

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

## Local Development Plan Task Force

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **19 July 2021**

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

### Membership:

Councillors Alex Anderson, Gary Collins, Martin Kerin, Joycelyn Redsell, James Thandi and Lee Watson

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### Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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**Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:**

Please contact Wendy Le, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to [direct.democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:direct.democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

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# DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

## Helpful Reminders for Members

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

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

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

## **Pecuniary**

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

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

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

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

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

## **Non- pecuniary**

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



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

## Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

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

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

## **Local Development Plan Task Force Terms of Reference**

### **Aim:**

To form a working group, hereafter referred to as “Task Force” to discuss and make recommendations in relation to the development and implementation of the Local Development Plan (LDP).

### **Membership:**

6 elected Members (to be nominated in accordance with political proportionality).  
1 named substitute from each political party.

### **Chair:**

The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected by the membership of the Task Force at its first meeting of each municipal year. The appointment will last for the municipal year’s duration.

### **Duration:**

The Task Force shall continue until such time as all business of the Group is complete, which will be when the plan is submitted to Government for inspection. The ultimate decision to discontinue the Task Force shall lie with the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee as parent committee; however the Chair of the Task Force may make such a request to disband at any time.

### **Meeting Schedule:**

The Task Force shall meet every two months. Schedule to be agreed.

### **Activities:**

The Task Force will undertake all but not exclusively the following activities:

1. To keep under review progress in preparing the Local Plan
2. Receive updates on Government policy changes and priorities insofar as they might impact on the preparation of the Local Plan
3. Receive reports and presentations on the development of the Local Plan evidence base and provide comments
4. Receive reports and presentations on the preparation of the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan and its implications for the Local Plan

5. Provide comment on the scope and nature of the thematic policy approaches to be considered in developing the Local Plan
6. Provide comment on the development of an evidence based Preferred Spatial Option
7. Review progress and the development of appropriate strategies and policy approaches to support the development of strategic sites within the framework provided by the Local Plan
8. To keep under review the Council's approach to community engagement in the plan-making process

### **Decision Making**

The Task Force shall have no executive powers and will refer all recommendations directly to the appropriate executive or quasi-judicial committee by way of report.



## Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Development Plan Task Force held on 8 March 2021 at 7.00 pm

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**Present:** Councillors Joycelyn Redsell (Chair), Martin Kerin (Vice-Chair), Gerard Rice and Luke Spillman

**Apologies:** Councillors Alex Anderson and Andrew Jefferies

**In attendance:**  
Leigh Nicholson, Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection  
Sean Nethercott, Strategic Lead of Strategic Services  
Mat Kiely, Transportation Services Strategic Lead  
Navtej Tung, Principal Transport Planner  
Adrian Neve, Stantec Representative  
Wendy Le, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

### **22. Minutes**

The minutes of the Local Development Plan Task Force meeting held on 11 January 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

### **23. Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

### **24. Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **25. Thurrock Local Plan - Next Steps**

The report on pages 9 – 30 of the Agenda was presented by Sean Nethercott.

The Chair questioned how housing needs would be assessed to identify the number of homes to deliver; the affordability of affordable homes; and if the medical hubs had been considered in the housing process. She also asked if smaller developers were considered for housing developments. Sean Nethercott explained that the methodology for housing needs had changed over the last 10 years which had considered factors such as demographic changes, economic growth and a Local Authority's (LA) local policies and

plans. He said that 2017 was the most recent study which had looked at the demographics of the Borough and the market uplift had given a figure of over 1,000 and the further economics assessment had indicated a further 300 dwellings per year. He went on to say that national government had recently set out a standard methodology for housing assessment to use but it would not change figures by much and that the Council would have the baseline figure by autumn this year. In regards to the Chair's query on whether affordable housing was affordable, he said that it was a wider issue for the Council to address. He also said that the Council encouraged SMEs to build with the Council but that in the short – medium term, the need was for 'shovel ready' sites that SMEs could get involved in which was difficult as this was dominated by big volume builders. He said that the Council was in discussions with Homes England to diversify this and make small parcels of sites available for SMEs. In regards to the medical hubs, he said that these were part of the infrastructure planning work with the assumption that the medical hubs would be built so was factored into what future facilities would be needed.

Councillor Kerin questioned whether the types of housing needed had been identified yet and said that the quality of housing needed to be considered. He commented that Thurrock had a broad range of salaries with the different types of employment that people were in and asked if housing affordability would be based on this. Sean Nethercott answered that once the baseline figure was identified in autumn, it would help to identify housing needs and affordable housing and what housing could be delivered. He said that the charrette process had collated a lot of information which would help in terms of affordable housing and that the Local Plan would take into account the housing from big sites. Further work would need to be undertaken before it could be confirmed what the Borough's future needs would be and had to be considered alongside good quality housing in sustainable locations and infrastructure. He went on to say that even with the identified number of housing needed, this would need to be monitored yearly as it could fluctuate. In regards to housing quality, he said that through the charrette process, landowners and house builders had been shown examples of poor housing and good quality housing in areas similar to Thurrock in order to prevent the same type of developments that had been produced in Thurrock over the last decade. He went on to say that in addition to good quality housing, the environment within the location of the housing was important such as having walking and cycling amenities in place. The service wanted to ensure that places met people's needs and also their health and community wellbeing needs.

Members commented that examples of good quality housing included a new development in Chadwell St Mary and one in Grays near Seabrooke Rise. Sean Nethercott said that various documents from South Essex authorities also highlighted these developments.

Councillor Rice highlighted that there were issues of affordable units which he felt should be managed by the Council and not by developers. This was to ensure that these units would be available for the people on the Council's

housing waiting list. He said that there were two disused pits in Chadwell St Mary that could benefit to have housing units built on and that the service needed to look at other areas within the Borough to contribute towards the housing target. He highlighted that some areas of the Borough were once marshland such as Stifford Clays before it went through regeneration. Sean Nethercott explained that each area had been looked at in detail through the charrettes process and had identified where potential housing could be brought forward but it was a case of what scale of development was appropriate for those sites. Landowners were promoting sites and the service was considering these properly and submitting these based on a rational judgement of deliverability.

The Chair said that some of the villages in the Borough should not lose their characteristics or community and that there could be another village built within the Borough. Sean Nethercott explained that development approaches looked at existing settlements to see what could be improved. In terms of new settlements, there was a potential new development in West Horndon which the Council was awaiting on for the Brentwood Local Plan and there was also South Fields to consider.

## **26. Thurrock Transport Strategy Refresh update**

The report on pages 31 – 40 of the Agenda was presented by Mat Kiely.

The Chair was pleased to hear that the river was being included in the Thurrock Transport Strategy (TTS). In regards to the Freight Strategy, she asked whether more lorry parks were needed in Thurrock as she felt that the middle of the Borough would benefit from this particularly one on the A13 where most lorries passed over. Mat Kiely said that lorry parking provision was bespoke piece of work that needed to be considered in more detail alongside the TTS.

Councillor Kerin asked if the impact of the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) had been considered within the TTS. Mat Kiely answered that the TTS took into consideration the LTC and other big infrastructure projects that would facilitate growth and improved access on the network. He said that the service was working with Highways England to identify where improvements to the road network could take place. He highlighted that sustainable modes of transport could significantly be impacted by the LTC and the service was working with Highways England to ensure that routes for non-motorised users were planned for with new or improved routes as the Council encouraged people to walk and cycle. He went on to say that the LTC could help to fund certain measures and to address access issues.

Councillor Spillman questioned the process and timescale of installing the electric vehicle charging points to the scale that was needed. Mat Kiely explained that a report on electric charging points had been through the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee recently and considered the best way to bring forward the infrastructure in the right locations for this and also to be considered as part of new developments. The

service was also working with Highways England to identify where electric charging points could also be installed on the strategic road network. He went on to say that a procurement process for an electric charger provider was in place.

Adrian Neve gave a presentation on the Local Plan Transport Baseline Study.

The Chair commented that London Road was heavily congested and questioned if there were plans for that road. She highlighted that there were tunnels under parts of the road due to the sinkholes and that the pollution in the area was high. Mat Kiely said that London Road was part of the longer term transport strategy in how it could be accommodated to different ways of travel. He said that the maintenance and structure teams would be aware of any issues with the tunnels. He added that London Road was an identified AQMA and was taken into consideration in strategies.

## **27. Parking Policy and Strategy, Parking Design and Development Standards, and Parking Enforcement Strategy**

The report on pages 41 – 156 of the Agenda was presented by Navtej Tung.

The Chair commented that people were currently working from home which caused parking problems as there were cars parked on grass verges. She said that this needed to be looked at alongside lorries parking on curbs and corners. She mentioned that a car parking survey in Blackshots had been undertaken in 2019 and questioned what the outcome of that had been. Mat Kiely said that he would look into this and report back to the Chair.

Councillor Kerin questioned whether this strategy would be featured in new developments and if it would be sustainable. He highlighted that in his ward, there were a lot of parking issues and too many cars for the amount of spaces that there was. He queried if there were any lessons picked up from these issues. Navtej Tung referred Members to the Parking Standards document which set out the minimum parking provisions and what was required. This would apply to all new developments once the parking standard documents were adopted. He said that it had been designed on some of the parking provision lessons learnt from the past and that it considered how a development fitted into the wider environment so that an appropriate level of parking provision could be determined.

Councillor Kerin commented that developments had to consider that there could be at least two cars in a household particularly where there were two adults even where it was close to a train station. He said that people would still use their cars when they were not commuting into work. Navtej Tung said that there was a changing trend in lower car ownership and the level of what was needed. He said that the document highlighted alternatives of not needing a second car such as a car club. He went on to say that there were considerations for further controlled parking zones so people could not just park on the streets and that the service recognised that these problems were occurring. He also referred Members to page 34 and said that the consultation

had highlighted significant emphasis on enforcing against parking on footways and grass verges.

## **28. Work Programme**

The following items were added to the work programme for the next municipal year:

- Update on sustainable travel.
- The impact of COVID-19 on the Local Plan.
- Number of homes to be delivered.

**The meeting finished at 8.53 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

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

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**19 July 2020**

**Local Development Plan Task Force**

**Thurrock Local Plan – Next Steps**

**This report is Public**

## **Executive Summary**

This report summarises the steps that the Council proposes to take to prepare a sound Local Plan in accordance with all relevant legal and procedural requirements and consistent with national policy. It provides an update to the previous Thurrock Local Plan - Next Steps Report which the Task Force considered at its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

### **1. Introduction and Background.**

- 1.1 This Report provides an update to the previous Thurrock Local Plan – Next Steps Report which was considered by the Taskforce at its last meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March 9<sup>th</sup> 2021.
- 1.2 Despite the problems caused by lockdown, significant progress has been made in moving the Plan forward with a particular focus being on the development of the Local Plan evidence base.
- 1.3 Further progress has also been made in rolling out Local Plan Planning Performance Agreements with landowners and developers promoting sites and in building up towards the launch of the Community Design Charrettes which will now start in September.

### **2 Progress in developing the Local Plan Evidence Base**

- 2.1 With the objective of preparing a Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan for public consultation in mid-2022, the Council has commissioned a wide range of technical studies to inform the production of the Plan. The technical studies which have been commissioned or are in the course of being commissioned since the beginning of 2021 are set out in Figure 1 below.

#### **Figure 1 Key Local Plan Studies commissioned in 2021**

- South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Thurrock Housing Urban Capacity Study
- Thurrock Housing Sites Assessment Study
- Thurrock Economic Developments Needs Assessment Update
- Thurrock Employment Land Availability Assessment Update

- Thurrock Centres and Urban Capacity Study
- Call for Sites Transport Connectivity Site Assessments
- Thurrock Transport Baseline Study
- Connecting Thurrock –Vision 2050 Vision Statement
- Interim Transport Strategy/Thurrock Transport Strategy
- Thurrock Strategic Transport Model
- Strategic Development Area Transport Access Strategies
- Thurrock Local Plan Infrastructure Baseline Study
- Thurrock Climate Change Strategy
- Thurrock Energy Strategy
- Thurrock Design Strategy Update

2.2 Further work will be commissioned over the next 12 months so that by this time next year the Council will be in a position to better understand the scale and spatial distribution of its future development needs with regard to the technical themes set out in Figure 2.

#### **Figure 1 - Key Local Plan Deliverables 2021**

##### **Housing**

- The number of homes we must plan for, including the identification of affordable and specialist housing needs;
- An assessment of the capacity of brownfield and Town Centre sites to meet future housing needs and reduce the need for Green Belt development;
- The assessment and identification of sites to meet the Boroughs future housing needs;
- The identification and development of a housing delivery strategy to ensure the phased development of sites and supporting infrastructure to meet future housing needs, including specialist and affordable housing requirements.

##### **Economy**

- The number of jobs we must plan for by economic sector;
- The capacity of existing employment sites to meet future needs and/or the need for additional allocations to support economic growth and diversify the Borough's economic base;



- The development of an Employment Land Delivery Strategy which identifies the need for infrastructure, accessibility or other improvements required to bring sites for development;
- An assessment of the potential for pursuing the development of a 'lift and shift' strategy to remove bad-neighbour uses from established residential areas;
- The amount of future retail, leisure and other town centre uses to be provided over the plan period together with the development of a Borough-wide strategy for accommodating these needs.

### **Transport**

- An assessment of current and future transport needs, capacity constraints and opportunities;
- The development of a Borough-wide Transport Strategy which sets out a range of policy and infrastructure interventions to support growth, and meet the Council's other key policy priorities in respect of Climate Change, Air Quality and Health and Well-Being;
- The ongoing development of costed proposals to support the future development of the Boroughs strategic growth areas and the promotion of sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and rail freight as a means of reducing car use and freight movements by road;
- The development of a range of transport models to test the effectiveness of a range of transport interventions in terms of capacity, safety and air quality considerations.

### **Community Infrastructure**

- The identification of current and future community infrastructure needs, deficiencies and opportunities at a Borough-wide and Ward based level;
- The production of place - based Infrastructure Delivery Plans for each strategic growth location which identifies the required Community, Transport, Utilities, Green and Blue infrastructure, together with proposed funding and delivery mechanisms;
- The production of a Borough-wide Infrastructure Delivery Plan underpinned by funding agreements with key delivery partners, including Government, infrastructure providers and service providers, and land owners and developers;

- A CIL Charging Schedule which sets out a strategy and priorities for delivery to be funded by landowners and developer through the capture of a CIL.

### **Environment**

- A full and transparent assessment of the environmental, sustainability and health impacts of the emerging development plan (policies and proposals);
- The identification of required mitigation strategies and proposals to address the impacts of the Plan on a range of key environmental considerations including, Climate Change, Flood Risk, Energy, Water resources, Landscape and Green Belt, Air Quality and, Health and Well-Being.

### **Place**

- Place based regeneration and development strategies for key growth locations across the Borough;
- Strategic Area Development Frameworks and Master Plans;
- Inset Plans for Strategic Growth Areas;
- A new Borough-wide Design Strategy and supporting Design Guides and Codes

2.3 It should be noted that progress on completing the work streams identified above will be largely dependent on the availability of resources and the ability of the Council to manage and mitigate the impact of outside influences on the plan-making process. These include Covid-19, Government Policy, Local Government reorganisation, the Lower Thames Crossing and the availability of scarce technical and professional resources.

### **3.0 Member Engagement**

3.1 In view of the importance of achieving effective Member engagement in the Plan process, work is underway in preparing a Member Engagement Strategy which will mirror the staged preparation of the Thurrock Plan and provide an opportunity for all Members to engage fully with the process. Although the detailed staging of activities is currently being worked up, it is envisaged that the programme for engaging with Members should be integrated and be delivered at the following levels:

- Leaders Group

- All Member Briefings – Evidence and Strategy Development
  - Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny
  - Local Development Plan Taskforce
- 3.2 It is hoped that by adopting a front-loading approach towards engaging Members in the plan-making process, it will be possible to achieve broad and early support for the Plan which will assist the process move forward quickly through the various statutory stages toward submission and adoption.
- 4.0 Thurrock Design Charrettes – Progress Update**
- 4.1 The roll out of the Thurrock Design Charrette process commenced in December 2020 with the launch of an online Consultation Portal. This was quickly followed by a series of 8 Design Charrette Workshops across the Borough involving landowners, scheme promoters and developers who are currently promoting sites for allocation through the Local Plan. A note summarising progress on the Charrette process to date is attached as Appendix 1 to this Report.
- 4.2 The Design Charrette workshops have been very well attended and have been invaluable in deepening and developing a shared understanding of the issues and opportunities associated in taking for the future development of 8 areas under consideration (Bulphan, Chadwell St Mary, Corringham, East Tilbury, Horndon on the Hill, South Ockendon, Orsett and Stanford-le-Hope).
- 4.3 The information obtained from these discussions will now be used to help inform the wider plan-making process including the nature and scope of the evidence needed to support the production of the Local Plan. The information generated will also be used to help inform the Community Design Charrette Workshops which will now be held in September and October 2021. The Community sessions were due to held during spring 2021, but unfortunately had to be postponed until the autumn due to the impact of Covid19 restrictions which would have limited the Councils ability to effectively engage with Local Communities.
- 4.4 Further progress reports on the roll out of the Design Charrette process will be provided to the Taskforce over the course of the year as work progresses over the summer and into the autumn.
- 4.5 Following the conclusion of the public consultation process work will then begin on the production of a series of reports and Development Frameworks which will establish a vision and guiding principles to steer the future development of the Charrette areas. It is intended that the place based Development Frameworks will sit alongside the formal Local Plan assessment of individual sites and their suitability for allocation in the Plan.
- 5.0 Member Action Points**

- 5.1 At the previous meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March, Members asked for a number of Reports to be prepared for consideration at the next meeting of the Taskforce. Requested were updates on the following:
- Sustainable Travel;
  - Number of homes to be delivered be delivered by the Local Plan;
  - The impact of COVID-19 on the Local Plan

*Sustainable Travel*

- 5.2 The emerging Local Plan has a significant role to play in delivering a wide range of Council priorities and its production will be informed by on-going work in preparing or updating a number of other Corporate Strategies. Of major importance to the Local Plan process is the need to prepare a new Thurrock Transport Strategy (TTS) which fully supports the delivery of the Local Plan as well as the Council's wider transport, economic, health and environmental objectives.
- 5.3 At the previous meeting of the Task Force, Members received a report setting out progress in preparing the Transport Strategy and requested a further update on the preparation of the transport evidence base at this meeting. In response to this request, Officers will provide a verbal update on progress at this meeting prior to the preparation of a further Report and presentation at the next Taskforce Meeting (27<sup>th</sup> September) on the Connecting Thurrock – Vision 2050 which is currently in production and sets a draft sustainable transport vision to support the future development of Thurrock and the delivery of the Local Plan.

*Number of homes to be delivered be delivered by the Local Plan*

- 5.4 Members further requested additional information on the number of homes to be delivered by the Local Plan. At this stage of the process it is not possible to accurately identify the number of new homes which need to be delivered by the Local Plan due to the continuing uncertainty surrounding the Governments attempts to revise the Standard Method used to calculate each Local Authorities future housing requirements. It is entirely possible that there will be further changes to the Standard Method in the coming months and the Council will need to keep this matter under review as it progresses its production of the Local Plan.
- 5.5 A further factor which hinders the ability of the Council to accurately forecast its future housing needs is the fact that the housing requirement generated by the Standard Method is just the starting point in terms of considering the future needs of an area. Associated with this is the need for Local Authorities to consider further whether there is a need to uplift their future housing requirements to support wider economic growth objectives and priorities. This is the case in places such as Thurrock where significant levels of employment growth are envisaged over the plan-period to 2040 which will generate additional demands for new housing over and above that required to meet demographic needs.

- 5.6 In order to be able to identify the scale of the housing uplift needed to support economic growth, including the successful delivery of the Thames Free Port, the Council will need to await the completion of the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the Thurrock Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) which will provide more detailed information on the Boroughs future housing and employment needs. Both studies are scheduled for completion in autumn 2021 and a further Report will be taken to the Taskforce on this matter which will set out the detailed calculations which sit behind the Borough's Local Plan housing targets.
- 5.7 It is often the case that discussions on Local Plans become focused simply on *'the numbers'*, while at the same time, losing sight of the crucial role that the plan-making process has to play in driving forward the place-making and transformational change.
- 5.8 At the heart of the plan-making process is the concept of 'spatial planning'. This is also called 'place shaping' and has a wider focus than traditional land use planning. It's about identifying a vision for the future of a place which responds to local needs and circumstances, including community views, and is based on evidence. This vision is translated into priorities, policies and the identification of land for development. Spatial planning creates a framework for private investment and regeneration. By agreeing a delivery plan, it seeks to co-ordinate and deliver public-sector parts of the plan with other agencies. Spatial planning should set a positive framework for action on climate change, and contribute to sustainable development.
- 5.9 Reflecting this approach, it is important not to view 'the numbers' as being a problem, but more often being an opportunity to address existing housing and, infrastructure deficiencies as well as wider climate change and health and wellbeing objectives. Equally, through support for 'good growth', it is possible to promote the regeneration of older areas and secure the creation of more attractive and better designed places within which to live, work and play.
- 5.10 The development of the Local Plan evidence base has a crucial role to play in not only informing decisions on the scale of growth that is required to meet the future needs of Thurrock, but also in terms of how this growth potential can be harnessed to meet the needs of the local community. As work on the plan continues, Members will be kept informed of the progress been made in identifying the Borough's future housing and employment needs as well as the options and opportunities available to meet these needs in a sustainable and deliverable way which benefits the different communities and localities which make up the Borough, prior to the preparation and consultation on the draft Local Plan in 2022.

*The Impact of Covid-19 on Planning*

- 5.11 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic will have significant and potentially long lasting economic, social and environmental impacts all of which could have profound impacts on how we will live, work and travel in the future. Notwithstanding the inherent difficulties this poses for the plan-making process in terms of trying to predict what this all means in relation to the demand for and use of land and infrastructure, the Government still requires that all local authorities should have an adopted Local Plan in place by December 2023.
- 5.12 Although Government has published guidance for Local Authorities on how to undertake community and stakeholder engagement during the pandemic, it has not provided any advice to local authorities on how they should take into account the impact of Covid-19 on planning policy development. It is therefore left to individual authorities to determine what policy approaches should be developed at a local level to promote future economic recovery and meet the needs of local communities. In doing so local authorities will still need to have full regard to Government policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guide (PPG) when it comes to determining the scope and content of their Local Plans.
- 5.13 Although it is still too early to determine what the long term implications of the pandemic will be for the plan-making process, it is clear that the Covid-19 has already had a significant impact in re-shaping the planning landscape in terms of where people want to live and work, and on how they shop and move around. The key Covid-19 challenges and issues arising which will need to be considered in the preparation of the Thurrock Local Plan are set out in Figure 3.0.

**Figure 3.0: Key Covid-19 challenges for the Local Plan**

**Migration patterns and housing markets**

- Increased housing pressures on outer London areas, Small towns, Rural locations, and Coastal locations.
- Rise in purchase of second homes/holiday lets
- Impact on population projections
- Change in rates of build between areas
- Impact on affordability
- Demand for community infrastructure

**The need and desire for space**

- Gardens
- Home offices
- Access to good green space from the home
- Focus of building on where there is space to build
- Impact on densities and land take

## **Centres – workspace, and shopping**

### **Workspace**

- Economic bounce back – but a different economy?
- Demand levels for permanent offices
- Demand levels for shared office space
- Digital Infrastructure – Working From Home
- Many businesses making decisions to reduce their estate
- Office is unlikely to die, but small shifts will have major impacts on the market, the costs for businesses, and the knock on effect on business that support office workers in a locality
- Alternative uses for workspace?
- Expected increase in unemployment post furlough

### **Retail**

- Demand for retail space?
- Comparison Shopping – Bricks and mortar v Internet
- Convenience Shopping - The Big Shop V Shop Local v Home delivery
- Shopping related to gardens and homes
- Contraction of retail core provides space for:-
  - New Homes
  - Extra leisure
  - Places for home workers to meet

### **Social hubs**

- Continued demand for places to meet, to eat, to socialise •
- More local demand may rise for services and certain retail •
- Centres retain Civic and community role - places where people meet and enjoy cultural and leisure activities.

### **Transport patterns**

- Trends in travel - WFH
- Some reduction in commuting levels may continue
- Reduction in travel for meetings?
- Less use of public transport impacting on viability and routes
- Foreign travel costs rising
- Impacts on regional airport locations?
- More travel within the UK for leisure
- Air quality impacts negative

### **The resilience of the city - Centre for Cities**

- Large part of economic damage appears temporary

- Mistake to assume period of long term contraction due to short term shock
- But risk of permanent shift to working from home, consuming less within city centres, impact on prospects of lower skilled
- Return to offices needed
- Encouragement to use Public Transport needed
- Action on Air Quality needed

5.14 In order to address the challenges identified above, it is essential that the preparation of the Local Plan is based on a sound evidence base which considers a range of different growth and development scenarios which enables the Local Plan to any changes in circumstances in a flexible way. It should also be noted that Government now expects Local Authorities to review their Local Plans every 5 years to ensure that they remain up-to date and relevant in planning for the future development needs of the area. The adoption of this approach would also provide the Council with an early opportunity to re-assess the Local Plans spatial strategy and policies and to update them in the light of the availability of better information than currently exists on the medium to long term impact of Covid19 on the future planning of Thurrock.

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

- Thurrock Local Plan Community Consultation Briefing – July 2021

### **Report Author:**

Sean Nethercott

Strategic Services Lead

Public Realm



## THURROCK LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION BRIEFING NOTE

**JULY 2021**

As you may be aware, Thurrock Council is developing a new Local Plan which will shape the future of development – including homes, transport, and local facilities – over the next 15 years. This briefing outlines the consultation activities undertaken to date and provides information on the upcoming consultation activities taking place across Thurrock.

As part of the Local Plan process, Thurrock Council is undertaking widespread consultation at an early stage in the development of the Plan, which aims to hear the views of all those affected by development in the area, as well as infrastructure providers and landowners.

### What have we done so far?

The recent stage of consultation follows on from the previous ‘Issues and Options’ and ‘Your Place, Your Voice’ consultations that took place in 2019.

Following on from these consultation stages, eight growth areas were identified. These areas were selected as there is a real need and opportunity to bring forward investment which supports the aspirations of the existing community. The areas also align with the ‘Call for Sites’ process and reflect those areas with the greatest development interest.

The eight identified ‘growth areas’ are: Bulphan, Chadwell St Mary, South Ockendon, East Tilbury, Horndon on the Hill, Orsett, Corringham, and Stanford-le-Hope.

As part of the most recent round of the Your Place, Your Voice consultation, we have undertaken a series of workshops with landowners who submitted sites in each of the eight identified growth areas as part of the Council’s Call for Sites process. These workshops provided the opportunity to understand which sites are deliverable, what the strengths of each area are, and to understand the opportunities and constraints of development in each of these key areas.

These workshops took place from January to March 2021. Also undertaken from January to March was an initial online consultation with residents looking to explore what local people feel the strengths and weaknesses of their area are through a dedicated website.

Activity was then paused for the pre-election Purdah period, where consultation had to be paused in line with Government legislation.

The second stage of consultation with the public has now launched and we are once again asking for communities’ views on their local area.

As part of this second stage of consultation, further workshops are to be held with key stakeholders, including key community groups.

This workshop process, also referred to as a ‘Charrette’ process, aims to bring a wide range of people into the process of developing the Local Plan. So far, this has included:

- An internal Council workshop to understand the needs and priorities of all Council services within the Local Plan.
- An ongoing community-focused survey which is helping us to understand the broader views and aspirations within specific areas of Thurrock. This follows on from our previous consultations.

- A series of workshops with landowners who may wish to promote their sites through the Local Plan process. This helped us to establish what land is available, who owns it, and the broader constraints and opportunities that exist with each one.

### Next steps

As part of the next stage of consultation, we want to engage with people who live and work in Thurrock to understand local aspirations and spark a Thurrock-wide conversation on where, when, and how development can and should take place. Thurrock Council has partnered with The Prince's Foundation to implement these workshops through its 'BIMBY' process.

In addition to seeking feedback through an online survey, Thurrock will be holding the next stages of the workshop process with a series of creative workshops with communities in all eight growth areas. These workshops present an opportunity to engage collaboratively and positively with local people to understand their concerns about, and ambitions for, their area. These workshops will take place once a week in each of the eight areas across September and October and will be held with key community stakeholders. The workshop sessions will be held midweek and will be all day.

In addition to these workshop sessions, a number of drop-in events will take place. These drop-in events will be open to all members of the community, with two taking place per area. One will take place in the evening following the workshop session, with the other drop-in event taking place on the following Saturday.

We want to listen carefully to local people and encourage them to have a say on development alongside professionals and other stakeholders. While acknowledging that following consideration, it may not be possible to implement all suggestions, we hope these workshops will help to build common ground and trust.

These community consultation events will be taking place as follows:

- Bulphan – Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September
- Stanford-le-Hope – Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September
- Corringham - Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> & Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September
- South Ockendon - Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September & Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October
- Horndon on the Hill- Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October
- Chadwell St Mary - Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October
- Orsett - Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October
- East Tilbury - Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> October

The online survey will continue to run until 31 December and comprises a multiple-choice questionnaire on what communities' feel are the strengths, and areas for improvement in their area, focussed on four main themes - nature and environment, buildings and transport, social life, and financial opportunity. Respondents are then also asked to provide comments on specific places in their communities using our 'Mapdragon' software. This allows you to drop a 'pin' on a specific element, e.g., a particularly busy traffic junction, or a community centre, and provide a comment. The survey and Mapdragon are available to view at [www.thurrockyourplaceyourvoice.co.uk/have-your-say/](http://www.thurrockyourplaceyourvoice.co.uk/have-your-say/).

Should you have any questions on any of the information enclosed within this briefing, please do not hesitate to get in touch by emailing [info@thurrockyourplaceyourvoice.co.uk](mailto:info@thurrockyourplaceyourvoice.co.uk),

ENDS

# Work Programme

**Committee:** Local Development Plan Task Force

**Year:** 2021/2022

**Dates of Meetings:** 19 July 2021, 27 September 2021, 29 November 2021, 24 January 2022, 21 March 2022.

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
<b>19 July 2021</b>		
Nomination of Chair and Vice-Chair	Democratic Services	
Terms of Reference	Democratic Services	
Thurrock Local Plan - Next Steps	Sean Nethercott	Members
Thurrock Town Centres Study Presentation	Sean Nethercott/DLA	Members
Work Programme	Dem Services	Standing item
<b>27 September 2021</b>		
Work Programme	Dem Services	Standing item
<b>29 November 2021</b>		
Work Programme	Dem Services	Standing item

## Work Programme

<b>24 January 2022</b>		
Work Programme	Dem Services	Standing item
<b>21 March 2022</b>		
Work Programme	Dem Services	Standing item
<b>TBC</b>		
Update on Sustainable Travel	Mat Kiely	Members
The Impact of COVID-19 on the Local Plan	Sean Nethercott	Members
Number of Homes to be Delivered	Sean Nethercott	Members