

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

## Council

To the Members of Thurrock Council

The next meeting of the Council will be held at **7.00 pm** on **31 January 2024**

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

### Membership of the Council:

Susan Little (Mayor)

Qaisar Abbas (Deputy Mayor)

John Allen  
Alex Anderson  
Deborah Arnold  
Paul Arnold  
Gary Byrne  
Adam Carter  
John Cecil  
Daniel Chukwu  
Gary Collins  
George Coxshall  
Jack Duffin  
Tony Fish  
Robert Gledhill  
Aaron Green  
James Halden  
Vikki Hartstean

Mark Hooper  
Mark Hurrell  
Andrew Jefferies  
Barry Johnson  
Tom Kelly  
Cathy Kent  
John Kent  
Martin Kerin  
Steve Liddiard  
Ben Maney  
Jacqui Maney  
Cici Manwa  
Fraser Massey  
Valerie Morris-Cook  
Sara Muldowney  
Augustine Ononaji

Srikanth Panjala  
Maureen Pearce  
Terry Piccolo  
Georgette Polley  
Kairen Raper  
Joycelyn Redsell  
Elizabeth Rigby  
Sue Sammons  
Sue Shinnick  
Graham Snell  
Neil Speight  
Luke Spillman  
James Thandi  
Lee Watson  
Lynn Worrall



**Dr Dave Smith**  
**Chief Executive**

Agenda published on: 23 January 2024



**Agenda**  
Open to Public and Press

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<b>1 Apologies for absence</b>	
<b>2 Minutes</b>	<b>11 - 24</b>
To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on 29 November 2023.	
To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Extraordinary Council, held on 6 December 2023.	
<b>3 Items of Urgent Business</b>	
To receive additional items that the Mayor is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
<b>4 Declaration of Interests</b>	
To receive any declaration of interests from Members.	
<b>5 Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council</b>	
<b>6 Questions from Members of the Public</b>	<b>25 - 26</b>
In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.	
<b>7 Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors</b>	
In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2(Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.	
<b>8 Petitions Update Report</b>	<b>27 - 28</b>
<b>9 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels</b>	
The Council are asked to agree any changes to the appointments made to committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels, as requested by Group Leaders.	

<b>10</b>	<b>Revised Political Balance</b>	<b>29 - 34</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Debate on a petition containing over 1500 verified signatures - Public Inquiry into financial collapse of Thurrock Council</b>	<b>35 - 42</b>
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In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.

**15 Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies**

**16 Minutes of Committees**

Minutes of Committee	Date
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	28 September 2023
Standards & Audit Committee	6 September 2023
Standards & Audit Committee	30 October 2023
Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	15 November 2023
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	5 October 2023
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	1 November 2023
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	21 November 2023
Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	2 November 2023
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	16 November 2023

- |           |   |                  |
|-----------|---|------------------|
| <b>17</b> | <b>Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year</b> | <b>141 - 144</b> |
| <b>18</b> | <b>Motion submitted by Councillor Speight</b>                         | <b>145 - 146</b> |

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

Please contact Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

**Future Dates of Council:**

February 2024 (Budget), 20 March 2024

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## **Information for members of the public and councillors**

### **Access to Information and Meetings**

#### **Advice Regarding Public Attendance at Meetings**

If you are feeling ill or have tested positive for Covid and are isolating you should remain at home, the meeting will be webcast and you can attend in that way.

Hand sanitiser will also be available at the entrance for your use.

#### **Recording of meetings**

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

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

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

The council welcomes the filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings as a means of reporting on its proceedings because it helps to make the council more transparent and accountable to its local communities. If you wish to film or photograph the proceedings of a meeting and have any special requirements or are intending to bring in large equipment please contact the Communications Team at [CommunicationsTeam@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:CommunicationsTeam@thurrock.gov.uk) before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will then be consulted and their agreement sought to any specific request made.

Where members of the public use a laptop, tablet device, smart phone or similar devices to use social media, make recordings or take photographs these devices must be set to 'silent' mode to avoid interrupting proceedings of the council or committee. The use of flash photography or additional lighting may be allowed provided it has been discussed prior to the meeting and agreement reached to ensure that it will not disrupt proceedings.

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

## Thurrock Council Wi-Fi

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

- You should connect to TBC-GUEST
- 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](#) or [Android Device](#) 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 4 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 4 minute time shall apply) [Rule 19.8(a)]

**All Motions will follow Section A and then either Section B or C**

- |           |    |  |                            |
|-----------|----|--|----------------------------|
| <b>A.</b> | A1 | Motion is moved                            | [Rule 19.2]                |
|           | A2 | Mover speaks                               | [Rule 19.8(a) (5 minutes)] |
|           | A3 | Seconded                                   | [Rule 19.2]                |
|           | A4 | Secunder speaks or reserves right to speak | [Rule 19.3] (4 minutes)    |

Then the procedure will move to either B or C below:

<b>B.</b>		<b>C.</b>	
<b>IF there is an AMENDMENT (please see Rule 19.23)</b>		<b>If NOT amended i.e. original motion</b>	
B1	The mover of the amendment shall speak (4 mins).	C1	Debate.
B2	The seconder of the amendment shall speak unless he or she has reserved their speech (4 mins).	C2	If the seconder of the motion has reserved their speeches, they shall then speak.
B3	<b>THEN</b> debate on <b>the subject</b> .	C3	The mover of the substantive motion shall have the final right of reply.
B4	If the seconder of the substantive motion and the amendment reserved their speeches, they shall then speak.	C4	Vote on motion.
B5	The mover of the amendment shall have a right of reply.		
B6	The mover of the substantive motion shall have the final right of reply.		
B7	Vote on amendment.		
B8	A vote shall be taken on the substantive motion, as amended if appropriate, without further debate.		

## Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

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

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

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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.

#### **December 1943**

WHITEBREAD Ernest J  
KEY Evelin L J  
COE W

#### **January 1944**

WELLER James R  
BENNING Loftus A M  
RAVEN Arthur J E  
BUDD Aubrey E W

This name is newly identified and therefore included now in recognition.

SHERRINGHAM William A, who died on 21 April 1917, Age 37

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## *Mayoral Roll of Honour*

*The Roll of Honour has been introduced to recognise and celebrate charities, businesses, individuals, and community groups that have strived to make Thurrock a greater place to live, work, learn and play.*

### *November 2023*

*David Sargeant - Services to the Stanford and Corringham Carnival*

*Cherie Sargeant - Services to the Stanford and Corringham Carnival*

### *January 2024*

*Terry Brown - Services to the voluntary sector in Tilbury Town*

*Yolande Simmons - Services to the voluntary sector in Tilbury Town*



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## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 29 November 2023 at 7.00 pm

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**Present:** Councillors Susan Little (Mayor), Qaisar Abbas (Deputy Mayor), John Allen, Alex Anderson, Deborah Arnold, Paul Arnold, Gary Byrne, Adam Carter, John Cecil, George Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Robert Gledhill, Aaron Green, James Halden, Vikki Hartstean, Mark Hooper, Mark Hurrell, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Ben Maney, Jacqui Maney, Cici Manwa, Fraser Massey, Valerie Morris-Cook, Augustine Ononaji, Srikanth Panjala, Maureen Pearce, Terry Piccolo, Georgette Polley, Joycelyn Redsell, Elizabeth Rigby, Sue Sammons, Sue Shinnick, Graham Snell, Neil Speight, Luke Spillman, James Thandi, Lee Watson and Lynn Worrall

**Apologies:** Councillors Gary Collins, Tony Fish, Sara Muldowney and Kairen Raper

**In attendance:** Dr Dave Smith, Chief Executive  
Mark Bradbury, Interim Director of Place  
Claire Demmel, Interim Director Public Realm  
Asmat Hussain, Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer  
Gavin Jones, Commissioner, Essex County Council  
Steven Mair, Interim Chief Financial Officer/Section 151 Officer  
Alix MacFarlane, Interim Director Communications Advisor - Intervention and Improvement  
Patrick McDermott, Chief of Staff to the Thurrock Commissioners  
Kerry Thomas, Chief Executive Business Manager  
Matthew Boulter, Head of Democratic, Scrutiny and Member Services  
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

### **85. Minutes**

Minutes of Council held on the 25 October 2023 were approved as a correct record.

### **86. Items of Urgent Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

## 87. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Kelly declared a pecuniary interest in Item 12 as he was an employee of DP World and agreed he would leave the chamber for this item.

## 88. Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council

The Mayor thanked those Members who had observed and paid their respect at services held on Remembrance Day.

The Leader made the following announcements:

- Thanked the Government for the £314,000 for fixing potholes.
- The Leader had attended the remembrance service in Grays to pay respect to those that had fallen and thanked those members who had attended other remembrance services within the borough.
- Welcomed the planning permission given to the Youth Zone, which would provide a first-class facility for the borough's youth to use.
- The Leader had attended the Grays Christmas light switch on and would be attending alongside members other events across the borough.

## 89. Questions from Members of the Public

The Mayor informed the chamber that three questions had been received from members of public.

From	To	Subject
Mr Perrin	Councillor Johnson	Is the Council able to ensure that all children in its care will have a safe and happy Christmas.
Ms Ramdenee	Councillor B Maney	What plans have this Council got for providing social facilities in East Tilbury, West Tilbury and Linford.
Mrs Hattle	Leader	This question fell due to Mrs Hattle unable to attend.

## 90. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors

There were no petitions presented.

## 91. Petitions Update Report

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

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

The Mayor asked whether there were any changes to be made to the appointments previously made by committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels.

The Leader made the following change:

Removed Councillor Spillman from General Services Committee and replaced with Councillor Johnson.

The Leader of the Labour group, Councillor J Kent, made no changes.

Councillor Speight as spokesman for the Non-Political Alliance of Independent made the following change:

Added Councillor Byrne to Planning Committee.

**93. Updated Annual Pay Policy Statement 2023/24**

The report presented outlined that the Localism Act 2011 that required the Council to publish an annual Pay Policy Statement. Council approved the 2023/24 Pay Policy Statement in January 2023 with amendments following the senior manager pay award approved in September 2023.

The following points were raised:

- Labour Members supported the report and the recommendations.
- Member referred to the Pay Multiples within the report and stated the medium salary for the chief executive had been the highest ever in this authority and members needed to be aware and to keep that in mind.
- Member questioned when the reporting of the mandatory gender pay gap would start to which Councillor Snell stated he agreed with the comments made and would provide details on the gender pay gap at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED**

**The Annual Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 was revised to replace the locally agreed pay award with the higher national award.**

**94. Senior Management Appointments**

The report sought the approval of the Council's new senior structure and recruitment to the new senior roles - Executive Director of Place, Executive Director of Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer), Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Assistant Chief Executive. The report also asked members to note the appointment to the Chief Financial Officer had not been made.

The following points were raised:

- Member referenced the stakeholder panels where the emphasis had been to attempt to build the senior management team and help build the support for the chief executive. Highlighted these appointments and the senior leadership team could not simply deal with the present difficulties and the issues of today.
- Member stated a reconsideration needed to be given as to what type of authority Thurrock was and as the new directors joined the council be part of an authority that had a serious future.
- Member noted that having sat on the interview panels these were the very best.
- Member stated his disappointment that the appropriate Chief Financial Officer had not been found and hoped this would be sorted out as soon as possible.
- Member echoed some of the comments made that this was the time to make a fresh start.
- Member encouraged all to support and work together with the new appointed directors.

## **RESOLVED**

### **1. Council noted the following appointments:**

- **Juliemma McLoughlin as Executive Director of Place.**
- **Daniel Fenwick as Executive Director of Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer).**
- **Alex Powell as Assistant Chief Executive.**

### **2. Council noted that an appointment was not made to the Chief Financial Officer. Options for progressing this role would be considered by the Commissioners.**

## **95. London Gateway Logistics Park Local Development Order**

*Councillor Kelly left the chamber at 7.40pm.*

The report presented was concerned with the planning consenting regime for securing the delivery of strategic employment development at London Gateway logistics park.

The following points were raised:

- Member asked for a guarantee that a Planning Lawyer with LDO knowledge would be present at Planning Committees when the item was considered.
- Member requested that East Tilbury be treated the same as other wards going forward.

- Members commented on their support and welcomed the report.
- Member stated that future planning should include the Corringham and Fobbing wards on any proposals of roads around the ports.
- Member commented on the recent piling operations being undertaken and that work needed to continue with DP World to ensure that noise levels were not at the expense of resident's wellbeing.
- Member also commented that the continued use of the Council's enforcement team as they played the watchdog role on behalf of the council.
- Member welcomed DP World's commitment to the borough.
- Member also commented that other methods needed to be explored on the transportation of containers and how these were moved across the borough.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. Noted the progress made so far on LDO2 and the future actions and processes necessary to bring LDO2 to a position where it is ready to be adopted.**
- 2. Delegated authority on the decision whether or not to adopt LDO2 to the Planning Committee.**
- 3. Delegated authority on the decision whether or not to adopt LDO1.5 to the Planning Committee.**

*Councillor Kelly returned to the chamber at 7.55pm.*

### **96. Review of Members' Allowances - Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP)**

This report presented the independent findings and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, following its review of the Scheme of Members Allowances in July 2023.

Councillor J Kent stated Labour would be voting against the recommendations.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. Rejected that all recommendations presented in the Independent Remuneration Panel's report at Appendix 1 and the subsequent Scheme of Allowances at Appendix 2.**
- 2. Rejected the Council implemented the recommendations from the municipal year 2024-2025.**
- 3. Rejected to apply 4% to allowances paid in 2022/23 as outlined in section 3.3 and in accordance with the continued recommendation to index allowances with staff increments.**

4. **Rejected the potential for the IRP to review special responsibility allowances for the Overview & Scrutiny Chair and Vice Chair positions six months after the introduction of any new structure to ensure appropriate remuneration.**

**97. Questions from Members**

The Mayor informed the chamber that six questions to the Leader and six questions to cabinet members and committee chairs had been received:

From	To	Subject
Councillor Hurrell	Leader	How many of Thurrock's residents, adults & children, fall into the category of being destitute.
Councillor Worrall	Leader	Vision for Thurrock, as a place in five years' time?
Councillor Byrne	Leader	Withdrawn
Councillor Byrne	Leader	Not use the appropriate name or title when addressing members.
Councillor Pearce	Leader	Sports master plan for Belhus Park.
Councillor Kerin	Leader	Rationale behind selecting PwC to assist the council in identifying savings
Councillor Worrall	Councillor Coxshall	Update on the Thameside building.
Councillor Watson	Councillor Coxshall	Health Care Resource Group implemented a new policy requiring patients to schedule appointments via email.
Councillor Polley	Councillor Carter	Number of Educational Health Care Plan's in place to support our young people.
Councillor Watson	Councillor Johnson	Proposed housing developments to be constructed by the Housing Revenue Account for council housing?
Councillor J Kent	Councillor Snell	Percentage of this year's council's revenue budget spent servicing the council's debt.
Councillor J Kent	Councillor Snell	Level of government Revenue Support Grant paid to Thurrock Council for the financial years 2010/11 and 2023/24.

**98. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies**

No reports were presented.

**99. Minutes of Committees**

The minutes of committees as set out in the agenda were received.

**100. Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year**

Members received an information report updating the progress in respect of motions received at Council.

Councillor Redsell requested an update on her motion in regard to the task and finish group looking at tackling school parking across the borough.

Councillor Speight stated there needed to be an improved way of formatting and logging motions.

**101. Motion submitted by Councillor Hooper**

The Motion, as printed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Hooper and seconded by Councillor Cecil. The Motion read as follows:

*People in Thurrock are waiting up to eight weeks to get an appointment for a blood test. This is entirely unacceptable, so, Thurrock Council calls on Mid and South Essex Foundation Trust to take whatever action is necessary to hold Phlebotomy First to account for this failure of blood testing in Thurrock and provide a reasonable service.*

Members collectively agreed with the motion in that the service provided was not acceptable and not what residents of Thurrock deserved. The waiting times affected all wards and in comparison with other local authorities was incredibly shocking. Member stated there were also delays in diagnosis. With another member suggesting the council set up their own blood testing organisation. Councillor Hooper thanked Members for their support and comments.

The Mayor called a vote on the motion, to which members voted unanimously in favour. The Mayor announced the motion carried.

A full recording of this meeting can be viewed from the following link:

[Council - Wednesday 29 November 2023, 7:00pm - Thurrock Council committee meeting webcasts \(public-i.tv\)](#)

**The meeting finished at 9.04 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)**



## Minutes of the Meeting of the Extraordinary Council held on 6 December 2023 at 7.00 pm

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**Present:** Councillors Susan Little (Mayor), Qaisar Abbas (Deputy Mayor), John Allen, Alex Anderson, Deborah Arnold, Paul Arnold, Gary Byrne, Adam Carter, John Cecil, Daniel Chukwu, George Coxshall, Tony Fish, Robert Gledhill, Aaron Green, James Halden, Vikki Hartstean, Mark Hooper, Mark Hurrell, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, Cathy Kent, Martin Kerin, Ben Maney, Jacqui Maney, Cici Manwa, Fraser Massey, Augustine Ononaji, Srikanth Panjala, Maureen Pearce, Georgette Polley, Kairen Raper, Joycelyn Redsell, Elizabeth Rigby, Sue Sammons, Sue Shinnick, Graham Snell, Neil Speight, Luke Spillman, James Thandi and Lee Watson

**Apologies:** Councillors Gary Collins, Jack Duffin, John Kent, Steve Liddiard, Valerie Morris-Cook, Sara Muldowney, Terry Piccolo and Lynn Worrall

Dr Dave Smith, Asmat Hussain and Matthew Boulter

**In attendance:** Ian Wake, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health  
Mark Bradbury, Interim Director of Place  
Jayne Middleton-Albooye, Assistant Director Legal  
Jenny Shade, Principal Democratic Services Officer  
Luke Tucker, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

### **102. Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

### **103. Local Plan - Initial Proposals Consultation (Regulation 18)**

Councillor B Maney presented the report that stated there was a statutory requirement placed on all Local Planning Authorities to have an up-to-date Local Plan in place and for Local Planning Authorities to review their plans every five years. This Council's current 'Local Plan' was adopted eight years ago. Those plans set out the future land use and planning policies for the borough over a set time frame. Consultation on the Thurrock Local Plan: Initial Proposals document (Initial Proposals document) formed the next stage in the preparation of the new Local Plan. Councillor B Maney called for a new recommendation to be added to formulate a working group of members and officers.

The following points were raised:

Councillor Watson noted she was not in favour of the proposals in their current state but recognised there needed to be a starting point. That members, residents, businesses, and stakeholders should all have the opportunity to be involved in the consultation to enable them to raise their concerns and to add comments. Confirmed she would be supporting the engagement side but not the proposals in their current state.

Councillor Shinnick stated she would not be endorsing the proposals as set out in the report but confirmed she agreed that the proposals be shared with residents and relevant stakeholders to allow them the opportunity to comment.

Councillor Kerin stated he would vote for the recommendations this evening but not as an endorsement of the proposals in their current state and agreed with members on the need for the consultation.

Councillor Redsell would be voting in favour of the recommendations and the consultation and stated if the plan did not go through, a local plan would be forced upon the council by the Government.

Councillor P Arnold agreed there needed to be a clear direction for the residents of Thurrock and for them to be involved in the consultation. Thurrock needed a local plan in place to stop developers carving up the borough.

Councillor Carter stated tonight was the opportunity to take the first step in writing the future of Thurrock and agreed the urgency and the need for the consultation for all to have their say.

Councillor Allen stated he doubted the council would be able to deliver a local plan that would work for the majority of Thurrock residents and not profit developers and would not be voting in favour of the recommendations this evening. He also raised concerns on the delivery of social and affordable accommodation.

Councillor J Maney stated that by doing nothing would be a developers charter and would be supporting the recommendations this evening as it was vital to hear the views of residents as part of the consultation. She also stated that if the consultation processes were not voted on, the council would have to adopt a plan that would be forced upon Thurrock.

Councillor Pearce stated she would be supporting the recommendations but not without reservation and agreed that public options for future developments within the borough were required and this local plan allowed that.

Councillor Massey stated he would not be supporting the recommendations. He stated some of the detail in the plans were wrong, making reference that the plans highlighted that East Tilbury and Linford still had a bus service and

the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, of which a decision had not yet been decided. To allow the consultation to take place when the detail was incorrect or in regards to the Lower Thames Crossing may not take place, was not right.

Councillor Thandi stated he would be supporting the recommendations as this would allow the council to decide on where housing growth was delivered.

Councillor Polley welcomed the consultation to enable all residents to have their say and the additional recommendation to form a working group, this was an opportunity for all residents. She stated the plan should not just be about a housing number, a target set by Government to deliver a certain number of dwellings. She stated there needed to be a master plan and that an infrastructure needs assessment required to be undertaken.

Councillor Speight recognised the importance of the local plan to the borough and that a focused planning process was a must, highlighted the importance of undertaking a branch review of the council's planning system was vital. Had concerns that too much was trying to be undertaken in this one process. He raised the following caveats that he hoped could be incorporated: the formatting of an overarching strategic needs document; a reason needed to be provided on why there was such a rush to meet the obligations of the Regulation 18 and to recognise the strategic partners going forward.

Councillor Jefferies stated this was not only an opportunity for the residents to have their say on the future of the borough but to also show residents that the council had learnt lessons from the past and would not be repeating them. To build a better future for Thurrock it was now time to listen to residents, to be honest with them that this stage of the local plan was a consultation. He concluded that by voting this evening to go out to consultation would be voting for a brighter future for Thurrock, decided on by residents for residents and urged all members to vote in favour of regulation 18.

Councillor Gledhill welcomed the report and agreed the consultation was vital to ensure all had their say. Noted the local plan was not just about housing and raised concerns on the development of industrial estates into the borough and there had been no specific details captured in the report on employment nor freight rail transport and lorry parks.

Councillor Sammons agreed on the consultation for residents to have their say but would not be voting in favour of the recommendations.

Councillor Manwa commented on the element of deliverability of the plan and hoped that in the 10, 20, 30 years residents could look back and see the plan being implemented. She questioned what was in plan that had a chance of being implemented and achieved and whether an assessment of feasibility had been undertaken. She stated the plan should concentrate on infrastructural elements as well as housing.

Councillor Johnson echoed comments made that it was important to give residents, partners, and stakeholders the opportunity to have their say as part of the consultation but to be mindful that planning by appeal was very possible if the local plan did not progress.

Councillor Spillman stated there were some incredible commitments within the plan but raised his concern that there had been no proper scrutiny of the documents that would be sent out for consultation and believed this document had not been finalised and not ready to be sent out. He continued to state that concepts and key themes within the document needed more clarification, which could cause confusion for those being asked to undertake the consultation.

Councillor Halden thanked Councillor B Maney for his engagement on the process, the former portfolio holder for the work he had undertaken on the progression of the local plan and thanked Councillor Spillman for the effective scrutiny undertaken. He confirmed he would be voting in favour this evening, but it had to be made clear what the consultation should be achieving. This was an opportunity to consult and listen to partners and stakeholders with a specific commitment from them on their intentions for the borough going forward.

Councillor B Maney summed up by thanking members for the debate this evening, respected all the valid comments made and recognised all had been founded on genuine comments or genuine aspirations. He reiterated this was not a plan but initial proposals and recognised this was not a perfect local plan and it would always be subject to change. Stated the local plan was a suite of documents which needed to come together to deliver the needs of the borough. Agreed that the working group needed to include businesses and those key stakeholders. He concluded that members now need to take a lead and to make collective decisions.

Councillor Watson requested that recommendation 1.4 be amended to ensure the group was a cross party working group and be politically balanced.

The Mayor called a vote on the recommendations:

Recommendation 1.1 to note the contents of the Thurrock Local Plan: Initial Proposals document (Regulation 18) (Appendix A) and approve it for public consultation was voted on unanimously. Majority of members voted in favour of this recommendation.

Recommendation 1.2 to agree that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content of the Thurrock Local Plan: Initial Proposals document (Appendix A) be delegated to the Director of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Highways. The result of the vote was that 34 members voted in favour and 5 members voted against, therefore the recommendation was carried.

Recommendation 1.3 to endorse the suggested approach to stakeholder engagement set out in the Local Plan – Regulation 18 Engagement Strategy (Appendix B). Majority of members voted in favour of this recommendation.

Recommendation 1.4 to agree the formation of a working group of members and officers to be organised by the Place Directorate to help shape the draft Local Plan document and to incorporate a cross party membership which would include all three groups presented at council. The working group to then provide updates to Council and or cabinet on its work and recommendations. Majority of members voted in favour of this recommendation.

Recommendation 1.4.1 to request that an operational report be brought back to Council on the Terms of Reference once proposed by the working group. Majority of members voted in favour of this recommendation.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. Noted the contents of the Thurrock Local Plan: Initial Proposals document (Regulation 18) (Appendix A) and approve it for public consultation.**
- 2. Agreed that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content of the Thurrock Local Plan: Initial Proposals document (Appendix A) be delegated to the Director of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Highways.**
- 3. Endorsed the suggested approach to stakeholder engagement set out in the Local Plan – Regulation 18 Engagement Strategy (Appendix B).**
- 4. Agreed the formation of a working group of members and officers to be organised by the Place Directorate to help shape the draft Local Plan document and to incorporate a cross party membership which would include all three groups presented at council. The working group to then provide updates to Council and or cabinet on its work and recommendations was voted on unanimously.**
  - 4.1 Requested that an operational report be brought back to Council on the Terms of Reference once proposed by the working group.**

A full recording of this meeting can be viewed from the following link:

[Council - Wednesday 6 December 2023, 7:00pm - Thurrock Council committee meeting webcasts \(public-i.tv\)](#)

**The meeting finished at 8.19 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)**

## QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

4 questions received from members of the public.

### 1. From Mr Perrin to Leader

On a BBC Panorama programme Cllr John Kent said, "They (the Conservatives) have borrowed huge amounts of money, hundreds of millions of pounds, which they then lent to somebody else to invest and I think they have done it in a way I think was reckless". When asked if he accepted any responsibility Cllr John Kent said, "I think every one of us, everybody who has been a member of the Council over the last six years has to have some responsibility for this. Every one of us could have done more than we did to bring this out and stop this happening. Everyone has to address it." Councillor Jefferies, do you accept your shared responsibility and could and should have done more?

### 2. From Ms Ramdenee to Councillor B Maney

The recently published Local Plan states that in East Tilbury "a new purpose-built community hub alongside enhancements/expansion to Gobions Park" will be provided, along with over 1000 new homes. What facilities will be provided in this new hub and the park that will cater to the needs of the existing 7713 residents and the proposed inhabitants of the 1000 new homes?

### 3. From Ms Byrne to Councillor B Maney

In 2021 the Grays Town Fund was awarded circa £19.9 million. Originally the Thameside Complex was mentioned in the expression of interest application, but it was not put into the final bid. What has happened to this fund?

### 4. From Ms Hattle to Councillor B Maney / Councillor Coxshall

According to the interim report provided midway through the consultation for the withdrawal of funding for subsidised bus services, the majority of residents stated that they used the bus services for health appointments, to utilise health care facilities, as well as shopping and visiting family and friends. What actions have Thurrock Council undertaken to follow up on the concerns raised during the consultation to withdraw funding for the 374, 11 and 265 with many residents using the phrase "eating or heating" to indicate the stark choice they have to make throughout their responses to losing this "socially necessary" service?

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## Petitions Update Report

Petition No.	Description	Presented (date)	Presented (at)	Submitted (by)	Status
582	Weymouth Drive, Chafford Hundred - Public CCTV Monitoring to be installed - The residents of Weymouth Drive are pleading for the local authority to install 3 or 4 CCTV cameras that are monitored by the control room which is encompassed at Thurrock Council. We want the residents of the street to be at ease and have peace of mind, especially the elderly residents. The crime rate on the street has increased in recent months, and burglaries and car thefts are taking place. With these, fully rotating camera opportunists will think twice if they see them. This is the second option as the first option of a gated community was rejected. I urge you to sign this petition so that we can have a better street and be able to live in harmony	December 2023	On-Line	Resident	In consultation with Essex Police, the council have been unable to trace any reports in the past 12 months for Weymouth Drive in relation to reports of burglary, vehicle crime (either theft from, theft of or vehicle interference) anti-social behaviour or criminal damage. Evidence would therefore not support a request from the Community Safety Partnership for either permanent or temporary mobile cameras.

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<b>31 January 2024</b>		<b>ITEM 10</b>
<b>Full Council</b>		
<b>Revised Political Balance</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> None	<b>Key Decision:</b> Not Applicable	
<b>Report of:</b> Dave Smith, Interim Chief Executive		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Not applicable		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Asmat Hussain, Interim Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer		
<b>This report is public.</b>		

## Executive Summary

This report requests the Council confirm the calculations relating to the allocation of seats on committees following the creation of the Non-Political Alliance of Independent Councillors (NPAIC).

### 1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 **That the political balance and allocation of seats, as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.**
- 1.2 **That Council note any subsequent changes to political balance on committees do not take effect by agreement of all group leaders.**

### 2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Following the notification to the Proper Officer of a new political group in November 2023, to be known as the 'Non-Political Alliance of Independent Councillors', the new political make up of the council is:

Conservatives: 25

Labour: 19

Non-Political Alliance of Independent Councillors (NPAIC): 5

- 2.2 Appendix 1 of this report shows the impact of this change on political balance. In summary NPAIC would expect to claim 9 seats across committees. This represents an increase of two seats from the 7 which the five independent councillors were entitled to previously.

2.3 NPAIC has confirmed they do not wish to claim these two extra seats and are satisfied that the current seat allocations remain as previously agreed by Full Council. NPAIC may wish to appoint to seats they currently have access to through former arrangements.

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

3.1 Political balance is calculated to show the objective division of committee seats across committees. Groups may wish to confirm alternative arrangements to seat allocation, which is known as 'manual adjustment'.

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

4.1 For transparency the Council is encouraged to have sight of any changes to political balance and agree or note them.

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

5.1 Consultation has been undertaken in respect of this report with the leaders of each of the political groups represented on the Council. Their agreement has been obtained to the calculations relating to the allocation of seats on committees and their respective nominations can be put before Council for approval.

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

6.1 Appointing members to committees in accordance with the political balance of the Council and associated allocation of seats on committees will enable the Council to properly discharge its functions.

### **7. Implications**

#### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Rosie Hurst**  
**Interim Finance Manager (27/11/23)**

There are no direct financial implications related to the change in political balance. The cost of servicing committees will be met through the existing budgets.

## 7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Gina Clarke**  
**Governance Lawyer (29/11/23)**

Under sections 15 - 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Council is under a duty to review the representation of different political groups on Committees and, as soon as practicable after such review, determine the allocation to different political groups and give effect to allocations. This is so as to ensure that the overall political composition of the Council is, as far as reasonably practicable, reflected in the appointment of Members to Committees and Sub-Committees.

This review has to be done at or as soon as practicable after the annual meeting of full Council. A review should also be done where the overall political balance of the Council changes during the course of the municipal year. Following any change in the overall political balance, the authority is required to undertake a review and consider any implications for representation on Council Committees and Sub-Committees.

Following the notification to the Proper Officer that a new political group has been constituted, a review must take place as soon as practicable where such notification is more than one month after the last review (reg. 17 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990).

If following a review it is considered that any changes need to be made to Committee and/or Sub-Committee allocations then a report needs to go to full Council setting out the recommended changes. The recommendations set out in this report comply with this requirement.

## 7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**  
**Head of Community Development (27/11/23)**

There are no direct implications for this report.

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

None.

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

- None.

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

There are the following appendices to this report:

- Appendix 1 – Revised Political Balance Calculations

### **Report Author:**

Matthew Boulter

Head of Democratic, Member and Scrutiny Services

Legal and Democratic Services

Thurrock Council  
**Proportionality**

Party Group	Committee	Size of Committee	Conservative		Labour		Non-political Alliance of Independent Councillors	Total
			Strict entitlement	Rounded Entitlement	Strict entitlement	Rounded entitlement		
Number of members			25		19		5	49
Overall proportionality			0.510204082	51.02%	0.387755102	38.78%		
Total strict entitlement			44.3877551		33.73469388			
Total rounded entitlement			44		34		78	9
Children's O&S		6	3.06	3	2.33	2	5	1
Cleaner & Greener O&S		6	3.06	3	2.33	2	5	1
Corporate O&S		6	3.06	3	2.33	2	5	1
Health O&S		6	3.06	3	2.33	2	5	1
Hidden & Extreme Harms		6	3.18	3	2.33	2	5	1
Housing O&S		6	3.06	3	2.33	2	5	1
Planning, Transport & Regeneration O&S		6	3.06	3	2.33	2	5	1
Planning		9	4.59	5	3.49	3	8	1
Licensing		15	7.65	8	5.82	6	14	1
General Services		7	3.57	4	2.71	3	7	0
Corporate Parenting		8	4.08	4	3.10	3	7	1
Standards & Audit		6	3.06	3	2.33	2	5	1
<b>Total seats</b>		<b>87</b>		45		31	76	11
Adjustments				-1		3		

Notes:

- 1 The total rounded entitlement of each party group is compared with the total number of seats allocated to that group. The allocations are then adjusted manually to ensure that the number of seats allocated to a particular group matches their
- 2 Compare total rounded entitlement of each party group (Row 7) with the total number of seats allocated to that group in Row 21. Then adjust the allocations manually to ensure that the number in Row 21 matches that in Row 7

3

4

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<b>31 January 2024</b>	<b>ITEM: 11</b>
<b>Full Council</b>	
<b>Debate on a Petition containing over 1500 verified signatures – Public Inquiry into Financial Collapse of Thurrock Council</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Not Applicable
<b>Report of:</b> Asmat Hussain, Interim Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer	
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Not Applicable	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Asmat Hussain, Interim Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer	
<b>This report is public</b>	

## Executive Summary

At Cabinet on 8 November 2023 a petition was submitted by Mr O'Rourke, a resident, relating to a public Inquiry into the financial collapse of Thurrock Council.

The petition exceeded the threshold of 1500 verified signatures and in accordance with Chapter 1, Part 2, Article 3 of the Constitution is qualified to be debated by Full Council.

### 1. Recommendation(s)

**1.1 That Full Council consider the petition and make any recommendations it feels appropriate as a response to the petition.**

### 2. Introduction and Background

#### History and Details of Petition

2.1 A petition was submitted on 8 November 2023 to Cabinet by Mr O'Rourke, a resident of Thurrock.

2.2 The following statement that accompanies the petition details the actions the petitioners wish the Council to take:

**We the residents of Thurrock demand that Thurrock Council and the Secretary of State take all the necessary action to hold a full public inquiry into the financial collapse at Thurrock Council.**

**We further request that should the inquiry find any person/s (Officer or Elected Member) guilty of negligence, the evidence gathered will be handed over to the police for criminal action, to be taken against them on behalf of the residents of Thurrock.**

- 2.3 The petition has been verified. 1697 signatures were inspected to reach the required 1500 threshold. A detailed breakdown is provided below:

Number of Signatures checked	<b>1697</b>
Number of Valid Signatures	<b>1501</b>
Number of Invalid Signatures	<b>196</b>

- 2.4 Where a petition in respect of any matter has a number of signatories equal to or greater than the 1500 verified signatures threshold set out in paragraph 7.1 of the Council's Petition Scheme it may be debated by the Council.
- 2.5 Due to reaching the required number of valid signatures, the Mayor has agreed that the petition may be debated at Full Council.

#### Procedure for Dealing with the Petition at the Meeting

- 2.6 Under the Council's petition scheme, the petition organiser will be given a period of up to five minutes to speak to the subject matter of the petition at the meeting.
- 2.7 In accordance with the rules of Full Council debate (Paragraph 7.3, Chapter 1, Part 2 – Article 3) the petition will then be discussed by Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes.
- 2.8 In accordance with paragraph 7.4, Chapter 1, Part 2 (Article 3) of the Constitution:

“the Council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. They may decide to take the action the petition requests, not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee”.

## Previous Petition

- 2.9 A similarly worded petition was submitted by Cllr Byrne at Full Council on 27 September 2023. The response to this petition, in accordance with procedures, is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' information.

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

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Council of the receipt of the petition which has attracted signatures from people who live, work or study in the Borough.

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

- 4.1 Allowing Members to debate the petition at a full council meeting complies with the requirements of the Council's adopted petition scheme.

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

- 5.1 The petition will be considered at Full Council.

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

- 6.1 The placing of the petition on the agenda for debate upholds the procedures set out in the constitution and reinforces the democratic process whereby residents are able to engage with decision-making in an informed and constructive way.

### **7. Implications**

#### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Karen Ind**  
**Interim Management Accountant**  
**(4/12/2023)**

The financial implications will depend on the nature of the decisions made by Council, and therefore at this time cannot be quantified. Once a decision, or decisions, are made then the financial impact will be assessed.

#### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Jayne Middleton-Albooye**  
**Interim Head of Legal Services (30/11/23)**

There are no particular legal implications arising from this report. The Council's petition scheme is set out in the Constitution. This petition has been accepted for debate at Full Council in accordance with paragraph 7.1 of Part 1, Chapter 2, Article 3 of the Constitution.

Paragraph 7.4 of the same section of the Constitution sets out that the Council will decide how to respond to the petition at the meeting. The Council may decide to take the action the petition requests, not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee.

### 7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**  
**Team Manager – Community Development & Equalities (22/11/23)**

There are no diversity or equality implications.

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

None.

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

None.

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

Appendix 1 - Council response to Councillor Byrne's petition – 27 September 2023.

### **Report Author:**

Matthew Boulter  
Head of Democratic, Scrutiny and Member Services  
Legal Services

**RESPONSE TO CLLR BYRNE PETITION – November 2023**

Cllr Byrne

**Independent Inquiry into the financial collapse of Thurrock Council**

In response to your petition to seek an independent Inquiry as shown above as you will be aware that the Council has already received Directions from the Secretary of State relating to, but not limited to, the financial management of the Council. As set out in the Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Directions, the context for these Directions was:

*The Department had been aware of concerns around the Authority's investment activity and external borrowing over a number of years and had been closely monitoring the current situation.*

*The Authority had incurred an exceptional level of external borrowing and is one of the most indebted and highly leveraged of all local authorities. The Authority's total external borrowing was c.£1.5bn (as at 30 June 2022), of which a significant amount (c.£0.94bn) was short term loans from other local authorities.*

*The feedback report of the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge of Thurrock Council (10 to 13 January 2022), published in July 2022, echoed the Department's concerns regarding the Council's financial strategy, and also raised a number of concerns relating to decision making processes and governance arrangements.*

*There had also been serious allegations made by third parties about the processes that had been applied to the operation of the Authority's commercial strategy, and concerns raised around the financial and commercial risks potentially facing the Authority.*

*In light of the above, and on the basis of discussions between the Department and the Authority, the Department was particularly concerned about the scale of the financial and commercial risks potentially facing the Council, and the failure of the Authority to provide assurance to Ministers and the Department on the adequacy of their actions to address the issues, considering the scale and pace of the response required.*

The Directions of September 2022 established that:

- the Council should prepare an improvement plan to the satisfaction of the Commissioners.
- a series of Council functions were to be exercised by the Commissioners. These include the Authority's functions over managing its financial resources, exercise of the statutory requirement to arrange for the proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs, and all functions associated with the strategic financial management of the Authority.

Moreover, the Secretary of State also appointed Essex County Council as best value inspector, who were required to inspect the governance, audit (internal and external), risk management, overview and scrutiny functions of the Council and consider their impact on service delivery. This being in order to assess the extent of the failure to comply with the best value duty by the Authority, beyond the management of financial resources, and to

make recommendations to mitigate the risk to service delivery that any further failure may have. That report was published on 15 June 2023 and its key findings were:

*Our inspection has found that Thurrock Council has experienced repeated failures both in the delivery of its investment strategy, and in the delivery of major infrastructure and regeneration projects. These failures have resulted in the loss of substantial sums of public money. When initially faced with these failures, members and senior officers within the Council have attempted to conceal bad news and avoid public scrutiny.*

*This pattern of failure, and the nature of the Council's response, has been enabled by dereliction in political and managerial leadership, inadequate governance arrangements and serious weaknesses in internal control.*

*The Council's lack of openness and transparency has given rise to a culture of insularity and complacency. Internal challenge has been discouraged, and external criticism and challenge have been routinely dismissed. This has undermined the Council's ability to learn from others and from its own previous mistakes. It has placed the Council in a state of 'unconscious incompetence' and has undermined its ability to secure continuous improvement. Thurrock Council has, therefore, failed to meet the 'Best Value Duty' placed on all local authorities.*

*Urgent change is required. The scale of the financial challenge now facing the Council means it is inevitable that, in addition to making extensive efficiency savings, the Council will have to undertake a significant and rapid reduction in the scope of local services. Many services, which have been relatively well funded over the past decade may, as a consequence, be equipped to do little more than the statutory minimum for the foreseeable future. Leading this transformation will be a hugely difficult task, not least because the Council does not have a good record in delivering major projects. This transformation will need to be effectively managed at both the corporate and service level if the Council is to avoid serious operational failures.*

The Council is clear in its focus to address the issues identified in these inspections and assessments and is working at pace to make the urgent changes necessary.

Regarding its financial position the Council has 4 major streams of budget reductions which are underway:

- selling £1.035bn of investments to the fullest extent possible to pay down debt and in doing so ensure the governance, project management, budgetary control etc of this programme of work is properly undertaken.
- generating over £100m of capital receipts to also pay down debt.
- reducing reliance on borrowing to fund the general fund capital programme to avoid increasing debt.
- saving £18.2m from the revenue budget for next 2 years and a further £13.65m for each of the following 3 years. This may change over time and is utilising external advisors where necessary to provide additional support and quality assurance.

Further the Best Value Inspection amounts to an independent inspection into the position and doing anything further at this stage would as a consequence add further costs for the Council with no obvious benefit.

The Council will also be benefitting shortly from the recently announced work by the FRC which will add further to the reviews undertaken.

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<b>31 January 2024</b>	<b>ITEM: 12</b>
<b>Full Council</b>	
<b>Progress on Thurrock Council’s Improvement and Recovery</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> N/A	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-Key
<b>Report of:</b> Cllr Andrew Jefferies, Leader of the Council	
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> N/A	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> N/A	
<b>This report is</b> Public	

## Executive Summary

This report provides Members with a progress update on the work to date to deliver the Council’s Improvement and Recovery Plan. This is the second report following Members’ agreement to receive quarterly updates and allow for scrutiny and constructive challenge to the delivery of the Plan and Council’s recovery overall.

The content of this report reflects that the period since the last report to Members has been focussed on the approval of an enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan as required in the updated Directions in March 2023 and the transition from the projects under the previous Plan. Future reports on progress will also consider how improvement is being made in relation to the Outcomes Framework set out in the Improvement and Recovery Plan, in order to test whether delivering the plan is making meaningful improvements.

The Council continues to face significant challenges as it recovers and responds to the Directions from the Secretary of State. As failings are addressed and improvements made, the Council will have to work at considerable pace to make the required changes to re-shape the organisation and become financially sustainable. Difficult decisions will come forward in the coming months, including agreeing a new vision for how services are delivered and setting a budget for 2024/25.

The progress reporting considered by Improvement and Recovery Board in December can be found as an appendix to this report.

## **Commissioner Comments**

Commissioners welcome this report on the progress of the intervention to Full Council.

Commissioners submitted their Third Report to the Secretary of State on 22 January 2024. Once Ministers have confirmed their plans for publishing the Report, Commissioners will provide an appropriate update to Full Council.

### **1. Recommendation(s)**

#### **1.1 That Full Council note the progress made on the Council's improvement and recovery.**

### **2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 On 2 September 2022, the then Secretary of State for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities made directions under section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999 to implement an intervention package for Thurrock Council. This package was in two parts: the first is that the Council's functions over managing its financial resources, exercise of the statutory requirement to arrange for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs, and all functions associated with the strategic financial management of the Authority would be overseen by Essex County Council (ECC), in the role of Commissioner.

2.2 Governance structures were put in place to allow the Commissioners to have oversight of these functions and carry out these functions. A Finance Recovery Board, chaired by Nicole Wood, Executive Director of Corporate Resources at ECC, was established and began meeting fortnightly from 10 October 2022 (latterly this meeting has been held monthly). The terms of reference and minutes from this and other Commissioner-led boards can be found on the intervention section of the Thurrock Council website.

2.3 From the outset of the intervention, Commissioners have worked constructively with Members and Officers to ensure proactive engagement, meaning that in practice decisions continue to be taken by the Council with Commissioners powers held in reserve and used where they deem necessary.

2.4 These directions also required the Council to produce an Improvement and Recovery Plan within three months. This plan was submitted to the Commissioners and the Department for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in December 2022, with reporting to Commissioners on urgent financial actions beforehand to the Finance Recovery Board.

2.5 To oversee the development and delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan, the Improvement and Recovery Board, chaired by Gavin Jones, Chief

Executive of ECC, was established and has met monthly since 1 November 2022. Membership of the Board includes Commissioners, the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Senior Leadership Team.

### **Expanded Directions**

- 2.6 In December 2022, the Commissioners submitted their first update to the Secretary of State, reporting on the Council's progress against the specific Directions as well as their reflections on the culture, governance and capacity.
- 2.7 Shortly after the Commissioner's report was submitted, the Best Value Inspectors also provided an update on the progress of their inspection. The update proposed an extension to the time period set out in the appointment to allow the inspection to look into wider areas than the original scope, however the inspectors were able to make some recommendations to the Secretary of State at that point.
- 2.8 These reports were published by DLUHC on 24 January 2023 alongside the Ministerial response to them, which outlined that the Secretary of State was 'minded-to' expand the Directions in order to:
- transfer further powers to Commissioners in areas such as governance, the way the Council delivers services and the senior structure of the Council.
  - require the Council to produce an enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan to go further into particular areas.
  - appoint a Managing Director Commissioner in order to strengthen the intervention model, and to support the Authority's capacity to deliver against its improvement plan.
- 2.9 After considering all representations made, the Secretary of State confirmed the expanded recommendations and appointment of Dr Dave Smith as Managing Director Commissioner on 16 March 2023, effectively replacing the original directions from 2 September 2022.
- 2.10 Following the publication of the Commissioners' Second Report on 5 October 2023, the Minister announced that Essex County Council would exit its role as Commissioner, given that the first phase of the intervention has concluded with the publication of the Commissioners' second report.
- 2.11 For the next phase of the intervention, Gavin Jones and Nicole Wood are appointed as Lead Commissioner and Finance Commissioner respectively, continuing their existing roles in the intervention, but on an individual basis rather than on behalf of Essex Country Council.

### **Updating the Improvement and Recovery Plan**

2.12 As set out in the March 2023 Directions, the Improvement and Recovery Plan needed to be enhanced to cover the additional areas highlighted by the Secretary of State. Following a period of extensive Officer and Member engagement, the Plan was approved by Full Council on 25 October 2023.

2.13 This plan builds on the work already underway and recognised by the Minister in his letter on 5 October. By focussing on three priorities of improving leadership to accelerate change, improving governance and controls and improving financial sustainability, this plan sets out a path for the Council to meet its Best Value Duty.

2.14 Below is further detail on each aspect of the Plan.

Priorities	Workstreams	Aims	Objectives
Improving Leadership to Accelerate Change	Leading with purpose and direction	We will have a published Corporate Plan and a revised operating model for service delivery, that is developed in partnership by Members and officers. This workstream will refocus our efforts and actions on being exemplary and visible place leaders for the communities we serve.	A long-term purpose and direction for the Council
			Develop a medium-term Corporate Plan that continues the change and improvement programme of the Council.
			Strategy-led business planning
	Building our corporate capability	We will have a new operating model that positions the Council as enabling the most effective and efficient delivery of public services within the resources available. We will redesign our organisation and have a corporate structure agreed and mobilised that has the right people in the right jobs to make a significant personal and corporate contribution to change.	Develop, consult and approve a new operating model for the Council
Redesign and restructure the Council			
Stand-up a Programme and Project Management Office			
Improving Governance and Controls	Establishing the foundations for governance excellence	We will have in place the policies and practice required to demonstrate strong governance. We will ensure that our policies are compliant and provide a solid foundation for the efficient and effective delivery of corporate and service priorities.	Review and refresh all of our governing policies
			Build a capable and effective scrutiny function
			Undertake a governance review for all external companies or partnership bodies that the Council has an interest in
	Creating an exemplary control environment	We will have in place processes, protocols and a culture of accountability, that positions the Council as having a highly effective control	Create a Council-wide strong risk managed operating environment

Priorities	Workstreams	Aims	Objectives
		environment. Members and Senior Leaders will collaborate to develop and implement an approach to the management of risk, including ensuring officers are empowered to deliver corporate objectives within a clearly articulated scheme of delegation. Through our control environment we will be accountable and transparent internally and externally for our actions.	The Council's assurance and audit functions are re-set
			Proportionate processes that maximise transparency and accountability are developed
Improving Financial Sustainability	Divestment of the Council's investments	We will have significantly reduced the debt of the Council and reduced the budget financing debt charges to secure a more stable financial position in the longer term to mitigate future risks.	Dispose of investments
	Improving our stability through budgetary savings and maximisation of income	We will have implemented a range of actions to demonstrate significant savings, reductions in the capital programme, generation of capital receipts - all of which will lead to the significant reduction in general fund borrowing – as well as maximisation of income to pay down a proportion of our debt and ensure that service and programme spending delivers the highest level of service and outcomes within the constrained resources available. Spending controls as a result of the Section 114 notice have also supported in delivering this objective.	Through implementing a savings programme, alongside a programme to maximise income over each of the next five years and beyond, the Council's budget moves towards achieving a balanced position.
			Detailed plan to generate capital receipts
			Develop a Capital Programme which leads to General Fund borrowing which is significantly smaller and aligned to the Corporate Plan.
	Improving our financial management capability and practice	We will have a fit for purpose finance function that demonstrates exemplary leadership and management, implements robust financial controls, and champions effective scrutiny and reporting to enable clear accountability, risk management and compliance with statutory requirements and accounting standards. That there is strong and appropriate financial capability for leaders, budget holders and members enabling them to fulfil their own fiduciary duties and engage meaningfully in scrutiny and challenge.	Demonstrate exemplary corporate financial leadership
			Redesign and restructure the Council's financial service
Corporate Financial Capability			

### **3. Challenges and Recovery Progress to date**

3.1 While progress is being made, the Council continues to face challenges and difficult decisions, including:

- Maintaining and where necessary enhancing the scale and pace of change – as well as securing the capacity, capability and appropriate external support to deliver.
- Decisions on how services are provided, linked to a different vision for the role the Council has in the community.
- Decisions related to setting a budget for 2024/25, including savings and the impact on service levels.
- Embedding a new Senior Leadership Team.
- Making significant progress to improve the Council's control environment of audit, risk management etc.
- Continuing to take steps to improve relationships and engagement between Officers and Members as well as between Members and Members.
- Meaningful and lasting culture change takes time to be delivered and embedded.

3.2 The Council is actively monitoring of these challenges and putting measures in place to minimise their impact on the Council's improvement. This includes taking a programme management approach to organisational change, as well as continually improving how we communicate and engage internally and externally.

3.3 Appended to this report is the progress update information considered by the Improvement and Recovery Board in December. This provides an overall position of each priority and project, with a specific focus on the milestones and risks associated to ensure Commissioners and Members have visibility of what could impact on the Council's improvement and what is being done to mitigate those risks. The minutes of the Commissioner-led boards can also be found on the Council's website.

#### **Improving Leadership to Accelerate Change**

3.4 Achievements and progress since last report:

- Working groups established to further develop the new operating model workstreams: Locality; Corporate Services; Communications and Engagement; Commissioning; Change Management.
- Locality model kick-off workshop completed in December.
- Engagement with Leadership Group and Managers Conference on Operating Model
- Work started to develop a multi-year Corporate Plan.
- Interim measures put in place to report on the performance of Council services.

- Appointments made to Assistant Chief Executive, Executive Director of Corporate Resources (Monitoring Officer) and Executive Director of Place roles.
- Recruitment of Assistant Director posts commenced.
- Programme Director for overall Change programme onboard to add capacity and capability to delivery.
- Technical Change Management Training sessions held for Managers & Leaders to build internal change management capability.
- Change & resilience support training delivered to workforce.
- Change Community resource developed and accessible via Oracle.

### 3.5 Sector and External Support:

- **Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC)** – supporting the work of the Change Team to develop a new operating model, savings and development of the Programme and Project Management Office.

### 3.6 Issues and Risks:

- Deliverability of new operating model – primary focus of this workstream has been to work with the organisation and PwC to develop the new operating model. Capacity and capability will be required to deliver the model to the scale and pace required.
- Recruitment to Chief Finance Officer position and Assistant Director roles.
- Communications – ongoing openness and transparency in external and internal communications.

## Improving Governance and Controls

### 3.7 Achievements and progress since last report:

- Mazars on board to provide capacity and support to the internal audit function.
- New arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny committees and Standards and Audit Committee considered by Governance Recovery Board ahead of engagement Members more widely.
- Member mentoring has commenced or has been offered to all political leaders.
- Report writing training delivered to senior officers.
- New report writing guidance and template developed.
- Draft Financial Regulations updates to the Council's constitution produced, including Contract Procedure Rules.
- The Consolidated Full Business Case for the Thames Freeport has been submitted to DLUHC.
- New Risk Management Strategy & Framework developed and taken to Standards & Audit Committee
- Bespoke risk management training for Standards & Audit Committee members and generic overview training for all members
- LGA commissioned to deliver awareness raising training on the role of Audit and to provide tailored development of Standards & Audit Committee members.

- Detailed reviews of Regeneration Projects (highlighted in BVI) undertaken and reported to O&S and Cabinet with next steps agreed.
- LGA Planning Advisory Service Peer Review of Planning Service undertaken.
- Local Plan Initial Options Proposals (Reg 18) Consultation approved by Council.

### 3.8 Sector and external support:

- **Local Government Association (LGA)** – in addition to the core offer to the Council as a member of the LGA, a package of support has been proposed including communications support, Member mentoring, Member training including the Leadership Academy, Member and Officer development, the review of the constitution, and audit reviews and refresh.
- **Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS)** – leading on the review of the overview and scrutiny function of the Council and supplementing the related aspect of the LGA support.
- **Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)** – conducted the review of Council-owned companies, Constitution Review, Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules.

### 3.9 Issues and Risks:

- Securing the appropriate resource to support the full review of the constitution.

## **Improving Financial Sustainability**

### 3.10 Achievements and progress since last report:

- Very good progress on the divestments workstreams - the Council aiming to have divested or have underway over 90% of its Council's investment portfolio by 31 March 2024.
- Finance function review and restructure complete and recruitment commenced.
- Review of HRA recharges conducted by CIPFA found no significant issues relating to the HRA ring-fence and made recommendations where improvements could be made.
- Investment Advisory Panel has been established and met.
- 2023/24 savings business cases and CEIAs considered by Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet, and programme of communications and engagement commenced.
- Treasury Strategy, Capital Programme, HRA Business Plan and Revenue Budget proposals developed for Commissioners and Members to consider through the budget setting process.
- MRP has been reviewed and a series of improvements set up for action.
- Properties currently being marketed with estimated anticipated sale receipts of c.£56million.



3.11 Sector and External Support:

- **CIPFA** – conducted a review of HRA recharges, support to the Divestment Strategy
- **Avison Young** – providing independent valuations of the Council’s assets.
- **PwC** – working with the Change Team, provided cross-cutting savings outline business cases to the value of £5.6million for 2024/25 as part of the direction to reshape the Council in order to become financial sustainable.

3.12 Issues and Risks:

- The ability to meet the savings targets and agree a balanced budget for 2024/25.
- Market factors impacting on the ability to gain capital receipts from asset disposals.

**4. Outcomes Framework**

4.1 As part of producing the enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan, an Outcomes Framework was developed in order to test whether the delivery of the plan has changed things in a meaningful way.

4.2 The 12 key outcomes are listed below and will be used by the Council to consider whether the changes made have led to tangible improvements. This will also form the basis of how progress is reported to both Members and Commissioners.

Improvement in the quality of decision making	Improvement in value for money	Improvement in corporate capability	Improvement in policy and practice through the use of external expertise
Improvement in collaboration between officers and between Members and officers	Improvement in responsiveness to poor performance	Improvement in risk management	Improvement in assurance and audit
Improvement in the transparency of performance information	Improvement in Member and officer confidence	Improvement in public and partner confidence in the Council	Improvement in responsiveness to the public

4.3 As this is a new element of how we measure progress, over the coming months we will assess the starting point / baseline for where the Council is against each outcome so that we can measure what improvement has been made, including using the independent methods as set out in the Plan.

## **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 5.1 This is the second report updating Full Council on progress towards the Council's improvement and recovery.

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

- 6.1 This report was considered by Cabinet on 10 January 2024, where it was agreed to refer to Full Council for consideration.

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

- 7.1 There are no direct impacts as a result of this report.

## **8. Implications**

### **8.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Karen Ind**  
**Management Account**

Revenue budget has been set aside for two years as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to fund the additional resource required to support the delivery of the Enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan. This resource and capacity will enable the Council to move towards financial sustainability by the delivery of long-term savings, maximising income, demonstrating value for money, divestment of the Council's investments and review of the Capital Programme. It will also allow the Council to improve the governance and controls and implement the culture change required by the organisation. Grant funding and external support, where available, will be used to fund delivery.

### **8.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Jayne Middleton-Albooye**  
**Interim Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer**

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation in this update report.

### **8.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**  
**Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer**

There are no direct diversity and equality implications from the recommendations in this progress update report.

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

There are no direct significant implications from the recommendations in this progress update report.

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

- Documents relating to the intervention in Thurrock Council, DLUHC - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/intervention-at-thurrock-council>
- Progress on Thurrock Council's Improvement and Recovery, Full Council 27 September 2023 - <https://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=134&MID=6348#AI17934>
- Improvement and Recovery Plan (approval of the enhanced plan), Full Council 25 October 2023 - <https://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=134&MID=6349#AI19348>

**10. Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Progress Reporting to Improvement and Recovery Board for December

**Report Author:**

Luke Tyson

Chief Intervention Officer

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# Improvement and Recovery Plan Report to Improvement and Recovery Board

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18 December 2023

# Improving Leadership to Accelerate Change

## Priority Theme

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Initiative	Start & End Dates	Current Phase	RAG Status		Overall Status Commentary
			Overall	Plan	
Building Corporate Capability	Nov-23 Apr-26	01. Concept			<p>The overall project is in concept phase following publishing of the Council's enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) at Council on 25 October 2023. The IRB report articulated the objectives of this project and how its expected outcomes will contribute to the achievement of the Council's strategic priority of Improving Leadership to Accelerate Change.</p> <p>This is the first status report for the Building Corporate Capability project which incorporates a new project to stand up a Programme and Project Management Office (PPMO) along with relevant previous Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) projects, namely Organisational Design, Leadership and Operating Model, which have been mapped to Implementing a New Operating Model and Redesign and Restructure of the Council.</p> <p>Standing up a Programme and Project Management Office is progressing the recruitment of project officers and resourcing. It is the more straightforward workstream of this project, which when established and embedded will support improved delivery of the Council's change programme and contribute to mitigation of change management issues and risks. Redesign and Restructure of the Council is in concept with senior leadership recruitment progressing and the wider organisational design will be informed and shaped by the new Operating Model design and as such will only be progressed once the Operating Model solution design has been progressed further. The New Operating Model is wide in scope and complex and will require scoping work to be undertaken and resourcing to support stakeholder analysis and project management.</p>
Leading vision and direction	Nov-23 Apr-25	03. Design			<p>This is the first status report for the Leading a new vision and direction project which incorporates relevant projects from the previous IRP. The project is in design phase. The IRP clearly articulated the objectives of this project and how its expected outcomes will contribute to the achievement of the Council's strategic priority of Improving leadership to accelerate change.</p> <p>A delivery plan has been drafted incorporating key milestones for the development of a long-term purpose and direction for the Council, the Council's Corporate Plan and its Performance Management and Assurance Framework (PMAF) and strategy led business planning approach. Milestones for the projects are aligned to Council and senior leadership meetings to ensure necessary approvals are obtained and effective engagement is undertaken throughout. The project will take a phased delivery approach due to the interdependency of work packages in each workstream and timescales involved in recruiting to the remaining vacancies within the new senior management structure.</p>

# Milestones

Priority / Programme	Workstream / Project	Objective / Service Business Case	Milestone	2023/24					2024/25														
				Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar			
Page 58 Improving Leadership to Accelerate Change	Leading with purpose and direction	A long-term purpose and direction for the Council	See "Corp Plan" milestones below																				
		Develop a medium-term Corporate Plan that continues the change and improvement programme of the Council.	Set up Core Project Team and agree scope with CEX/MDC 13/11/23		Completed																		
			Corp Plan: Initiation and Early Discovery 25/11/23		Completed																		
			Corp Plan: Detailed Investigation and Draft Plan Phase 12/01/24				On-track																
			Corp Plan: Presentation of initial draft (pre-engagement) 27/01/24				On-track																
			Corp Plan amendments reflecting on engagement feedback 02/02/24					On-track															
			Corp Plan: Operating Model - (eg centralisation of PMAF related disciplines) 30/04/24							On-track													
			Corp Plan agreed at Council									On-track											
			PMAF: Deep dive presentation to IRB - Agree Phases 27/11/23		Completed																		
			PMAF: Present proposed interim scorecard to IRB for agreement 27/11/23		Completed																		
			PMAF: First report of indicators including data and narrative to IRB (Q2) 18/12/23			On-track																	
			PMAF: IRB receive Q3 corporate performance scorecard report 19/02/24				On-track																
			PMAF: Consider for agreement draft PMAF Core Document by SLT / IRB 31/03/24					On-track															
			PMAF: IRB receive Q4 corporate performance scorecard report 18/06/24										On-track										
			PMAF: Corp O&S receive Q4EoY corporate performance scorecard report 31/07/24											On-track									
			PMAF: Sign off PMAF at Corporate O&S / Cabinet 31/07/24												On-track								
			PMAF: Phase 2: Stakeholder Engagement 31/01/24				On-track																
			PMAF: Phase 2: Development of Annual Business Planning Cycle 30/06/24											On-track									
			PMAF: Phase 3: First Corporate Performance Report using PMAF for Q1 reporting to members 30/09/24													On-track							
	Strategy-led business planning		PMAF: Phase 2: Development of Annual Business Planning Cycle 30/06/24											On-track									
	Building our corporate capability	Develop, consult and approve a new operating model for the Council	Workstream Lead resource requirements identified		Completed																		
			Workstreams leads kick off meeting		Completed	On-track																	
			Roadmap for implementation drafted				On-track																
			Directorate locality Operating Models developed							On-track													
			Policy approval through Corporate Plan									On-track											
		Redesign and restructure the Council	Council Structure: Leadership & Management Behaviour Sets 01/12/23		Missed																		
			Council Structure: Leadership diagnostics			On-track																	
			Senior Leadership Recruitment in post 28/02/24				On-track																
			Leadership & Management Framework Refreshed 30/04/24							On-track													
			Leadership & Management Framework socialised 01/07/24											On-track									
			Council Structure: Leadership & Management Skills Analysis – Revised L&D Offering - 30/11/24																	On-track			
		Stand-up a Programme and Project Management Office (PPMO)	Governance Handbook including PPMO design documented and socialised (ongoing)		Completed	On-track																	
			Power BI launched as reporting tool to Change Board 06/12/23			On-track	On-track																
			Recruitment & Resourcing PPMO Completed 29/02/23					On-track															
			Project Officers assigned to Theme Boards 01/03/24							On-track													
			PPMO resources. Including: MS 365, Governance Handbook, Project book, Power BI reporting etc							On-track													
			Project Close PPMO Established 31/03/24							On-track													

■ Completed     
 ■ On-track     
 ■ Missed



# Aggregated Risk Matrix (open items only)

Impact

4 - Catastrophic  
3 - Significant  
2 - Minor  
1 - Insignificant

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(LFC 002) - IR-003 Availability of project resource</li> <li>(LFC 002) - IR-006 Corporate Plan signoff delay</li> <li>(LFC 002) - IR-011 Not achieving cross-party consensus impacting CP sign off</li> <li>(LFC 003) - IR-011 Budget constraints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(LFC 003) - IR-001 Resourcing</li> </ul>	<p><b>KEY:</b>                  Projects                  LFC 002 – Leading a New Vision and Direction                  LFC 003 – Building Corporate Capability</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(LFC 002) - IR-008 Tight timeline for Corporate Plan</li> <li>(LFC 003) - IR-003 Optimising productivity of the PPMO</li> <li>(LFC 003) - IR-005 Enough service based resource to support delivery of the change programme</li> <li>(LFC 003) - IR-012 HR Policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(LFC 003) - IR-002 Noncompliance to Governance Handbook</li> <li>(LFC 003) - IR-007 Leadership capability gaps</li> <li>(LFC 003) - IR-008 Lack of available specialist technical skill/experience within the organisation</li> <li>(LFC 003) - IR-009 Change legacy - failure to recognise impact</li> <li>(LFC 003) - IR-013 Capacity and capability deficit due to staff attrition</li> <li>(LFC 003) - IR-014 Org. ill equipped to successfully deliver change</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(LFC 002) - IR-005 Personnel and process changes due to restructures (eg Finance restructure)</li> </ul>	

1 - Unlikely

2 - Possible

3 - Probable

4 - Extremely Likely or Definite

Probability

Project	Ref	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Building Corporate Capability	IR-001	Standing Up a PPMO	<b>Resourcing:</b> Unable to attract suitable project officer/manager candidates, then there is a risk of shortfall in available skilled resource to meet the demands of the Change Programme. The potential result is the Council will fail to meet its priority improvement objectives as planned	Gary Staples	12	<b>Treat:</b> Revisit the job description, readvertise the role and expand advertising channels to include social media	29/11/23 Post to be readvertised by 01/12/23 Snr PO role JD being developed	Gary Staples	29-Feb-24	
Building Corporate Capability	IR-002	Standing Up a PPMO	<b>Noncompliance to Governance Handbook:</b> Lack of awareness & engagement of the Governance Handbook, then there is a risk of noncompliance with agreed governance protocols. The potential result is lack of improvement in corporate capability to apply programme and project management governance principles	CPT	9	<b>Treat:</b> Communication strategy	29/11/23 Meeting set up to plan PMO launch	Gary Staples	31-Mar-24	

Project Ref	Ref	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Building Corporate Capability	IR-007	Redesign and restructure the Council	<p><b>Leadership capability gaps:</b> A lack of leadership/management change skill and experience to a requisite standard to support and lead delivery of the IRP actions and their service/teams through the transformation</p> <p>Impact: uncoordinated and inconsistent standard in the delivery of change/IRP activities, Leaders /Managers fail to recognise the impacts of change on their teams, staff feel unsupported and disengaged leading to a lack of understanding and desire to support the change (increased resistance)</p>	Tina Dempsey	9	<p><b>Treat:</b> Leadership and Mangement Development Modules delivered as a priority, specific focus on change management and critical skills. Development sessions also incorporated into Leadership Group and Mangers Conference</p>	<p><b>29/11</b> Additional Technical Change Mgt training sessions held Oct/Nov/Dec; twice monthly sessions scheduled for 2024 to support leaders technical change management capability.</p> <p><b>25/09</b> good attendance at change training sessions. Change Community resource developed and socialised</p> <p><b>22/08</b> Additional Change Mgt sessions scheduled Aug - Nov, awaiting outcomes of PwC skills gaps. Leadership Group development session 12th Sept</p> <p><b>28/07</b> SLT development programme work progressing ready for delivery Autumn 2023. Change Management sessions delivered July, excellent feedback and additional sessions scheduled Aug/Sept/Oct. Behaviours diagnostic carried out 3 x Managers Conference to inform L&amp;M framework, further workshops scheduled Aug/Sept/Oct to progress the L&amp;M Framework indicators.</p> <p><b>28/06/23</b> SLT development programme in development. Leading Change training scheduled early July for managers/leaders. Managers Conference x 3 scheduled for mid-July - development session. Leadership Group development sessions scheduled Sept 2023</p> <p>Change Team creation to support the consistent delivery of intervention projects and activities. Change Team will ensure change impacts are recognised and action taken to mitigate.</p> <p><b>05/05</b> "Change Management for Leaders" content under development (May), &amp; date to be scheduled for Leadership Group development session.</p> <p><b>05/05</b> Schedule for development sessions for wider audience under development (May), dates to be released once content is fully developed.</p>	Tina Dempsey	01-Apr-24	A

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Project Ref	Ref	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Building Corporate Capability	IR-008	Redesign and restructure the Council	<p><b>Lack of available specialist technical skill/experience within the organisation:</b>                      Significant critical skills deficit within Culture and Leadership Workstream. A lack of available specialist technical skill/experience within the organisation ( Org Development/Design and Change SMEs or practitioners, trained facilitators etc) required to inform and support delivery of the workstream activities.                      Impact: lack of critical specialist skills required to support successful design and development of Theme activities will constrain and delay progress of theme activities development and delivery, theme success outcomes and performance standards are not achieved</p>	Tina Dempsey	9	<p><b>Treat:</b>                      Implementation of the resourcing and capacity plan. Proactive recruitment of additional skills/capacity. Identification of internal talent who can be developed swiftly to fulfil skills gaps</p>	<p><b>28/06/23</b> 3 x OD/Change leads now recruited and progressing work within the L&amp;C Theme. OD Manager working with OD/Change Leads to direct and deliver. Creation of The Change Team will allow for additional resources to be directed to specific L&amp;C Theme activities                      The Programme Director for change is starting Monday 5 December                      Specialist OD resources aligned to the project in place.</p>	Tina Dempsey	01-Apr-24	A





Project Ref	Ref	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Building Corporate Capability	IR-009	Redesign and restructure the Council	<p><b>Change legacy - failure to recognise impact:</b> Historically Thurrock does not implement projects and adopt change successfully Impact: the legacy of this will engender attitudes of apathy and lack of trust and motivation to engage with and support the transformation. Uncoordinated and inconsistent standard in the delivery of change/IRP activities, Leaders /Managers fail to recognise the impacts of change on their teams, staff feel unsupported and disengaged leading to a lack of understanding and desire to support the change (increased resistance)</p>	Tina Dempsey	9	<p><b>Treat:</b> Technical Change Management Training developed and delivered to the Change Team members and HR BPS, to build awareness and understanding using a structured process to deliver change activities. A Change Toolkit designed a Leaders and Managers support to guide through key change activities aligned with the PM methodology. Sessions to support staff going through change delivered through to March 2024 to build capability to deal with the change at Thurrock.</p>	<p><b>29/11</b> Technical Change Mgt sessions scheduled twice monthly. for 2024. Practical application of change management activities for live projects sessions scheduled for 2024. Continued managing change sessions delivered by L&amp;D for 2024. Change Leads assigned to specific projects for IRP to support managers delivering change and to support identification &amp; management of staff impacts of change. <b>25/09</b> As below training sessions, Change Community support resources now available through Oracle <b>22/08</b> Additional Change Mgt sessions running Aug - Nov to build leadership &amp; management capability <b>28/07</b> Change Management sessions delivered July, excellent feedback and additional sessions scheduled Aug/Sept/Oct. <b>05/07</b> Technical Change Management Training developed and delivered to the Change Team members and HR BPS, to build awareness and understanding using a structured process to deliver change activities (July/Aug 2023). The Change Toolkit designed a Leaders and Managers support to guide through key change activities aligned with the PM methodology live July 2023. Sessions to support staff going through change delivered from July 2023 through to March 2024 to build capability to deal with the change at Thurrock.</p>	Tina Dempsey	01-Apr-24	A

Project Ref	Ref	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Building Corporate Capability	IR-013	Redesign and restructure the Council	<p><b>Capacity and capability deficit due to staff attrition:</b>                      Due to the significant changes within the organisation, there is an increase in voluntary resignation and the additional voluntary and compulsory redundancy following the outcomes of the budget saving work over the next 3 years and the Thurrock improvement plan creating a reduction in capacity and capability. This in likelihood will lead to reduced core skills and experience for the delivery of BAU activity currently and the key skills required for the future new ways of working.                      Inherent in any significant change is the disengagement of a percentage of staff with the process and the outcomes of the required changes to their behaviours and ways of working and therefore a reduction in staff engagement, commitment and morale.</p>	Tina Dempsey	9	<p><b>Treat:</b>                      Robust business case validation                      Recruitment and resourcing of appropriately skilled expertise                      Extensive staff engagement and communication</p>	<p><b>29/11/23</b>                      Actions to date include:                      Technical Change Management training for leaders &amp; managers to build internal change capability delivered                      Change support training (3 hrs sessions) for all staff and managers delivered                      Managers Conferences x 3 – engagement on required new behaviours to support change delivery                      Engagement with Leadership on required new behaviours to support change delivery                      Managers Conferences x 3 – engagement on the high-level proposals for the operating model</p>	Tina Dempsey	01-Apr-24	A

Project Ref	Ref	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Building Corporate Capability	IR-014	Operating Model/ Standing up a PPMO	<p><b>Org. ill equipped to successfully deliver change:</b>                      Organisation not equipped with capacity/capability to deliver change successfully</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of forward planning and structured approach for key change projects (e.g. Operating Model)</li> <li>-Change legacy</li> <li>-Lack of change management capability &amp; capacity</li> <li>-Lack of structured approach to change management delivery</li> </ul>	Tina Dempsey	9	<p><b>Treat:</b>                      Operating mode workstreams formed – planned work approach beginning Dec 23. Realistic resourcing and scheduling approach to improve sustainable implementation and embedding. Leaders and managers engagement sessions ongoing to facilitate understanding and co-design.                      As a key enabler of the IRP's delivery and success a Change Team has been stood up, aligned with the new PPMO and key deliverers to influence feasibility, change readiness and adoption. The objective to build internal change capability and capacity aims to ensure that change is planned and supported successfully.                      Change management support and training is made available to all staff with the aim to build capability for managing change. Leaders and managers are offered targeted technical change management training. A change community resource is available via Oracle to support and equip staff with relevant content and tools. Additional change operating capacity will be provided through the new Programme Director who starts imminently, and ultimately the new Assistant CEX</p>	<p><b>29/11/23</b> Actions to date include:                      Change SMEs recruited                      Change Team created                      Technical Change Management training for leaders &amp; managers to build internal change capability delivered                      Change support training (3 hrs sessions) for all staff and managers delivered                      Managers Conferences x 3 – engagement on required new behaviours to support change delivery                      Engagement with Leadership on required new behaviours to support change delivery                      Managers Conferences x 3 – engagement on the high-level proposals for the operating model                      Engagement with Leadership Group on the high-level proposals for the operating model                      SME resources allocated to Operating Model Programme                      Volunteer requests for Operating Model Workstream team members                      Change Community support resources for all staff to access                      OD SME resources allocated to the new IRP Programme</p>	Sue Church	04-Apr-24	A

# Governance and Controls Priority Theme



Project	Start & End Dates	Current Phase	RAG Status		Overall Status Commentary
			Overall	Plan	
<p>An Exemplary Control Environment</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 67</p>	Jan-23 Dec-24	04. Delivery			<p>The focus has been on migrating the projects from the old IRP to the new IRP. The project workstreams are now: 'Improving RM Practice', 'Improving Audit Practice' and 'Improving Transparency &amp; Accountability'.</p> <p>The former Information Governance project has been removed and replaced with a workstream focusing on transparency. (This requires additional work). All workstreams are in delivery. The former Chief Internal Auditor has left the Council with a part time interim CIA resource being provided by Mazars pending an appointment being made as part of the Finance Restructure. Key achievements since the last theme report include:</p> <p><b>Improving Risk Management Practice</b> - 1) ROM Strategy &amp; Framework review paper taken to Standards &amp; Audit Committee on 30/10 and to SLT on 29/11. Report prepared for submission to Cabinet. 2) Work on the refresh of the Corporate Risk Register continues with a report to SLT scheduled in December (SAC in Feb 24) 3) RM training for SAC members on 30/10 and on 23/11 for all members. (Further sessions planned in December and January).</p> <p><b>Improving Audit Practice</b> - 1) Mazars senior manager acting as Interim Chief Internal Auditor, 2) Mazars on site and undertaking audit work, 3) Discussions with the LGA to agree the scope of awareness raising training of the role of Audit and tailored development of Standards &amp; Audit Committee members</p> <p><b>Improving Transparency &amp; Accountability</b> - 1) Mentor secured for the Deputy Conservative Leader, 2) New approach for delegated decisions embedded into Cabinet Report agenda items 3) Engagement approach agreed to develop quality assurance surveys of Members Enquiries</p>
Foundations for Governance Excellence	Jan-23 Dec-24	04. Delivery			<p>The focus has been on migrating the projects from the old IRP to the new IRP. The project workstreams are now: 'Improving Governance', 'Thames Freeport AB' and 'Company Governance'. As a result of the migration to the new IRP the project in respect of Thurrock Regeneration Ltd has been part moved to the Financial Sustainability Theme (asset disposal) with the governance aspects remaining to be included in a workstream to review all companies and partnerships. This needs to be scoped. Delivery is underway in respect of Improving Governance and Thames Freeport. Key achievements since the last theme report include:</p> <p><b>Improving Governance</b> - 1) Discussions held with LGA to revisit the request for support to deliver the Constitution Review and potential suppliers investigated. Financial Procedure Rules aspects of Constitution significantly advanced with formal consultation with CWG underway 2) New arrangements for O&amp;S agreed by GRB and work programming sessions scheduled for January to engage Members more widely 3) Agreement secured to split Standards &amp; Audit Committee to 2 separate committees 4) New report writing guide designed and ready for consultation, 5) New approach to minute taking launched, 6) Proposed new report writing template designed ready for consultation</p> <p><b>Freeport Accountable Body</b> – 1) Signed and submitted the Consolidated Full Business Case to the Freeport for onward submission to DLUHC 2) Raised concerns again about current governance arrangements 3) Begun process to develop retained Business Rates Strategy</p> <p><b>Company Governance</b> - Workstream content being scoped.</p>

# Milestones




Priority / Programme	Workstream / Project	Objective / Service Business Case	Milestone	2023/24					2024/25													
				Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Page 68 Improving Governance and Controls	Establishing the foundations for governance excellence	Review and refresh all of our governing policies	Report writing courses end 30/11/23	█																		
			Proposal to split SAC into 2 cttees to GRB 13/11/23	█																		
			Introduce new version control process and report tracking 31/12/23		█																	
			Commence formal review of Constitution 28/02/24				█															
			Introduce new report writing template 31/03/24					█														
			Go Live for new Standards Committee and new Audit Committee 31/05/24							█												
		Conclude formal review of Constitution 30/12/24																	█			
		Build a capable and effective scrutiny function	GRB considers draft O&S Protocol and Cttee Structure 13/11/23	█																		
			Member budget Training ends 27/11/23	█																		
			O&S Officer Interviews 06/11/23	█																		
			New O&S Officers onboarding				█															
			New O&S approach socialised to officers					█														
			Go Live for new O&S arrangements 31/05/24									█										
		Undertake a governance review for all external companies or partnership bodies that the Council has an interest in	Thames Freeport: FBC signed off 06/11/23	█																		
			Thames Freeport: Freeport OP/CO submit FBC to DLUHC 10/11/23	█																		
			Thames Freeport: Funding agreement for Freeport OP/CO drafted 30/11/23	█																		
			Thames Freeport: MOU governing Freeport operations drafted 31/12/23		█																	
			Thames Freeport: Accountable Body approves business plan 30/01/24			█																
	Thames Freeport: Thames Freeport Governing Board approves retained business rates strategy 26/01/24					█																
	Thames Freeport: Process to distribute retained business rates agreed 30/03/24									█												
	Thames Freeport: Billing authorities approved retained business rates strategy 30/03/24										█											
	Creating an exemplary control environment	Create a Council-wide strong risk managed operating environment	Risk Management Strategy, Policy and Framework to Cabinet 13/12/23		█																	
			DMT Risk Managment awareness raising sessions end 30/01/24			█																
			Refreshed Corporate Risk Register to SAC by 29/02/24				█															
			New Risk Management Team Members onboarding by 31/03/24					█														
		The Council's assurance and audit functions are re-set	Assessment report & recs to Cabinet 23/11/23	█																		
			Develop engagement & adoption approach 31/11/23	█																		
			Commence delivery of implementation plan by 31/12/23		█																	
			Commence Audit Awareness raising training			█																
		Proportionate processes that maximise transparency and accountability are developed	End use of interim Mazars resource 31/03/24							█												
Start refresh of the Member Portal 20/11/23			█																			
Conclude refresh of the Member Portal & launch 31/12/23				█																		
Develop & launch Member Enquiry Survey 31/01/24					█																	
Commence development of Member Training Schedule 08/01/24					█																	
Commence refresh of the Member Handbook 08/01/24						█																
Commence consultation on draft Member Handbook 12/02/24							█															
Conclude consultation on draft Member Handbook 15/03/24								█														
Conclude development of Member Training Schedule & launch 30/04/24									█													
Conclude refresh of the Member Handbook & launch 30/04/24										█												

█ Completed
 █ On-track
 █ Missed






# Aggregated Risk Matrix (open items only)

Impact	Probability			
	1 - Unlikely	2 - Possible	3 - Probable	4 - Extremely Likely or Definite
4 - Catastrophic		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(GC 002) - IR-004 Failure to deliver cultural change</li> <li>(GC 002) - IR-005 External perceptions of the Council's governance do not change</li> <li>(GC 002) - IR-008 Council and Freeport OpCo unable to agree Freeport Business Plan and Contract</li> <li>(GC 002) - IR-009 Council unable to resource Accountable Body Function</li> <li>(GC 002) - IR-010 Proper governance arrangements to secure delivery of Freeport Accountable Body not in place</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-004 Failure to deliver a cultural change in the practice of Risk Management</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-005 External &amp; Internal views of Council's ROM approach do not change</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-012 Failure to deliver a cultural change in the practice of Audit</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-013 Internal and External perceptions of Internal Audit do not change.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(GC 002) - IR-006 Council, Freeport and DLUHC unable to agree MOU and associated legal agreements</li> <li>(GC 002) - IR-011 Seed Capital Projects</li> <li>(GC 002) - IR-012 Retained Business Rates Strategy</li> </ul>	
3 - Significant		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(GC 002) - IR-001 Failure to recruit to key posts in the Democratic Services Team</li> <li>(GC 002) - IR-002 Inadequate levels of engagement from stakeholders</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-010 Lack of engagement from business in the Audit Improvement workstream</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-015 Member Development</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-016 Members Enquiries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(GC 002) - IR-003 Low availability of resources to support the delivery of the project</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-003 Availability of project resource</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-006 Lack of single point of storage or system for risk data</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-007 Lack of knowledge &amp; skills for Risk Management across the council</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-011 Availability of resource to support the Audit Improvement workstream</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(GC 003) - IR-001 ROM Review</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-008 Restructure of Finance Department</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-009 Recruitment to key posts in the Internal Audit Team</li> <li>(GC 003) - IR-014 Impact on the Internal Audit function as a result of the restructure of Finance Department</li> </ul>
2 - Minor		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(GC 003) - IR-002 Low level of engagement from the business in the Risk Improvement Workstream</li> </ul>		
1 - Insignificant				

KEY:  
 Projects  
 GC 002 – An Exemplary Control Environment  
 GC 003 – Foundations of Governance Excellence

Project	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Foundations of Governance Excellence	IR-011	Open	Freeport Accountable Body	<b>Seed Capital Projects:</b> Timeframe to approve and deliver Seed Capital schemes	Stephen Taylor	12	<b>Treat:</b> 1) Detailed partner engagement with Freeport OpCo and with final grant recipients	11 - Accountable Body preparing for subsidy control assessment and working with Freeport OpCo to address gaps in Outline Business Cases as they stand 10 - WSP appointed by Freeport OpCo to work with grant recipients to develop OBCs 10 - Raised reprofiling seed capital schemes with DLUHC 09 - Accountable Body feedback on initial OBCs - significant gaps in information	Stephen Taylor	30-Mar-24	
Foundations of Governance Excellence	IR-012	Open	Freeport Accountable Body	<b>Retained Business Rates Strategy:</b> Accountable Body and TFGB unable to agree Retained Business Rates Strategy and Approach	Stephen Taylor	12	<b>Treat:</b> Partner engagement initially with OpCo and then with TFGB	11 - Initial meeting on principles held by Thurrock Council and OpCo. Thurrock stressed importance of Best Value, of supporting projects that benefit Thurrock	Stephen Taylor	30-Mar-24	
Foundations of Governance Excellence	IR-006	Open	Freeport Accountable Body	<b>Council, Freeport and DLUHC unable to agree MOU and associated legal agreements:</b> Parties unable to agree legal framework for the Freeport	Stephen Taylor	12	<b>Treat:</b> 1) Partner engagement	10-11 - Issue raised in person and via email between Head of Freeport and Head of Programmes at Freeport OpCo 09 - Issue raised formally again by CEO at TFGB meeting 07 - Issue formally raised again by monitoring officer through email exchange 03 - Council concerns about existing governance arrangements issues raised with Freeport OpCo and collaboration agreement proposed	Stephen Taylor	31-Mar-24	




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Project	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-001	Open	Improving Risk Management	<b>ROM Review:</b> Capacity/Resource - Limited capacity/resource and/or competing priorities lead to project delay	Andy Owen	12	<b>Treat:</b> Development of plans (project and service level) to manage position and ongoing monitoring of developments and progress against plans.	11 - Project schedule is mapped out and being managed to target. No project slippage experienced to date	Andy Owen	31-Mar-24	
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-003	Open	Improving Risk Management	<b>Availability of project resource:</b> Limited project resource capacity and competing requests leads to a longer delivery period	Andy Owen	9	<b>Treat:</b> Recruiting additional resource funded by the programme as appropriate	11 - On track. Project schedule is being met.	Andy Owen	31-Mar-24	
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-006	Open	Improving Risk Management	<b>Lack of single point of storage or system for risk data:</b> Risk Registers - Lack of single point of storage or system for risk data, leads to inadequate & inefficient analysis, recording & reporting of risk information	Andy Owen	9	<b>Treat:</b> Management Strategy - Research and gather info on system, report findings and if agreed commission system.	11 - No action taken since last meeting. To be addressed when Risk Management function is fully established	Andy Owen	31-Mar-24	
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-007	Open	Improving Risk Management	<b>Lack of knowledge &amp; skills for Risk Management across the council:</b> Lack of knowledge & skills for RM across the council leads to limited or inconsistent application for the management of risks and non compliance with the RM strategy & framework	Andy Owen	9	<b>Treat:</b> Management Strategy - Develop and implement training programme to meets stakeholders needs and to support the delivery of the ROM strategy and framework	11 - Strategy, Policy & Framework and supporting guidance has been refreshed. Bespoke training provided to Members, SLT and directorate based senior leads. When risk function is fully established further training and support will be made available	Andy Owen	31-Mar-24	
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-008	Open	Improving Risk Management	<b>Restructure of Finance Department:</b> Restructure of Finance Dept will temporarily impact on the delivery of the risk workstream	Andy Owen	12	<b>Treat:</b> Manage (see actions)	11 - First phase of recruitment of new service management is underway	Andy Owen	31-Mar-24	

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Open Aggregated Risks by exception – both projects

Project	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-009	Open	Improving Audit Practice	<b>Recruitment to key posts in the Internal Audit Team:</b> Inability to recruit senior internal auditor posts results in capacity and capability gaps for the service	Mark Chalkley	12	<b>Treat:</b> Targeted recruitment in specialist press	11 - Mazars now embedded into team and undertaking scheduled Audit work. Mazars also providing interim CIA role 09 - High level scope shared with Mazars and contact made with the client. Fieldwork to start 6th October. Finance restructure out to consultation with increased capacity and training identified for the Internal Audit service. 08 - Mazars formally appointed. Programme of work for them to deliver has been agreed and they will commence on site work in September 07 -Most recent advert for recruitment of second post was not successful. Recruitment will continue. In the short-term, APEX Framework will now be utilised, and an interim resource to support the service has been secured from Mazars who will start in September 2023.	Mark Chalkley	31-Mar-24	A
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-011	Open	Improving Audit Practice	<b>Availability of resource to support the Audit Improvement workstream:</b> Limited project resource capacity and competing requests leads to a longer delivery period	Mark Chalkley	9	<b>Treat:</b> Recruiting additional resource funded by the programme as appropriate	11 – LGA commissioned to provide leadership and member support in respect of the role of audit as part of governance 09 - Subject to finance restructure and available resources following recruitment to vacant posts. 08 - Appointment of Mazars to undertake audit work will further enable audit team members to support the project 07 - New SIA supporting project delivery 06 - The newly appointed Senior Internal Auditor has been brought into the project to support the delivery of key activities - conducting the self assessment against national standards.	Mark Chalkley	31-Mar-24	A

Project	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-014	Open	Improving Audit Practice	Impact on the Internal Audit function as a result of the restructure of Finance Department: Changes to the structure of the Internal Audit service result in a lack of personnel to deliver the workstream	Mark Chalkley	12	<b>Treat:</b> Recruitment process in line with new structure	11 - Recruitment underway for new Head of Service and Mazars providing interim senior support. 09 - Finance restructure date extended to 6th October. 08 - Finance restructure currently out to consultation which finishes 29th September 23.	Mark Chalkley	31-Mar-24	
Foundations of Governance Excellence Page 73	IR-001	Open	Improving Governance	Failure to recruit to key posts in the Democratic Services Team Inability to recruit to scrutiny posts results in capacity and capability gaps for the service	Matt Boulter	9	<b>Treat:</b> Targeted recruitment in specialist press	11 - Successful appointment of 3 positions has taken place. Staff will start in January 2024. Challenges becoming evident with the level of support required for onboarding new members of staff 08 - Recruitment continues to be a significant challenge. Agency recruitment has not been successful. Options for secondments from the Legal Department are currently being explored. 07 - Recruitment campaign continues 06 - Failure to recruit temporary staff via agencies has led to business case to seek temporary staff through other means. Request made to LGA and CfGS for support 04-05 - Failure in permanent recruitment led to sourcing of temporary staff via agencies 09- All internal activities completed and new posts out to advert with a deadline of last quarter of October.	Matt Boulter	31-May-24	
Foundations of Governance Excellence	IR-003	Open	Improving Governance	Low availability of resources to support the delivery of the project: Limited project resource capacity and competing requests leads to a longer delivery period	Matt Boulter	9	<b>Treat:</b> Recruiting additional resource funded by the programme as appropriate	11 - Issue escalated to LGA and further meeting to discuss requirements arranged for 5/12 10- Recruitment underway. LGA chased for further support on Constitution review 08 - LGA have been approached to supply support for constitution review. Awaiting response 07 - Resource plan approved by SLT, recruitment exercise underway 07 - Specialist expertise has been brought in via CfGS to support O&S reviews and LGA scoping a proposal for Constitution review 06 - GRB requested a resource plan to be developed, to deliver a sustainable governance function, for consideration by SLT 05 - Project Manager has engaged with CIPFA & CfGS to secure additional external expertise to support delivery	Matt Boulter	31-May-24	

# Financial Sustainability Priority Theme



Initiative	Start & End Dates	Current Phase	RAG Status		Overall Status Commentary
			Overall	Plan	
Budgetary Stability	Oct-23 Apr-24	04. Delivery			The Council is currently working through four major workstreams to seek to achieve financial stability: Divestment of investments – this is progressing well with over 90% of the investments planned to be in progress or complete by March 2024. Assets sales of over £100m currently estimated, £40m in 2023/24 and £40m in 2024/25 Reducing the borrowing financing the general fund capital programme to as low as possible over a 5 year period – currently standing at circa £5m Identifying and delivering £18.2m of revenue savings in 2024.25. All identified to date – some at OBC stage
Divestment	Apr-23 Mar-24	04. Delivery			The Council continues to progress all 14 divestments supported by advisors who provide regular updates on progress with a key focus on the Toucan administration process, that is currently progressing towards a sale in November/December 2023 and Just Loans Group (JLG). Both represent a significant proportion of the total and remain on track. Work is also progressing on divesting from the other financial investments, work has commenced on the windfarm sales, where we are now focusing on agreeing the sale and the approach. The project remains and is likely to remain at an amber rating, as an act of caution. This project is unlikely to progress towards a green rating until funds have been recouped successfully. The dates provided for the milestones and tasks within the project schedule are regularly discussed, reviewed and updated accordingly as the project progresses. Amber reflects that certain activities that are outside of the Council's direct control - for example the company administration process.
Financial Management	Nov-23 Mar-24	04. Delivery			A series of matters have been and are being addressed within the Council: The Council's financial model has been and will be further reviewed The budget process – pace and quality has been considerably improved for 2024/25 The Council's MRP has been reviewed and a series of improvements set up for action The half year and full year Treasury Management reports are in preparation The Restructure was completed on 26 October 2023 and staff assimilated to their roles. The Recruitment Phase began almost immediately with the drafting of adverts. Following feedback from managers the recruitment phase was split into two phases, pre and post Christmas 2023. This is to allow for higher priority posts to be filled urgently and for a smooth handover from agency staff to permanent staff in the new year depending on the success or otherwise of the recruitment campaign. Phase 1 interviews are due to begin in week commencing 5 December 2023.



# Milestones

Priority / Programme	Workstream / Project	Objective / Service Business Case	Milestone	2023/24					2024/25												
				Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Page 70 Improving Financial Sustainability	Divestment of the Council's investments	Dispose of investments	Toucan: Planned Financial Close																		
			Wind Farms: Approval to seek market options agreed																		
			CCLA: Financial Close																		
			Preliminary assessment of tail investments																		
			90+% of investment portfolio divested (subject to Toucan, Wind Farms and CCLA coming to fruition)																		
	Improving our stability through budgetary savings and maximisation of income	Through implementing a savings programme, alongside a programme to maximise income over each of the next five years and beyond, the Council's budget moves towards achieving a balanced position.	Fees and Charges Business Cases: Overview & Scrutiny 14/02/24																		
			Savings Business Cases: Overview & Scrutiny 28/11/23																		
			Draft budget proposals: 2nd Overview and Scrutiny 14/02/24																		
			Budget proposals Cabinet 26/02/24																		
			1 year savings plan: Council approval 06/03/24																		
			Budget: Council 06/03/24																		
			New fees and charges effective																		
			Delivery of savings business cases 11 January and 8 March																		
			Delivery Risk Assessment 24/25 starts																		
			Detailed plan to generate capital receipts	Cabinet Report on Asset Disposals 13/03/24																	
	Develop a Capital Programme which leads to General Fund borrowing which is significantly smaller and aligned to the Corporate Plan.	General Fund draft Capital Programme changes at FRB																			
		General Fund Capital Programme: Overview and Scrutiny 14/02/24																			
		General Fund Capital Programme: Council approval 06/03/24																			
		DSG: DBV SEND grant application submitted																			
	Improving our financial management capability and practice	We will demonstrate exemplary corporate financial leadership	Treasury Strategy (incl. MRP), Revenue Budget (incl. DSG Plan), HRA Business Plan: Cabinet 26/2/24																		
Treasury Strategy (incl. MRP), Revenue Budget (incl. DSG Plan), HRA Business Plan: Council 06/03/24																					
Finance Restructure: Phase 1 recruitment starts																					
We will redesign and restructure the Council's financial service		Finance Restructure: End of Project Report 22/12/23																			
		Finance Restructure: Phase 2 recruitment starts																			
		Outcomes contained in Improvement Report and Departmental Business Plan 31/3/24																			
		Corporate Financial Capability	Corporate capability and accountability: work commences																		




■ Completed
 ■ On-track
 ■ Missed

Impact	Probability			
	1 - Unlikely	2 - Possible	3 - Probable	4 - Extremely Likely or Definite
4 - Catastrophic		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(FST 004) - IR-008 Insufficient resources to fund new structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(FST 002) - IR-001 Crystallised losses on Toucan, JLG / JCF, and PWE investments</li> <li>(FST 002) - IR-002 Borrowings</li> <li>(FST 002) - IR-003 Illiquid Investments</li> <li>(FST 004) - IR-005 Failure to recruit</li> <li>(FST 004) - IR-006 Inability to meet statutory responsibilities</li> <li>(FST 004) - IR-007 External review agencies do not have confidence that the revised structure will deliver required change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(FST 002) - IR-004 Inflation and rates (FST 002) - IR-005 UK economic downturn</li> </ul>
3 - Significant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(FST 003) - IR-001 Significant economic downturn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(FST 004) - IR-002 Reviews not included</li> </ul>		
2 - Minor		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(FST 004) - IR-003 Economic factors</li> <li>(FST 004) - IR-004 Asset Disposals/Disinvestments</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(FST 004) - IR-001 Completion of Accounts</li> </ul>
1 - Insignificant				

KEY:  
 Projects  
 FST 002 – Divestments  
 FST 003 – Budgetary Sustainability  
 FST 004 – Financial Management

Project Ref	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Divestment	IR-001	Open	Divestments	<b>Crystallised losses on Toucan, JLG / JCF, and PWE investments:</b> These investments are currently or have recently undergone recovery plans to resolve identified issues. There is a risk impacting the Council's investment and leading to significant impairments, at least initially (with some additional recoveries over time depending on the strategy).	Steve Mair	12	<b>Treat:</b> The mitigation for this risk is to understand the timeframe of these impairments, the timeline of recoveries, the associated borrowing costs and the wider financial impact (e.g. MRP, revenues) are important to manage the risks to the Council's balance sheet.	<b>28/11</b> - continues to be monitored. Work has been undertaken to further understand and mitigate the MRP implications on investments that will be shortly disposed of.	CIPFA	31-Mar-24	
Divestment	IR-002	Open	Divestments	<b>Borrowings:</b> The Council's refinancing strategy continues to replace maturing inter-LA loans with PWLB loans. There is a risk as new loans are taken out, the cost of borrowing will grow considerably given increases in PWLB rates in recent months.. This will diminish the net income for Thurrock and likely turn it negative.	Steve Mair	12	<b>Treat:</b> The mitigation for this risk is the maturity profile of the new borrowing will also need to be carefully managed to ensure it is aligned with the liquidity being targeted for investments, so as not to incur added borrowing (or repayment) costs over time.	<b>28/11</b> looking at the Camdor portfolio report for October (most recent received) short term borrowing is being put in place to bridge between the divestment proceeds and the requirement to repay borrowing.	CIPFA	31-Mar-24	

Project Ref	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Divestment	IR-003	Open	Divestments	<p><b>Illiquid Investments:</b> The majority of investments are illiquid by virtue, as they are in private markets. It is likely that Thurrock is locked into most of their bond investments until the maturity date, so it will be important to assess if and how liquidity may be obtained.</p>	Steve Mair	12	<p><b>Treat:</b> The key mitigation for this risk is that the Council will need to carefully negotiate and manage these positions to ensure they are divested insofar as possible in line with the Council's needs and proceeds maximised. Financial structuring/restructuring as well as secondary sales processes may also need to be considered to help the Council achieve its goals.</p>	<p><b>23/08/23, 28/9</b> - Good progress has been made on Toucan, with the sales process well advanced and some distributions now flowing. The same is also true for JLG/JCF, where the servicer is now in place for the majority of the Council's exposure, and the CCLA funds, where redemption notices have been served and a timeline agreed for receipt of proceeds. Between these three, that represents c. 85% of the Council's portfolio. For the remaining positions, these are more illiquid, given the much smaller size in general, specific market dynamics in the underlying sectors and the contractual obligations or structure of the arrangements. Preliminary analysis is underway on these and the risk will be assessed in more detail following this. The Council should also consider its strategy for the equity-like positions, which do not have a contractual end date but could be sold theoretically to other investors should the company grow and/or perform well.</p> <p><b>28/11/23</b> - The position remains the same</p>	CIPFA	31-Mar-24	<span style="background-color: #f1c40f; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 5px;">A</span>

Project Ref	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Divestment	IR-004	Open	Divestments	<p><b>Inflation and rates:</b> Inflation has risen significantly and remains elevated. The impact of this is extensive: the Council's investments will likely be dealing with increased operating costs, potentially weighing on profitability and weakening their ability to service interest payments, principal repayments or distributions to the Council. The portfolio has some protection through index-linked investments, notably solar and wind investments. The real estate exposure (CCLA) is also a partial mitigant, through the index-linkage is typically capped here and will not fully mitigate current inflation. Alongside, the Bank of England has raised rates aggressively in recent months, which has also raised borrowing costs for the Council.</p>	Steve Mair	16	<p><b>Tolerate:</b> The Council will monitor and align borrowings with anticipated liquidity points to lock in borrowing costs where possible, minimise upcoming falls / gaps in net income and future asset-liability mismatches. Increased rates further weighs on asset valuations, driving down the value of underlying assets through increases in the discount rate.</p>	<p><b>28/11</b> the Council has put in place short term borrowing given any gap between divestment proceeds and repayment of borrowing. These same inflationary/macro economic factors are making it difficult for a number of the funds to refinance in order to repay the Council's investment when they fall due.</p>	Council	31-Mar-24	
Divestment	IR-005	Open	Divestments	<p><b>UK Economic Downturn:</b> The Council has significant exposure to many aspects of the UK economy: property, small businesses, energy, etc. Therefore, a downturn and potential recession as growth slows would negatively impact their portfolio. We note the UK may enter a recession, which will increase the risk for several positions.</p>	Steve Mair	16	<p><b>Tolerate:</b> Council to proactively monitor and engage with its positions to understand points of weakness, potential mitigants (e.g. contractual underpinnings, positive correlation to energy prices) and to ensure liquidity or exits are not impaired. Higher risk positions should be prioritised within the Council's ongoing review</p>	<p><b>28/11/23</b> – high level monitoring via boards and panels continues.</p>	Council	31-Mar-24	
Financial Management	IR-005	Open	Finance Restructure	<p><b>Failure to recruit:</b> Failure to increase capacity undermines ability to improve financial sustainability</p>	Mike Thomas	12	<p><b>Treat:</b> Build in a Phase 2 recruitment campaign in early 2024 to fill any remaining vacancies following Phase 1.</p>	<p><b>28/11</b> first stage recruitment active and due to end <b>22/12/23</b></p>	Mike Thomas/Sarah Hirt	31-Mar-24	

Project Ref	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Financial Management	IR-006	Open	Finance Restructure	<b>Inability to meet statutory responsibilities:</b> Failure to improve capacity and capability will potentially impact the Council's ability to meet its statutory financial responsibilities.	Steve Mair	12	<b>Treat:</b> Robust recruitment campaign in place, with phase 2 built in to fill any remaining vacancies following Phase 1	<b>28/11</b> first stage recruitment active and due to end <b>22/12/23</b>	Steve Mair	31-Mar-24	
Financial Management	IR-007	Open	Finance Restructure	<b>External review agencies do not have confidence that the revised structure will deliver required change:</b> External agencies (Commissioners) do not consider the changes sufficient to deliver the required cultural, strategic and operational improvements	Steve Mair	12	<b>Treat:</b> Regular reports to Commissioners, IRB, FRB, SLT. Commissioner and external audit views will continue to be received but increased capacity and restructure should impact views	<b>28/11</b> regular reports to Commissioners, IRB, FRB and SLT continue	Steve Mair	31-Mar-24	

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<b>31 January 2024</b>	<b>ITEM: 13</b>
<b>Full Council</b>	
<b>Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places / Polling Stations 2023/2024</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> n/a
<b>Report of:</b> Dr Dave Smith, Chief Executive and Returning Officer	
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> n/a	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Asmat Hussain, Interim Director of Legal and Governance	
<b>This report is public</b>	

## Executive Summary

The Representation of the People Act 1983 places a duty on the Council to divide the borough into polling districts and designate polling places for each polling district. The Council has a duty to keep these polling arrangements under review.

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a number of changes to the 1983 Act in respect of the way reviews must be undertaken. Under the 2006 Act, the Council is required to undertake a review of polling districts and polling places within their boundary on a four yearly cycle. The last review was completed in 2019/2020.

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 (the 2013 Act) introduced a change to the timing of statutory reviews. The 2013 Act requires that a compulsory review has to take place within the 16-month period between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025.

This report sets out the consultation regarding the polling districts and polling places and the recommendations of the Returning Officer in respect of the responses received. This report requests Council to consider and approve the recommendations of the Returning Officer and Chief Executive.

## **1. Recommendation(s)**

**1.1 That the changes tabled on Page 3 of Appendix 2 (Extract – Recommended Changes – Recommendation 1.1) are approved and**

**1.2 That the existing arrangements for polling places also set out in Appendix 2 are confirmed as no changes.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 The report sets out the legal requirements of the Review, the methodology used and the conclusions drawn, together with the proposed changes that have been recommended by the Returning Officer.

2.2 The statutory responsibility for reviewing UK Parliamentary polling districts and places rests with each relevant local authority in Great Britain for so much of any constituency as is situated in its area. A relevant local authority is, in England, the council of a district or London borough.

2.3 Local authorities must comply with the following legislative requirements regarding the designation of polling districts and polling places:

- each parish in England is to be a separate polling district, unless special circumstances apply
- the council must designate a polling place for each polling district, unless the size or other circumstances of a polling district are such that the situation of the polling stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electors
- the polling place must be an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district (for example, if no accessible polling place can be identified in the district)
- the polling place must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station.

2.4 The review can only address issues within the current ward structure of the local authority. It cannot make changes to the ward or local authority boundary. There are some areas where moving a ward boundary might resolve an anomaly highlighted in consultation responses, concerning the allocation of voters to polling places but this cannot be achieved as part of this review.

2.5 The council must have regard to the accessibility to disabled persons of potential polling stations in any place which it is considering designating as a polling place or the designation of which as a polling place it is reviewing.

2.6 The Elections Act (the Act), which received Royal Assent in April 2022, made a range of further changes which impact the suitability of polling places. These changes were considered within this review and the Returning Officer recommendations. The Act includes provisions to

- Make it easier for disabled people to vote
    - Disabled voters can choose anyone who is over 18 to accompany them in the polling station, to help them to vote
    - Requirement for ROs to take all reasonable steps to provide equipment to support disabled voters to vote independently and in secret at the polling station, and in doing so to have regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Electoral Commission
  - Requirement for voters at polling stations to show photographic identification before they receive their ballot paper.
  - Electors can request to show their identification in private.
- 2.7 The Electoral Commission guidance outlined that the Returning Officer should review the suitability of usual venues in relation to the checking of photographic identification. For example:
- how to design the flow of electors through the polling station to manage any congestion or queues effectively
  - whether the venue has a private space, or space to accommodate a screen, that can be used for checking the photographic identification of a person who wears a face covering or requests to have their photographic identification checked in private
  - how the implementation of photographic voter identification requirements for polling stations will impact on the number of voters you allocate to a particular polling station.
- 2.8 The recommendations of the Returning Officer, including the move away from temporary polling places have also taken into account the requirements of the Elections Act 2022 noted in paragraphs 2.6 and 2.7. Members have also previously mentioned that temporary polling stations are not ideal, including at General Services Committee on 10 October 2023.
- 2.9 Consultation with the electorate and elected members formed part of the review process. The link to the consultation was also sent to local accessibility groups to request their input.
- The formal commencement of the review requires the local authority to give notice of the holding of a review. The notice was published on the Council noticeboard and website.
  - A report was taken to General Services Committee on 10 October to inform members of the commencement and timetable of the review. Suggestions made at the Committee were incorporated into the online consultation.
  - All members were informed by email of the consultation and asked for their comments on the existing polling places and to provide suggestions for new polling places.

- The consultation was sent to the Member of Parliament for Thurrock and the Member of Parliament for South Basildon and East Thurrock. It was also sent to local disability groups and community forums.
- The consultation was available for completion via the consultation portal from 1 October to 12 November.
- All members were informed and comments sought on the final recommendations and proposals contained in this report.

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

- 3.1 The issues, options and analysis for each polling district and place are detailed in Appendix 1 and 2.
- 3.2 Whilst the Statutory Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places was underway, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) informed Thurrock that it would commence their statutory review. This is a review of wards and the number of councillors and will take place in 2024.
- 3.3 The review in 2024 will look at the:
- total number of councillors
  - total number of wards
  - boundaries of wards
  - number of councillors in each ward
  - names of each ward.

If the LGBCE proposes that any of the above are changed, there will be full public consultations on their proposals during 2024.

- 3.4 If changes to ward boundaries are made, this will require a further Polling District and Polling Place review to designate polling district boundaries and polling places.

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

- 4.1 The reasons for the recommendations are informed by the consultation and analysis in Appendix 1. They are also informed by reference to the relevant electoral legislation and guidance from the Electoral Commission. The timing of the LGBCE review has also influenced the recommendations.

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

- 5.1 The consultation exercise was designed to maximise inclusion and input into the review and potential changes under consideration. The consultation arrangements are outlined in paragraph 2.9. Members were informed of the Returning Officers recommendations following the end of the consultation.

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

- 6.1 The Council continually seeks to ensure services are accessible by all users and the recommendations following the review will help to ensure that those electors who wish to vote will not be put off by inaccessible polling stations. The proposed changes have been reviewed to actively encourage participation.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Rosie Hurst**  
**Interim Finance Manager**

The costs associated with the proposed changes to polling places are contained within the electoral services budget.

Temporary polling stations are a major cost in the provision of polling places and the recommendations in this review do provide suitable alternative polling places where possible. It is noted that savings are not the aim of this review although they are an obvious consideration. Appendix 1 outlines the savings or cost impact where there is a budget impact. The changes are proposed to minimise risk and meet the needs of the electorate whilst enabling the Returning Officer and the Local Authority to meet the requirements of current legislation.

### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Jayne Middleton-Albooye**  
**Interim Head of Legal Services**

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) places a requirement for all Councils to undertake a periodic full review of all polling districts and places throughout their area.

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 (the 2013 Act) introduced a change to the timing of reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. The timing of this review had to take place within the 16-month period between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025. Both the 2006 Act and the 2013 Act amended the Representation of the People Act 1983.

The Elections Act 2022 introduced requirements that impact the facilities required within polling places, accessibility and the duties of the Returning Officer. The recommendations take into account changes arising from this Act where they impact polling districts or places. The process for a polling district and places review is set out in Schedule A1, Representation of the People Act 1983, and has been followed in undertaking this review.

### 7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on Local Authorities to promote equal opportunities. These considerations should sit alongside the statutory obligations set out in the Electoral Administration Act. The Electoral Administration Act (2006) and the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 seeks to improve the engagement in the electoral process, by ensuring that polling places are accessible to all.

The requirement in the Elections Act 2022 for Returning Officers to provide reasonable equipment to enable or make it easier for disabled voters to cast their vote independently and in secret replaces the previous limited and prescriptive requirements. This requirement also sits within the broader legal framework of rights and protections for disabled people and specific provisions in electoral law to help to safeguard and improve the experience of disabled voters.

The proposed changes will improve access to the electoral process, in line with the objective of the legislation.

The proposals contained in the report will aid community participation in elections, by ensuring adequate facilities are available for all electors. The review also considered the facilities or space available in polling places to view Voter Identification both in public or private if requested, for example to assist people who wear face coverings for religious reasons to remove them for the purposes of checking identification.

The consultation was widely circulated and sent to local disability groups and forums to ask for their feedback.

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

None

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

The Electoral Commission – Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations

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

- Appendix 1 - Returning Officer recommendations.
- Appendix 2 – Summary Returning Officer comments.

### **Report Author:**

Elaine Sheridan

Electoral Services Manager

Electoral Services

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## Appendix 1 - Returning Officer Recommendations

### Aveley & Uplands

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
A	1826 Increase since 2019 -13 electors (1813)		1035	1035	Park Tavern, Romford Road	One
B	2510 Increase since 2019 - 66 electors (2444)		1297	1269	Aveley Community Hub, High Street	One
C	2563 Increase since 2019 - 94 electors (2469)		1509	1494	The Sycamores, Dacre Avenue	Two
D	685 Decrease since 2019- 9 electors (694)		463	463	Hugh Delargy Hall, Wood Avenue	None
<b>Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals</b>						
<p><b>Polling District A</b>            Park Tavern was first used at polls in May 2023 due to Aveley Methodist Church Hall being deemed unsafe by the Church. One online response to the consultation confirmed it was adequate and ok. Following feedback from May 2023 polls, election staff will provide further screening or barriers onsite to more clearly define the polling station within the Tavern. considered The Impulse Leisure Belhus site was considered initially, but this was not taken further or consulted on due to the location and accessibility within the polling district.</p> <p>The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.</p>						
<p><b>Polling District B</b></p>						

One response received to the consultation stated this was a suitable location with adequate facilities. The comment was “It's in the middle of the all the estates that make up the old village area of the town of Aveley. It also has brilliant disabled access and facilities including a changing places style disabled toilet something even the newer council offices do not have.”

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

### **Polling District C**

Two online responses were received stating that (1) parking can be difficult and (2) it was a good location. The Electoral Commission recommend that no more than 2250 electors (excluding postal voters) are allocated to a polling station. The polling place is large enough to accommodate this number of electors and two polling stations will accommodate the elector numbers if required.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

### **Polling District D**

This is polling place accommodates a small electorate and it provides suitable and adequate facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

### **Financial Impact**

None

## **Belhus Ward**

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
E1	660 Increase since 2019 - 2 electors (658)		334	333	All Saints Church Hall, Foyle Drive <i>Proposal – merge polling district with E2</i>	None
E2	1409 Decrease since 2019 - 88 electors (1497)		872	874	Royal British Legion Hall, Faymore Gardens (station 1) <i>Proposal – merge polling district with E1</i>	Two Comments on proposal – two

F	2919 Increase since 2019 – 51 electors (2868)	1764	1764	Royal British Legion Hall, Faymore Gardens (stations 2 & 3)	None
G	2302 Increase since 2019 – 34 electors (2268)	1111	1098	Temporary Structure- South Parade <i>*Proposal move to 1<sup>st</sup> Ockendon Scout Hall</i>	None

### Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals

#### Polling District E1 & E2

The Consultation sought comments on a proposal to merge polling district E1 and E2 with voting to take place at All Saints Church Hall for electors. This would create one new Polling District – Polling District E.

Two comments were received about the proposed move from the Royal British Legion stating it would (1) have a negative impact and (2) the British Legion was handy to get to. Both responses said the Royal British Legion Hall was accessible. Whilst the consultation was underway the LGBCE\* informed the Council that they will commence a separate boundary review. The consultation did not provide evidence of a need to amend this polling district, at this time. The LGBCE will consult separately on their draft proposals for implementation at the May 2025 polls.

The Returning Officer therefore recommends no change to the current polling district boundaries or polling places

- Polling District – E1 All Saints Church Hall
- Polling District – E2 Royal British Legion Hall, Faymore Gardens (station 1)

#### Polling District F

The Royal British Legion Hall is used for polling for electors from Polling District E2 plus Polling District F. It is accessible. The hall can accommodate this number of electors with several stations set up inside. In May 2023 polling staff highlighted the need for further signposting within the hall. Electors did not raise any issues. The signs and staffing will be reviewed for the May 2024 election. The Electoral Commission recommend that no more than 2250 electors (excluding postal voters) are allocated to a polling station. The polling place is large enough to accommodate this number of electors and the RO will

- provide two polling stations in this polling place, for Polling District F, to accommodate the elector numbers if required and
- provide one polling station for Polling District E2 (as referred to above)

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

#### Polling District G

The use of a temporary polling station on South Road was agreed in 2013. Previously, the Ockendon Scout and Guide Hall was used, followed by Thurrock Garden Centre.

The use of temporary polling stations have been reviewed as part of this statutory review. The Elections Act 2022 required the Returning Officer to ensure that polling places and stations are accessible to all electors. Temporary polling stations are not ideal but have been adequate in the past. They provide limited facilities and accessibility for electors. The space within a temporary station is limited and there is not room to provide a private space to check Voter ID if required. At an election with a higher turnout, the station will not be suitable considering the additional requirements introduced by the Elections Act. The cost of temporary cabins and the risk when booking and placing on site is proportionally high. Additional resources are required to site the cabin, from Environmental Services. At this particular location there are incidences of fuel being taken from the generator even though it is not delivered until early morning to mitigate such risk. This leaves the site at risk with no fuel, lighting or electricity. The electorate allocated to this polling place is above the limit recommended by the Electoral Commission although within the limit when taking into account the number of postal voters. The electorate size does contribute to the risk as this is a large electorate in the smallest and least accessible polling places.

An alternative suitable location is available. The Ockendon Scout and Guide Hall has been reviewed and is available. The hall is 65ft x 35ft and could accommodate two polling stations if required. The hall has disabled access with a ramp and facilities plus good public transport links with a car park directly outside. There is space to provide a private area for viewing Voter ID. Facilities are available for polling staff.

The Returning Officer recommends that the Ockendon Scout and Guide Hall is designated as the polling place for Polling District G.

#### **\*Local Government Boundary Commission for England**

##### **Financial Impact**

Polling District E1 & E2 – no financial impact

Polling District F – no financial impact

Polling District G –

Ockendon Scout Hall - awaiting final cost – expect circa £350-£500

Proposed financial impact – Estimated Saving £3000

Temporary polling station costs, as of 2023 - £3854\*

\*This includes generator hire, fuel, transport, toilet hire, cabin, ramps and furniture

## Chadwell St Mary

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments received</b>
H	673 Decrease since 2019 – 6 electors (679)		393	382	Alf Lowne OAP Complex, Loewen Road <i>Proposed change to polling district boundary</i>	None
I	2672 Increase since 2019 – 83 electors (2589)		1634	1572	Delargy Close OAP Complex, Delargy Close <i>Proposed change to polling district boundary</i>	One including one comment on the proposal
J	1772 Increase since 2019 – 41 electors (1731)		930	932	Chadwell Library, Brentwood Road <i>Proposed change to Marisco Hall</i>	None
K	2255 Increase since 2019 – 1 elector (2254)		1239	1245	Chadwell Village Hall, Waterson Road	None
<b>Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals</b>						
<p><b>Polling District H</b></p> <p>No responses were received to the online consultation. A change was proposed to Polling District I which if implemented would have had an impact on this Polling District and Polling Place. This is covered below. The polling place is acceptable and accessible, with adequate facilities for the electorate size.</p> <p>The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling district and polling place arrangements.</p> <p><b>Polling District I</b></p> <p>The electorate allocated to this polling place is above the range recommended by the Electoral Commission even when the number of postal voters are removed. The polling place can accommodate two polling stations and the hall is accessible with appropriate facilities. Due to the large electorate, the Consultation asked for comments on a proposal to change the polling district boundary between Polling District H and I. This proposed that some electors from Polling District I, would vote at Alf Lowne Complex which has a far smaller electorate. Whilst the consultation was underway the LGBCE* informed the Council that they will commence a boundary review. The LGBCE will consult separately on their proposals for implementation at the May</p>						

2025 polls. The Polling District and Place consultation did not provide evidence of a need to amend this polling district, at this time. One response indicated the proposal would have a negative impact on the elector with further to travel.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling district and polling place arrangements.

### **Polling District J**

In 2021 the polling place was moved to Chadwell Library on Brentwood Road as the Working Mens Club would no longer hire to the Returning Officer for the purpose of an election. Chadwell Library is fairly central within the main residential area, on a main road and a bus route and parking is available. There have been no negative comments regarding the use of Chadwell Library however the review highlighted that the flow of electors and route into the area used as a polling station is not ideal. Looking ahead to an election with a higher turnout this may be an issue, but the Polling Place is otherwise suitable. No comments were received in relation to the proposed change of polling place.

Marisco Hall is situated next to the library. It is in the same location and has access to the same parking area and public transport. The hall has disabled facilities and facilities for staff and a suitable area to use for polling. The hall is available for scheduled elections but booking may be difficult for an unscheduled Parliamentary Election.

The Returning Officer recommends that

- a) Marisco Hall is designated as the Polling Place for Polling District J and
- b) In the event that Marisco Hall is not available, Chadwell Library is designated as the Polling Place for Polling District J.

### **Polling District K**

No comments have been received about the current polling arrangements. The polling station is on a road that runs through the residential area and has transport links and parking facilities. A large hall can accommodate more than one polling station if the elector numbers increase. The electorate allocated to this polling place is on the upper limit of the range recommended by the Electoral Commission however this figure includes electors with a postal vote. A proposal has been made by the Conservative Group requesting that some electors from East Tilbury (Polling District T) vote at this polling place. This is covered under East Tilbury below. The hall is accessible with a ramp and facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

### **Financial Impact**

Polling District J

Chadwell Library – £336\*

Marisco Hall – no charge – agreed with Neil Woodbridge

Saving/increase - negligible

\*subject to internal fees and charges increase

## Chafford and North Stifford

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
L	558 Increase since 2019 – 23 electors (535)		266	265	The Pavilion, North Stifford Rec. Ground	None
M	3103 Increase since 2019 – 32 electors (3071)		1640	1639	Beacon Centre, All Saints Church, Drake Road	One
N	1966 Decrease since 2019 – 39 electors (2005)		1027	1026	Drake Community Centre, Drake Road	None
<b>Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals</b>						
<p><b>Polling District L</b> The Pavilion is a central and suitable location within the residential area. There is parking onsite, including disabled parking and facilities. A larger hall is available in the village but a change was not considered due to the small electorate size and no negative feedback on the current location.</p> <p>The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.</p> <p><b>Polling District M</b> All Saints Church at The Beacon Centre was used as a polling place in May 2023. This was due to the unavailability of the Chafford Gorge Visitor Centre. The Visitor Centre had not been an ideal venue due to size and outside lighting. Staff provided positive feedback about the use of The Beacon Centre. One online response to the consultation highlighted dissatisfaction due to being nearer to the Polling Place for Polling District N. Polling districts M and N are built up areas with few buildings to use as polling places. The venue is well known in the area with parking directly outside, additional parking outside the shopping parade and on good public transport links. The location near the shops may help to encourage turnout. The building is accessible and has facilities for staff and the electorate. The electorate allocated to this polling place is above the recommended amount by the Electoral Commission however the Returning Officer operates two polling stations within the polling place to accommodate this. The area available for polling is able to accommodate separate polling stations.</p>						

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Polling District N**

Drake Community Centre was designated the polling place for polling district N in 2011 after concerns continued to be raised about the use of Tudor Court Primary School. Drake Community Centre is not within the polling district, but it is within the ward boundary and its use is permitted. Polling districts M and N are built up areas with few buildings to use as polling stations. The current polling place appears to suit the electorate whilst working with the facilities available in the area. No responses were received to the consultation about this location however a comment was made from an elector in Polling District M, who stated this was a nearer location and they would prefer Drake Community Centre as opposed to travelling to The Beacon Centre. Parking is available to the side and rear of the centre and the building has two halls available.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Financial Impact**

None

**Corringham & Fobbing Ward**

**Existing Arrangements**

<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
O	1553 Decrease since 2019 – 23 electors (1576)		828	810	Thurrock Christian Fellowship, 2-4 Chase Road	Two
P	2271 Decrease since 2019 – 37 electors (2308)		1235	1235	Corringham Community Church, Fobbing Road	One
Q	598 Increase since 2019 – 22 electors (576)		489	305	Gardner Hall, High Road	One

**Returning Officer’s Comments and Proposals**

**Polling District O**

The Christian Fellowship Centre in Chase Road has been used as a polling place since 2011. Staff of the Returning Officer have not been able to find alternative venues within the polling district and highlight that no complaints have been received regarding



the use of the Christian Fellowship Centre. The Christian Fellowship Centre is just outside the polling district and the ward but on the boundary line. Two comments were received to the online consultation confirming it was a suitable location.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Polling District P**

Corringham Community Church is centrally located in the main residential area and is fully accessible. A small number of parking spaces are available off-road, however there is parking on Fobbing Road and in a nearby side road (Recreation Ave). Public transport links are available. The church is now established as the Polling Place. One comment was received to the online consultation which confirmed it was accessible. This Polling District has the largest electorate in the ward and the hall is available with a dividing wall and suitable to accommodate two polling places if required for a larger electorate or turnout.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Polling District Q**

One comment was received to the online consultation confirming it was “a perfect location and easy to access.” The hall could accommodate more than one polling station if required. It has parking onsite and disabled access and facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Financial Impact**

None

**East Tilbury Ward**

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
R	3535 Increase since 2019 – 117 electors (3418)		2013	1993	East Tilbury Village Hall, Princess Margaret Road	Three
S	1319 Decrease since 2019 - 45 electors (1364)		670	668	Linford Village Hall, Lower Crescent	None
T	418 Increase since 2019 – 23 electors (395)		235	235	West Tilbury Village Hall, Rectory Road	None Conservative Group – joint response
<b>Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals</b>						

**Polling District R**

There has been an increase in electors in Polling District R since 2019. The Electoral Commission recommendation is that no more than 2250 electors are allocated to one polling station. The elector level is above this (3535) but the figure will be lower when taking into account the number of electors who choose to vote by post. The electorate numbers require two polling stations at this polling place. The hall is large and able to meet this requirement.

Three responses were received to the online consultation. To summarise, the hall is accessible, spacious, in a good location and parking is available.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Polling District S**

No responses were received to the online consultation. The review confirmed it was a large accessible hall with parking, ramps and accessible facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Polling District T**

No responses were received to the online the consultation.

The Conservative Group responded with a request to consult further on a proposal for voters to the west of Turnpike Lane voting at Chadwell Village Hall. Electoral services have identified that this refers to part of Linford Road, Biggin Lane and Sandy Lane.

The Returning Officer has considered this request and highlights the following in response

- a) The proposal would mean that East Tilbury electors would cast their vote for an East Tilbury member outside of the ward, (in Chadwell). This could cause confusion if East Tilbury ward ballot papers are mixed with Chadwell ballot papers.
- b) It would require additional staffing and the setup of an additional separate polling station in Chadwell Village Hall for East Tilbury
- c) A reduced electorate of circa 300, including postal voters, at West Tilbury Village Hall
- d) Chadwell Village Hall has a large electorate and can accommodate two polling stations if required for the Chadwell electorate. The number allocated is currently just below this requirement. A defined separate area and station would be required for a section of the East Tilbury electorate. This would impact the voters at Chadwell Village Hall.
- e) A potential change to a polling district and a ward boundary may be required. Ward boundaries are not part of the Polling District review.
- f) Polling places should only be designated outside of the ward or polling district if there are no suitable places within the district. This is not the case with this proposal.
- g) No complaints have been received about the polling arrangements from electors. Absent Voting arrangements are available if required.
- h) Electoral staff have consulted with the LLPG custodian who advises that the area to the west of Turnpike Lane is considered part of Chadwell St Mary. The Returning Officer recommends that interested parties could consider raising this in response to LGBCE proposals when warding arrangements are consulted on.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Financial Impact**

None

## Grays Riverside Ward

Existing Arrangements						
Polling District	Electors 2023	Electors 2019	Properties 2023	Properties 2019	Polling Place	Summary of Comments Received
U	3472 Increase since 2019 – 9 electors (3463)		2177	2175	Belmont Village Hall, Parker Road (Station 1 & 2) <i>Proposal – change polling district boundary</i>	None Conservative Group – joint response
V	1316 Decrease since 2019 – 8 electors (1324)		893	864	Inspire Youth Hub, Orsett Road	None
W	3459 Increase since 2019 – 35 electors (3424)		2589	2504	Civic Offices, New Road <i>Proposal – change polling district boundary and polling place to Seabrooke Rise</i>	One Conservative Group – joint response
Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals						
<p><b>Polling District U</b></p> <p>This is a polling place with a large electorate. Belmont Village Hall is large and two polling stations are set up to meet the needs of the electorate. Parking is available for polling staff and a designated disabled parking space. On street parking is available. Disabled facilities are available inside the hall.</p> <p>The consultation asked for consideration to be given to change the polling district boundary and move some properties south of the railway line to Polling District W. No responses were received online. The Conservative Group responded stating that <i>“they do not believe that moving Belmont Village Hall polling station (U) to Seabrook Rise is correct. However, the Town Hall is ideally located to enable maximum voter participation. The station should, therefore, move to the Town Hall – but not be located in the middle of the Seabrook Rise housing development; as transport links by comparison to the Town Hall are sub-optimal.”</i></p> <p>The Returning Officer notes the response by the Conservative Group and highlights that this was not a consultation to move all the electorate of polling district U to Seabrooke Rise Community Hall. Taking into account the response and the commencement of the LGBCE* separate boundary review, the Returning Officer does not consider a need to change the current polling arrangements for Polling District U at this time. The LGBCE will consult separately on their draft proposals for implementation at the May 2025 polls.</p>						

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

### **Polling District V**

No responses were received to the online consultation.

Electoral Services considered the option to propose of this Polling Place which included a move and combined polling at Seabrooke Rise Community Hall. However, upon examining maps it was considered that electors within the residential area to the north of this polling district would be inconvenienced and potentially disenfranchised. No adverse comments had been received from electors in respect of the use of Inspire Youth Hub. This initial option was not considered viable and was not consulted upon.

Inspire Youth Hub is located on the edge of Grays town centre along the main Orsett Road. As a council owned building, access at the time of an unscheduled election is available. Parking facilities are available for staff with equipment and disabled parking is available to the side of the building. A ramp is available. The space available is not large and it would not accommodate a larger electorate but there is sufficient space for the flow of electors, polling and privacy screens.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

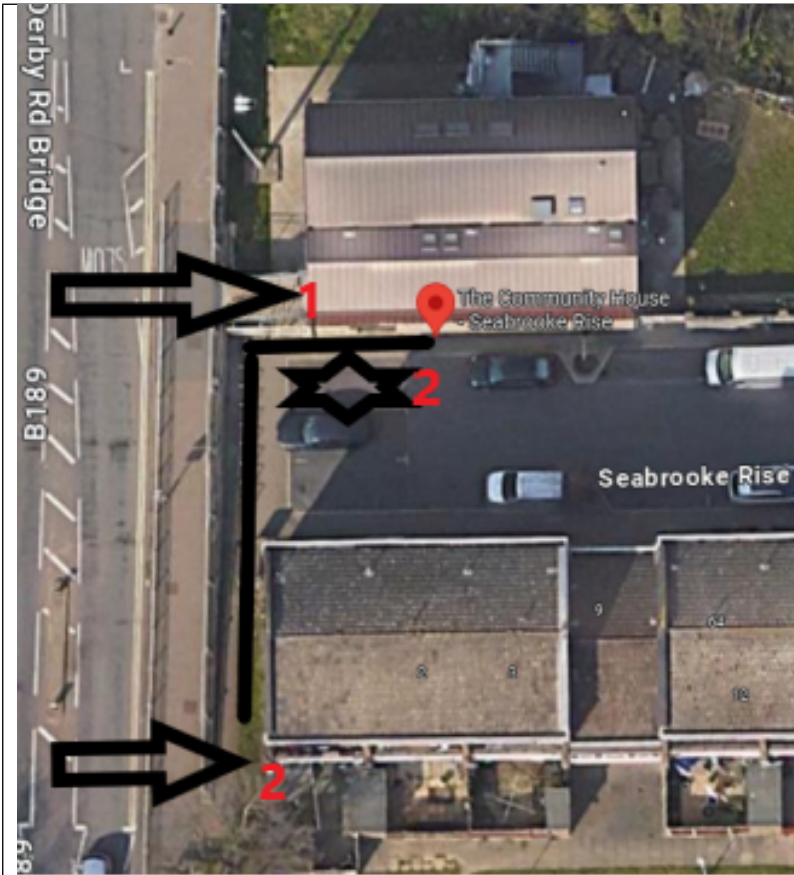
### **Polling District W**

There has been a slight increase in electors in Polling District W since 2019. The Electoral Commission recommendation is that no more than 2250 electors are allocated to one polling station. The elector level is above this (3459) but the figure will be lower when taking into account the number of electors who choose to vote by post. The Returning Officer operates two polling stations within the polling place to accommodate the number of electors.

The Civic Offices are currently designated as the polling place for Polling District W. This can be confusing with electors unsure of where the exact station(s) will be located each year and how to enter. The main entrance for the public throughout the year is via the new Town Hall building whilst on polling day, a separate access is requested and required via the closed, old reception doors. The old reception area has been used recently which means that staff using the Civic Offices cannot access the building or security team on the ground floor area. The committee rooms in CO1 used to be the polling stations but these are no longer accessible. With an increase in staff numbers returning to work in the building, the area used in May 2023 will no longer be available. The old reception area is also being considered for other uses. The Town Hall ground floor reception does not provide a suitable location. The area used for polling needs to be a separate area, cordoned off and not accessible to people who are not using it to vote.

Seabrooke Rise Community Hall is located on Derby Road Bridge/Sherfield Road, on the corner to the Civic Offices, just along from New Road. It would provide an accessible, permanent location for a polling place. There is parking on the bridge and around Seabrooke Rise if required. This is not available on New Road for the current polling place. The Returning Officer notes the Conservative Group response to a proposed change to Polling District U, whereby they stated that *transport links to Seabrooke Rise were sub-optimal in comparison to the Town Hall (Civic Offices) and that the location is in the middle of Seabrooke Rise*. The Returning Officer believes this is not a consideration in this instance. The proposal would create a polling place on the edge of the residential area and may encourage a higher rate of voter participation amongst the residents of Seabrooke Rise.

One comment was received from the online consultation which stated that the proposed move to Seabrooke Rise would have a negative impact as the Community Hall did not have step free access.



Elections staff checked access during the review. If accessing from Derby Road Bridge there are two pedestrian access routes to the hall. There are steps with a handrail to the main entrance from Derby Road Bridge (Route 1 on the map). Route 2 is more accessible for those with a disability or the need to access with a pushchair, with access via a lift (route 2 on the map). Entrance can be gained to the access lift via Seabrook Rise and a disabled parking bay is available (marked by a star on the map). Additional signage will be supplied to highlight route 2. Communications could also be added to poll cards.

The Returning Officer recommends that

- a) Seabrooke Rise community hall is agreed as the polling place for W and
- b) In the event that Seabrooke Rise is not available or suitable, polling will revert back to a location, to be determined by the Returning Officer, within the Civic Offices or Town Hall.

**Financial Impact**

Proposed change to Seabrooke Rise - cost increase £400  
 Civic Offices – no charge

## Grays Thurrock Ward

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
X	2342 Decrease since 2019 – 22 electors (2364)		1277	1268	Attlee Court OAP Complex, Lucas Road	One
Y	1625 Increase since 2019 – 14 electors (1611)		899	885	United Reform Church, Bradleigh Avenue <i>Proposal – alternative location Stanley Lazell Hall</i>	One - Labour Ward Member
Z	2705 Decrease since 2019 – 22 electors (2727)		1618	1605	St Thomas Parish Room, John Street	Seven
<b>Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals</b>						
<p><b>Polling District X</b></p> <p>There has been a small decrease in electors since 2019. The number of electors for this polling place is slightly above the level recommended by the Electoral Commission. The polling place is large enough to accommodate two polling stations if required but the electorate will be lower when taking into account the number of postal voters. Signage has been previously mentioned by members at this polling place and this was reviewed in 2023.</p> <p>One comment was received to the online consultation which stated that “access via wheelchair is impossible and the elector uses a postal vote for all the family.” This was not found to be the case in the review of the sheltered housing hall. The hall has disabled parking facilities with level access and a ramp from the car park area. The doors are wide enough to provide good access for all users. The location is a sheltered housing complex and no issues have been raised previously by electors or members. The same elector responded to a later question in the consultation stating that the complex was accessible.</p> <p>The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.</p> <p><b>Polling District Y</b></p> <p>The current polling place is United Reform Church on Bradleigh Avenue. This is on the far east boundary of the polling district and not within the main residential area.</p>						



A Labour Group Ward member requested that consultation and consideration be given to move polling back to Stanley Lazell Hall. Stanley Lazell Hall on Dell Road was reviewed and included in the online consultation. The Hall is now divided into two smaller rooms which are used as a class room and a sensory room. The hirers would be willing to accommodate polling for a scheduled election, with notice given, although space is smaller than when the venue was previously used and it would impact students. There was no access to the onsite parking and parking outside is limited with mostly permit parking between 9am and 6pm. The building was reviewed at lunchtime and no nearby parking was available. Congestion is likely to increase at peak school hours due to the location next to Quarry Hill Academy and the narrow road.

The United Reform Church offers a large accessible venue with a car park outside. The staff were pleased with the venue and the polling place is large and accommodates the size of the electorate. No comments were received to the online consultation or directly from electors regarding the change of location at previous polls. Due to the parking limitations at Stanley Lazell Hall, the upcoming Parliamentary Election with a likely increased turnout plus availability at short notice, the United Reform Church on Bradleigh Avenue is considered the better polling place. Members have previously preferred not to locate polling places in schools or venues that would disrupt schooling if this could be avoided.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

### **Polling District Z**

There has been a small decrease in electors since 2019. The polling place has its own car park. The number of electors is above the number recommended by the Electoral Commission but the large hall accommodates two polling stations. Seven comments were received to the online consultation. Four comments stated that this location was too far for them either because they no longer drove or there was a polling place nearer to their property that they wished to attend. One comment said there was no parking. The review of this polling place confirmed that the car park still exists with level access and disabled parking. Three positive responses stated the location was convenient, accessible, parking was available, with good access for wheelchairs and was a well-known location.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

### **Financial Impact**

Change to Stanley Lazell - £309 – potential saving £241	
Remain at United Reform Church - £550 – no impact, current cost	

**Little Thurrock Blackshots Ward**

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
AA	3251 Decrease since 2019 - 77 electors (3328)		1770	1768	Civic Hall, Blackshots Lane	None
AB	1859 Decrease since 2019 - 6 electors (1865)		971	970	Woodside Academy, Grangewood Avenue	None
<b>Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals</b>						
<p><b>Polling District AA</b>                      The Electoral Commission recommendation is that no more than 2250 electors are allocated to one polling station. The electorate for polling district AA is above this. The Civic Hall is the current polling place and the Returning Officer will provide two polling stations within this place to accommodate this elector number. The Civic Hall is a well-known location within Little Thurrock Blackshots area. It has ample parking outside with designated disabled parking, disabled ramp access and provides accessible facilities within the hall.</p> <p>No comments were received to the consultation.</p> <p>The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.</p>						
<p><b>Polling District AB</b>                      The electorate in this polling district is within the limit recommended by the Electoral Commission for one polling station. The Returning Officer notes that Woodside Academy remains open on polling day and the Academy is given advance notice of scheduled elections. Whilst members have previously indicated that they would prefer schools not to be used for polling, the options for polling places within this ward and polling district are limited. Election staff work with the Academy to maintain good relations and follow their requests for signage to enable polling to take place and the school to remain open.</p> <p>There is a small step into the area used as a polling station and a ramp is supplied by Electoral Services. The entrance doors are wide to enable access for all.</p>						

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Financial Impact**

None

**Little Thurrock Rectory Ward**

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
AC	1821 Decrease since 2019 – 23 electors (1844)		958	955	Grays Spiritualist Church, 168 Rectory Road	One
AD	2734 Decrease since 2019 – 65 electors (2799)		1623	1624	Tyrells Hall, 67 Dock Road <i>Proposal – alternative location – St Mary’s Church</i>	One Conservative Group – joint response
<b>Returning Officer’s Comments and Proposals</b>						
<p><b>Polling district AC</b></p> <p>One comment was received to the online consultation stating that the location is suitable however the parking is insufficient, with limited parking and the road is very congested. There is a small car park with parking for staff and disabled parking. The Church is located within a residential area and whilst parking is always a consideration there is no requirement for parking to be provided. Parking is available in the surrounding residential roads and they are not restricted by yellow lines or permit parking. The hall has level access, double doors and is accessible.</p> <p>The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.</p> <p><b>Polling district AD</b></p> <p>The electorate for this polling district has decreased slightly since 2019 but is above the recommended limit of voters set by the Electoral Commission. The Returning Officer provides two polling stations within the place.</p> <p>Election staff reviewed the use of Tyrells Hall. Access to the hall is via a corridor. It is not directly into the polling station. Parking can also be an issue although there is a car park. However we do not have sole access to the venue and parking can be</p>						

problematic if there is a larger event in the other hall. Lighting has also been raised previously as an issue. More recently, booking and securing the venue has become problematic and there has been an increase in the rate of hire.

Staff have considered other options within this consultation and review. St Mary's Church is directly opposite Tyrells Hall and provides a well-lit polling place with direct access from the car park. There is also a cost saving vs Tyrells hall. The consultation asked respondents to consider the impact of moving polling to St Mary's Church. One response from a Member was received indicating polling should remain at Tyrells Hall and that a move to St Mary's Church would have a negative impact due to it being difficult to access and park at the church. There was a further joint response from Basildon & Thurrock Conservatives who did not believe there was a sufficient case to move the polling station currently located at Tyrells Hall (AD). The response was as follows *"The polling station serves its purpose effectively and is located in the best place for highest voter turnout/engagement. The Tyrell's Hall site has more suited vehicle, access parking, disabled access and toilet facilities. The polling station was originally moved from the Church Hall to Tyrell's Hall because the car parking was insufficient as it is difficult to navigate into and out of in a vehicle, the facilities inside for staff were not sufficient, the small carpark and single point of access for both cars and residents made it more difficult for those with mobility issues to access the Church Hall at the same time. These issues remain at the Church Hall site. The Church Hall should not be considered at all."*

Election staff are not aware of polling previously taking place at the Church Hall. Tyrells Hall has been the polling place from 2009. A review of the Church (not the Hall) indicated that it would be acceptable for polling and provide facilities for staff. A large area is available within the Church and capable of housing two polling stations for the electorate size. There is a slight step into the Church porch and again into Church, no more than 1.5 inch high. There is parking for polling staff but no disabled parking. There are facilities for staff onsite and disabled toilets within the church. Note, the Church Hall is not available, this is used for a nursery. The Church is available and used as a foodbank and place of worship.

The Returning Officer has considered the responses provided to the consultation, the review undertaken by staff and the LGBCE review taking place. The Returning Officer does not consider there is an immediate requirement to change the polling place for this district. However, in the event that Tyrells Hall is not available it would be prudent to designate St Mary's Church as an alternative polling place. The Returning Officer recommends

- a) no change to the current polling place – Tyrells Hall and
- b) St Mary's Church Hall be designated as a polling place if Tyrells Hall is not available.

#### **Financial Impact**

Tyrells Hall - £1200 – current venue – no impact  
 St Marys Church £400  
 Potential saving - £800

## Ockendon Ward

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
AE	1943 Decrease since 2019 – 16 electors (1959)		1091	1091	Belhus Village Hall, Daiglen Drive – STATION 1	None
AF	2738 Increase since 2019 – 566 electors (2172)		1751	1687	Belhus Village Hall, Daiglen Drive – STATION 2	One
AG1	2061 Increase since 2019 – 53 electors (2008)		1317	1303	Benyon Court OAP Complex, Peartree Close	None
AG2	1656 Decrease since 2019 – 17 electors (1673)		859	856	Brandon Groves Community Hall, Brandon Groves	Two

### **Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals**

#### **Polling District AE and AF**

Belhus Village Hall is located in the main residential area of the polling district in the shopping parade. It is accessible and a car park is available for the hall and the nearby shopping precinct. Belhus Village Hall is able to cope with the current number of electors and no issues were raised. Whilst the Returning Officer is able to use a room in a school for polling, the use of schools as polling stations has declined in recent years in Thurrock unless there is absolutely no alternative location.

Two polling districts vote at Belhus Village Hall. They are clearly signposted and the stations are set up in different rooms within the Polling Place/Hall.

Polling District AE is located in the smaller hall.

Polling District AF - The electorate number has increased in recent years and the electorate within this polling district is above the number recommended by the Electoral Commission for one polling station. The Returning Officer uses the bigger hall within Belhus Village Hall to provide two polling stations for this polling district (AF).

There is no suitable alternative location within the polling district apart from Bonnygate School. Bonnygate School has previously shut on polling day despite advance notice being provided. There is also confusion about entry to the school from different gates when polling takes place.

One comment was received to the consultation confirming that *“the hall was accessible with a ramp to enter the polling station. It was very well-lit and spacious, although not busy. Good availability of parking nearby and easy to get to on foot.”*

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements for Polling Districts AE and AF

**Polling District AG1**

Benyon Court OAP complex is fairly central to the residential part of the polling district from east to west. Other polling stations have been used in the past including South Ockendon Methodist Church which became unavailable a few years ago. The complex is a council owned property which assists Electoral Services to book the facility and ensures it is available at election time.

The electorate has decreased slightly since 2019 and is below the level recommended by Electoral Commission. When the complex was first used, signage was an issue as the complex is accessed and located away from the main roads. Signage is provided from West Road to indicate the entrance to Peartree Close. The complex has level access and parking is available with entrance via double doors and disabled facilities provided.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Polling District AG2**

Brandon Groves Community Hall is located centrally in the residential part of the polling district. The elector numbers have decreased slightly since 2019. The Hall is large and accessible with facilities available for staff. Two entrances are available, one with steps and one with a purpose built ramp, hand rail and double doors. Two comments were received to the consultation saying it was a suitable and accessible location with parking but within walking distance of everyone in Brandon Groves and nearby roads.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Financial Impact**

None

## Orsett Ward

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
AH	843 Increase since 2019 – 28 electors (815)		446	414	Bulphan Village Hall, Church Road	One – community forum
AI	1718 Increase since 2019 – 110 electors (1608)		902	893	Horndon Village Hall, Mill Lane	None
AJ	1482 Decrease since 2019 – 64 electors (1546)		827	827	Orsett Village Hall, High Road	Three
AK	1009 Decrease since 2019 - 11 electors (1020)		521	514	Whitmore Hall, Bristowe Drive	None
<b>Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals</b>						
<p><b>Polling District AH</b> Bulphan Village Hall is centrally located within the polling district. The hall is large and easily accommodates the small electorate size. Car parking is available and the hall has a purpose built ramp and handrail.</p> <p>One response was received to the consultation from the community forum confirming the hall had good parking, good disabled access, perfect location, plenty of space, good lighting and secure (including CCTV).</p> <p>The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.</p> <p><b>Polling District AI</b> Horndon Village Hall is located within the main residential area of the polling district. The elector numbers have increased since 2019 but there is a large hall which is adequate for this electorate size or two polling stations if required in the future. Parking is available, level access and a purpose built ramp with handrail.</p> <p>No comments were received about this polling place.</p>						

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling station and location.

**Polling District AJ**

Orsett Village Hall is located within the village. Three comments were received from the public consultation confirming it was in a suitable location, easy to walk to and a central location. It was accessible for a wheelchair user and the car park was used when required. The hall is large, with a large car park and could accommodate a bigger electorate if required. A ramp is provided. There are facilities for staff and voters.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Polling district AK**

Whitmore Hall is located within the residential area of the polling district and elector numbers are within the limits recommended by the Electoral Commission. There is a large hall which could accommodate a larger electorate and car parking. Facilities are available for staff and voters.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

<b>Financial Impact</b>	
None	



**South Chafford Ward**

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
AL	1778 Increase since 2019 – 17 electors (1761)		917*	1057	Bannatyne Health Club  <i>Change required</i> <i>Option 1</i> – portacabin at Bannatyne Health Club <i>Option 2</i> – portacabin at Sainsbury supermarket <i>Option 3</i> – combine polling at Harris Academy	None Conservative Group response
AM	3397 Increase since 2019 – 109 electors (3288)		1823	1823	Harris Academy, Mayflower Road	Two Conservative Group response
<b>Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals</b>						
<p>*reduction in properties due to deletion of flats that will not be built.</p> <p><b>Polling District AL</b> This district is highly residential and the lack of places for a polling place has been an issue for several years. Portacabins have been used previously along with Brewers Fayre public house and Bannatyne Health Club (Tennis Court).</p> <p>Bannatyne Health Club was the last approved polling place. Since the last election in this ward, external access to the Tennis Court is no longer available. Electors would need to sign in and access the Tennis Court via the Health Club. This is not acceptable. An alternative polling solution is required.</p> <p>Three options were put forward for consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 1 - Portacabin on land at Bannatyne Health Club (permission agreed)</li> <li>• Option 2 - Portacabin on land at Sainsbury Supermarket (permission agreed)</li> <li>• Option 3 - Combine Polling at Harris Academy</li> </ul> <p>The Elections Act 2022 required the Returning Officer to provide polling stations that were more accessible. The size of the electorate plus additional space required for privacy for Voter ID means that portacabins do not best meet this criteria. The</p>						

Returning Officer does not consider a temporary polling place should be the first option if other locations are available. For this reason, the Returning Officer recommends that polling should be combined at Harris Academy where the location is suitable and will accommodate this electorate with a number of polling stations.

The Conservative Group provided the following response to the consultation. *“Moving the two polling districts of AL and AM together is not supported – Harris School is already very busy, evidenced by queues in 2010, 2015 and 2019 general elections. We acknowledge there have been some issues regarding using the internal facilities at Bannatyne Health Club and Spa (AL), however, this remains the right location for voting activity. We therefore submit that a temporary structure should be arranged/used at the Bannatyne Health Club and Spa in the exterior car park.”*

The Returning Officer considered the response provided and responds that measures will be put in place at the next election to improve the voter journey at the polling station through the use of Modern Polling. This solution allows each elector to be processed more efficiently and quickly. Queues are possible and likely at Parliamentary Elections due to the higher turnout. It is important to consider how a queue is managed and if electors are disenfranchised and do not vote due to the queue. The risk and issues with temporary buildings remain high and there is no suitable permanent building within the polling district. A portacabin would not be the better option at a Parliamentary Election with a high turnout as there is no space to wait inside. There are cost implications for temporary buildings and they are subject to availability, especially with the possible increase use in schools since Autumn 2023.

The Returning Officer recommends that the polling place for this polling district is Harris Academy, within Polling District AK.

### **Polling District AK**

The electorate allocated to this polling place is above the recommended number suggested by the Electoral Commission. The Returning Officer provides two polling stations in this polling place for electors of polling district AK. The review by officers confirmed that the hall was large and could accommodate an additional polling station if the Returning Officer recommendation for Polling District AL is approved. There is a limited parking for polling staff but no additional parking. It is desirable to provide parking however it is not possible in this instance. Comments about accessibility did mention parking.

The comments from the Conservative Group for Polling District AL are noted and addressed above. There will be an impact with additional voters from Polling District AL if approved. Two comments were received to the online consultation. One response said this was a suitable location and responded to the proposed combined polling, stating there was plenty of room. One negative response said *“There is nowhere to park whilst visiting the polling station at Harris Academy. Although I can see the school from my house, it is a long walk, and a round trip takes 25 minutes, which discourages me from voting, especially on a busy working day or when the weather is inclement. It is not on my regular routes to or from anywhere, so it means making a special journey to vote. A better location would be at Bannatynes, Sainsbury's or Chafford Hundred railway station.”* The Returning Officer notes

the comment however the ward is very residential with a lack of suitable public or private buildings for hire. This location provides a permanent building for polling with adequate facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the polling place for Polling District AK.

**Financial Impact**

**Polling District AL**

**Bannatyne Health Club (not available) – cost £400**

Option 1 and 2 - Portacabin at Bannatyne or Sainsbury £4000

Increase of £3600

Option 3 – Harris Academy £0

Saving £400

**Polling District AK**

**Harris Academy – hire cost £50** – this is the cost to hire the hall and is not affected by the number of polling stations set up.

**Stanford East & Corringham Town**

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	
AN	2954 Decrease since 2019 – 144 electors (3098)		1702	1699	O'Donaghue House, Thors Oak	Two
AO	1758 Decrease since 2019 – 54 electors (1812)		1019	1017	Tom Wood Hall, Bellmaine Avenue	None
AP	1607 Decrease since 2019 – 27 electors (1634)		960	956	The Springhouse Club, Springhouse Road	None

**Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals**

**Polling District AN**

The number of electors at this polling place is above the number recommended by the Electoral Commission. The Returning Officer operates two polling stations at this polling place to accommodate the size of the electorate. Two comments were received during the public consultation. One comment stated that it was a suitable and accessible location. One further response commented that *“it was a long and arduous trek and they rely on being taken by car. Access to the polling station building is*

*difficult with parking outside a problem.*” This resident stated that the building was accessible, but it could be improved. They did not provide a suggestion for improvement.

O’Donaghue House is not centrally located within the polling district but it is a suitable location and as a council owned building there is flexibility to book the polling place when required. There is parking for staff and disabled electors, level access to the building and facilities for staff and disabled electors inside. The doors are wide with automatic opening. As a sheltered housing complex the building is accessible and has appropriate facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

### **Polling District AO**

The number of electors at this polling station has decreased slightly since 2019. Although the polling place is on the edge of the polling district boundary the station is fairly centrally located. Schools are available within the polling district but members have previously preferred not to use a school when there is an alternative building. The hall is large with parking for staff and disabled electors. There is a purpose built slope and wide entrance doors to the building.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

### **Polling District AP**

Springhouse Club was approved as the polling place for this district due to the unavailability of Corringham Hall. Corringham Hall have confirmed they will not permit the Returning Officer to hire the venue.

The Springhouse Club has been used for two elections and the polling station is accessible via a ramp into the main club entrance and then into the hall or alternatively directly into the hall via a step. Whilst it is not ideal to have a separate accessible entrance via a different route, there is no other suitable location in the polling district. Clear signage is provided and there have been no reported issues. There is adequate parking onsite and the accessible entrance has a ramp with handrail. There are no kitchen facilities for staff on polling day but equipment is provided to staff in advance.

Election staff are aware of planning permission for Springhouse Club with a new building planned and the existing building to be demolished. Talks have taken place and assurance received that we can continue to hire the building whilst the new club is being built and then use the new build. The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

<b>Financial Impact</b>	
None	

## Stanford-le-Hope West Ward

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
AQ	2258 Increase since 2019 – 124 electors (2134)		1374	1365	Allott Hall, Park Road	None
AR	2083 Increase since 2019 – 61 electors (2022)		1412	1236	St Margaret's Church, The Green	Two
AS	1243 Decrease since 2019 – 93 electors (1327)		687	686	Kynoch Court, Billet Lane	None
<b>Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals</b>						
<p><b>Polling District AQ</b></p> <p>There has been an increase in electors in this polling district since 2019 but the elector number is within the limit recommended by the Electoral Commission when excluding postal voters. The hall is large and could accommodate two polling stations if required. Allott Hall is quite central within the polling district and has an onsite car park with a bus stop nearby. There are stairs to both entrances but the venue provides a purpose built ramp and handrail on polling day. No comments have been received about accessibility. No comments were received during the public consultation.</p> <p>The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.</p> <p><b>Polling District AR</b></p> <p>St Margaret's Church on The Green is located quite centrally within the polling district, a visible location and has parking to the rear of the church. The allocation of electors is within the limit recommended by the Electoral Commission. One comment was received during the recent election as an elector did not wish to cast their vote within a church and the church hall had been used previously. Two comments were received to the consultation stating it was a suitable location; very close, a large public building with friendly staff and easy to access.</p> <p>The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.</p> <p><b>Polling District AS</b></p>						

Kynoch Court is within the residential area of the polling district and run by Thurrock Council which assists with booking arrangements in the event of an unscheduled election. No comments were received during the consultation period. The allocation of electors is within the limit recommended by the Electoral Commission. There is parking for polling staff on the street and disabled parking. Facilities for staff and disabled electors are available and there is ramp access with a handrail to the building. There is a slight lip at the entrance door which is marked by hazard tape.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Financial Impact**

None

**Stifford Clays Ward**

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	
AT	2626 Decrease since 2019 – 66 electors (2692)		1408	1406	Headon Community Hall, Crawford Avenue	One
AU	2428 Decrease since 2019 – 16 electors (2444)		1258	1255	Stifford Clays Social Club, Crammavill Street	One

**Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals**

**Polling District AT**

The Electoral Commission recommendation is that no more than 2250 electors are allocated to a polling station. The elector number is slightly above this but will be less when the number of absent voters are taken into account. The Returning Officer operates two stations in this polling place. One comment was received during the consultation confirming it was a suitable polling station. Polling staff can park outside on hard standing but there is no disabled parking. Public transport is available outside. There is level access to the hall and facilities inside for staff and disabled voters.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Polling district AU**

The Electoral Commission recommendation is that no more than 2250 electors are allocated to a polling station. The elector number is slightly above this but will be less when the number of absent voters are taken into account. A larger hall is available

within the venue if required. One comment was received during the consultation confirming it was an excellent polling station with car parking, easy access, and secure. There is level access in the car park with a slight slope and handrail into the building. The entrance doors are double doors and disabled facilities accessible within the venue.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Financial Impact**

None

**The Homesteads Ward**

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
AV	1919 Decrease since 2019 – 36 electors (1955)		1020	1019	Homesteads Village Hall, Dunstable Road <i>Proposed change</i>	Three One - Independent ward member Conservative Group
AW (1) & AW (2)	2420 Increase since 2019 – 63 electors (2483)		1221	1219	2 x Temporary Structure(s), Balstonia Rec Ground <i>Proposed change</i>	Eight One - Independent ward member Conservative Group
AX	1234 Decrease since 2019 – 49 electors (1283)		610	604	Gable Hall School, Southend Road <i>Proposed change</i>	Two
AY	837 Decrease since 2019 – 50 electors (887)		447	447	Temporary Structure, Gardner Avenue <i>Proposed change</i>	Two
<b>Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals</b>						
<p>Options considered in the consultation:–                      Option 1 - Merge Polling Districts AV and AW – electors vote at Homesteads Village Hall or                      Option 2 - Retain separate Polling Districts, AV and AW – electors from AV and AW both vote at Homesteads Village Hall or                      Option 3 – no change to polling for Polling Districts AV and AW                      AND                      Option 4 - Merge Polling Districts AX and AY – electors vote at Gable Hall School or</p>						

Option 5 - Retain separate Polling Districts, AX and AY – electors from AX and AY vote at Gable Hall School or  
Option 6 – no change to polling for Polling Districts AX and AY

### **Polling District AV & AW**

Homesteads Village Hall provides a large polling place with an electorate below the number recommended by the Electoral Commission. There are additional buildings to the rear of the hall. In contrast Polling District AW has a larger electorate and currently requires the provision of two temporary polling stations at Balstonia Recreation Ground (Park).

3 electors responded to the consultation for AV (Homesteads Village Hall).

- Very convenient, well laid out and well run hall. Plenty of parking, lights and security.
- Absolutely ideal for the purpose and in a large catchment area
- Good location and facilities, plenty of space and parking

All respondents said it was accessible and the proposals would have neutral or no impact as they already vote at Homesteads Village Hall.

AW - 8 electors responded to the consultation and proposal. They confirmed that the polling place for AW (Balstonia Park) was in a suitable location.

- *Located very centrally. Adequate lighting & parking available if needed.*
- *Fit for purpose and disabled access considered.*
- *Always been good enough for voting.*
- *Local not far to get to and has parking*
- *The use of Balstonia Park is a great idea for the temporary site of the polling station. The park is ideally situated for locals with 3 entrances to it plus parking on the gravel area. The park is not inconvenienced in any way, the ground is flat and ideal for wheelchair access as long as a ramp is in place for the demountables, lighting can be easily rigged up and there were plenty of staff to help and provide security.*
- *It is very convenient and easy to walk to.*
- *There were no issues from my perspective as a voter within the Borough and as a presiding officer at the temporary polling station too.*

All respondents replied that (Balstonia Park) was accessible.

6 responses said a change from polling at Balstonia Park would have a negative impact and in summary said it was further for them to travel and they would not be able to walk to the polling station. One response said the proposed change would be neutral/no impact and Homesteads Village Hall would be more accessible for through traffic.

The Conservative Group response to Polling District AV and AW is outlined and summarised as follows. *“The proposal would double the electorate at Homesteads Village Hall. Homesteads Village Hall is located on the corners of Southend Road (no*



*parking), Dunstable (almost no parking), and Colman (a very tight cul-de-sac with almost no parking). The car park is very limited. The hall is on the far west of the ward, meaning the current AW voters have quite an extra trip with poor access. This was compared with the current polling arrangements in Balstonia Park highlighting the location is almost in the centre of the ward with access via three entrances on Rosevalley, Graham and Rodings Avenue. This means the park and polling station is highly accessible on foot from a myriad of roads in the ward. The roads also have limited to no parking restrictions. Therefore [they] suggest the council still consolidate these 2 districts but do so at the central and accessible AW, Balstonia Park location, and not at the cramped and further out AV, Village Hall location. If this cannot be the case, then retaining both is the only way to prevent a real accessibility issue for many people currently living in AW.”*

An Independent Ward member responded to the proposals for the Homesteads Ward as follows. *“Already had many messages from residents, the turnout is low anyway, cutting out residents access to that side of Southend road will only lower the numbers who go out and vote, especially for the less abled. 100% in support of residents, Not in favour of the change or keep as is until the all outs in 2025 then you have 4 years is decide.”* It is not clear if this response is in relation to the proposed move away from Balstonia Park and combined polling at Homesteads Village Hall or all the proposals for The Homesteads Ward.

The Returning Officer notes the joint response from the Conservative Group plus the response from a ward member and has considered the need for accessible polling places which cater for the whole electorate in the ward. Whilst the consultation was underway the LGBCE\* informed the Council that they will commence a separate boundary review. The council consultation did not provide evidence of a need to amend polling districts AV and AW, at this time. The LGBCE will consult separately on their draft proposals for implementation at the May 2025 polls. The designation of polling places and the use of temporary structures post implementation of the Elections Act is still a matter for consideration in this review. The risk and issues with temporary buildings remain high and there are no suitable permanent buildings within polling district AW. A portacabin is not considered suitable to provide space to view Voter ID in private unless there is no alternative. At a Parliamentary Election with a high turnout there is no space to wait inside and for transparency there is no space for observers within the polling place. There are cost implications for temporary buildings and they are subject to availability, especially with the potential increased use in schools since Autumn 2023.

Polling District AV has an electorate within the range recommended by the Electoral Commission. The total size is 1919 and this is smaller when the number of postal voters is removed from this range. The RO will provide one polling station in Homesteads Village Hall for a polling district of this size.

Polling District AW has an electorate of 2420 which is slightly above the range recommended by the Electoral Commission. The electorate size will reduce when the number of postal voters is removed.

Homesteads Village Hall could comfortably operate 2 or 3 polling stations within the hall to accommodate Polling Districts AV and AW. By contrast 2 temporary structures are required for this number of electors if polling remains at Balstonia Park.

Taking into account the LGBCE review and the requirements of the Elections Act for accessibility, Voter ID and privacy, the Returning Officer recommends Option 2

- Retain separate Polling Districts, AV and AW – electors from polling districts AV and AW both vote at Homesteads Village Hall. The Returning officer will confirm the number of polling stations to be provided for AV and AW depending on the electorate at the time of polling.

### **Polling District AX**

The polling place at Gable Hall School, Southend Road was introduced to reduce costs and minimise complaints from residents. The previous location was a portacabin on land at Kenneth Gardens, Southend Road. The School does not shut on polling day.

2 responses were received to the consultation with one commenting it was 'great continue to make it available'. Both responses said the polling place was accessible and the proposal for AY would not affect them.

The Returning Officer is aware of feedback from the 2022 polls regarding accessibility and the election team continue to work with the School and colleagues from Education to ensure that the location provided by the school for polling is the most accessible. No accessibility issues were raised at the polls in 2023.

The Returning Officer recommends no change for the polling place for polling district AX.

### **Polling District AY**

The temporary structure at Gardner Avenue is located in a layby outside of a parade of shops. In previous years members have requested combined polling at Gable Hall School.

2 electors responded to the online consultation about the current provision

- Easy to get to and access. Parking is free, ramps provided for disabled users, easy to find location. Lighting easy on the eyes. Enough space to do what was required.
  - This polling station is within easy walking distance of my house but if I drove, there is adequate parking.
- Both responses said the provision was accessible

In response to the proposal to move polling to Gable Hall School the responses said this would have a negative impact and provided the following

- More people would drive. Depending on which part of Gable Hall is used, there would be noise nuisance with car doors slamming, people hooting, car alarms going off, unsupervised children running around the grounds.
- Going by the above map, my polling station is labelled as AY. If my station was to close, it hasn't been allocated a place that it'll merge with.

The Conservative Group and a ward member responded to the consultation stating *“Firstly, the new Gable Hall district makes much sense. Both AX and AY are very small and it is hard to justify a split. The Gable Hall site is very large with plenty of onsite parking, and there are many safe walking routes. The Gardiner site, however, is a demountable at the shops, which frequently causes much congestion given it takes up parking spaces and it is also a main cut through to the school. Much of the current AY population is closer to Gable Hall than the current AY station they have. I support councils proposal”*.

The Returning Officer has outlined risks and issues associated with temporary structures earlier in this summary of The Homesteads Ward. The issues apply equally to this Polling District. The recommendation below takes account of the LGBCCE review which is currently taking place and the requirement to provide polling places which are accessible and take account of the provisions contained within the Election Act.

The Returning Officer recommends Option 5

- a) Polling district boundaries to remain unchanged and
- b) Gable Hall School be confirmed as the polling place for polling district AY, due to the lack of suitable buildings within the polling district.

#### **Financial Impact**

Homesteads Village Hall – no financial impact

Options 1 & 2 – saving £7,708 – Balstonia Park

Option 3 – no financial impact or saving

Options 4 & 5 - saving £3,854 – Gardener Avenue

Option 6 – no financial impact or saving

1 x Temporary polling station - cost as of 2023 - £3854\*

\*This includes generator hire, fuel, transport, toilet hire, cabin, ramps and furniture

## Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
AZ	464 Decrease since 2019 – 19 electors (483)		242	241	Temporary Structure, Churchill Road	None
BA	2542 Increase since 2019 – 206 electors (2336)		1776	1718	Beaconsfield Place, Calcutta Road	None
BB	1898 Increase since 2019 – 23 electors (1875)		1119	1112	The Sunshine Centre, Civic Square	None

### **Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals**

#### **Polling District AZ**

The temporary structure is located in a non-residential part of the Thurrock Park estate. It serves a small electorate and no comments or issues were raised during the consultation or at previous elections in respect of accessibility. The Returning Officer has outlined in other Ward arrangements that the use of temporary polling stations are not ideal and have inherent risks. However, this polling district is clearly defined and separate from the rest of Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park. Removing this temporary location and combining it with other polling districts in the ward would require the residents to make a journey to central Tilbury (Tilbury Town) and potentially discourage participation in the democratic process.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

#### **Polling District BA**

Beaconsfield Place was a new polling place location in May 2023. No responses were received to the consultation. Electors commented on polling day that they did not know the location of this polling place. Further communication will be undertaken with electors in this polling district. The electorate is slightly above the range recommended by the Electoral Commission but it will be within the accepted range when electors who vote by post are removed. The hall is not overly large but it accommodates one polling station set up. The polling place is on a main road through Tilbury and has a bus stop outside. As a council run hall it is available in the event of unscheduled elections. Parking bays are available on the road and staff parking is permitted within the development. Access to the polling station is directly from the pavement in Calcutta Road and the polling place is accessible and has appropriate facilities.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Polling District BB**

No responses were received to the consultation. The electorate allocated to this polling place is within the range recommended by the Electoral Commission. The space provided can accommodate one polling station and this is a suitable arrangement for the electorate size. As a council run building it is available in the event of unscheduled elections. Public transport is available with a bus stop opposite the building if required. Disabled parking and parking for staff is available. There is level access with a slight ramp to the door, with a handrail. Other appropriate facilities are available inside for staff and electors.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Financial Impact**

None

**Tilbury St Chads Ward**

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	
BC	2607 Increase since 2019 – 34 electors (2573)		1421	1419	The Hall, Lansbury Gardens OAP Complex	None
BD	1806 Decrease since 2019 – 70 electors (1876)		1076	1075	Fruitful Land Church, The Anchor, Civic Square	One
<b>Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals</b>						

**Polling District BC**

No comments were received during the consultation, The Hall is a Sheltered Housing complex and as the venue is a council run property it ensures that a polling location is available when required at a minimum cost. The electorate allocated to this polling district is slightly above the range recommended by the electoral commission even with the number of electors who vote by post removed. The Returning Officer currently runs two polling stations in this polling place. There is a bus stop nearby, parking for disabled voters and parking for staff. Access to the building is via a ramp with handrail and disabled facilities are available inside the building.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Polling District BD**

The Fruitful Land Church (The Anchor Pub) was designated as the polling place at the last statutory review. One response was received to the consultation which confirmed it was suitable and accessible. The response also said 'Only place really in the eastern area of Tilbury. However, it is next to the other polling station for riverside at the civic centre. Parking is tough as you have to park around the back of Civic Square and play 'chicken' running across the road.'

There is a large accessible space for voting which could accommodate an additional polling place. The electorate size does not require this. Public transport links are available with parking to the rear of the building, with CCTV and outdoor lighting. Level access is available from the main street through double doors. Access from the car park requires a ramp which is supplied by electoral services. There are facilities available within the building for staff and electors.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Financial Impact**

None

**West Thurrock & South Stifford**

<b>Existing Arrangements</b>						
<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Electors 2023</b>	<b>Electors 2019</b>	<b>Properties 2023</b>	<b>Properties 2019</b>	<b>Polling Place</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>
BE	2368 Increase since 2019 – 66 electors (2302)		1503	1456	Mulberry Drive OAP Complex, Mulberry Drive	Two
BF	1608 Increase since 2019 – 42 electors (1566)		1161	1161	The Fleet Public House, London Road	None
BG	2267 Increase since 2019 – 618 electors (1649)		1457	1196	Cowdray Hall, London Road	Four Conservative Group
BH	2789 Increase since 2019 – 204 electors (2585)		1685	1670	St Clements Health & Community Centre, London Road	None

## Returning Officer's Comments and Proposals

### Polling District BE

Two responses were received to the online consultation, which confirmed it was in a suitable location with one commenting it was very accessible and the other commenting it was accessible but could be improved (limited parking). St Stephens Church Purfleet-on-Thames was suggested as an alternative location.

No issues have been raised about the suitability of Mulberry Drive Complex as the polling place. The complex is a suitable location and provides an adequate size room for polling. The electorate size is within the range recommended by the Electoral Commission when the number of electors who vote by post are removed from the total. There are parking facilities for the electorate, disabled parking and staff parking. The entrance has stairs with a handrail plus a ramp to the main door. Facilities for the disabled are available within the polling place. As a council building the cost is minimal and the building is available for elections when required.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

### Polling District BF

No responses were received to the consultation regarding this polling place. The Fleet is an established polling place located along the main London Road, Purfleet. The place provided for polling is large and could accommodate an additional polling station if required. The manager is accommodating and provides access at short notice to book the area within the building for polling. Parking is available on site and the links to public transport are good. Access to the building is down a slight slope with entrance via a raised decking area with ramp access and a hand rail. No issues have been raised about accessibility. Facilities are available inside for both staff and the electorate.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

### Polling District BG

Three responses were received to the online consultation, which confirmed this polling place was in a suitable location and accessible. The comments are listed below

- "Large car park; disabled access; lighting and security good inside and outside; plenty space for individuals; toilets and kitchen for water available.
- Everything at this Polling Station is perfect - car parking, disabled access, location, space, lighting and security - all brilliant.
- Parking on site, close to my home. Large enough to have a busy voting station. Not sure if there would be anywhere better for residents in the vicinity"

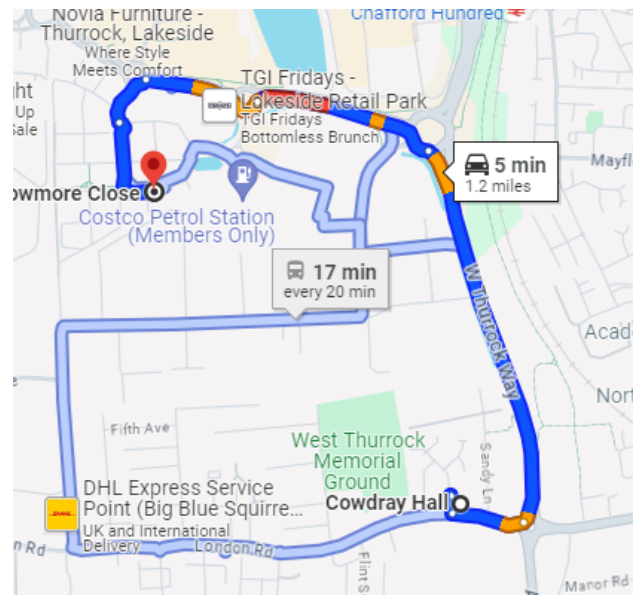
One comment was received from a resident in Killarney Crescent stating

- The nearest polling station (Cowdray Way and St Clements) are too far. The distance is about 1.5 miles each way, this is too long for me to walk after a long day at work.

There has been an increase of over 600 electors in this polling district and allocated to this polling place. It is still within the limit recommended by the Electoral Commission especially when the electors who vote by post are removed from that total. Parking is available to the rear of the hall.

The Conservative Group responded to the consultation and provided the following comment which relates to this ward and polling district “the new housing development in the Lakeside Basin suffers the risk of being disenfranchised because of no polling station in near commutable distance. We therefore submit that a temporary structure should be arranged/used at a suitable location on the new development to ensure maximum voter participation.” A labour ward member has previously raised the issue of access to a polling station for the electorate housed in the Renovo estate and queried if the allocated polling station could accommodate the size of the potential electorate in this estate.

The Returning Officer has noted the comments received and the additional comment raised by one of the electors living in the housing development comprising of Abberton Way, Buttermere Way, Carrowmore Close, Colliford Road, Dovestone Close, Draycote Road, Killarney Crescent and Loweswater Way in regard to their voting arrangements and polling at Cowdray Hall, London Road. The map below outlines the distance from the development to the polling place.



The Returning Officer does not consider that introducing a temporary polling station, with limited accessibility for 321 properties is appropriate when there is a suitable permanent building within the existing polling district.

The location and siting of a temporary building in this area and the impact that the placement of a temporary building for 3-4 days would be problematic.



The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements for BG at Cowdray Hall.

**Polling District BH**

There has been an increase in electors in this polling district since 2019 and it is just slightly over the range recommended by the Electoral Commission. The hall is large enough to accommodate the size of the electorate and currently two polling stations are provided within the hall. Parking is available off road with a bus stop nearby. Access to the building is via a slight slope with hand rails. Adequate facilities are available within the hall.

The Returning Officer recommends no change to the existing polling arrangements.

**Financial Impact**

None

Proposal for additional polling place in Polling District BG – increase of £3854

1 x Temporary polling station - cost as of 2023 - £3854\*

\*This includes generator hire, fuel, transport, toilet hire, cabin, ramps and furniture

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Current Ward	Polling District	Polling District Reference	Electorate	Parliamentary Constituency	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Polling Place	Acting Returning Officer Comments
Aveley & Uplands	North	A	1826	Thurrock	Thurrock	Park Tavern	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Aveley & Uplands	West	B	2510	Thurrock	Thurrock	Aveley Community Hub	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Aveley & Uplands	East	C	2563	Thurrock	Thurrock	The Sycamores	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Aveley & Uplands	Uplands	D	685	Thurrock	Thurrock	Hugh Delargy Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Belhus	All Saints	E1	660	Thurrock	Thurrock	All Saints Church Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Belhus	Somers Heath	E2	1409	Thurrock	Thurrock	Royal British Legion Hall (1)	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Belhus	Culverhouse	F	2919	Thurrock	Thurrock	Royal British Legion Hall (2)	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Belhus	Mardyke	G	2302	Thurrock	Thurrock	1 <sup>st</sup> Ockendon Scout Hall, Tamarisk Road	<b>Temporary structure at South Parade is not considered to meet the requirements of the Election Act. The 1<sup>st</sup> Ockendon Scout Hall provides a suitable permanent arrangement within the polling district</b>
Chadwell St Mary	North West	H	673	Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Alf Lowne Complex	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Chadwell St Mary	North East	I	2672	Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Delargy Close Complex	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Chadwell St Mary	West	J	1772	Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Marisco Hall and Chadwell Library (reserve)	<b>Chadwell Library is suitable but Marisco Hall provides a better option.</b>
Chadwell St Mary	East	K	2255	Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Chadwell Village Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Chafford and North Stifford	North Stifford	L	558	Thurrock	Thurrock	The Pavillion	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Chafford and North Stifford	Drake	M	3103	Thurrock	Thurrock	Beacon Centre	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Chafford and North Stifford	Tudor	N	1966	Thurrock	Thurrock	Drake Community Centre	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Corringham and Fobbing	West	O	1553	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Thurrock Christian Fellowship	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Corringham and Fobbing	Central	P	2271	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Corringham Community Church	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Corringham and Fobbing	Fobbing	Q	598	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Gardner Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
East Tilbury	Coalhouse	R	3535	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	East Tilbury Village Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
East Tilbury	Linford	S	1319	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Linford Village Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
East Tilbury	West Tilbury	T	418	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	West Tilbury Village Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Grays Riverside	North West	U	3472	Thurrock	Thurrock	Belmont Village Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Grays Riverside	North East	V	1316	Thurrock	Thurrock	Inspire Youth Hub	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Grays Riverside	South	W	3459	Thurrock	Thurrock	Seabrooke Rise Community Hall and Civic Offices / Town Hall (as reserve)	<b>The location within the Civic Offices is not guaranteed. Seabrooke Rise Community Hall is a suitable alternative with Civic Office/ Town Hall a reserve polling place</b>
Grays Thurrock	North	X	2342	Thurrock	Thurrock	Atlee Court Complex	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Grays Thurrock	West	Y	1625	Thurrock	Thurrock	United Reform Church	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Grays Thurrock	East	Z	2705	Thurrock	Thurrock	St Thomas Parish Room	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable

Little Thurrock Blackshots	North	AA	3251	Thurrock	Thurrock	Civic Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Little Thurrock Blackshots	Torells	AB	1859	Thurrock	Thurrock	Woodside Academy	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Little Thurrock Rectory	Central	AC	1821	Thurrock	Thurrock	Grays Spiritualist Church	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Little Thurrock Rectory	South	AD	2734	Thurrock	Thurrock	Tyrells Hall Reserve – St Marys Church	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable but St Marys Church designated as reserve polling place
Ockendon	Barretts	AE	1943	Thurrock	Thurrock	Belhus Village Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Ockendon	Bonnygate	AF	2738	Thurrock	Thurrock	Belhus Village Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Ockendon	Benyon	AG1	2061	Thurrock	Thurrock	Benyon Court Complex	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Ockendon	Brandon Groves	AG2	1656	Thurrock	Thurrock	Brandon Groves Community Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Orsett	Bulphan	AH	843	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Bulphan Village Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Orsett	Horndon	AI	1718	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Horndon Village Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Orsett	Central	AJ	1482	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Orsett Village Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Orsett	Southfields	AK	1009	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Whitmore Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
South Chafford	North	AL	1778	Thurrock	Thurrock	Harris Academy	<b>Bannatyne Health Club is not suitable. Combine polling with polling district AM at Harris Academy as the only suitable permanent building within the Ward</b>
South Chafford	South	AM	3397	Thurrock	Thurrock	Harris Academy	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Stanford East and Corringham Town	Abbotts Hall	AN	2954	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	O'Donaghue House	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Stanford East and Corringham Town	Giffards	AO	1758	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Tom Wood Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Stanford East and Corringham Town	Springhouse	AP	1607	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	The Springhouse Club	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Stanford-le-Hope West	St Cleres	AQ	2258	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Allot Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Stanford-le-Hope West	St Margarets	AR	2083	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	St Margarets Church	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Stanford-le-Hope West	Billet	AS	1243	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Kynoch Court	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Stifford Clays	North	AT	2626	Thurrock	Thurrock	Headon Community Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Stifford Clays	Avenues	AU	2428	Thurrock	Thurrock	Stifford Clays Social Club	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
The Homesteads	Branksome	AV	1919	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Homesteads Village Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
The Homesteads	Balstonia	AW	2420	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Homesteads Village Hall	<b>Temporary structures at Balstonia Park are not considered to meet the requirements of the Election Act. The Homesteads Village Hall provides a suitable permanent arrangement outside of the polling district</b>
The Homesteads	Morley Hill	AX	1234	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Gable Hall School	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
The Homesteads	Queen Elizabeth	AY	837	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Gable Hall School	<b>Temporary structure at Gardener Ave is not considered to meet the requirements of the Election Act. Gable Hall School provides a suitable permanent arrangement outside of the polling district</b>

Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park	Thurrock Park	AZ	464	Thurrock	Thurrock	Temporary Structure, Churchill Road	No suitable permanent building in this area or nearby. No Change, this polling place is acceptable
Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park	East	BA	2542	Thurrock	Thurrock	Beaconsfield Place	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park	Fort	BB	1898	Thurrock	Thurrock	The Sunshine Centre	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Tilbury St Chads	West	BC	2607	Thurrock	Thurrock	The Hall, Lansbury Gardens Complex	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
Tilbury St Chads	East	BD	1806	Thurrock	Thurrock	Fruitful Land Church	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
West Thurrock & South Stifford	Garrison	BE	2368	Thurrock	Thurrock	Mulberry Drive Complex	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
West Thurrock & South Stifford	Purfleet Village	BF	1608	Thurrock	Thurrock	The Fleet Pub	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
West Thurrock & South Stifford	Central	BG	2267	Thurrock	Thurrock	Cowdray Hall	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable
West Thurrock & South Stifford	South Stifford	BH	2789	Thurrock	Thurrock	St Clements Health and Community Centre	No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable

### Extract – Recommended Changes – Recommendation 1.1

Current Ward	Polling District	Polling District Reference	Electorate	Parliamentary Constituency	Future Parliamentary Constituency	Polling Place	Acting Returning Officer Comments
Belhus	Mardyke	G	2302	Thurrock	Thurrock	1 <sup>st</sup> Ockendon Scout Hall, Tamarisk Road	<b>Temporary structure at South Parade is not considered to meet the requirements of the Election Act. The 1<sup>st</sup> Ockendon Scout Hall provides a suitable permanent arrangement within the polling district</b>
Chadwell St Mary	West	J	1772	Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Marisco Hall Chadwell Library (as reserve)	<b>Chadwell Library is suitable but Marisco Hall provides a better option.</b>
Grays Riverside	South	W	3459	Thurrock	Thurrock	Seabrooke Rise Community Hall Civic Offices / Town Hall (as reserve)	<b>The location within the Civic Offices is not guaranteed. Seabrooke Rise Community Hall is a suitable alternative with Civic Office/ Town Hall a reserve polling place</b>
Little Thurrock Rectory	South	AD	2734	Thurrock	Thurrock	Tyrells Hall St Marys Church (as reserve)	<b>No Change – the polling place is considered acceptable but St Marys Church designated as reserve polling place</b>
South Chafford	North	AL	1778	Thurrock	Thurrock	Harris Academy	<b>Bannatyne Health Club is not suitable. Combine polling with polling district AM at Harris Academy as the only suitable permanent building within the Ward</b>
The Homesteads	Balstonia	AW	2420	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Homesteads Village Hall	<b>Temporary structures at Balstonia Park are not considered to meet the requirements of the Election Act. The Homesteads Village Hall provides a suitable permanent arrangement outside of the polling district</b>
The Homesteads	Queen Elizabeth	AY	837	South Basildon & East Thurrock	South Basildon & East Thurrock	Gable Hall School	<b>Temporary structure at Gardener Ave is not considered to meet the requirements of the Election Act. Gable Hall School provides a suitable permanent arrangement outside of the polling district</b>

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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 8 questions to the Leader and 9 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

**1. From Councillor Redsell to the Leader**

Would the Portfolio Holder like to update the chamber on the changes being made to the bin collections.

**2. From Councillor J Maney to the Leader**

Would the Portfolio Holder like to comment on the success of the introduction of the collection of Christmas trees following the festive season.

**3. From Councillor Speight to the Leader**

Is the Leader happy with the current situation regarding the working hours, available facilities, general conditions and suitability of the regime demanded by the administration for council staff who work within the CO1 building?

**4. From Councillor Fish to the Leader**

Can the Leader tell me what steps he has taken to improve access to CO3 for disabled people given his personal undertaking to me several months ago?

**5. From Councillor Morris-Cook to the Leader**

Can the Leader confirm that all available funding available from Government has been applied for?

**6. From Councillor J Kent to the Leader**

Will the Leader give an update on progress towards Greater Essex Devolution?

**7. From Councillor J Kent to the Leader**

Will the Leader set out a timescale for implementing the eleven recommendations of the recent PAS review?

**8. From Councillor Panjala to the Leader**

According to statistics available online, robbery and theft has increased significantly in the Thurrock region. Can the portfolio member please provide their overall strategy to tackle these crimes?

**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 Snell**

In the interest of openness and transparency will you share all the paid for recommendations from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and not just the ones you cherry pick?

**2. From Councillor P Arnold to Councillor B Maney**

Would the Portfolio Holder like to comment on the future of the ferry service between Gravesend and Tilbury?

**3. From Councillor Speight to Councillor Johnson**

Is the Portfolio Holder happy with the progress being made on the decant of the three Blackshots tower blocks, including arrangements for transfer of residents and families to alternative accommodation and the conditions in which those tenants who are forced to remain are being asked to live?

**4. From Councillor Polley to Councillor B Maney**

Following the Secretary of State criticising nearby councils that do not have Local Plans, would like portfolio holder like to comment on the importance of delivering a Local Plan for the people of Thurrock?

**5. From Councillor Polley to Councillor Coxshall**

With the NHS now no longer delivering IMCs for Thurrock, would the Portfolio older like to comment on what the Council is doing to make sure Thurrock is not getting a raw deal?

**6. From Councillor Byrne to Councillor Snell**

Please explain justification behind spending £25,500 plus on an advertising Totem with real time bus information stock in Corringham town centre, very much against the will of the shop owners without consultation prior to seeking planning permission?



**7. From Councillor Morris-Cook to Councillor B Maney**

Can I see the following data for the last 5 years of the roundabout sponsorship programme including number of sponsorships and revenue generated.

**8. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Snell**

Following the divestment of the council's investment in Toucan Energy, can the portfolio holder confirm the total costs of external advice connected with the divestment?

**9. From Councillor Worrall to Councillor B Maney**

Could the Portfolio Holder verify the safety measures in place for our frontline staff in the Council foyer?

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

Date	From	Motion	Status	Director
Cllr Speight	14 September 2023	This chamber calls on Thurrock Council to commission a fully independent inquiry into the management and achievements of Thurrock Council's planning department since 2015 – with its remit to produce a year-by-year performance analysis indicating the number of applications received, the number dealt with by delegation, the number progressed to committee and the number passed or rejected that have been contrary to officer recommendation. The report should produce a subjective judgement on the performance of the planning department over each of those years. In addition the remit will include a full and detailed investigation into how and why the council has not been able to formulate a new local plan over the same period of time.	Following the motion it was agreed with Cllr Speight that, in order to avoid possible duplication, we would wait until the outcome of the LGA Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Peer Review of the planning service before progressing an inquiry. The PAS review is now complete and their report published. Officers will now be working with members to agree the scope and terms of an inquiry to cover areas not addressed in the PAS review.	Mark Bradbury
Cllr Redsell	25 October 2023	Members resolve that a task and finish group or similar be established~ to look at options for tackling school parking across the borough. Further, that a report on such options should be produced at the conclusion of the group's review.	A task and finish group must be properly scoped, and a term of reference drafted and agreed by the parent Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Transport department has been contacted and both this department and Democratic Services will be working on a joint presentation to O & S in due course. Democratic Services are recruiting to Scrutiny Officer posts at present with these officers expected to start in the early New Year 2024. These officers will be able to take on	Asmat Hussain

			<p>this workstream and progress in accordance with Scrutiny Rules and procedures. This project will also be raised at forthcoming work programme sessions with the CfGS to ensure it is accommodated appropriately in a future Scrutiny structure and arrangements.</p> <p><u>Update Jan 2024:</u></p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Officers started in their roles in early January 2024. The Centre for Governance Scrutiny (CfGS) is due to meet chairs and vice-chairs of O &amp; S on 23 and 24 January to discuss the work programmes for the future, including Task and Finish reviews. Chairs and Vice Chairs will make a decision on what reviews and items to prioritise at those sessions in the context of the council's special measures. The proposed school parking Task and Finish group will be considered within this session and CfGS are aware of the request and will work into the session.</p>	
Cllr Halden	25 October 2023	The chamber wishes to confer Freedom of the Borough on Reverend Canon Darren Barlow upon his retirement as rural dean.	<p>Preparations are underway to organise the ceremonial meeting to confer the award to Rev Barlow. The relevant companies who manufacture the badge have been contacted for delivery times. Once these are known, a date will be scheduled for the meeting.</p> <p><u>Update January 2024:</u></p>	Asmat Hussain

			The ceremonial meeting has been organised for 31 January 2024.	
Cllr Hooper	29 November 2023	People in Thurrock are waiting up to eight weeks to get an appointment for a blood test. This is entirely unacceptable, so, Thurrock Council calls on Mid and South Essex Foundation Trust to take whatever action is necessary to hold Phlebotomy First to account for this failure of blood testing in Thurrock and provide a reasonable service.	<p>The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health has written to the Managing Director of Basildon Hospital (who hold the contract for Phlebotomy in Thurrock) to request an update on action the trust is taking to address the unacceptable long waits for blood tests.</p> <p><u>Update January 2024:</u></p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health received a response from the System Integrated Care Pathway Director offering apologies on behalf of the Trust for the experience of Thurrock constituents. Reassurance was given that the Trust had taken Councillor Hooper's concerns seriously, and that appropriate action was being taken. to reduce the waiting time for non-urgent/routine blood tests down to a maximum of three weeks.</p>	Ian Wake

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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 Speight**

This council acknowledges the tremendous contributions to community and sport by Margaret Whitbread and Fatima Whitbread and in doing so puts in motion the relevant process to offer both the freedom of the borough of Thurrock.

#### **Monitoring Officer Comments:**

This motion meets the requirements of Rule 15.2, Chapter 2, Part 2 of the Constitution which states that "a notice of motion must relate to a matter which affects the authority or the authority's area and must relate to a matter in respect of which the authority has a relevant function."

Pursuant to s.249 (5) 'honorary freemen' or 'honorary freewomen' status can be granted to:

- persons "of distinction"
- persons who have "rendered eminent services to that place or area"

However, this must be done "by resolution of the Council at a meeting of the relevant authority which is specially convened for the purpose and where notice of the object of the meeting has been given; and by not less than two-thirds of the members of the relevant authority (or, in the case of charter trustees, of the trustees) who vote on it." (s.8a and b). This requires a separate meeting of the Council if the motion is passed.

#### **Section 151 Officer Comments:**

There are no financial implications arising from this motion.

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

Yes

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