

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

Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **13 June 2023**

Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL.

Membership:

Councillors Valerie Morris-Cook (Chair), Joycelyn Redsell (Vice-Chair), Alex Anderson, Mark Hurrell, Cathy Kent and Maureen Pearce

Substitutes:

Councillors Aaron Green, Steve Liddiard, Augustine Ononaji, Elizabeth Rigby, James Thandi and Watson

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 24 January 2023 and 27 February 2023.	
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To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972. To agree any relevant briefing notes submitted to the Committee.	
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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Agenda published on: **5 June 2023**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

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

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non-pecuniary

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



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

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

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

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

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

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

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 January 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Joycelyn Redsell (Chair), Gary Byrne (Vice-Chair), Daniel Chukwu, Sara Muldowney, Maureen Pearce and Paul Arnold (Substitute) (substitute for Elizabeth Rigby)

Apologies:

In attendance:

Michael Dineen, Assistant Director Counter Fraud, Enforcement and Community Safety
Anita Caccioli - Assistant Director Street Scene and Leisure
Terry Fisher, Essex Police
Susan Reddick, Strategic Lead - Waste
Rhiannon Whiteley, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

9. Minutes

The minutes of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 November 2022 were approved as a correct record.

10. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

11. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

12. Single Use Plastic Policy Implementation

The report was presented by the Strategic Lead for Waste. She explained that Cabinet had adopted the single use plastic policy last year around February 2022 and a framework is required to be implemented to make sure that the Council are acting to that policy. The report outlines the two proposed options for implementing the policy.

The report recommends option 2 is taken forward which is to implement a procurement process to ensure that the policy is considered at the point of

procurement for new procurements and a review is carried out for live contracts.

The Chair queried how the policy would work in terms of enforcing this against external providers.

The Strategic Lead for Waste gave the example that in a recent contact for new uniforms it was specified in the procurement contract that they were not to be delivered in single use plastic.

Councillor Byrne queried what has been done in the last year and asked if the policy had been forgotten about.

The Strategic Lead for Waste agreed the route to delivery has been delayed. She confirmed that it is part of the procurement process and they are trying to strengthen the process.

Councillor Muldowney stated that she had looked back at the decision made by Cabinet a year ago that said elimination of Single Use Plastic was to be a priority. She queried what was being proposed now.

The Strategic Lead for Waste confirmed that what is being proposed is a route for delivery to what Cabinet decided.

Councillor Muldowney queried the differences between options 1 and 2. The Strategic Lead for Waste responded that option 1 would require a project manager to deliver the strategy, calculations of time needed at different levels to deliver on that first option have been completed and given the Council's current situation it was not considered the best use of time. It was felt at a procurement level the same goals could be delivered in a lot less time intensive way.

Councillor Muldowney stated that the calculations and data should be in the report so that the Committee is able to properly scrutinise the options and know what each one means. Councillor Muldowney requested that the data is provided after the meeting.

The Strategic Lead for Waste agreed the data would be provided to Members the following day.

Councillor Arnold queried how the policy can be policed and if it will be more expensive to change contracts.

The Strategic Lead for Waste confirmed that through the contract change policy, financial implications will be considered on an individual basis. Sometimes it reduces the costs. The policy will be policed through a robust look at contracts and the procurement process and it will be considered at the point of purchase.

Councillor Chukwu queried how it will be implemented in schools and if they are on board.

The Strategic Lead for Waste responded that they will be writing supporting documents to help explain it to Schools. The Government is banning disposable plastic cutlery anyway this Summer which also helps. She stated that they have had some good engagement with schools and have sent an education person into Schools to talk about recycling and single use plastics. The Schools are on board and are interested about how they can support it further. In relation to events on council land, conditions will be attached regarding single use plastics.

Councillor Chukwu queried if this could be extended to the business world.

The Strategic Lead for Waste confirmed they are part of a Partnership called Oceans Together with DP World where they share good practice to reduce single use plastics and recycling. DP World found a way of recycling pallet wrapping and shared it within that forum.

Councillor Muldowney queried if the officers are confident they can deliver the policy through the procurement process.

The Strategic Lead for Waste responded that in the governance forms to procure it asks the individual contract manager to confirm that they have considered all the options and the process can therefore be audited.

The Assistant Director for Street Scene and Leisure added that as part of going out to tender there will be a requirement that they don't want the goods to be supplied in single use plastics and the supplier needs to demonstrate how they will meet those requirements.

Councillor Muldowney queried if there are any plans to educate council staff.

The Strategic Lead for Waste stated that there are plans to educate staff and they could off this training to members too.

Councillor Muldowney queried if the decision needs to be made tonight as she would like to have seen the supporting data.

The Strategic Lead for Waste responded that if a decision is not made tonight it will delay the roll out.

Councillor Muldowney confirmed that she didn't want to cause delay and she is happy to agree the recommendations tonight provided the data and calculations completed are provided tomorrow.

The Chair agreed that the data should be provided to members tomorrow.

RESOLVED:

1.1 To agree the approach across the Council to implement to eliminate where possible SUP's from Thurrock Council

13. Waste Service Update Report

The Strategic Lead for Waste presented the Waste Update Report to the Committee. She confirmed that the report outlines the changes to the Waste Service coming into place in September 2023 and an overview of the improvement plan.

The new waste service collection plans due to commence in September 2023 are as follows: -

- Alternate Weekly Refuse Collection
- Weekly Recycling Collection
- Alternate Weekly Garden Waste Collection
- Weekly Food Waste Collection

The Strategic Lead for Waste updated the Committee that in February 2023 17 agency workers will become full time employees. She also confirmed that there remains a national HGV driver shortage which poses a challenge for recruitment of drivers.

The Chair raised concerns about the new caddie bin to be provided and raised concerns about the number of bins and whether they will be returned to the correct house. The Chair also queried if another vehicle will collect the food waste.

The Strategic Lead for Waste explained that there will be one 5 litre caddie which residents can store in their kitchen and there will also be an external 27 litre caddie to be stored outside. Both bins are small enough that they don't need wheels and can be carried. The bin to be stored outside is lockable so creatures cannot open it and it will fit on top of resident's wheelie bins. The Strategic Lead for Waste proposed holding a Member's engagement session where they can view the sample caddies. The Strategic Lead for Waste confirmed that the new trucks have a rear lifting system for recycling and a side lifting system for food. A company has been found that will transport the food waste to Croydon in vehicles that use bio-fuels. Members were invited to visit the food waste plant if they wanted to.

The Chair queried if a food waste recycling centre had been considered in Thurrock. The Chair also queried who is on the Waste Service Board and noted there could be health and safety issues with the workers wearing shorts.

The Strategic Lead for Waste responded that health and safety issues had been considered regarding the workers wearing shorts and they are prohibited from entering certain areas in shorts for health and safety reasons.

She also confirmed that she is on the board, Councillor Jefferies, the Assistant Director of Street Scene and Leisure, representatives from the fleet, the Health and Safety representative, Directors Julie Nelder and Julie Rogers, customer service team and information management team representatives.

The Assistant Director of Street Scene and Leisure added that the board is operationally focused and therefore there has been input from across the Council. It is task related and therefore some of these representatives won't be invited all of the time.

Councillor Byrne commented that the department have never ever put their hands up and said we got it wrong. He stated that a resident told him that recently when a driver got out of the truck there was a smell of cannabis. Councillor Byrne stated that he has raised this as a complaint and the response was the worked don't smoke.

The Assistant Director of Street Scene and Leisure Council stated that the Council has recently improved the drug and alcohol policy and they will be implementing this. If evidence is provided to them they will commence an investigation and deal with it in line with the Council's policy.

The Strategic Lead for Waste confirmed spot checks are being completed once a month and this will be recorded so it can be audited.

Councillor Muldowney commented that this is Government legislation which must be put in place. She praised the procurement of sustainable transport for this and that there is now a proper audit trail for complaints. Councillor Muldowney queried the assisted bin collection service.

The Strategic Lead for Waste responded that they are currently checking the assisted bin collection list. They are also looking at an option to put a sticker on these resident's bin to demonstrate to crews which bins require this additional service. The loaders collect 1300 -1500 bins a day and therefore this may help to improve the service especially when it is not the usual workers completing the route due to staff sickness.

Councillor Muldowney queried if recycling will be staying two weekly and if this can be guaranteed given the Council's financial situation.

The Assistant Director of Street Scene and Leisure referred to paragraph 2.1 of the report which outlines the new bin collection regime being brought forward in September 2023. The department are waiting on the outcome of a Government consultation which could affect how they collect the waste which may require greater source separation. The Assistant Director of Street Scene and Leisure stated she cannot answer at this time if there will be any change to the proposals described at paragraph 2.1 of the report.

Councillor Muldowney queried the current recycling rate.

The Strategic Lead for Waste stated that the recycling rate for last quarter was 32.2 % and nothing went to landfill.

Councillor Arnold questioned if there will be random drug and alcohol testing.

The Assistant Director of Street Scene and Leisure responded that the drug and alcohol policy is a recent policy and she doesn't know if it goes as far as random drug testing. If there is evidence and they are able to pointed in the right direction they will investigate.

The Assistant Director for Enforcement and Community Safety added that his team would be interested in taking forward the complaint Councillor Byrne raised earlier in the meeting. He is also new to the role and therefore does not have detailed knowledge of the new policy yet however testing falls under three categories completely random, intelligence led or incident led.

Councillor Muldowney queried if brown bins will be collected again in Spring.

The Strategic Lead for Waste responded that Monday will be the start of week 1. This is with the caveat that they do not have high levels of sickness or van breakdown. It is a work in progress. The Strategic Lead for Waste highlighted that she is nervous about service delivery but it is the number one priority to make sure there is another staff to run the service.

Councillor Muldowney agreed it was right not to over promise given the service history.

The Chair commented that the Strategic Lead for Waste and the new Assistant Director for Street Scene and Leisure had made a good start and wished them luck. She highlighted that the service needs to get better and communication to residents.

RESOLVED:

1.1 It is recommended that Cleaner Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the content of the report.

14. Council Funded Police Officers Options Paper

The Committee discussed that item 7 is an exempt report and therefore the public and press and any officers not involved would need to leave the meeting so the item could be heard in private.

Councillor Byrne commented that he could see no reason why item 7 should be an exempt report. It goes against what Councillor Coxshall has said about the Council being transparent going forward and demonstrates that they are keeping secrets again like they have done for the last 2 – 3 years.

Councillor Muldowney also queried why the report should be exempt.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer confirmed that under the legislation the reason given by officers for keeping the report confidential from the public is that it contains *information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)*.

The Assistant Director for Counter Fraud, Community Safety and Resilience confirmed that when he came to the role the report was exempt and his understanding is that this is because it is about changing the roles of those outside our organisation.

The Members took a vote and three agreed it should remain exempt (The Chair, Councillor Arnold and Councillor Pearce) and three members disagreed (Councillor Byrne, Councillor Muldowney and Councillor Chukwu).

The Senior Democratic Services Officer confirmed that if a decision was made by Members that the report should not be exempt she would advise that legal advice is obtained and the item should be deferred.

The Assistant Director for Counter Fraud, Community Safety and Resilience agreed with the Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Neil Speight from the press asked to speak and the Chair allowed this. Neil Speight outlined that he had seen the report as it had been leaked to him and he could not see any reason why it is exempt. In his opinion, the report is about an important policy of the Conservatives and the only reason it is not being disclosed to the public is because it embarrasses them.

The Chair responded that she had read the report and had also queried why it was exempt but she could not ignore the fact that it was on pink paper.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer advised the Chair that if she was not sure she could defer the item so that legal advice could be obtained as to whether all or parts of the report could be disclosed to the public and that it would be within her discretion to call an extraordinary meeting so the item could be heard at a later date as there were no more Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings scheduled for this municipal year.

The Assistant Director for Counter Fraud, Community Safety and Resilience added that the review was on the value for money of the contract and the right time to assess this was at the end of the first year of the contract, not the last and the longer this goes on the less importance the decision will have.

The Chair decided to defer the item so that legal advice could be obtained and requested that an extraordinary meeting is arranged to consider the report.

15. Work Programme

Item 7 was deferred to be heard at an extraordinary meeting on a date to be confirmed.

The meeting finished at 8.54 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**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 February 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Joycelyn Redsell (Chair), Gary Byrne (Vice-Chair), Sara Muldowney and Maureen Pearce, Paul Arnold (Substitute for Elizabeth Rigby), Steve Liddiard (Substitute for Daniel Chukwu)

Apologies: Councillor Elizabeth Rigby

In attendance: Michael Dineen, Assistant Director Counter Fraud, Enforcement and Community Safety
Rhiannon Whiteley, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

16. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

17. Council Funded Police Officers Options Paper

The Chair clarified that the report is no longer an exempt report and on pink paper and therefore will be debated in public.

The Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement and Community Safety introduced the report. He explained that the report concerns the contract in place with regard to the Council funding of 4 Essex Police Officers, currently deployed as part of the Town Centre Teams (TCT) within Community Policing in Tilbury and Purfleet. The report outlines 5 options for the Committee to consider.

- I. The Contract is terminated complying with the contractual stipulations within the contract.
- II. The 4 additional officers are able to be deployed to other areas covered by Town Centre Teams, namely Grays, Ockendon and Stanford le Hope/ Corringham according to intelligence and operational demand.
- III. 2 funded officers remain in Tilbury with the 2 Purfleet Officers being able to be deployed to other areas covered by Town

Centre Teams, namely Grays, Ockendon and Stanford le Hope/ Corringham according to intelligence and operational demand.

- IV. 2 funded officers remain dedicated to Purfleet and Tilbury (1 in each area) and 2 officers are able to be deployed to other areas covered by Town Centre Teams, namely Grays, Ockendon and Stanford le Hope/ according to intelligence and operational demand.
- V. No change to current arrangements

The Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement and Community Safety highlighted that options 2,3 and 4 are the ideal options they are looking at so they can move officers around linked to intelligence and to meet operational demand.

Councillor Byrne queried why Stanford-Le-Hope and Corringham are being treated as the same place.

The Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement and Community Safety clarified that those two areas are controlled by the same town centre team.

Councillor Byrne added that Stanford-Le-Hope has the third biggest shopping centre and expressed concern that those two towns were being treated differently to other towns.

Councillor Muldowney commented that she was confused as to why the options are different from the exempt report previously presented to the Committee.

The Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement and Community Safety responded that since the last meeting there has been ongoing dialogue with the police and the report has been updated.

Councillor Muldowney highlighted that she would have voted for the previous option 2 which is now not an option in the current report.

The Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement and Community Safety clarified that this is the only option that has changed significantly from the previous report and this is because the police would like the flexibility to move officers around the town centre teams and that is what options 2, 3 and 4 deliver.

Councillor Muldowney reiterated that she would like to vote for the previous option 2.

Councillor Pearce noted that Aveley share officers with Ockendon and she queried if Aveley might get their own dedicated police officers in the future.

The Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement and Community Safety clarified that he could not answer for the police as to where they will place their resources in the future.

Councillor Muldowney queried what the point of the meeting was.

The Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement and Community Safety responded that it was for the Committee to discuss and scrutinise the available options which is outlined in the recommendation at paragraph 1.1 so that he can make Cabinet aware of their comments.

The Chair commented that the location of Police officers should be put back into the hands of the police.

Councillor Byrne commented that if police were in every town in Thurrock there would be no crime. Prevention is better than cure.

The Chair commented that of course everyone would like to see more police on the beat.

The Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement and Community Safety clarified that there are 7 officers already on the town centre teams and they will continue to police the town centres. However, the Council pays for an additional 4 police officers two of which have been dedicated to Purfleet and two that have been dedicated to Tilbury. Options 2, 3 and 4 would give the police the freedom to allow the police to decide whether some or all of those 4 officers can attend any town centre.

Councillor Muldowney referred to the Community Impact Assessment provided as an appendix and stated that it referred to a negative impact on redressing inequalities.

The Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement and Community Safety responded that within the options the police will respond to intelligence which can be in many forms such as crime statistics and crime hotspots and if there was a negative impact more officers will then be placed in that area as they will be able to free up the 4 Council funded police officers to target any spike in crime rates. The impact assessment would be correct if they were removing the police from those areas but that is not what the options are proposing. Purfleet has in fact had some low numbers before Christmas whereas Ockendon had 7 incidents, it would be nice to be able to move officers to the places that need it. However, it may be that they remain in Purfleet as that is where the intelligence informs the police that they are required.

Councillor Muldowney commented that in her ward there had been fires behind the shops but they have no town centre police so whatever decision is made her ward will not get anything.

Councillor P Arnold stated that the Police should be given the ability to deploy officers where they see necessary. Everyone wants to see police on the beat

where they are and just because you do not see them, it doesn't mean they are not there and acting as a deterrent.

Councillor Liddiard echoed Councillor Arnold's comment that the Police should have the flexibility to decide where officers are located. He also stated the Local Authority should not be funding police officers at all.

The Chair commented that they should perhaps put this back in the Police Commissioner's hands. They have done a good thing for the last 4 years by funding the additional police officers and she would like to see some data on the impact it has had.

The Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement and Community Safety clarified that as a result of the S114 Notice the Local Authority are looking at savings in all areas and in funding 4 Police officers the Local Authority is currently helping to fund an organisation that has its own responsibilities. It has been put forward as a saving that the Local Authority no longer funds the additional 4 police officers and this was accepted at Cabinet last week and the final decision will be made at Full Council later this week.

Councillor Muldowney queried if option 2 gives the police the most flexibility. The Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement and Community Safety agreed this was correct.

The Chair highlighted that the Committees views would go back to Cabinet.

The Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement and Community Safety stated that if the Committee members could indicate which option they prefer that would be helpful. This will then be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Councillor Byrne queried how the Council can afford to support another service given the current financial situation. He stated that in the circumstances, he would have to go with option 1.

Councillor Liddiard commented that he would prefer option 3 or option 5.

The Chair, Councillor Pearce and Councillor Byrne preferred option 1.

Councillor Arnold preferred option 2.

Councillor Muldowney preferred option 4.

Councillor Byrne queried why Stanford-Le-Hope and Corringham were grouped together as the same place.

The Assistant Director for Investigation, Enforcement and Community Safety responded that the paper being discussed at the meeting doesn't define Borough lines and he will have to ask the police if they treat those areas as separate entities and respond to Councillor Byrne at a later date.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the options presented to them with regards to the future funding of the 4 funded Town Centre Police Officers, in line with good practice and make a recommendation to Cabinet for a decision on the options suggested.**

The meeting finished at 7.53 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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4. Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Appointed by: The Council under section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000	Number of Elected Members: Six, of whom none shall be a Cabinet Member
Chair and Vice-Chair appointed by: The Council	Political Proportionality: The elected Members shall be appointed in accordance with Political Proportionality
Quorum: Three elected Members	Co-opted Members to be appointed by Council: None appointed
Functions determined by Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crime and Disorder Partnerships under the Police and Justice Act 2006 2. Waste and recycling 3. Community safety 4. Environmental protection and management of the environment 5. Consumer protection and trading standards 6. Licensing 7. Animal welfare 8. Prevent duties 9. Parks, open spaces and cemeteries 10. Museums and community facilities 11. Sports development 	
Functions determined by Statute: All the powers of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This Committee is also the designated Committee under section 19 Police and Justice Act 2006.	

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13 June 2023	ITEM: 6
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Fees and Charges Review 2023/24	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Accountable Assistant Director of Service: Leigh Nicholson - Assistant Director - Planning, Transport and Public Protection Julie Nelder – Assistant Director – Highways, Fleet and Logistics Michael Dineen – Assistant Director - Counter Fraud, Community Safety and Resilience Tracie Heiser – Assistant Director - Customer Services Gerard McCleave – Assistant Director - Economic Growth and Development	
Report of: Accountable Directors of Service: Julie Rogers - Director of Public Realm Karen Wheeler – Director of Strategy, Engagement and Growth	
This report is: Public	

Executive Summary

As is well known the Council faces unprecedented financial challenges and is reviewing and revising all of its financial plans as a consequence. One element of this is income from Fees and Charges. This report begins to address that by:

- designing and proposing the adoption of a new Fees and Charges policy
- undertaking stage 1 of a three-part review of Fees and Charges
- arising from that recommending several increases in charges/new charges, effective from 1 October, to potentially generate £114k increase in income in a full year
- noting that subsequent stages will take this work further

1. Recommendations:

- 1.1 That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the proposed Fees and Charges policy, Appendix 1, in particular agreeing the commitment to full cost recovery and annual CPI inflation increases as the default.
- 1.2 That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the proposed Fees and Charges increases for the material areas, Appendix 2.
- 1.3 That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the proposed new Charges in section 8 of this report.

1.4 That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the requirement for a further detailed review & analysis of remaining Fees and Charges by Quarter 4 2023/24.

2. Background

Thurrock's financial position is exceptionally challenging as 35.2% of its 2023/24 budget, £180m, is financed by an indicative capitalisation direction. A non-recurrent form of potential exceptional funding which must be replaced by asset or investment sales, reductions in the capital programme and revenue budget reductions (expenditure) or increases (income).

This report deals with the start of a Fees and Charges review which will assist in increasing the Council's income.

Due to the magnitude of the task, the review has been split into three Phases.

➤ Phase 1:

- create a new policy for Fees and Charges, enclosed as Appendix 1.
- begin the gathering of benchmarking data to start to enable Thurrock's charges to be compared against other local authorities, enclosed as Appendix 3a, 3b, 3c.
- identify material areas for Fees and Charges.
- analyse if inflation and/or other up-lifts have been applied to the Council's material income areas over the past 5 years to inform opportunities.
- investigate and propose immediate price increases for existing services.
- investigate any new charges which could be implemented by October 2023.
- explore the possibility of a semi-automated workflow process for Fees and Charges via Thurrock's embedded 4me system to add further transparency and improved reporting functionality to the process.

➤ Phase 2:

- review further Fees and Charges.
- analyse inflationary increases across all remaining Fees and Charges.
- begin implementation of the workflow system in 4me.
- further analysis of the benchmarking exercise to identify opportunities. to expand Fees and Charges further, including any unique services Thurrock offer.
- support services to identify commercial opportunities.
- complete the annual Fees and Charges process with a paper to Cabinet in February 2024.
- implement increases for 1st April 2024.

➤ Phase 3:

- undertake a review of all service's financial recovery – identifying the cost recovery position, the financial opportunities, and the timescale to achieve completion of this.

3. Thurrock Fees and Charges Policy

A revised policy for Fees and Charges has been prepared and is enclosed as Appendix 1.

The policy deals with the following:

- sets out the purpose of the policy
- highlights the financial context of the Council
- explains why the Council levies Fees and Charges and factors that must be considered
- proposes a default approach to charging of full cost recovery and annual minimum inflationary increases
- highlights the categories of charge and the legal basis
- sets out roles and responsibilities
- also, the category of charge and the Council's commercial and pricing principles
- advises on the timetable for reviews
- notes key administration issues and
- sets out the basis for charging and cost calculation and provides a structured framework for future work in this area

4. Benchmarking Data

To enable a comparison of Thurrock's Fees and Charges against those of other boroughs initial data has been gathered. This requires much greater work including full reviews and business cases before any decisions are taken on the matters below, but it does provide a start for exploration. The high-level analysis indicates that:

- On average Thurrock have less Fees and Charges than those the Council benchmarked against as at 2022/23:
 - Thurrock - 1099
 - LBBD - 1209
 - Basildon - 1318
 - Havering - 1397
 - Medway - 1464
 - Southend - 1518Please see Appendix 3a, 3b, 3c.
- This indicates that Thurrock has the potential to expand its Fees and Charges offering with a view to increasing Thurrock's income. Noting as above the need for full reviews and business cases in all instances. In addition, during the initial work the following have been identified as areas for further review. At this stage these are simply areas to be considered in the future:
 - Culture parks and outdoor spaces
 - Events and hiring
 - Exhibition spaces an area which Thurrock's comparable authorities charge for which Thurrock do not
 - It is also known from previous benchmarking exercises that Thurrock's registrars' services could be expanded to generate more income subject to appropriate investment.

This also confirms that in some areas Thurrock's charges are significantly less than that of its neighbouring boroughs. For example, Thurrock have the lowest cost Resident Parking Permit Prices of its comparative boroughs, by way of example for the 1st Resident Permit Thurrock the charge is £15, whereas Maldon charge £54, Brentwood and Basildon charge £34, Table 1 below. This matter will be explored further in stage 2.

Table 1 – Resident Parking Permit Comparison

Residents Permits 22/23	1 st	2nd	3rd	Rank	% > TC
Thurrock (Agreed 23/24)	£15	£15	£15	1st	0%
Southend	£15	£25	£50	2nd	0%
Chelmsford	£26	£26	£26	3rd	73%
Medway	£31	£31	£31	4th	107%
Basildon	£34	£34	£34	5th	123%
Brentwood	£34	£34	£34	6th	123%
Havering	£35	£60	£85	7th	133%
Rochford	£50	£50	£50	8th	233%
Castle Point	£52	£52	£52	9th	247%
Maldon	£54	£54	£54	10th	260%
<i>Ranking based off 1st permit pricing</i>					

There are other examples which will also be explored further in stage 2 of the review.

5. Material Income Areas

Budgeted total income for 2023/24 is £51.805m as per the budget report presented to Full Council on 1st March 2023. Of this income, £7.462m is due to be generated through the levying of Fees and Charges for council services. The material areas identified within this are set to contribute £4.242m (57%) of the budgeted Fees and Charges revenue:

Table 2 – Material Income Areas

Key areas:	2023/24 Indicative budget £'000
<i>Planning</i>	(1,180)
<i>Parking</i>	(523)
<i>Street works</i>	(480)
<i>Environment Enforcement</i>	(317)
<i>Licensing</i>	(314)
<i>Burials & Cemeteries</i>	(305)
<i>Registrar</i>	(303)
<i>Music Service</i>	(284)
<i>Theatre sales</i>	(269)
<i>Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre</i>	(265)
Total of key areas	(4,242)
% Of 23/24 F&C budget	57%

Please see link below for full details:

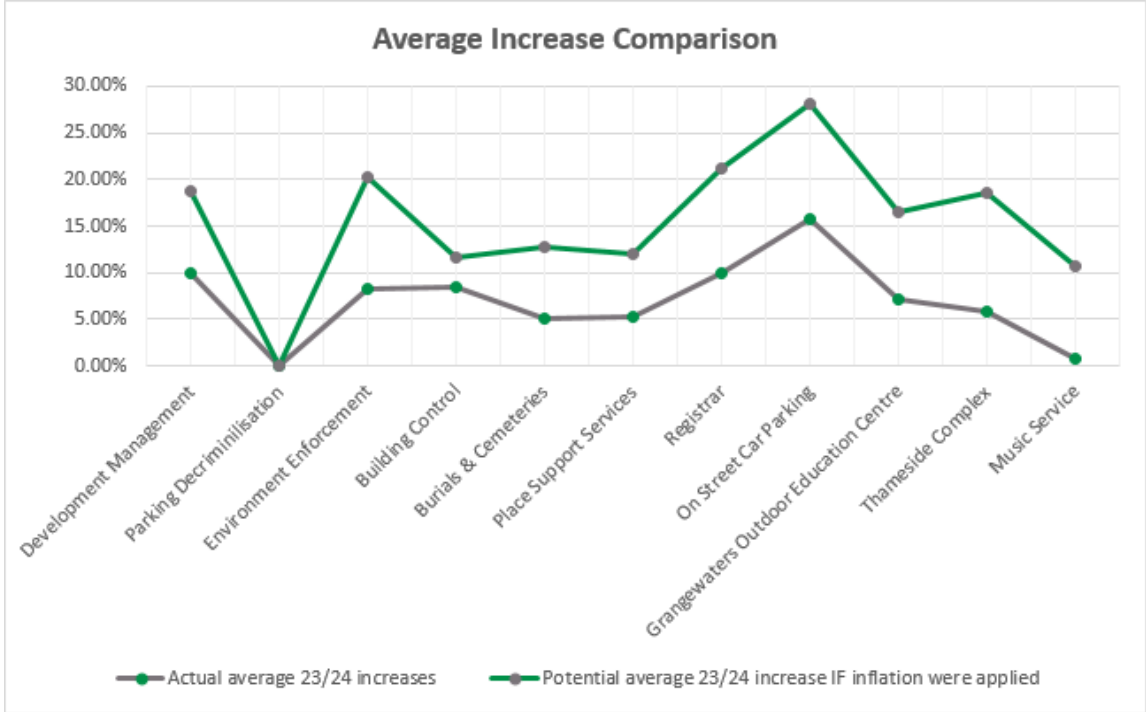
[\(Public Pack\)Item 16 - Appendix 2 - Budget Proposals 2023-24 Agenda Supplement for Council, 01/03/2023 19:00 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

6. Inflation Comparator

After an assessment of the material areas over the past 5 years, it was identified that in some instances, the rate of inflation was not previously applied to each fee.

The review indicates that if these prices had increased at the rate of inflation over the past 5 years, income could potentially have increased for 9 out of the 10 areas (see graph 1 below) therefore potentially provided additional income. As a consequence of this, it is planned to address these issues further in the coming stage 2 of the review.

Graph 1 – Average Increase Comparison



7. Proposed Prices Increases

Using the above as a base, price increases are proposed in 8 of the 10 areas, via 153 fees which we are proposing to increase from 1st October. These increases range from £0.10p for additional parcels for personal searches, to £600 within pre-application fees. If demand remains unchanged, Thurrock services could potentially generate £37k for 2023/24, circa £74k full year effect.

The full list of suggested charges can be seen in Appendix 2.

8. Identifying Initial New Charges

As part of the review the following new fees were identified and are proposed to be implemented alongside the other increases:

- **Bikeability Level 3** – This will expand the service offering and promote the service beyond its current level, enabling schools to offer further development of skills, this can be advertised on Thurrock's services to school's website to encourage take up and could potentially generate income of £45 per pupil grant funding, plus £5 per pupil Thurrock charge. Currently it is estimated that 83 pupils can be trained in the next 6 months, providing an income generation of £4,150, however the more that are trained, the higher the yield; therefore, in future years the service will promote this in order to generate more income year on year.
- **Request for bus stop suspension** - This was previously capped at 2 days (£350), however whilst reviewing the fees, it was identified that in some instances bus stops were being decommissioned for 12+ months, it is now proposed that a monthly charge of £300 be applied. This should not only generate additional income but also incentivise third party utility companies to carry out the works in a timelier fashion, which will cause less disruption. A recent example of this is the latest suspension of Bus Stop 1 located at Grays station whereby C2C have requested to decommission Bus Stop 1 in order for them to carry out works to the station for approximately 14 months. This would equate to £4,200 of income compared to the previous capped charge of £350 giving us an increase of £3,850 for this one application.
- **Visitor Parking Vouchers** – Previously Thurrock gave the first 20x 5-hour visitor vouchers free of charge, this would equate to 100 hours of free parking, which is a value of £9 per household if charged at the existing 45p per 5 hours fee. As per previous years demand for visitor vouchers, the proposal is to no longer give the free 100 hours as this would generate additional income for the Council. This could potentially generate an additional £31,500 annually as previous year demand has shown a demand of 3,500 visitor vouchers.

In addition to the newly identified fees, other areas of potential opportunities and/or efficiencies will be explored subject to the preparation of full business cases/completion of ongoing work with other colleagues.

9. Continuous Improvement and Automation

The Business Development team have explored opportunities to improve the process of Fees and Charges and to date several improvements have been made which are:

- improved the calculations of the master data
- added change analysis
- identified statutory vs non-statutory and specifically those fees that can be increased.
- streamlined the communication process
- further engaged with services and finance officers
- raised the profile of Fees and Charges
- most importantly an increased understanding and in-depth knowledge of the complexities and legalities regarding Fees and Charges

The latest initiative is the implementation of a semi-automated workflow process for Fees and Charges via the Council's embedded 4me system. 4me is a CRM self-service change portal. This will enable the Council to attain further transparency, improve reporting functions and provide a superior audit trail whilst minimising the administration for Fees and Charges. This will allow for the automation of the approvals process and reduction in administrative duties when capturing updates from service areas within the annual process, via the use of an embedded approval hierarchy. The system will also capture any mid-year requests for amendments to fees and ensure they have gone through the correct approval process and generate reports and statistics whilst holding all this data securely in a central location minimising the risk of data corruption.

10. Conclusions:

As a result of the Fees and Charges review – Phase 1, it has been identified that there is potential to generate in excess of £114k per annum, this was established by the proposed increases in the material areas and the identification of new charges. Given this additional income in the initial phase 1 of the review it is reasonable to conclude that there is potential to generate further income as part of Phase 2 by reviewing the remainder of the Fees and Charges and identifying further opportunities to expand Thurrock's fees and charges offering.

11. Reasons for Recommendations

The setting of appropriate Fees and Charges will enable the Council to generate essential income for the funding of Council services. The approval of reviewed Fees and Charges will also ensure that the Council is competitive with other service providers and neighbouring councils. The ability to vary charges within financial year will enable services to more flexible adapt to changing economic conditions.

The granting of delegated Director authority will only apply to legal or regulatory changes. If there is a need to alter fees during the financial year to enable the Council to better respond to commercial challenges, additional reports may be brought to Cabinet for approval.

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

Consultations will be progressed where there is a specific need. However, with regard to all other items, the proposals in this report do not affect any specific parts of the borough and have been seen via their retrospective Overview and Scrutiny committees and commentary is included within the Appendix of this report. Fees and Charges are known to customers before they make use of the services they are purchasing.

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

The changes in these Fees and Charges may impact the community; however, it must be taken into consideration that these price rises include inflation, and no profit will be made on the running of these discretionary services.

14. Implications

14.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jo Freeman**
Finance Manager

Thurrock's challenging financial position is set out in the opening paragraph of this report.

Budgeted income from fees and charges for 2023/24 is £7.462m. The income from fees and charges helps to manage demand and cover costs for providing services. Changes proposed to fees and charges set out in this report are anticipated to deliver an additional £0.114m in a full year. The total amount of income generated through fees and charges will depend on price as well as volume/service take up. Any changes to service delivery or use of assets will also impact the ability to realise the £0.114m in full.

14.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kevin Molloy**
Principal Solicitor Contracts Team

Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 ("LGA 2003") and guidance issued in 2003 pursuant to section 96(3) of the Act, empowers the Council to charge for discretionary services related to a Council function if the recipient of the service has agreed to its provision.

Discretionary services are those services authorised by statute that the Council is not required to provide but may do so voluntarily (section 93(1)(a), LGA 2003).

However, the Council cannot charge for mandatory services or services it has a duty to provide. Further, the section 93 charging power does not apply where there is a power to charge for a particular service elsewhere in other legislation (section 93(2)(a), LGA 2003).

The section 93 charging power cannot be used to charge for a service if other legislation expressly excludes an authority from charging (section 93(2)(b), LGA 2003). For example, the Education Act 1944 prohibits a local authority from charging for basic education; this prevents section 93 being used to circumvent a local authority's statutory duty to provide basic education for free.

The Council can set the level of charge for each discretionary service. However proposed charges must have regard to the 2003 statutory guidance. [General Power Best Value \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Where the introduction of new fees and charges require consultation of affected service user this needs to be undertaken prior to the proposed changes taking effect and consultation responses considered as part of the decision-making process. Also, any relevant statutory provisions must be complied with prior to the introduction of new fees and charges.

The Council is under a general duty to secure that, from one financial year to the next, the income from charges for services does not exceed the costs of provision (section 93(3), LGA 2003). This approach allows a local authority greater flexibility to balance their accounts over a period of time and recognises the practical difficulties for a local authority in estimating the charges for a discretionary service at the outset.

The Council must offset any surplus or deficit in income because of any over or under recovery of charges when setting future charges for the discretionary service. This ensures that over time the income generated by the discretionary service equates to the cost of providing the service.

However, the Council does not have to recover the full costs of providing the service if there are policy reasons for limiting the charges in relation to a particular user of the service e.g., to the disabled, the unemployed or those in receipt of benefit. It must be able to justify its reasons for doing so.

Alongside the section 93 charging power, the general power of competence for local authorities under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 (LA 2011) also confers a power on the Council to charge individuals for discretionary services. The section 1 charging power has similar requirements of the Section 93 LGA 2003 charging power as referred to above.

These charging powers are not intended to provide a new income stream for the Council and cannot be used to generate a profit. It does enable the Council to recover the costs of providing services or improvements to services that it might not otherwise have been able to justify providing or been able to provide. These powers also enable the Council to spread the cost of providing an existing service or a new discretionary service,

Taking the decision set the fees and charges is an executive function of the Council. The report to Cabinet supporting the recommended course of action should contain all the necessary and relevant information to enable members to take an informed decision on the proposed scheme and to satisfy themselves that the proposed charges are fair and reasonable.

In reviewing and setting fees and charges, the Council will need to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

The issuing of a s114 Notice by the Council's Chief Finance Officer (s151 Officer) means by law the Council must stop all expenditure with the exception statutory services and pre-existing commitments. The recommendations set out in the report contribute to the financial recovery of the Council.

14.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The Council is responsible for promoting equality of opportunity in the provision of services and employment as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. Decisions on setting charges and fees are subject to Community Equality Impact Assessment process and the Council's wider decision-making structures to determine impact on protected groups and related concessions that may be available. A CEIA has been completed to assess the impact of the changes detailed within this report.

Council's pay and display charges have been benchmarked to ensure they are either below or in line with other local authorities and are applied fairly and consistently across all car parks in Thurrock that are the subject of pay and display measures.

Council's overarching Parking Policy and Strategy and Parking Enforcement Strategy was the subject of consultation in November 2020, and each are the subject of Community Equality Impact Assessment. Feedback from this consultation and other individual projects is used to support ongoing monitoring and review of CEIA and the implementation of the related policy and strategies.

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

Not applicable

15. **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

16. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Fees and Charges – Policy.
- Appendix 2 – Fees and Charges - Schedule of Material Areas - Proposed charges.
- Appendix 3a – Additional Data - Benchmarking Summary.
- Appendix 3b – Additional Data - Resident Parking Permit Comparison.
- Appendix 3c – Additional Data - Building Control Comparison.
- Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary.

Fees and Charges Policy

POLICY AND FRAMEWORK FOR THE
SETTING OF
FEES AND CHARGES ACROSS
THURROCK COUNCIL

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1 BACKGROUND

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- highlight the financial context of the Council
- explain why the Council levies fees and charges and factors that must be considered
- propose a default approach to charging
- highlight the categories of charging and the legal basis of charging
- set out roles and responsibilities
- clarify the Council's commercial and pricing principles
- advise on the timetable for reviews
- note key administration issues
- set out the basis for charging and cost calculation

Financial Context

Thurrock's financial position is exceptionally challenging as can be seen from the table below which highlights that 35.2% of its 2023/24 budget is financed by an indicative capitalisation direction. A non recurrent form of potential exceptional funding which has to be replaced by asset or investment sales or revenue budget reductions (expenditure) or increase (income)

Table 1 – Council Income 2023/24

Budget	£m	£m	%
Local Income		181	35.4
Business Rates	47		
Income	52*		
Council Tax	82		
Capitalisation Direction		180	35.2
Specific Grants		132	25.8
Government Grants		11	2.2
Collection Funds		7	1.4
Total		511	100.00

Why the Council Charges for Services

The level of funding Councils receive from Government through core grants has steadily declined and there is an increasing reliance on local income sources – council tax, business rates and other income being key in this.

Many Local Authorities have recognised the importance of income generation in addressing the financial challenges with which they are now faced. Fees and charges form one part of the other income, and while relatively small, are still a vital source of funding for Councils, enabling them to balance their budgets. and by doing so enable important local services to be sustained and provided. As can be seen from Table 1 this is especially the case for Thurrock with its current dependence on the capitalisation direction which must be resolved at the earliest opportunity.

- Of this £52m £7.5m comes from fees and charges

In addition fees and charges:

- are an important source of income providing vital funds to deliver essential public services
- assist in achieving the Council's objectives for better outcomes for residents
- can be used as a tool to manage demand or influence behaviour, through encouraging/discouraging the use of services and/or the patterns of use of services to help or benefit residents
- are an important driver of efficiency as an appropriate and strategic approach to fees and charges requires the Council to have a robust understanding of the costs of the services it provides, as well as local economic and market factors.
- ensure that users pay directly for some, or all of the costs as opposed to taxpayers in general subsidising individual users which can have consequences for the funding of services in general, and/or cause levels of taxation to be higher than they would otherwise be.

Factors to be Considered when Setting Fees and Charges

The following considerations are to be observed by the Council in setting fees and charges for the services that it provides:

- some categories of income will be influenced by wider factors such as the general level of economic activity
- the level and structure of charges already being made by the Council may limit the potential to generate additional income
- increasing fees and charges may have a regressive effect
- public or commercial competitors may develop resentment if the Council has a monopoly on providing the service. Compliance with this policy will enable assurance to be provided that fees and charges have been properly calculated
- end users may feel as if they are being subjected to double taxation, namely through Council Tax (which is visibly high) and the additional charge in question. This is a not infrequent misconception and users can be advised more fully
- the risk to the Council of making a loss must be considered when deciding whether the service should be provided
- the long-term risk of not providing a service, especially if that service is a preventative service must be considered. For example, would this result in greater costs or increased risk in the medium to long term if we stopped providing this service? Or is there a greater risk of harm or reputational damage if the Council does not provide a service which later results in a more costly resolution.

Policy Proposal

To ensure the best possible value for money and establish the fairest possible approach to charging and cost recovery, this Policy proposes that **charges for discretionary services will be set in order to fully recover their costs**, unless there is a specific decision on the part of the Cabinet to subsidise the service provision for policy reasons.

At the same time the Council will aim to support vulnerable groups as far as it can, encourage equal access and will for all charges give due consideration to Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 by considering the impact on individuals/groups who share a protected characteristic.

Categories of Charges that the Council May Apply

As with all Local Authorities Thurrock has different types of fees and charges:

- **Charges set by statute law which are fully outside the Council's control** - These are set by Government or in line with statutory guidance. These include planning and building control applications, some adult social care services, such as residential care.
- **Charges set by statute law where the amount charged must be within certain parameters** - These are set by Government or in line with statutory guidance.
- **Charges that are fully within the Council's control in determining the amount that should be charged** – These are Discretionary charges that are fully or partially within the Council's control in determining the amount that should be charged. These are services that the Council is not mandated or under a duty to provide but that instead chooses to provide for the benefit of the residents.

Legal Basis

The Council will ensure that any charge that is implemented for the services that it provides will meet the current legal requirements.

As outlined above, the legal basis for implementing a fee or charge is arrived at either through a specific statutory legislation relating to the particular service, or through the employing of the Council's discretionary powers under the Localism Act 2011 or s93(1) Local Government Act 2003. Where a service specific legislation does not empower charging then the Council can rely on the above legislation to charge for discretionary services.

Additional guidance will be sought with regard to the specific requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and s93(1) Local Government Act 2003, and the following summarises the main limitations which will be taken into consideration before introducing or amending a charge when the Council employs its powers to charge for a discretionary service:

- there must not be a legal restriction on charging.
- the charging powers only apply to discretionary services against which there is no pre-existing power to charge
- if the power is to be used to operate a service commercially on a traded basis then it must be provided through a UK registered company or cooperative.
- charges for discretionary services not operated commercially must be set so that income does not exceed the cost of provision. This must be calculated, in taking one financial year with the next, the income from discretionary charges must not exceed the cost of provision. The intention of the power is not that local authorities make a profit, rather that they are able to recover their costs.
- in setting discretionary charges, the function may charge only some service users and may make different charges to different groups of service users, provided that the cost recovery limitation is observed.
- the service user must have agreed to the charge before it can be applied. Where charges are to be collected after services have been provided it is important that evidence of customer consent is obtained, otherwise any outstanding debt may be unenforceable. This can be done by the display of signs or through agreements.
- finally, an important point to note with regard to the powers to charge and trade is that whilst these are limited to discretionary services, where a service is being provided under statutorily defined limits, any enhanced provision beyond statutory requirements could be considered to be discretionary and can therefore be charged for in line with the requirements of this policy

This policy will be effective from July 2023 following approval from Cabinet

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Service managers are responsible for ensuring fees are set in accordance with this Policy. For reviews to be effective, managers will need to consider relevant market information e.g. changes in legislation, patterns of service use, benchmarking data, price sensitivity, or opportunities to introduce or extend charges. It is important that areas not currently charged for (but which could potentially be) are also considered.

Service managers must review all charges for which they are responsible for on at least an annual basis as part of the budget process. There must be continuous and full engagement with Finance and Business Development teams throughout this process.

Directors should ensure that their service area has completed this task prior to the completion of the Council's annual fees and charges setting process.

Directors should ensure that their service area has completed this task prior to the completion of the Council's annual fees and charges setting process:

- **Analyse** – service has reviewed and identified new charges and amended existing charges, including both commercial and statutory charges.
- **Engage** - engaged and sought support from key stakeholders for proposed changes.
- **Action** – incorporated the proposed charges into the planned budgets for the coming year and the fees and charges process.
- **Communicate** – communicated the proposals at the relevant Overview and Scrutiny meetings.
- **Approve** - Changes to be approved on an ongoing basis as necessary or as part of the budget setting process, then via all appropriate committees and boards as per the timeline in table 3, section 4.

3 CHARGES – CATEGORIES, COMMERCIAL AND PRICING PRINCIPLES

3.1 Charging Categories

It is proposed that fees and charges for discretionary services as a default are set in order to **fully recover the cost of delivery**, unless there is a specific decision by Cabinet to subsidise the service provision for policy reasons.

All charges should be identified as belonging to one of the categories in Table 2 below. In determining the appropriate charging category proper consideration should be given to the wider equalities implications which may be involved affecting accessibility of all groups to Council services.

Table 2 - Approaches to fees and charges and corresponding strategic objectives

Approach	Objective
1. Full cost recovery	The Council wishes to make the service generally available, but there is no policy rationale for providing a subsidy from general taxation. This Policy proposes that full cost recovery is the default approach to establishing fees and charges. Charging for discretionary services will fall into this category unless otherwise agreed.
2. Full cost recovery with concessionary discounts	The Council wishes to make the service generally available and is prepared to subsidise the service to ensure priority groups have access to the service, and/or other Council priority objectives are met
3. Subsidised	The Council wishes to make the service widely accessible and therefore provides a subsidy from general taxation, however users of the service are expected to make some contribution to the cost.
4. Nominal	The Council's Policy is to make the service fully available and "free at the point of delivery". The service is funded from general taxation
5. Statutory	Charges are set in line with legal obligations and appropriate legislation.

3.2. Commercial Charging Principles

The Commercial Charging Principles establish the Council's key philosophies in relation to charging, these principles should be adhered to by all. Any deviations from the charging principles set out will require appropriate approval. Such principles are reflected in any local, service-based charging policy. This policy sets out several principles that are considered to be those which are most relevant. It should be noted that these principles will generally apply to services for which the Council has discretion over the level of charging rather than services where charging is prevented or where charges are required to be set within statutory limits.

The standard principles that will be applied to all fees and charges set by the Council will be as follows:

- fees and charges will be set to recover the full cost and to maximise income streams, where this is likely to lead to a higher yield.
- costs of any subsidies provided for provision of services must be clearly identified and reviewed as part of the budget setting process and minimised.
- where possible payment will be sought in advance of the supply of goods or services using the most appropriate payment channels.
- any new charges must be developed in the context of the council's strategic agenda
- the impact of new charges must be worked through in sufficient detail prior to implementation
- the development of new charges must follow the council process set out in this Policy

- benchmarking will be undertaken to ensure that the proposed level of fees and charges can be justified against other, similar providers and/or Authorities.
- fees and charges will be subject to at least an annual review in accordance with the agreed corporate timeline and budget setting timetable.
- fees and charges will be subject to a local equalities impact assessments where appropriate.

If a local service seeks approval to deviate from these principles, a local policy statement will be prepared, setting out the basis and reason for any such variations. This will include an equalities impact assessment covering the fees and charges, the policy, in each local service area and the financial impact of the proposal. This will then allow the option to be fully considered.

3.3 Pricing Principles

Rather than a blanket increase across all service lines, when considering the pricing strategy some key questions must be considered:

- where can we apply a tiered/premium pricing structure
- how sensitive are customers to price (are there areas where a price freeze is relevant)
- what new charges might we want to introduce for this financial year
- how do our charges compare to neighbouring boroughs and private sector competitors (particularly in those instances where customers have choice)
- how can we influence channel shift
- can we set charges to recover costs
- what do our competitors charge
- how sensitive is demand to price
- statutory services may have discretionary elements that we can influence.
- do we take deposits, charge cancellation fees, and charge an admin fee for duplicate services (e.g., lost certificates)
- how do proposed price increase compare to inflation which must be the minimum starting point

3.4 Charging Exemptions

All services provided by the Council will be charged for unless prevented by statute, or detailed as exempt, evidence of this should be provided during the annual fees and charges process.

4. Timetable

The Council must keep its schedule of fees and charges under regular review to ensure the most appropriate fees and charges are applied.

All charges and the scope for charging will be reviewed at least annually within the service area, though charges within the same service area can be reviewed at additional times. All reviews will include those services which could be charged for, but which are currently provided free of charge and all reviews will be undertaken in accordance with the policy.

Table 3 – Example of Committee and Board Timeline

Committee	Meeting Date	Report Submission	O&S Imps Submission Deadline	ICB	ICB Report Submission	SLT	SLT report Submission	Commercial & Budget Sign Off
Cabinet (February)	08/02/23	26/01/23	N/A	20/01/23	15/01/23	11/01/23	05/01/23	02/01/23
Housing O&S	22/11/22	09/11/22	01/11/22			02/11/22	27/10/22	22/10/22
Cleaner, Greener, Safer O&S	08/11/22	25/10/22	18/10/22			19/10/22	13/10/22	07/10/22
Children's O&S	17/11/22	03/11/22	27/10/22			26/10/22	20/10/22	15/10/22
Health & Well-being O&S	03/11/22	20/10/22	12/10/22			12/10/22	06/10/22	02/10/22
Planning, Transport & Regen O&S	06/12/22	21/11/22	10/11/22			16/11/22	10/11/22	05/11/22
Corporate O&S	01/12/22	17/11/22	07/11/22			13/11/22	07/11/22	03/10/22

**Example 22/23 dates for illustrative purposes only – will be amended when 2023/24 timetable issued*

5. Administration

Charges should be simple to understand and to administer. They should be easily located by service users through the Council's website, through any other form of literature provided, or directly from Council services. Reasonable notice should be given to service users before any new or revised charges are implemented. Methods of payment should be flexible, convenient and consider the needs of those on low income and people's ability to pay. The easier it is to pay, the more likely it is that payment will be made. Consideration should be given to:

- payment in advance: which should be the preferred means of recovery if possible
- frequency of payment: having regard to the budgetary patterns of those reliant on benefits or low incomes
- format of payment: including alternatives to cash. The costs of collection should be evaluated. Potentially, they may make the charging proposal uneconomic or require charges to be raised further. Costs of collection must be identified and budgeted for
- the corporate charging policy will need to follow corporate and service policy and financial procedure rules regarding the collectability of the income and debt recovery strategy.

A schedule of all fees and charges is managed and supporting documentation is maintained by the Business Development Team. These schedules include, identified separately:

- any charges that are Statutory
- the increase/decrease from the previous year
- the charge categorisation of that fee
- which committee this fee relates to and
- the schedule records the date of the last review.

The date of any relevant political decision and the minutes of that Committee are also made available alongside the schedule.

6. CHARGING AND COST CALCULATION

Adopting a method of full cost recovery means that the total cost of delivery, including the appropriate level of VAT, together with an apportionment of department and corporate overheads is calculated and charged to the service user. It involves analysing the whole process and ensuring that all the stages involved are considered

Table 4: Costs of Provision to Inform Fees and Charges

1. Employment costs

- Costs of staff who deliver the service
- Salary plus all other on-costs to employer (e.g. pension)
- Allocation of pension back-funding

2. Departmental costs

- Costs incurred by the Department to deliver the service, for example:
 - Travel and distribution costs incurred
 - Specialised equipment required
 - Administration and management at the Departmental level
 - Insurance costs paid at the Departmental level
 - Advertising and marketing costs paid at the Departmental level

3. Corporate costs and overheads

- Costs incurred by other corporate services to ensure the service is provided, including:
 - Accommodation, IT and Insurance
 - Back office support services such as Treasury and Finance, Human Resources, Legal, Business Operations (e.g. payroll, accounts payable)
 - Democratic costs (e.g. costs of democratic decision-making/governance processes relevant to the service, if and as appropriate)
 - Insurance costs paid corporately
 - Marketing and advertising costs paid at the corporate level

4. Financial costs

- Depreciation
- Costs of capital
- Interest on loans
- Costs of payment collection fees
- Debt collection and bad debt write-off

Appendix 2 - Schedule of Material

Material areas	Name of Fee or Charge (Inceasable)	Inceasable	Mid Year Review Increases			
			Current 23/24 Charge	Proposed (MYR) Charge	Proposed Incr. £	Proposed Incr. %
* All amounts are rounded						
Development Management	Pre application fees - Householder - written only	Y	£ 69.50	£ 76.00	+ £6.50	+ 9.35%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Householder- written with 1/2 hour meeting	Y	£ 111.00	£ 120.00	+ £9.00	+ 8.11%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Householder- proposales in conservation areas/works to listed building inc. 1/2 hour meeting (with planning officer and conservation officer)	Y	£ 390.00	£ 420.00	+ £30.00	+ 7.69%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Householder- single dwelling (replacement and residential annexe) inc. 1/2 hour meeting	Y	£ 209.00	£ 225.00	+ £16.00	+ 7.66%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Householder - single dwelling (replacement or residential annexe) in conservation are or listed building, inc. 1/2 hour meeting (with planning officer and conservation officer)	Y	£ 489.00	£ 530.00	+ £41.00	+ 8.38%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Householder - Alterations to listed building (whether residential or commercial) inc/ 1/2 hour meeting, (with planning officer and conservation officer)	Y	£ 390.00	£ 420.00	+ £30.00	+ 7.69%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Minor development inc. 1 hour meeting	Y	£ 625.00	£ 645.00	+ £20.00	+ 3.20%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Major development - 10-49 Units	Y	£ 2,100.00	£ 2,300.00	+ £200.00	+ 9.52%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Major development - 50-99 Units	Y	£ 3,000.00	£ 3,300.00	+ £300.00	+ 10.00%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Major development - 100-499 Units	Y	£ 4,800.00	£ 5,300.00	+ £500.00	+ 10.42%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Major development - 500+ Units	Y	£ 6,000.00	£ 6,600.00	+ £600.00	+ 10.00%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Non-residential Major schemes based on floorspace - 1,000 to 4,999 sq.m	Y	£ 2,100.00	£ 2,300.00	+ £200.00	+ 9.52%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Non-residential Major schemes based on floorspace - 5,000 to 9,999 sq.m	Y	£ 3,000.00	£ 3,300.00	+ £300.00	+ 10.00%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Non-residential Major schemes based on floorspace - 10,000 to 29,999 sq.m	Y	£ 4,800.00	£ 5,300.00	+ £500.00	+ 10.42%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Non-residential Major schemes based on floorspace - 30,000+ sq.m	Y	£ 6,000.00	£ 6,600.00	+ £600.00	+ 10.00%
Environment Enforcement						
Environment Enforcement	Abandoned Vehicles - Administration charge for removal of vehicle from private property when directed by Management company or Private Landowner	Y	£ 100.00	£ 112.00	+ £12.00	+ 12.00%
Burials & Cemeteries						
Burials & Cemeteries	The following Burial charges are applicable to residents of the Borough of Thurrock. Non Residents are required to pay double the Burial fees set out below, also included is the charge for non residents aged 5 and under.					
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 1 Interment - Exclusive right of Burial - In a full size grave-Lawn Section	Y	£ 930.00	£ 990.00	+ £60.00	+ 6.45%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 1 Interment - Exclusive right of Burial - In a full size grave-Traditional grave where available	Y	£ 1,900.00	£ 2,025.00	+ £125.00	+ 6.58%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 1 Interment - In a grave - Person aged 16 year and over	Y	£ 755.00	£ 820.00	+ £65.00	+ 8.61%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 1 Interment - In a grave - Cremated remains in full size grave	Y	£ 381.00	£ 408.00	+ £27.00	+ 7.09%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Additional interment of ashes and replacement plaque for further 7 years where original subscription has: Less than 4 years to run	Y	£ 264.00	£ 282.00	+ £18.00	+ 6.82%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Additional interment of ashes and replacement plaque for further 7 years where original subscription has: More than 4 years to run	Y	£ 187.00	£ 201.00	+ £14.00	+ 7.49%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Cremated Remains Section - Exclusive Right of Burial for a forty year period	Y	£ 390.00	£ 420.00	+ £30.00	+ 7.69%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Cremated Remains Section - Interment of Ashes	Y	£ 381.00	£ 414.00	+ £33.00	+ 8.66%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Erection of memorial plaque only for 7 years (no ashes to inter)	Y	£ 225.00	£ 243.00	+ £18.00	+ 8.00%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Includes plaque for 7 years & loose interment of ashes	Y	£ 291.00	£ 309.00	+ £18.00	+ 6.19%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Renewal of 7 year subscription - With existing plaque	Y	£ 148.00	£ 160.00	+ £12.00	+ 8.11%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Renewal of 7 year subscription - With replacement plaque	Y	£ 225.00	£ 243.00	+ £18.00	+ 8.00%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 - Kerb Plaque - replacement	Y	£ 87.00	£ 95.00	+ £8.00	+ 9.20%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 3 Monuments, Gravestones, Tablets & Monumental Inscriptions - For the right to erect or place on a grave in respect of which an exclusive right of burial has not been granted: a tablet not exceeding 20' x 18' x 6' base	Y	£ 187.00	£ 201.00	+ £14.00	+ 7.49%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 3 Monuments, Gravestones, Tablets & Monumental Inscriptions - The fees indicated for Part 3 include the first inscription, for each inscription after the first	Y	£ 93.00	£ 100.00	+ £7.00	+ 7.53%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 3 Monuments, Gravestones, Tablets & Monumental Inscriptions - Permit for Lawn Grave Memorial	Y	£ 216.00	£ 231.00	+ £15.00	+ 6.94%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 3 Monuments, Gravestones, Tablets & Monumental Inscriptions - Permit for Traditional Grave Memorial	Y	£ 264.00	£ 282.00	+ £18.00	+ 6.82%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 3 Other Burial Fees - Permit to Work on a Headstone	Y	£ 89.00	£ 96.00	+ £7.00	+ 7.87%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 5 Other Burial Fees - Additional Plaque	Y	£ 206.00	£ 225.00	+ £19.00	+ 9.22%

Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 5 Other Burial Fees - Memorial bench	Y	£ 1,970.00	£ 2,150.00	+ £180.00	+ 9.14%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 5 Other Burial Fees - Memorial tree (New trees no longer available) Interment of second set of ashes for existing memorial trees only	Y	£ 381.00	£ 408.00	+ £27.00	+ 7.09%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 4 Other Burial Fees - Transfer of grant of exclusive right of burial fee for registering the transfer and endorsing the deed	Y	£ 89.00	£ 96.00	+ £7.00	+ 7.87%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 4 Other Burial Fees - Transfer of grant of exclusive burial where a Statutory Declaration is required	Y	£ 120.00	£ 129.00	+ £9.00	+ 7.50%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 4 Other Burial Fees - Search Fees for Historical records	Y	£ 28.50	£ 32.00	+ £3.50	+ 12.28%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 1 Interment - Exclusive right of Burial - In a full size grave-Muslim grave where available	Y	£ 1,900.00	£ 2,025.00	+ £125.00	+ 6.58%
Place Support Services						
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Additional parcel - commercial	Y	£ 55.00	£ 58.50	+ £3.50	+ 6.36%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Additional parcel - personal search	Y	£ 10.00	£ 10.10	+ £0.10	+ 1.00%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Additional parcel - residential	Y	£ 42.00	£ 45.00	+ £3.00	+ 7.14%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Cancellation fee for Con29 search	Y	£ 29.00	£ 30.00	+ £1.00	+ 3.45%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Charges for a copy of the local land charges search	Y	£ 23.00	£ 25.00	+ £2.00	+ 8.70%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Con290 - Per question	Y	£ 41.00	£ 44.00	+ £3.00	+ 7.32%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Copy of building regulation decision notice	Y	£ 16.00	£ 18.40	+ £2.40	+ 15.00%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Electronic Format - Con29R Search - commercial	Y	£ 216.00	£ 231.00	+ £15.00	+ 6.94%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Electronic Format - Con29R Search - residential	Y	£ 159.00	£ 170.00	+ £11.00	+ 6.92%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Form LLC1 Only	Y	£ 46.00	£ 48.50	+ £2.50	+ 5.43%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Assisted Personal Search (ranged based on no. questions)	Y	£33 - £44	£40 - £50	+ £6-7	+ 16.88%*
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Expedited Search	Y	£ 82.00	£ 87.00	+ £5.00	+ 6.10%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Expedited Residential search including Con 29 (Cannot include extra CON290 questions)	Y	£ 285.00	£ 303.00	+ £18.00	+ 6.32%
Registrar						
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Deposit for all ceremonies at Approved premises	Y	£ 110.00	£ 124.00	+ £14.00	+ 12.73%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Re-Schedule of Appointment/ Ceremony	Y	£ 40.00	£ 43.50	+ £3.50	+ 8.75%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Fees for superintendent Registrar attendance at approved premises for Marriage/Civil Partnership (Monday to Friday)	Y	£ 590.00	£ 610.00	+ £20.00	+ 3.39%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Fees for superintendent Registrar attendance at approved premises for Marriage/Civil Partnership (Saturday)	Y	£ 645.00	£ 665.00	+ £20.00	+ 3.10%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Fees for superintendent Registrar attendance at approved premises for Marriage/Civil Partnership (Sunday, Bank or Public Holiday)	Y	£ 700.00	£ 760.00	+ £60.00	+ 8.57%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Fees for superintendent Registrar attendance at Register Office for Naming Ceremonies/ Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership) Saturday	Y	£ 390.00	£ 430.00	+ £40.00	+ 10.26%
Registrar	Residents Services - Fees for Superintendent Registrar attendance at Approved Premise for Naming Ceremonies/Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership) (Monday to Friday)	Y	£ 355.00	£ 384.00	+ £29.00	+ 8.17%
Registrar	Residents Services - Fees for Superintendent Registrar attendance at Approved Premise for Naming Ceremonies/Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership) (Saturday)	Y	£ 410.00	£ 445.00	+ £35.00	+ 8.54%
Registrar	Residents Services - Fees for Superintendent Registrar attendance at Approved Premise for Naming Ceremonies/Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership) (Sunday)	Y	£ 465.00	£ 470.00	+ £5.00	+ 1.08%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Ceremonies held in Thameside Theatre (Monday to Friday)	Y	£ 288.00	£ 330.00	+ £42.00	+ 14.58%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Ceremonies held in Thameside Theatre (Saturday PM)	Y	£ 420.00	£ 490.00	+ £70.00	+ 16.67%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Ceremonies held in Thameside Theatre (Saturday AM)	Y	£ 350.00	£ 393.00	+ £43.00	+ 12.29%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Postage and Packing Charge (1st Class Recorded)	Y	£ 3.60	£ 4.40	+ £0.80	+ 22.22%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Private Citizenship Ceremony (Monday to Saturday)	Y	£ 200.00	£ 216.00	+ £16.00	+ 8.00%
Registrar	Resident Services - Registration - Postage and Packing Charge (Special Delivery 24hr Guaranteed)	Y	£ 10.00	£ 11.60	+ £1.60	+ 16.00%
Registrar	Administration Charge to complete PD2 / Proof of Life Confirmation forms	Y	£ 40.00	£ 44.50	+ £4.50	+ 11.25%
On Street Car Parking						
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - Business Permits - Per Month thereof	Y	£ 45.00	£ 50.00	+ £5.00	+ 11.11%
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - Business Permits - Per year	Y	£ 400.00	£ 450.00	+ £50.00	+ 12.50%
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - Business Permits - for 6 months	Y	£ 230.00	£ 249.00	+ £19.00	+ 8.26%
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - NHS Permits	Y	£ 120.00	£ 151.00	+ £31.00	+ 25.83%
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - Non Commuter Car Parks / On Street Long Stay Only	Y	£ 500.00	£ 635.00	+ £135.00	+ 27.00%

On Street Car Parking	Parking permits - Contractor permits - Annual	Y	£ 200.00	£ 207.00	+ £7.00	+ 3.50%
On Street Car Parking	Parking permits - Contractor permits - 6 month	Y	£ 100.00	£ 110.00	+ £10.00	+ 10.00%
On Street Car Parking	Parking permits - Contractor permits - 3 month	Y	£ 70.00	£ 77.00	+ £7.00	+ 10.00%
On Street Car Parking	Parking permits - Contractor permits - 1 month	Y	£ 50.00	£ 55.00	+ £5.00	+ 10.00%
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - Operational Permits	Y	£ 130.00	£ 149.00	+ £19.00	+ 14.62%
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - Residents Permits - Per year - 3rd Permit per Household	Y	£ 15.00	£ 75.00	N/A	N/A
On Street Car Parking	Tempory Permit	Y	£ 13.00	£ 13.40	+ £0.40	+ 3.08%
On Street Car Parking	Annual Country Park Parking Season Pass - Up to 3 hours	Y	£ 75.00	£ 82.00	+ £7.00	+ 9.33%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre						
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters - Club Use of Site - Grangewaters Working Newfoundlands (Per dog, per visit)	Y	£ 6.50	£ 6.80	+ £0.30	+ 4.62%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters VIP offer - Up to 2 adults and 2 children (Full day, 4 sessions)	Y	£ 346.00	£ 381.00	+ £35.00	+ 10.12%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters VIP offer - Up to 2 adults and 2 children (Half day, 2 sessions)	Y	£ 197.00	£ 217.00	+ £20.00	+ 10.15%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters - VIP offer - Up to 2 adults and 4 children (Full day, 4 sessions)	Y	£ 359.00	£ 396.00	+ £37.00	+ 10.31%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters VIP offer - Up to 2 adults and 4 children (Half day, 2 sessions)	Y	£ 215.00	£ 237.00	+ £22.00	+ 10.23%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters VIP offer - Up to 2 adults and 4 children (Single session)	Y	£ 122.00	£ 134.00	+ £12.00	+ 9.84%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters - School Holiday Periods Only - Activity Sessions (per session per person charge)	Y	£ 10.00	£ 11.00	+ £1.00	+ 10.00%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Accommodation only (per person per night)	Y	£ 20.00	£ 22.50	+ £2.50	+ 12.50%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Training Lodge / Dining Cabins - Full Day Charge	Y	£ 89.00	£ 92.00	+ £3.00	+ 3.37%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Training Lodge / Dining Cabins - Half Day Charge	Y	£ 49.00	£ 50.00	+ £1.00	+ 2.04%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Celebration Groups up to 10 people - Single Activity	Y	£ 175.00	£ 189.00	+ £14.00	+ 8.00%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Celebration Groups up to 10 people - Double Activity	Y	£ 310.00	£ 336.00	+ £26.00	+ 8.39%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Private Tuition - First Person - 1.5 Hour Session	Y	£ 58.00	£ 62.50	+ £4.50	+ 7.76%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Private Tuition - First Person - 3 Hour Session	Y	£ 100.00	£ 107.00	+ £7.00	+ 7.00%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Private Tuition - First Person - 4.5 Hour Session	Y	£ 126.00	£ 140.00	+ £14.00	+ 11.11%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Private Tuition - Additional Person - 1.5 Hour Session	Y	£ 31.50	£ 34.00	+ £2.50	+ 7.94%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Private Tuition - Additional Person - 3 Hour Session	Y	£ 50.50	£ 56.00	+ £5.50	+ 10.89%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Private Tuition - Additional Person - 4.5 Hour Session	Y	£ 68.50	£ 76.00	+ £7.50	+ 10.95%
Thameside Complex						
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Performance Surcharge	Y	£ 205.00	£ 243.00	+ £38.00	+ 18.53%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Room Hire - Third Floor Foyer Monday to Saturday only	Y	£ 20.00	£ 22.00	+ £2.00	+ 10.00%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Gallery Booking Deposit	Y	£ 25.50	£ 30.50	+ £5.00	+ 19.61%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Surcharge for staff and bar with Foyer booking	Y	£ 55.00	£ 61.00	+ £6.00	+ 10.92%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Extra Staff - For technical or Front of house work. Charged per hour.	Y	£ 24.00	£ 26.00	+ £2.00	+ 8.33%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Radio Microphone System Price per 4 microphones	Y	£ 31.00	£ 35.00	+ £4.00	+ 12.90%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Museum as additional dressing rooms - Only available after museum closing times 5pm-11pm	Y	£ 74.00	£ 82.00	+ £8.00	+ 10.81%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Digital Cinema Projector	Y	£ 71.00	£ 80.00	+ £9.00	+ 12.68%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Set up and Remove Stage in Foyer	Y	£ 71.00	£ 80.00	+ £9.00	+ 12.68%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Off Peak Tariff - Commercial Organisations Mondays and Tuesdays in January, February and August only. Standard block 18:00 to 23:00	Y	£ 81.50	£ 87.00	+ £5.50	+ 6.75%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Off Peak Tariff - Commercial Organisations Mondays and Tuesdays in January, February and August only. Standard Fee per hour between 09:00 to 18:00	Y	£ 351.00	£ 396.00	+ £45.00	+ 12.82%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Off Peak Tariff - Commercial Organisations Mondays and Tuesdays in January, February and August only. Additional hour after 23:00	Y	£ 186.00	£ 210.00	+ £24.00	+ 12.90%

Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 1 - Thurrock based non profit organisations, members of Thurrock Arts Council and Thurrock Schools and Colleges - Standard fee Period 18.00 to 23.00 - Saturday - 2) Thurrock based non-profit organisations and members of Thurrock Arts Council	Y	£ 845.00	£ 950.00	+ £105.00	+ 12.43%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 1 - Thurrock based non profit organisations, members of Thurrock Arts Council and Thurrock Schools and Colleges - Standard fee Period per additional hour after 11pm Mon-Thurs - 1) Thurrock Council services and DFE funded schools and academies	Y	£ 155.00	£ 174.00	+ £19.00	+ 12.26%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 1 - Thurrock based non profit organisations, members of Thurrock Arts Council and Thurrock Schools and Colleges - Standard fee Period per additional hour after 11pm Mon-Thurs - 2) Thurrock based non-profit organisations and members of Thurrock Arts Council	Y	£ 186.00	£ 210.00	+ £24.00	+ 12.90%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 1 - Thurrock based non profit organisations, members of Thurrock Arts Council and Thurrock Schools and Colleges -Standard fee per hour 08.00 to 18.00 - Saturday - 1) Thurrock Council services and DFE funded schools and academies	Y	£ 110.00	£ 124.00	+ £14.00	+ 12.73%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 1 - Thurrock based non profit organisations, members of Thurrock Arts Council and Thurrock Schools and Colleges -Standard fee per hour 08.00 to 18.00 - Saturday - 2) Thurrock based non-profit organisations and members of Thurrock Arts Council	Y	£ 131.00	£ 148.00	+ £17.00	+ 12.98%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Additional hours after 23.00 - Monday to Thursday	Y	£ 270.00	£ 303.00	+ £33.00	+ 12.22%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Additional hours after 23.00 - Saturday	Y	£ 441.00	£ 495.00	+ £54.00	+ 12.24%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Friday per hour 08.00 to 18.00	Y	£ 206.00	£ 231.00	+ £25.00	+ 12.14%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Monday to Thursday per hour 08.00 to 18.00	Y	£ 198.00	£ 225.00	+ £27.00	+ 13.64%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Saturday per hour 08.00 to 18.00	Y	£ 226.00	£ 255.00	+ £29.00	+ 12.83%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Standard Fee per period - 18.00 to 23.00 - Friday	Y	£ 1,160.00	£ 1,310.00	+ £150.00	+ 12.93%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Standard Fee per period - 18.00 to 23.00 - Saturday	Y	£ 1,580.00	£ 1,780.00	+ £200.00	+ 12.66%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Additional hours after 23.00 - Friday	Y	£ 297.00	£ 336.00	+ £39.00	+ 13.13%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Additional hours after 23.00 - Sunday	Y	£ 441.00	£ 495.00	+ £54.00	+ 12.24%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Standard Fee per period - 18.00 to 23.00 - Monday to Thursday	Y	£ 725.00	£ 820.00	+ £95.00	+ 13.10%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Sunday per hour 09.00 to 23.00	Y	£ 267.00	£ 300.00	+ £33.00	+ 12.36%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Bronze Technical Package	Y	£ 107.00	£ 121.00	+ £14.00	+ 13.08%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Silver Technical Package	Y	£ 150.00	£ 169.00	+ £19.00	+ 12.67%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Gold Technical Package	Y	£ 172.00	£ 194.00	+ £22.00	+ 12.79%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Platinum Technical Package	Y	£ 321.00	£ 363.00	+ £42.00	+ 13.08%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Foyer Party Package	Y	£ 321.00	£ 363.00	+ £42.00	+ 13.08%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Outdoor events Package	Y	£ 1,030.00	£ 1,160.00	+ £130.00	+ 12.62%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Indoor Events Package	Y	£ 1,030.00	£ 1,160.00	+ £130.00	+ 12.62%

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F&C 22/23 - Benchmarking	Thurrock	Havering	Southend	Basildon	LBB	Medway
	Fees	Fees	Fees	Fees	Fees	Fees
Service Categories	1,099	1,397	1,518	1,318	1,209	1,464
Advertising	1	4	-	-	-	-
Bereavement Services	28	214	218	51	61	220
Commercial Matters/ Properties	12	-	-	-	-	-
Culture, Parks & Outdoor Spaces	224	260	283	512	364	315
Allotments	2	1	8	8	2	5
Events/ Hiring	5	164	64	185	99	100
Grounds Maintenance	1	16	-	10	4	1
Heritage	8	-	-	-	124	51
Library Services	81	58	57	-	44	19
Parks	20	4	22	109	44	-
Sports & Leisure	44	17	132	69	47	65
Theatre	63	-	-	131	-	74
Environmental Health	115	119	5	9	46	20
Catering	1	4	-	-	-	-
Environmental Enforcement	36	38	-	-	14	-
Environmental Protection	78	77	5	9	32	20
Highways	63	21	126	-	50	46
Housing	68	13	24	9	41	36
General Housing	21	1	-	-	34	-
HMO	24	9	-	7	7	-
Housing Offences	9	-	-	2	-	-
Private Housing	13	3	24	-	-	36
Sheltered Housing	1	-	-	-	-	-
Legal Services	75	53	-	86	-	-
Regulatory	410	616	690	628	583	529
Building Control	1	27	135	110	26	-
Licensing	191	211	266	241	177	180
Local Land Charges	22	48	8	20	12	73
Planning	59	44	32	152	40	85
Parking	38	108	157	40	299	84
Public Protection	51	112	25	10	4	79
Registrars	48	66	67	55	25	28
Services for Adults	46	28	9	-	17	44
Adult Education	17	-	-	-	-	44
Adult Social Care	20	19	9	-	6	-
Court Protection	9	9	-	-	11	-
Services for Children	22	41	-	-	5	-
Childcare	19	-	-	-	5	-
Music Services	3	41	-	-	-	-
Transport	30	-	15	-	16	69
Waste	5	28	12	8	26	6
Unique Service Categories (Aggregated into service areas)			136	15	-	179
Archives	-	-	-	-	-	31
Exhibition Spaces	-	-	47	-	-	-
Interpretation Services	-	-	-	-	-	118
Photography/ Filming	-	-	11	15	-	-
Pier & Foreshore	-	-	66	-	-	30
Education	-	-	12	-	-	-

Sources shown in 'Summaries' tab

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Residents Permits 22/23	1st	2nd	3rd	Rank	% > TC
Thurrock (Agreed 23/24)	£15	£15	£15	1st	0%
Southend	£15	£25	£50	2nd	0%
Chelmsford	£26	£26	£26	3rd	73%
Medway	£31	£31	£31	4th	107%
Basildon	£34	£34	£34	5th	123%
Brentwood	£34	£34	£34	6th	123%
Havering	£35	£60	£85	7th	133%
Rochford	£50	£50	£50	8th	233%
Castle Point	£52	£52	£52	9th	247%
Maldon	£54	£54	£54	10th	260%
<i>Ranking based off 1st permit pricing</i>					

Residents Permits	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th+
Barking & Dagenham	Table - Emissions (CO2) g/km				
Band 1: 0 to 50*	£0 - Up to 2		£45	£45	£45
Band 2: 50 to 100	£18 - Up to 2		£45	£45	£45
Band 3: 101 to 140	£36 - Up to 2		£45	£54	£63
Band 4: 141 to 160	£45 - Up to 2		£56.25	£67.50	£78.75
Band 5: 161 to 180	£51 - Up to 2		£63.75	£76.50	£89.25
Band 6: 181 to 255	£80 - Up to 2		£100	£120	£140
Band 7: Over 256	£140 - Up to 2		£175	£210	£245
<i>* Hybrid or Electric vehicle</i>					

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Fee Comparison Full Plans 2023/24	< 30sqm	2 Storey	Loft ext.	Rank
Castle Point	£656	£754 (£806 between 40 and 100sqm)	£718	1st
Brentwood	£667	£778 (£865 between 40 and 100sqm)	£643	2nd
Thurrock	£694	£815	£676	3rd
Colchester	£737	£760 (£1003 between 40 and 100sqm)	£832	4th
Southend	£745	£902 (£980 between 30 and 100sqm)	£824	5th
Epping	£745	£745 (£1170 between 40 and 100sqm)	£790	6th
Havering	£754	£1,039	£754	7th
<i>Ranking based off cheapest < 30sqm cost</i>				

Fee Comparison Building Notice 2023/24	< 30sqm	2 Storey	Loft ext.	Rank
Castle Point	£720	£804 (£828 between 40 and 100sqm)	£758	1st
Thurrock	£729	£885	£729	2nd
Brentwood	£735	£855 (£951 between 40 and 100sqm)	£707	3rd
Epping	£745	£745 (£1170 between 40 and 100sqm)	£790	4th
Havering	£754	£1,039	£754	5th
Colchester	£767	£813 (1034 between 40 and 100sqm)	£882	6th
Southend	£785	£941 (£1020 between 40 and 100sqm)	£863	7th
<i>Ranking based off cheapest < 30sqm cost</i>				

% > TC
-5%
-4%
0%
6%
7%
7%
9%

% > TC
-1%
0%
1%
2%
3%
5%
8%

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Grangewaters – EIA

Community Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 states that public bodies must have “due regard” to a variety of Equalities objectives (Equality Act 2010, Section 149) and consequently, Equality Analysis must be carried out to demonstrate that decision-makers are fully aware of the impact that changes may have on stakeholders.

The concept of ‘due regard’ was reinforced in 2012 during the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which “requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities”

‘Due regard’ is dependent on the relevance and potential impact of the decision being considered. The greater the relevance and impact, the higher the regard due.

As an authority, we have made a commitment to apply a systematic screening process to new policy, strategy, functions or service development including reviews or changes to existing policy, strategy, functions or services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on different groups within our community.

This process has been developed, together with [full guidance](#), to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Service (Social Value) 2012 Act

In addition, the guidance supports officers to consider our commitments set out in the [Thurrock Joint Compact](#) with the voluntary sector.

As well as supporting you to look at whether there is, or will be, a significant impact, the guidance will also consider ways in which you might mitigate this in the future.

About the service and reason for the development or review process

Name of service	Children’s Services – Mid Year Fee Increase Grangewaters
Lead Officer	Michele Lucas
Contact Details	mlucas@thurrock.gov.uk

Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development/review needed?

The current financial position of the council has meant we have to give consideration to an in-year price increase linked to our current fee and charges. Grangewaters is an outdoor education centre which covers its running costs year and year and has over the past two years made a profit, Grangewaters offers the local communities of Thurrock the opportunity to participate in outdoor learning programmes. Its unique selling point is the work it undertakes with children and young people who have special education needs and this attracts customers from both within and outside of Thurrock. It is one of the key providers for the government's national holiday activities programmes.

1. Community impact (this can also be used to assess impact on staff although a cumulative impact should be considered)

1.1 What impacts will this policy, strategy, function or service development/review have on communities and workforce?
 Look at what you know? What does your research tell you?

Consider:

- National and local data sets – please see guidance
- Complaints
- Consultation and service monitoring information
- Voluntary and community organisations
- The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with ‘protected characteristics. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general		x	x	The price increases are in line with the increased running costs.	The in-year increases have been considered in line with the local competitors and we do not believe they will have a negative impact on the bookings for a proportion of our local residents

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

					Some of our local residents will struggle to pay any in year price increase due to the current rate of inflation – we will continue to seek external funding to ensure vulnerable children are not disadvantaged due to the in-year price increases.
Age			x	The new price increases directly impact on children and young.	This in year price increases will be monitored and considers – external funding will be sought to mitigate the price increase.
Disability			x	Grangewaters offers a range of programmes specifically targeting children and young people with disability any increase in costs will place additional challenge on parents/carers.	Holiday Activities programme supported children and young people on free school meals we will undertake further targeted information to families with children with a disability.
Gender reassignment				N/A	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership				N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity				N/A	N/A
Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)			x	Please refer to above due to vulnerability of children and young people related to cost increases.	Please refer to above further external funding to be sought.
Religion or belief				N/A	
Sex				N/A	
Sexual orientation				N/A	

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

<p>Any community issues identified for this location? <i>See above link to ward profiles.</i> If the project is based in a specific location please state where, or whether Borough wide. Please include any detail of relevance – for example, is it an area with high unemployment, or public transport limited?</p>				<p>The in-year price increase will impact on all areas on communities within Thurrock</p>	<p>All work within the Children’s Services is monitored via our Brighter Futures Strategy which is focussed on outcomes for children and young people.</p>
<p>Workforce</p>		<p>x</p>		<p>The current workforce are trained to deliver high quality outdoor learning activities</p>	<p>We appoint a number of apprentices into the team to ensure that we are growing our workforce and supporting both young people and adults with apprenticeship roles in outdoor learning</p>

2. Consultation, data and intelligence

2.1 Please highlight the steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review e.g., on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups? For further guidance please contact: consultations@thurrock.gov.uk
This is a vital step

The new in year increases will cause some concern re local residents however we have undertaken some market testing and feel they can be increased from October 2023. A further review of all fees and charges will be undertaken over the summer to ensure that we can increase fees from April 1st 2024.

2.2 Please also provide details on the sources of data or intelligence you have used to inform your assessment of impact and how they have helped you to understand those that will be affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review outlined?

Grangewaters continually looks at what other local outdoor learning sites are charging for similar programmes – we have had to ensure that we remain competitive as this is cost neutral to the council and provides much needed activities for families across Thurrock and SEND children and young people. We will undertake further investigations over the summer to enable to consider price increases from April 2024. As outlined in the document we do believe we can increase some of the charges from October 2023 this are outlined document that was sent across.

3. Monitoring and Review

3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented?
*These actions should be developed using the information gathered in **Section 1 and 2** and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.*

<p>Action</p>	<p>Page 56</p>	<p>By when?</p>	<p>By who?</p>
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3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented?

*These actions should be developed using the information gathered in **Section 1 and 2** and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.*

Children’s O&S approve the in-year increase of charges	June 2023	TBC
Communication sent to all current customers to inform them of the price increase from October 2023.	1 st August 2023	
The new fee structure will be in place from October 2023.	1 st October 2023	

4. Next steps

It is important to ensure that the information gathered is used to inform any council reports that are presented to Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny committees. This will allow members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the community as a whole.

Take some time to précis your findings below. This can then be added to your report template and the Equality and Diversity Implications section for sign off by the Community Development and Equalities team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact
We will continue to monitor the impact from October to April re the price increases we are looking to introduce from October 2023, and this will enable us to have a secure picture of the price increases from April 1 st 2024. We will continue to identify external funding opportunities to support families who would not be able to afford any price increase and use our funded places to support disadvantaged children and young people.

5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Head of Service who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role – for example, project sponsor, head of service)	Date
Michele Lucas	Assistant Director	10 th May 2023

Parking and Enforcement – EIA

Community Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 states that public bodies must have “due regard” to a variety of Equalities objectives (Equality Act 2010, Section 149) and consequently, Equality Analysis must be carried out to demonstrate that decision-makers are fully aware of the impact that changes may have on stakeholders.

The concept of ‘due regard’ was reinforced in 2012 during the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which “requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities”

‘Due regard’ is dependent on the relevance and potential impact of the decision being considered. The greater the relevance and impact, the higher the regard due.

As an authority, we have made a commitment to apply a systematic screening process to new policy, strategy, functions or service development including reviews or changes to existing policy, strategy, functions or services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on different groups within our community.

This process has been developed, together with [full guidance](#), to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Service (Social Value) 2012 Act

In addition, the guidance supports officers to consider our commitments set out in the [Thurrock Joint Compact](#) with the voluntary sector.

As well as supporting you to look at whether there is, or will be, a significant impact, the guidance will also consider ways in which you might mitigate this in the future.

About the service and reason for the development or review process

Name of service	Parking services and Environmental Enforcement
Lead Officer	Phil Carver
Contact Details	Pcarver@thurrock.gov.uk

Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development/review needed?
Proposed increase in Fees & Charges

1. Consultation, data and intelligence

<p>1.1 Please highlight the steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review e.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups? For further guidance please contact: consultations@thurrock.gov.uk</p> <p><i>This is a vital step</i></p> <p>We also have completed notices regarding car park charges. We also plan to use the council website and use comms. This is also published within the annual Fees & Charges report which is uploaded online</p>
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<p>1.2 Please also provide details on the sources of data or intelligence you have used to inform your assessment of impact and how they have helped you to understand those that will be affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review outlined?</p>
<p>No data exists or gathered. However, this will form part of the action plan</p>

2. Community and workforce impact

1.1 What impacts will this policy, strategy, function or service development/review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?
Look at what you know? What does your research tell you?

Consider:

- National and local data sets – please see guidance
- Complaints
- Consultation and service monitoring information
- Voluntary and community organisations
- The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with ‘protected characteristics’. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	x			This will allow the upkeep of maintenance such as lines, signs and resurfacing	We have a robust approach to monitoring as it is a part of officers duty to review the standards of locations. Inflation has been considered in the Increases
Age	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in ‘local communities in general’ above.
Disability	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in ‘local communities in general’ above.
Gender reassignment	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in ‘local communities in general’ above.
Marriage and civil partnership	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in ‘local communities in general’ above.
Pregnancy and maternity	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in ‘local communities in general’ above.
Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in ‘local communities in general’ above.

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Religion or belief	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in 'local communities in general' above.
Sex	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in 'local communities in general' above.
Sexual orientation	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in 'local communities in general' above.
Any other community issues identified for this location? If the project is based in a specific location please state where, or whether Borough wide. Please include any detail of relevance – for example, is it an area with high unemployment, or public transport limited?				This is borough wide, paying fair rates for the upkeep as detailed in the Local communities in general above	
Workforce of Thurrock Council (e.g. in the case of service change/s)	x				
Health and wellbeing of residents Please see guidance.			x	This may have a negative impact on the health & Wellbeing of residents as they may not be able to afford to pay which in turn may cause stress and upset as well as not being able to access facilities due to increased charges that aid in health and wellbeing e.g. parks and open spaces,	
Socio-economic outcomes Please see guidance.			X	Those living on a low income may have their ability to access services and amenities reduced or restricted.	
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces Please see guidance.	x			paying fair rates for the upkeep as detailed in the Local communities in general above	

3. Monitoring and Review

<p>3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? <i>These actions should be developed using the information gathered in Section 1 and 2 and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.</i></p>		
Action	By when?	By who?
To undertake regular quality monitoring visits during officers patrols ensuring quality standards at locations	Patrolled daily	CEOs & EEOs
To carry out consultation with residents and other stakeholders to gather intelligence to further inform this CEIA and assess if the assumed impacts are accurate or need amending.		

4. Next steps

It is important to ensure that the information gathered is used to inform any council reports that are presented to Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny committees. This will allow members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the community as a whole. Take some time to précis your findings below. This can then be added to your report template and the Equality and Diversity Implications section for sign off by the Community Development and Equalities team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact
Paying fair rates for the upkeep will allow quality standards of maintenance such as lines, signs and resurfacing. Quality standards prevent trips and falls, less damage to vehicle and public confidence to pay and use locations

5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Strategic Lead who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role – for example, project sponsor, head of service)	Date
Phil Carver	Strategic Lead	5 th May 2023

Registrars- EIA

Community Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 states that public bodies must have “due regard” to a variety of Equalities objectives (Equality Act 2010, Section 149) and consequently, Equality Analysis must be carried out to demonstrate that decision-makers are fully aware of the impact that changes may have on stakeholders.

The concept of ‘due regard’ was reinforced in 2012 during the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which “requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities”

‘Due regard’ is dependent on the relevance and potential impact of the decision being considered. The greater the relevance and impact, the higher the regard due.

As an authority, we have made a commitment to apply a systematic screening process to new policy, strategy, functions or service development including reviews or changes to existing policy, strategy, functions or services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on different groups within our community.

This process has been developed, together with [full guidance](#), to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Service (Social Value) 2012 Act

In addition, the guidance supports officers to consider our commitments set out in the [Thurrock Joint Compact](#) with the voluntary sector.

As well as supporting you to look at whether there is, or will be, a significant impact, the guidance will also consider ways in which you might mitigate this in the future.

About the service and reason for the development or review process

Name of service	Registrars
Lead Officer	Tracie Heiser
Contact Details	07766 206658

Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development/review needed?
<p>Following the mid year review of fees and charges for the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrar attendance at approved premises for Marriage/Civil Partnership • Registrar attendance at Register Office for Naming Ceremonies/ Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership) • Registrar attendance at Approved Premise for Naming Ceremonies/Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership) • Ceremonies held in Thameside Theatre • Postage and Packing Charge (1st Class Recorded) • Private Citizenship Ceremony • Postage and Packing Charge (Special Delivery 24hr Guaranteed)

1. Consultation, data and intelligence

1.1 Please highlight the steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review e.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups? For further guidance please contact: consultations@thurrock.gov.uk <i>This is a vital step</i>
<p>None as these are optional services.</p>

1.2 Please also provide details on the sources of data or intelligence you have used to inform your assessment of impact and how they have helped you to understand those that will be affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review outlined?

Benchmarking exercise has been carried out to compare with other local authorities.

2. Community and workforce impact

1.1 What impacts will this policy, strategy, function or service development/review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents? Look at what you know? What does your research tell you?

Consider:

- National and local data sets – please see guidance
- Complaints
- Consultation and service monitoring information
- Voluntary and community organisations
- The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with ‘protected characteristics’. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general		*			
Age		*			
Disability		*			
Gender reassignment		*			
Marriage and civil partnership			*	Negative – higher costs	
Pregnancy and maternity		*			

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)		*			
Religion or belief		*			
Sex		*			
Sexual orientation		*			
Any other community issues identified for this location? If the project is based in a specific location please state where, or whether Borough wide. Please include any detail of relevance – for example, is it an area with high unemployment, or public transport limited?			*	New citizens who would like a private citizenship may not be able to afford this due to the increase.	Group citizenship ceremonies are available free of charge as the cost is in the Home Office application fee.
Workforce of Thurrock Council (e.g. in the case of service change/s)		*			
Health and wellbeing of residents Please see guidance.		*			
Socio-economic outcomes Please see guidance.		*			
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces Please see guidance.		*			

3. Monitoring and Review

<p>3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? <i>These actions should be developed using the information gathered in Section 1 and 2 and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.</i></p>		
Action	By when?	By who?
Monitoring customer feedback	March 2024	Jenny Osborne
Review of income to see if customers continue to use these services with us or book elsewhere.	March 2024	Tracie Heiser and Jenny Osborne

4. Next steps

It is important to ensure that the information gathered is used to inform any council reports that are presented to Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny committees. This will allow members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the community as a whole.

Take some time to précis your findings below. This can then be added to your report template and the Equality and Diversity Implications section for sign off by the Community Development and Equalities team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact
<p>These fee increases relate to services which are optional to our residents, there are alternatives available.</p> <p>The impact would be that residents may choose to use services outside of Thurrock.</p>

5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Strategic Lead who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role – for example, project sponsor, head of service)	Date

Land Charges – EIA

Community Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 states that public bodies must have “due regard” to a variety of Equalities objectives (Equality Act 2010, Section 149) and consequently, Equality Analysis must be carried out to demonstrate that decision-makers are fully aware of the impact that changes may have on stakeholders.

The concept of ‘due regard’ was reinforced in 2012 during the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which “requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities”

‘Due regard’ is dependent on the relevance and potential impact of the decision being considered. The greater the relevance and impact, the higher the regard due.

As an authority, we have made a commitment to apply a systematic screening process to new policy, strategy, functions or service development including reviews or changes to existing policy, strategy, functions or services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on different groups within our community.

This process has been developed, together with [full guidance](#), to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Service (Social Value) 2012 Act

In addition, the guidance supports officers to consider our commitments set out in the [Thurrock Joint Compact](#) with the voluntary sector.

As well as supporting you to look at whether there is, or will be, a significant impact, the guidance will also consider ways in which you might mitigate this in the future.

About the service and reason for the development or review process

Name of service	Land Charges
Lead Officer	Anthony Fletcher
Contact Details	A.FLETCHER@THURROCK.GOV.UK

Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development/review needed?
A corporate decision has been made to review all material fees and where possible increase them mid-year (October 2023). Land charge fees fit into this category

1. Consultation, data and intelligence

<p>1.1 Please highlight the steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review e.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups? For further guidance please contact: consultations@thurrock.gov.uk <i>This is a vital step</i></p>
<p>Benchmarking is regularly completed against other local authorities and national unitary authorities and the fees increases still keep us in line. Our searches are submitted by search agents (The same 10 – 15) who we will discuss the changes with for comment via individual consultation</p>

1.2 Please also provide details on the sources of data or intelligence you have used to inform your assessment of impact and how they have helped you to understand those that will be affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review outlined?

Benchmarking among other local and unitary authorities

2. Community and workforce impact

1.1 What impacts will this policy, strategy, function or service development/review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents? Look at what you know? What does your research tell you?

Consider:

- National and local data sets – please see guidance
- Complaints
- Consultation and service monitoring information
- Voluntary and community organisations
- The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with ‘protected characteristics’. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general		X			
Age		X			
Disability		X			
Gender reassignment		X			
Marriage and civil partnership		X			
Pregnancy and maternity		X			

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)		X		
Religion or belief		X		
Sex		X		
Sexual orientation		X		
Any other community issues identified for this location? If the project is based in a specific location please state where, or whether Borough wide. Please include any detail of relevance – for example, is it an area with high unemployment, or public transport limited?		X		
Workforce of Thurrock Council (e.g. in the case of service change/s)		X		
Health and wellbeing of residents Please see guidance.		X		
Socio-economic outcomes Please see guidance.		X		
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces Please see guidance.		X		

3. Monitoring and Review

<p>3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? <i>These actions should be developed using the information gathered in Section 1 and 2 and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.</i></p>		
Action	By when?	By who?
Land Searches are completed during the process of a house sale, to understand the history of the land to inform the buyer before purchase. There will be no impact on community or equality as a result of the fee change.	N/A	N/A

3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented?

*These actions should be developed using the information gathered in **Section 1 and 2** and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.*

4. Next steps

It is important to ensure that the information gathered is used to inform any council reports that are presented to Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny committees. This will allow members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the community as a whole.

Take some time to précis your findings below. This can then be added to your report template and the Equality and Diversity Implications section for sign off by the Community Development and Equalities team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact

The increase in fee is still in line with what is charged at neighbouring authorities and unitary authorities. Our searches have a statutory target of 20 working days, Thurrock average 7.2 working days so the service is high. The average house price in Thurrock is £479,231. Our fees are as a % the least costly part of the whole process, but the accurate information provided is incredibly important.

5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Strategic Lead who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role – for example, project sponsor, head of service)	Date
A.FLETCHER	Head of service	09.05.2023

Development Management – EIA

Thurrock Council

Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Development Management
Lead officer name	Leigh Nicholson completing on behalf of Louise Reid (Strategic Lead)
Lead officer job title	Assistant Director, Planning, Transport and Public Protection
Lead officer email address	lnicholson@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Development Management pre-application fees and charges
Borough-wide or location-specific?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Click or tap here to enter text.
Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?
The Council is seeking to increase fees and charges across all services.

1. Consultation and supporting information

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by this development or review? **This is a vital step.**

Steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult or engage
There is a corporate expectation that fees and charges will be increased in 23/24. No consultation has been carried out with customer groups, though previous benchmarking has found that Thurrock’s fees are within the upper / lower limits of those set by other LPAs in Essex.

- 1.2. What data or intelligence sources have you used to inform your assessment of the impact? How have these helped you understand who will be affected by the development or review?

Sources of data or intelligence, and how they have been used
See above.

2. Community and workforce impact

- 2.1. What impacts will this development or review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Increased pre-application fees could deter residents with fixed incomes from engaging in the pre-application process.	Not possible to address this issue if fees are to be increased. It should be noted that pre-app is a discretionary service.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Increased pre-application fees could deter residents with fixed incomes from engaging in the pre-application process.	Not possible to address this issue if fees are to be increased. It should be noted that pre-app is a discretionary service.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The pre-application process tends to make the planning process smoother, with better designed built development at the end of the process. Increasing fees for pre-app could discourage residents from seeking advice, resulting in avoidable refusals. +	Click or tap here to enter text.
Socio-economic outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Monitoring and review

- 3.1. How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? These actions should be developed using the information gathered in sections 1 and 2 and included in your service area's business plans.

Action	By when	By who
To review the number of pre-application submissions made	This data is collating on a rolling monthly basis	Business Improvement team – PTPP.

4. Next steps

- 4.1. The information gathered must be used to inform reports presented to Cabinet or overview and scrutiny committees. This will give members a necessary understanding of the impact their decisions will have on different groups and the whole community.

Summarise the implications and customer impact below. This summary should be added to the committee reports template in the Diversity and Equality Implications section for review and sign-off at the consultation stage of the report preparation cycle.

Summary of implications and customer impact

The pre-application process is provided to help residents / applicants shape development proposals before making a formal application. It allows residents to ‘dry run’ their proposals through the relevant teams to ensure the scheme stands the best chance of approval and is the best design to suit their needs and the location.

Previous benchmarking has indicated that Thurrock’s pre-app charges fall within the upper / lower limits of other LPA’s in Essex. Nonetheless, residents in Thurrock are facing increased Council tax charges and other pressures. Increasing fees for pre-app at this time runs the risk of deterring residents from engaging in the process. This could result in applications being refused with the time and costs of re-submissions (which are free to the applicant) and potential costly appeals.

If increased, the number of pre-application submission received would be monitored.

5. Sign off

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

- the accuracy of the information
- making sure actions are undertaken

Name	Role	Date
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Thameside Theatre – EIA

Thurrock Council

Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Thameside Theatre
Lead officer name	Dianna Ferry
Lead officer job title	Theatre Manager
Lead officer email address	dferry@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Thameside Theatre – Fees and Charges Policy
Borough-wide or location-specific?
<input type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Thameside Complex, Grays
Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?
<p>As a result of the S114 notice and financial position of the Council all services have been asked to review fees and charges with a view to increasing them to, as a minimum, reflect the cost of inflation over the past 5 years.</p> <p>The Thameside Theatre is one of the services that charges for services. In general fees and charges have increased in line with inflation except during the pandemic years. There is no legal reason why they should not be increased in line with inflation.</p> <p>On that basis an in year review of fees and charges has taken place in line with the corporate approach.</p>

1. Consultation and supporting information

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by this development or review? **This is a vital step.**

Steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult or engage

All fees and charges will be considered by Members through relevant overview and scrutiny committee(s) prior to final decision. A final decision will be taken by Members through Cabinet / Council (Kelly to confirm).

The information provided to hirers and promoters will clearly explain the costs associated with use of the venue and the services it provides.

The decision to increase fees and charges has been taken corporately as a result of the S114 notice.

- 1.2. What data or intelligence sources have you used to inform your assessment of the impact? How have these helped you understand who will be affected by the development or review?

Sources of data or intelligence, and how they have been used

The decision to increase fees and charges in line with inflation has been taken corporately as a result of the S114 notice.

An increase in line with inflation will result in fees and charges that are in real terms the same as those charged five years ago. Some of the increases appear higher than others because charges were not increased through the COVID pandemic.

Data including bookings from previous years and anecdotal information from hirers suggests there will be an impact on hirers and promoters hoping to use the theatre as charges will be higher than previously expected. This may have an impact on the number and type of bookings.

The area we expect to be most affected will be the subsidised hire costs available to schools and community groups already struggling financially.

Given decisions taken on the Thameside Complex and the possibility it will close it is unclear whether the theatre will be able to continue to trade in the medium / longer term.

2. Community and workforce impact

1.3. What impacts will this development or review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Increased hire charges will mean costs are passed on to performers and customers which may reduce the number and type of activities at the theatre and therefore reduce income.</p> <p>However increased fees and charge may help address the Council's financial position.</p>	The Theatre will work with hirers and promoters to market shows and demonstrate value for money.
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The theatre hosts smaller events for groups with disabilities. These groups are stretched financially and may no longer be able to afford the cost of using theatre space and services.	Wherever possible the theatre will work with groups to try to reduce their costs or increase income to offset the additional charges.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LGBT+ group meets regularly at the theatre. They have secured funding for the short term but an increase in costs may impact on their use of the theatre space once external funding ceases.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Residents may be unable to afford tickets if prices increase. There is a wealth of evidence demonstrating how engagement with cultural activity improves health and wellbeing.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local dance schools hire the theatre as an affordable space for their shows. Any increase in price could result in dance schools being unable to afford hire which will have an impact on their businesses.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Monitoring and review

1.4. How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? These actions should be developed using the information gathered in sections 1 and 2 and included in your service area's business plans.

Action	By when	By who
Monitor impact on number and type of bookings and compare to previous years	Ongoing	Theatre Manager

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Gather anecdotal evidence from hirers and promoters	Ongoing	Theatre Manager
Monitor income and compare to previous years	Ongoing	Theatre Manager
Gather evidence from other local venues to ensure the theatre is competitive in the local market	Sept to January 2024 when prices are set for the next financial year	Theatre Manager
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

2. Next steps

- 2.1. The information gathered must be used to inform reports presented to Cabinet or overview and scrutiny committees. This will give members a necessary understanding of the impact their decisions will have on different groups and the whole community.

Summarise the implications and customer impact below. This summary should be added to the committee reports template in the Diversity and Equality Implications section for review and sign-off at the consultation stage of the report preparation cycle.

Summary of implications and customer impact

An increase in fees and charges could impact on the number and type of bookings received from hirers and promoters. There may be particular impact on organisations already struggling with cost of living and reductions in funding such as schools and community groups. Impact will be monitored and, if appropriate, recommendations made when fees and charges are reviewed for the next financial year.

Thurrock has a low participation rate in cultural activity compared to other local authorities across the country. The increased fees and charges are likely to result in increases to ticket prices which could reduce numbers using the theatre. As a result numbers participating in cultural activity could fall. Again impact will be monitored and, if appropriate, recommendations made to amend fees and charges to maximise income and audience numbers.

3. Sign off

- 3.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

- the accuracy of the information
- making sure actions are undertaken

Name	Role	Date
Dianna Ferry	Theatre Manager	10/05/2023
Stephen Taylor	Strategic Lead – Economic Development	10/05/2023
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Burials – EIA

Thurrock Council Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Clean and Green – Burials
Lead officer name	Vincent Taylor
Lead officer job title	Strategic Lead – Clean and Green
Lead officer email address	vtaylor@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Fees and Charges for Burial Services
Borough-wide or location-specific?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Click or tap here to enter text.
Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?
There is an annual review of fees and charges in this service area, this CEIA review is needed as an additional review of the fees and charges is being conducted.

1. Consultation and supporting information

1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by this development or review? This is a vital step.

Steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult or engage
There are no specific groups affected by this change. The fees and charges are in line with other local authorities

1.2. What data or intelligence sources have you used to inform your assessment of the impact? How have these helped you understand who will be affected by the development or review?

Sources of data or intelligence, and how they have been used
The registrar of burials conducted a recent benchmarking exercise looking at the fees charged by neighbouring local authorities for these services and ensured that those charges by Thurrock are comparable to others.

2. Community and workforce impact

2.1. What impacts will this development or review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Monitoring and review

- 3.1. How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? These actions should be developed using the information gathered in sections 1 and 2 and included in your service area's business plans.

Action	By when	By who
To monitor the uptake in the services offered by the council and to see if there is an increase in complaints	January 2024	Sue Newton – Registrar of Burials
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Next steps

- 4.1. The information gathered must be used to inform reports presented to Cabinet or overview and scrutiny committees. This will give members a necessary understanding of the impact their decisions will have on different groups and the whole community.

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Summarise the implications and customer impact below. This summary should be added to the committee reports template in the Diversity and Equality Implications section for review and sign-off at the consultation stage of the report preparation cycle.

Summary of implications and customer impact

The charge for these services are in line with those offered elsewhere, our core burial services are only being increased in line with inflation, and those that are at the discretion of the service user are able to be increased in line with commercial demand.

5. Sign off

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

- the accuracy of the information
- making sure actions are undertaken

Name	Role	Date
Vincent Taylor	Strategic Lead – Clean and Green	10/05/23
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Abandoned Trolleys – EIA

Thurrock Council Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Clean and Green – Abandoned Trolleys
Lead officer name	Vincent Taylor
Lead officer job title	Strategic Lead – Clean and Green
Lead officer email address	vtaylor@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Fees and Charges for Abandoned Trolleys
Borough-wide or location-specific?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Click or tap here to enter text.
Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?
There is an annual review of fees and charges in this service area, this CEIA review is needed as an additional review of the fees and charges is being conducted. In addition this is a new charge following a Cabinet Decision to adopt the Abandoned Trolley Cost Recovery Policy

1. Consultation and supporting information

1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by this development or review? This is a vital step.

Steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult or engage

There are no specific groups affected by this change. This charge will be on the Supermarkets that allow their trollies to be abandoned and blight the environment

This has gone through Overview and Scrutiny, Cabinet and has had a public consultation that was overwhelmingly positive

1.2. What data or intelligence sources have you used to inform your assessment of the impact? How have these helped you understand who will be affected by the development or review?

Sources of data or intelligence, and how they have been used

The policy was written looking at the charging made by other Local Authorities and taking into consideration what was needed for cost recovery.

2. Community and workforce impact

2.1. What impacts will this development or review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Monitoring and review

3.1. How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? These actions should be developed using the information gathered in sections 1 and 2 and included in your service area's business plans.

Action	By when	By who
To monitor the number of trollies where fees for abandonment was needed and the uptake in the service offered by the authority to take back trollies to the stores, and to see if there is an increase in complaints	January 2024	Vincent Taylor – Strategic Lead Clean and Green
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Next steps

4.1. The information gathered must be used to inform reports presented to Cabinet or overview and scrutiny committees. This will give members a necessary understanding of the impact their decisions will have on different groups and the whole community.

Summarise the implications and customer impact below. This summary should be added to the committee reports template in the Diversity and Equality Implications section for review and sign-off at the consultation stage of the report preparation cycle.

Summary of implications and customer impact
This charge will be on the supermarkets, and will not have an impact on equalities / communities.

5. Sign off

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

- the accuracy of the information
- making sure actions are undertaken

Name	Role	Date
Vincent Taylor	Strategic Lead – Clean and Green	10/05/23
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Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Overarching Parking Strategy – EIA

Thurrock Council Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Planning, Transportation and Public Protection
Lead officer name	Navtej Tung
Lead officer job title	Strategic Transport Manager
Lead officer email address	ntung@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
<p>Parking Policy and Strategy;</p> <p>Parking Design and Development Standards</p> <p>Parking Enforcement Strategy</p>
Borough-wide or location-specific?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Click or tap here to enter text.
Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?

It is important to ensure that the Council’s approach to vehicle parking is in accordance with national and local policy and objectives. As part of the new Local Plan, it is necessary to develop an up-to-date Parking Policy and Strategy document and new Parking Standards to respond to current transport trends and demands and also to positively shape new development proposals, ensuring homes and businesses are supported by the right level of parking provision.

The Parking Policy and Strategy document has been developed to assist the Council to oversee the provision of parking across the borough now and in the future, as the borough looks to accommodate growth and to incorporate emerging vehicle technologies and infrastructure (namely electric vehicles and charging requirements). It includes a number of overarching objectives and principles covering how the Council will manage parking demand in the future and how decisions on parking arrangements can be taken across Thurrock.

The Parking Design & Development Standards document has been developed to clearly set out the parking requirements for new developments. It provides detail on the design and standards that will be applicable throughout the Borough. This includes details such as the number, size and location of parking stock for all types of vehicles. This will also become an important tool for Officers to use when discussing development proposals with developers.

The Parking Enforcement Strategy document has been developed to set out the processes and procedures for undertaking enforcement of inappropriate and illegal parking across on roads under the responsibility of the Council across the borough.

1. Consultation and supporting information

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by this development or review? **This is a vital step.**

Steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult or engage

The Parking Policy and Strategy, Parking Design & Development Standards and Parking Enforcement Strategy have been developed as a result of community and stakeholder engagement with relevant parties and stakeholders.

A six week public consultation programme was undertaken between 2 November 2020 and 14 December 2020 to enable local residents, businesses, interest groups and key stakeholders to provide input and comment to shape the documents. The consultation was undertaken via the Thurrock Council consultation portal, with the published page and supporting documents available to view on the following web address - <https://consult.thurrock.gov.uk/parking-strategy-2020>.

In total, there were 358 visits to the Parking Strategy consultation page, which resulted in 31 individuals responding to the page via the survey. The survey consisted of 18 questions, with a mix of pre-populated (e.g. yes/no) and open ended/free choice questions.

Based on the responses received, where questions asked whether respondents supported or opposed the documents, they were generally in favour of the documents.

When reviewing the open text questions, there was, as expected, a wide variety of answers and priorities for respondents. The mix of responses do not sway support for nor against the policies and documents. However, there is a predominant ask for a greater level of enforcement against poor parking, parking on verges and the blocking of footpaths, as well as more enforcement within residential areas and those areas outside town centres. Additionally, the emotive nature of parking has resulted in some responses identifying factors outside the remit of the strategy and policy documents, such as routing of traffic and learner HGV routes. This is being addressed through an increase in the number of Civil Enforcement Officers deployed by the council, with the recruitment of an additional ten officers.

Following the completion of the consultation, there has been no identified changes to the policies or standards themselves, but it has been necessary to amend the structure and information within the documents. The changes are not material to the nature or purpose of the documents and would not invalidate the outcome of the public consultation, but they are considered necessary to make the documents more easily accessible.

- 1.2. What data or intelligence sources have you used to inform your assessment of the impact? How have these helped you understand who will be affected by the development or review?

Sources of data or intelligence, and how they have been used

The development of the parking strategy undertook a review of existing data sources and includes a key summary of the existing picture within the borough related to parking. No specific external sources have been consulted to further inform the EQIA, though feedback from the consultation has helped to identify key themes which were identified, along with the details within the policies.

2. Community and workforce impact

- 2.1. What impacts will this development or review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate parking policies will help control how vehicles are parked across the borough, within designated areas. Haphazard parking, or a lack of control creates dangers for all road users, and impacts users in need of parking controls – such as blue badge holders, the most.	By providing appropriate parking mechanisms, with appropriate provisions and backed up by enforcement, all members of the community are able to best enjoy the built environment, whether vehicle users or not.
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The policies specifically focus on disabled persons with blue badge parking provision with specifications for parking provision for blue badge holders and sizing specification for spaces within new developments. Policies TPP 10, 11 and 12 are specific to support disabled people entitled to a Blue Badge to have accessible parking in key locations and destinations. Blue badge parking provisions are generally identified through national guidance and legislation.	New developments are required to show and commit to disabled parking provision through the Development Management Process and the standards in this policy set a minimum level of provision. Enforcement of these are undertaken on the public highway by the council's team of enforcement officers in line with legal provisions.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Location-specific impact, if any	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The suite of policies are borough wide, and not specific to any one community. However some parts of the borough are more likely to be impacted than others, such as locations where there is a high demand for destination parking – such as town centres or near transport hubs.	Controls of parking are best managed by the council’s enforcement team, to ensure the best balance between quality of life for residents and access to parking.
Workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The strategies identify measures to restrict free parking across all parts of the public highway. Typically, where there is a high demand for parking by workers, such as town centres or near railway stations, there is likely a need to balance the need for residents to have parking near their properties against access to parking for all.	Enforcement by CEO’s allows for the right people to have access to the right parking zones. Enforcement ensures that where applicable, permit areas are adhered to as well as P&D Zones that are implemented

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The parking strategy suite of documents is produced to support the provision of parking to create fairness and a balance for all users. While many residents will be car owners, not all residents have a private space to keep their vehicle, and when in using their vehicles will need somewhere to park when away from home. Conversely the public highway need to be passible, and inappropriate parking and levels need to be managed, so that the highway and footways remain accessible, and provision for blue badge holders can be maintained.	N/A
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is an economic impact of parking and the management of parking, though effective land provision and management. There are also charges associated with parking, such as for parking permits, or for charged parking at key destinations and locations or in off-street parking at popular destinations.	N/A
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

3. Monitoring and review

- 3.1. How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? These actions should be developed using the information gathered in sections 1 and 2 and included in your service area's business plans.

Action	By when	By who
Review the Parking Strategy suite of papers every 3 years or in extraordinary circumstances, ensuring data and strategy comply with legislation and current work trends, feeding a review of the CEIA	3 years or in extraordinary circumstances	Transport Development
Reporting and escalate any concerns with street furniture, to ensure community impacts are low	constant action	Parking Enforcement
Review of best practise guidance for parking enforcement	3 years or in extraordinary circumstances	Parking Enforcement
Continue to review restrictions to further inform this CEIA and assess if the assumed impacts are accurate or need amending	3 years	Parking Enforcement
To consider any alternative parking solutions that are available	Yearly	Transport and Development
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Next steps

- 4.1. The information gathered must be used to inform reports presented to Cabinet or overview and scrutiny committees. This will give members a necessary understanding of the impact their decisions will have on different groups and the whole community.

Summarise the implications and customer impact below. This summary should be added to the committee reports template in the Diversity and Equality Implications section for review and sign-off at the consultation stage of the report preparation cycle.

Summary of implications and customer impact

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

The report was presented to Planning, Transportation and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2021 and again in February 2022, before being presented for adoption to Cabinet in March 2022.

The key implications of the policies, and standards identifies that disabled persons are directly identified within the policy to be supported with parking provision to help meet their needs, in line with national guidance and policy. The policy identifies minimum parking requirements for new developments off the public highway, and where blue badge holders can and cannot park on the public highway. The policy identifies how these users can also access a disabled bay within an appropriate distance from their home.

Other persons with protected characteristics are not directly impacted specifically due to their protected characteristics. However, the policy does identify the opportunity to impose restrictions in key locations which may not currently exist. These new restrictions would not exclude disabled persons from accessing the appropriate provisions as provided in the policy.

5. Sign off

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

- the accuracy of the information
- making sure actions are undertaken

Name	Role	Date
Navtej Tung	Strategic Transport Manager	19/05/2023
Mat Kiely	Strategic Lead for Transportation Services	19/05/2023
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Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Legal Commentary

It was lovely meeting with you both this afternoon and I appreciate the time that you spent in reiterating your instructions and providing myself and Kevin with context regarding the same.

In the meeting this afternoon we discussed the basis in which the Council is able to increase the fees and charges for some of the services that it provides in line with carrying out its functions. I advised that it is standard practice for fees and charges to be subject to an annual inflation uplift but the Council may deviate from this having provided reason. Ultimately the Council is to decide whether the inflation uplift is appropriate in each circumstance when reaching a decision to increase a charge.

You mentioned that at this stage in particular your focus is with a segment of the services that are provided by the Council that arise from the Council's discretionary powers to increase fees and charges. I advised that where a discretionary power exists (under the Local Government Act 2003, Localism Act 2011) the Council is to ensure that the charge that it decides to set is reasonable and in any event is a fee that does not exceed the costs of the provision of the service.

I will undertake the required work on the draft policy and return to you as soon as possible.

13 June 2023	ITEM: 7
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Update report on Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls	
Wards and communities affected: Borough wide	Key Decision: N/a
Report of: Michelle Cunningham, Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager	
Accountable Assistant Director: Michael Dineen, Assistant Director Counter Fraud, Community Safety and Resilience Ewelina Sorbjan, Assistant Director Housing and Chair of Thurrock’s Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Board	
Accountable Director: Julie Nelder, Interim Director of Public Realm Ian Wake, Corporate Director Adults, Health and Housing	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report provides members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee an opportunity to scrutinise the areas of work associated in delivering on the Thurrock Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2020-2023, (Appendix 1) as well as providing members with an update on progress to implement the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 duties and delivery against 2 of the priorities of the Community Safety Partnership 2022/23 which are:

1. Tackling disproportionality in relation to Violence Against Women and Girls
2. Breaking the cycle of Domestic Abuse

This will also provide an opportunity to comment on proposals of strategic direction within the revised Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy due for launch in 2023.

All forms of VAWG can affect anyone, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. The Crime

Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2022¹ highlights that an estimated 6.9% of women (1.7 million) and 3.0% of men (699,000) experienced domestic abuse in the last year. A higher proportion of adults aged 20 to 24 years were victims of domestic abuse in the last year compared with adults aged 55 years and over. A higher percentage of adults with a disability experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without. This data shows that there was no significant change in the prevalence of domestic abuse for both men and women in the year ending March 2022, compared with the year ending March 2020. In the same year, data supplied from police forces nationally detailed that victims were female in 74.1% of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police, sadly, in case of domestic abuse-related sexual offences, the proportion of victims that were female was higher at 93.5%.

Recent years have seen implementation of new laws and policy to support the VAWG agenda. In November 2022 the UK became the 37th state to ratify, with some reservations, the Istanbul Convention². In July 2021, government published the revised national plan to address VAWG, titled, Tackling Violence against Women and Girls' strategy. This strategy includes a combination of prevention, intervention, and support measures aimed at reducing the incidences and impact of violence against women and girls. The strategy seeks to raise awareness and increase the understanding of the issues faced by people experiencing these crimes. The strategy reflects the strengthening of laws (Domestic Abuse Act 2021) and policies to protect women and girls from violence. It acknowledges the long-term support that survivors need to help them rebuild their lives. This strategy separated out domestic abuse due to the requirement of statutory guidance to support the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. As a result of these legislative changes, the National Statement of Expectations and other supportive documents were also updated.

Government refreshed the Male Victims Position statement, reiterating their commitment to ensure that male victims of crimes, which disproportionately affect women and girls, are supported. Whilst acknowledging the disproportionately gendered nature of VAWG, government VAWG communication campaigns are inclusive of male victims to raise awareness, challenge harmful societal myths about masculinity, and encourage male victims and survivors to report abuse. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 stipulates that a child who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of domestic abuse, and is related to the person being abused or the person perpetrating the abuse, is also regarded as a victim. Boys can be victims of domestic abuse in their own right, and the government acknowledges that boys can also suffer with short and long-term cognitive, behavioural, and emotional impact of the crimes they experience.

The Thurrock Community Safety Partnership (TCSP), through the VAWG Coordinator, seek to ensure that all partners, both statutory and voluntary, work together to provide effective support and protection to victims, including children, and a response to address the behaviour of perpetrators.

¹<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabusevictimcharacteristicsenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2022>

² <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=declarations-by-treaty&numSte=210&codeNature=2&codePays=UK>

The refreshed Health and Well Being strategy 2022/26 has provided opportunity to continue to address shared priorities in partnership. Domain 6 of the strategy sees a focus on improving the local response to supporting victims/survivors of abuse and exploitation to improve their health and wellbeing. These are collective aims of both the Thurrock and national strategies.

The statutory guidance for the Serious Violence Duty³, published 16th December 2022 states “Where domestic abuse or sexual offences are determined to be serious violence in a local area, in accordance with section 13(6) of the PCSC Act, specified authorities should take action to prevent and reduce such offending. Local areas’ strategy should include how they will exercise their functions to tackle domestic abuse and sexual offences” - and “action on domestic abuse and sexual offences is particularly encouraged where preventative activity is directed at risk factors which are shared between these crimes and public space youth violence”

In terms of the VAWG agenda, the TCSP priorities for 23/24 directly support 3 of the current priorities of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner plan⁴. These include:

- Protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse
- Reducing violence against women and girls
- Improving support for victims of crime

Members should be reassured that national and local strategies recognise that men and boys are also affected by these crimes and Thurrock’s support services for all VAWG crimes are available to any survivor regardless of gender identity or expression.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Note the progress on delivery of responsibilities detailed within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and scrutinise the funding allocations

1.2 Note the key successes and the programme to deliver on the VAWG strategy for Thurrock 2020/23

1.3 Provide comment on the proposed vision and 6 Ps to deliver the Thurrock Domestic Abuse and VAWG strategy 2023/6

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 National & Local Framework: The role of local authorities in the prevention of crime and disorder became a legal requirement under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. To meet this obligation, Community Safety Partnerships (as they are now known) were created, ensuring that the named ‘responsible authorities’ worked together on a statutory basis. Locally the

³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty

⁴ <https://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/>

VAWG work stream is a priority of the TCSP and is delivered by the Thurrock VAWG Strategic Board. Thurrock are the only authority in Essex to have a longstanding VAWG strategy.

- 2.2 The Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges (2021)⁵ surveyed children aged 13+ on what types of harmful sexual behaviours they think happened ‘a lot’ or ‘sometimes’ between people their age: 79% of girls said sexual assault, 88% of girls said receiving pictures or videos they did not want to see, 53% of boys said rumours about sexual activity, 92% of girls said experiencing sexist name-calling. This rapid review concluded that sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are prevalent for children and young people. For some children, incidents were so commonplace that they saw no point in reporting them. The review did not analyse whether the issues are prevalent for different groups but found that they were so widespread that they need addressing for all children and young people. The key recommendation was that schools should assume that this is happening, even if there were no reports of it occurring.
- 2.3 A Call for Evidence on violence against women and girls was conducted by the Home Office in late 2020. The public survey was reopened following the tragic rape and murder of Sarah Everard. The total number of responses was 180,000, making this the largest ever consultation the Government has run in this area. The responses detail a need for change in areas aligned to the national priorities: Prioritising Prevention, Supporting Victims, Pursuing Perpetrators, a Stronger System. Sadly, this violence continues, 108 UK women were killed by men (or where a man is the principal suspect) in 2022⁶. Women are murdered on average every three days in the UK. Inside and outside of homes. Mostly, by people they know and trust.
- 2.4 In 2021, The National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) announced the appointment of a National Police Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls to coordinate police action across England and Wales. The new role is responsible for agreeing and delivering a new police strategy that will focus on interventions to prevent violence, target perpetrators, and help victims achieve justice. Essex Police have since developed a Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022-2024. This is principally an internal facing document, focusing on High Harm, Safer Spaces and Culture and Behaviours.
- 2.5 The Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Crime Plan 2021-2024⁷ recognises this agenda with the priority of **Reducing violence against women and girls**, stating that they will not tolerate male violence and abuse against women and girls in any form. This is in addition to the priorities of **Protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse**

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>

⁶ Karen Ingala Smith: CountingDeadWomen

⁷ <https://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/what-we-are-doing/police-and-crime-plan/encouraging-volunteers-and-community-support/>

and **Improving support for victims of crime. Domestic Abuse and Rape** are also identified within the Crime Prevention Strategy for Essex 2021/25 (Appendix 2) as 2 of the 14 thematic strands which Essex Police recognise not only pose the greatest potential threat, harm and risk to our people and communities, but also present the greatest opportunity for prevention.

2.6 In 2022, following the direction of national strategy and Essex Police Fire Crime Plan, Thurrock CSP separated Domestic Abuse from VAWG to individual priorities for 2022/23 namely:

- **Tackling disproportionality in relation to Violence Against Women and Girls** – including sexual offences, stalking and rape, whilst recognising that men and boys can also be victims
- **Breaking the cycle of Domestic Abuse:** in line with the Domestic Abuse Duty and needs assessment

Violence Against Women and Girls – encompasses sexual violence, abuse and exploitation; stalking; sexual harassment; domestic abuse; female genital mutilation (FGM); forced marriage and so called “Honour” based abuse of all genders.

2.7 Progress to delivery of actions within the Violence Against women and Girls Strategy 2020/23

There have been several key successes of the current Thurrock VAWG strategy and notable progression within other internal services that contributes to and has an impact on the response and support offered to victims of VAWG related crimes and behaviours. A summary of activity is detailed below:

- 2.7.1 The domestic violence perpetrator programme continues to support individuals, assessed as standard/medium risk, who wish to change their abusive behaviours towards others. This includes a dedicated Integrated Support Service for victims of domestic abuse and their children. The programme is available for men, women, and those within same sex relationships. This programme is for those who want to stop being abusive towards intimate partners and are motivated to change their behaviour. The programme is accompanied by the ‘high risk’ service offered by the domestic abuse practitioner in Childrens Social Care.
- 2.7.2 The Housing Safeguarding team have an outreach support service for domestic abuse victims. This is a developing initiative including reaching out to residents on the Thurrock Council managed traveller sites and Buckles Lane. They also have male practitioners to assist with any survivor who might feel more comfortable seeking support from a male, however all practitioners can support any survivor of domestic abuse.
- 2.7.3 Thurrock is involved in the county wide TONIC landscape review of the current model of support for survivors of domestic abuse. The initial findings are

currently being reviewed by commissioners across SET. They will offer recommendations across all of SET for further commissioning and delivery model options of accessing support. This project ensures that Thurrock are involved in joint commissioning opportunities, working in a consistent way across SET and striving towards improved services for victims and survivors.

2.7.4 The Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LCSP) identified a need to better understand the issues associated with Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) experienced and displayed by young people. To help inform this understanding, in partnership with the NSPCC, they have conducted a multi-agency audit that will seek to identify current practitioner awareness of HSB and the pathways of support for young people displaying such behaviours. Initial findings are expected early 2023.

2.7.5 The CSP offer a comprehensive suite of training covering awareness of VAWG including:

- Domestic Abuse & Stalking awareness training: an initiative aimed at raising awareness of domestic abuse, assisting survivors to access support safely by training and upskilling professionals in their responses. In 2022 a total of 100 people attended the training.
- Professionals visit to Thurrock Women's Refuge: This provides professionals the opportunity to have a greater understanding of what it is like to reside in the Refuge. Verbal feedback is extremely positive from the visiting professionals and the Refuge, enabling further networking and building connections.
- J9 Community: Members of the community can access this training to gain a greater understanding of what domestic abuse is, recognise domestic abuse and signpost survivors to specialist support services.
- Sexual Violence & Abuse Awareness training: Following a successful bid for funding to the Thurrock Safeguarding Adults Board, an 'e learning' module was commissioned. This self-paced awareness module will ensure that we can offer this awareness training to a large partnership audience and increase understanding of this topic so that survivors can be signposted to professionals for the right support.
- Sexual violence and abuse from the perspective of men and boys-independent awareness sessions delivered to staff and Members.

2.7.6 Annual promotion of initiatives such as '16 days of activism' through November and December. This year saw TCSP, and partners host two community engagement events, one outside South Essex College to engage young people, the second was opposite Grays Train station, capturing commuters and Thurrock residents. Cllr Arnold supported this event attending and speaking to many involved. We continued to promote the Street Safe website, a Home Office service where residents can anonymously report where they don't feel safe in the borough

2.7.7 The street safe data will be used within the forthcoming Project Minerva, an area of work looking at safety in public spaces. This is an emerging project which TCSP members were briefed on in January 2023.

2.7.8 There was a relaunch of the SET wide stalking awareness campaign, REFLECT campaign (perpetrator behaviour change support) and Ask for Angela.

2.7.9 The VAWG agenda now has a Champion, Cllr Arnold for VAWG, and Cllr Collins for Men's health issues.

2.8 Progress in implementation of The Domestic Abuse Act 2021⁸

2.8.1 The Domestic Abuse Act introduced a new statutory definition of domestic abuse with an aim to ensure that it is properly understood, considered unacceptable and actively challenged across statutory agencies and in public attitudes. Part 4 of the Act places several statutory duties on tier 1 local authorities in England relating to the provision of support for victims and their children residing within relevant safe accommodation. Local Authorities have been awarded 'new burdens' funding by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to deliver the new duties.

2.8.2 Thurrock continue to meet their obligations as set out by the Act. The Thurrock VAWG Strategic Board remains the 'domestic abuse local partnership board' for the local area. We completed our first needs assessment for accommodation-based domestic abuse support, for survivors and their children in their area, including the need of those coming from outside the area. The provision of support that was commissioned as a result of the needs assessment is detailed within the Thurrock VAWG strategy which was amended to reflect the new duties. A change in this included the decision to for modern slavery and human trafficking to have a standalone strategy and plan from April 2022.

2.8.3 In June 2022 we submitted our first annual return to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities regarding the allocation of spend of the 'new burdens' fund for 2021/22, in which Thurrock was allocated £366,530. To offer consistency to service provision and in line with the statutory guidance, it was agreed that the funding would be allocated for a 3-year period, in anticipation of continued government funding as assured. This time period aligns with the requirement for future needs assessment. The spending will continue to fund the same services for 2022/23 and 2023/24 in line with the needs assessment recommendations, subject to any amendments as part of the annual review and is detailed at *Appendix 3*. Any underspend proposal will be discussed with the VAWG Board for consultation purposes prior to reallocation. New burdens spending from April 2024 onwards will be determined by a new needs assessment and forthcoming recommendations.

⁸ [The Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

2.9 Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)

DHRs were established on a statutory basis through the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). A DHR is a multi-agency review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse, or neglect by a person to whom they were related or with whom they were, or had been, in an intimate personal relationship, or a member of the same household as themselves. They are also undertaken where a victim took their own life (suicide) and the circumstances give rise to concern, for example it emerges that there was coercive controlling behaviour in the relationship. Section 9 of the Act came into force on 13 April 2011 which requires Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to undertake a DHR following a domestic homicide that meets the criteria.

The Homicide Index data, to the year ending March 2021 highlights that 72.1% of victims of domestic homicide were female. In the majority (77.0%) of female domestic homicides the suspect was a male partner or ex-partner, whereas in the majority (62.5%) of male domestic homicides, the suspect was a male family member.

There is also increasing acknowledgment and awareness amongst domestic abuse support organisations that national data is not reflecting the true toll of the number of suicides related to domestic abuse. This is also reflected in the ONS analysis 'The lasting impact of violence against women and girls' recognising the link between surviving these crimes and suicide. Survivors in the analysis were quoted to feeling the only way out was to take their own life, some attempting suicide several times during and soon after the end of the relationship.

The DHR process has been centralised across SET and coordinated by the SET Domestic Abuse team for several years. In 2021, Thurrock CSP alongside the Thurrock Adult Safeguarding Board, commissioned their first Domestic Homicide Review with a Safeguarding Adult Review being conducted alongside, this concluded in late 2022. The report is currently with the Home Office for approval, it remains confidential to the wider public until publication is agreed, however CSP members, the responsible body, alongside members of the Adult Safeguarding Board have been briefed privately. The CSP and TSAB will continue to work with SETDAB (Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board) and relevant partners to implement the recommendations of the report whilst awaiting official endorsement.

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

The current VAWG strategy was agreed by this committee in 2020. The members of the Thurrock VAWG Strategic Board were consulted on proposals for the new strategy for 2023/26. This strategy aims to tackle the continuum of Violence against Women and Girls, including domestic abuse – in Thurrock. The key elements of these proposals are outlined below:

- 3.1 Overall vision: **Reduce the prevalence of VAWG crimes and ensure that where they do happen, all those affected get the right support.**
- 3.2 Priorities 6 Ps: It is recognised that the existing priorities are still effective and offer the best direction for this area of work, complementing national and local strategies as detailed previously. The proposed priorities for the new strategy are: **Positive communities, Prevention, Partnership, Provision and Protection.** The VAWG board have agreed with the addition of one more priority titled **Participation: Ensure survivors voices are heard (and influence decision making).** This additional priority will assist us to embed survivor voice across the work that we do so we are survivor led, not only in domestic abuse but across the wider VAWG agenda.
- 3.3 To assist us with the delivery of the 6th priority, we are working closely with SETDAB colleagues to ensure that there is a consistent approach to survivor engagement across SET, whilst seeking to capture the local differences of survivor experiences within Thurrock. Survivors should not have to navigate different engagement processes or not feel able to engage across boundaries. This will be a long-term piece of work, moulded by survivor input.
- 3.4 The NHS have a crucial role in supporting survivors of VAWG crimes. It was reported that 44% of domestic abuse victims disclosed to a health professional in the first instance, as identified in the Domestic Abuse Commissioners recent report (A Patchwork of Provision)⁹ In the most extreme cases, victims of domestic abuse on average would attend A&E up to 15 times before targeted intervention was provided¹⁰. Integrated Care Boards (ICB) were introduced in 2022, replacing the existing Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG). The legislation has directed the Boards to prepare an integrated care strategy. This strategy should also address the drivers of unwarranted variation in population health and disparities health and wellbeing outcomes, access, and experience, including people with trauma from violence or abuse. The domestic abuse statutory guidance states that ‘Responding to and preventing domestic abuse should be a strategic priority for both ICBs and ICPs and should be the responsibility of all healthcare professionals working within a system. An ICS is expected to have a joined up, collaborative response to domestic abuse across its geographical footprint.’¹¹
- 3.5 Forthcoming legislative changes that will impact the VAWG agenda nationally and in Thurrock include:
- 3.5.1 The Serious Violence Duty -The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022 introduced a Serious Violence Duty to ensure specified authorities such as police, fire and rescue services, health, local authorities, youth offending teams and probation services work collaboratively to put in place a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence. Section 13 of the

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-patchwork-of-provision-mapping-report>

¹⁰ <https://safelives.org.uk/policy-evidence/getting-it-right-first-time>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-act-2021/domestic-abuse-statutory-guidance-accessible-version>

PCSC Act 2022 explicitly includes domestic abuse and sexual offences within the definition of “violence” for the purpose of the Serious Violence Duty.

- 3.5.2 Online safety Bill-In progression- This Bill will require companies to take swift and effective action against illegal content targeted at women. Illegal content that platforms will need to remove includes child sexual abuse, extreme sexual violence, and sexual exploitation.
- 3.5.3 The Victims Bill-placing a duty on relevant local bodies to coordinate victim support services; and crucially, placing Independent Sexual Violence Advisors and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors on statutory.
- 3.5.4 The implementation timetable for the Domestic Abuse Act has been revised. The pilot programme for Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders Pilot will begin in spring 2024.

3.6 Equality Impact Assessment

The Community Equality Impact Assessment for the proposed Domestic Abuse and VAWG strategy 2023/26 has highlighted:

- There is a gender imbalance in relation to reported crime. Nationally, most victims were female, and the majority of perpetrators are male
- Elder abuse is acknowledged as under reported
- Pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to domestic abuse
- National research highlights that BAME, LGBT and disabled individuals face additional barriers when reaching out to seek help.
- The established religions do not condone the abuse highlighted within this strategy
- Domestic abuse affects all communities, certain wards have higher reporting levels.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 This report provides the committee with an opportunity to be assured that Thurrock Council is meeting its statutory requirements as detailed in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as outlined in 2.8
- 4.2 This report provides the committee with a summary of the key successes towards delivery of the VAWG strategy 2020/23.
- 4.3 This paper provides the committee with an opportunity to comment on the proposed vision and priorities of the Domestic Abuse and VAWG strategy for Thurrock 2023/26

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

- 5.1 Annual reporting to the Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee providing opportunity to scrutinise commitment to delivery of statutory duties placed on the Local Authority from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and note the progress against the current strategy.

- 5.2 Hidden and Extreme Harms Committee – There have been presentations and discussion on sexual violence from the perspective of males, and training provided on the both the wider topic of sexual violence and abuse. This Committee requested that modern slavery was removed from a future VAWG strategy and requested a standalone document to tackle this crime. This has been completed.
- 5.3 Annual report to the Community Safety Partnership Board and Health and Well Being Board
- 5.4 Consultation with the VAWG Strategic Board members is a key process within the requirements of a domestic abuse local partnership board. The Board members have been consulted on the proposed spending of the new burdens funding and the strategic direction of the new strategy. This resulted in a vote to remain as one VAWG strategy and not to separate out domestic abuse from VAWG. They viewed this as key to the existing strong collaborative working.

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

- 6.1 The VAWG strategy is central to delivering Thurrock Council's priority of:
- **People** - a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay. All elements of this priority are relevant to VAWG.
 - **Prosperity** - a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations. In particular 'vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all.' which provides victims with access further opportunities to help them rebuild their lives.
- 6.2 VAWG crimes affect our residents, and this is recognised in the Health and Well Being Strategy 2022- 2026. The HWB Board receive updates in relation to activities relating to domain 6 of the strategy, once again evidencing the shared priorities across different services. This provides a focus on the wider determinants of health including domestic and sexual violence and / abuse.
- 6.3 The VAWG action plan links closely to and supports delivery of the SETDAB Domestic Abuse Strategy 2020-2025. Within the PFCC Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024 it supports the priorities of reducing violence against women and girls, protecting vulnerable people, and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse and improving support for victims of crime.
- 6.4 The VAWG strategic board have contributed to the draft drug and alcohol needs assessment and recommendations will be included within the action plan as relevant.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**

Senior Management Accountant

Thurrock Council allocations for the New Burdens funding are in the table below and spend for 21/22 and indicative spend for 22/23 detailed in Appendix 3.

This project has experienced some delays due to the requirement to commission against the outcome of a needs assessment, having regard for statutory guidance published in late 2021 and then identifying the appropriate service for those needs, including recruitment of staff to those positions and therefore some carry forwards of this grant funding have been required.

All spend detail for 22/23 is indicative at this stage pending the completion of all year-end adjustments in order to reach an outturn position for the Council.

In addition, a grant return for 22/23 is due to be submitted to central government on 30th June

Year	Amount
2021/22	£366,530- received
2022/23	£367,545- received
2023/24	£374,897- confirmed allocation
2024/25	£381,970 - confirmed allocation

The New Burdens fund for 22/24 has committed to funding the post of the VAWG Coordinator. The TCSP in 2022/23 committed £4k of funding for training and awareness raising. The Public Realm Directorate contribute £17k for the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Nicola Monerville**
Principal Solicitor, Safeguarding, LBBD.

The allocation of funding has followed the statutory guidance. Where spend has not occurred directly within 'safe accommodation' establishments it will offer a service to cohorts who are accessing 'safe accommodation.' The VAWG Board has been consulted on proposals of spend, as per the Board role in statutory guidance.

Childrens Domestic abuse support group – Children are victims in the own right in law as per the Domestic Abuse Act. A proportion of children or their

adult with parental responsibility accessing this service, will also be accessing safe accommodation, (Refuge/Sanctuary)

Funding of the Partner link worker element of the perpetrator intervention provision- some of the client group will also be accessing safe accommodation in Thurrock.

Flexible Fund – Funding is provided to organisations who directly support clients in ‘safe accommodation’ or a proportion of clients accessing this fund will be accessing safe accommodation such as sanctuary. Use of the flexible fund follows the principles of the Whole Housing approach; this approach is supported by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The key findings from the draft Community Equality Impact Assessment (appendix 4) are articulated in 3.6. It is proposed to further review this with a panel and any further identified actions will be included within the delivery plan.

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

This report contributes towards Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

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):

- [HM Government: Tackling violence against women and girls strategy- July 2021](#)
- [The Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

9. Appendices to the report

1. Thurrock DA and VAWG Strategy 2023/26
2. **Crime Prevention Strategy 2021-2025**
3. Breakdown of new burdens funding 2021/22
4. Community Equality Impact Assessment

Report Author:

Priscilla Tsang, VAWG Coordinator
Community Safety Team, Public Realm

Thurrock Council

Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2026

Our partnership approach to tackling domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Thurrock.

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Introduction

Sadly, violence against women and girls feels inevitable, and it shouldn't be that way.

The sheer scale and prevalence of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) has been brought to the forefront of the nation's attention in the last couple of years following a number of high-profile tragic cases. There appeared to be a turning point within society in recognising the extent of gender-based violence and public sexual harassment faced by women. These circumstances also supported conversations about the role of wider society, in particular men, to prevent these issues. The public had had enough, the outcry was the largest we had seen since the #MeToo movement.

Thurrock have proudly been trying to address VAWG crimes since 2012. Our previous strategy was written just prior to the world 'pausing' because of the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic affected everyone in society and in the context of VAWG and personal safety, it sadly added another barrier to individuals reaching out for support. Due to the initial 'stay at home' guidance, many experiencing VAWG crimes were sadly locked away with their abuser. Technology in the form of mobile phones and internet access is accessible to many, however these are often monitored by abusers. The option to find a brief window of time alone to make a phone call would have been incredibly difficult for many. Reports to national helplines also increased during the pandemic and local services were supporting individuals for longer periods of time. The courts system was severely affected, adding lengthy delays to an already slow process. The saying 'justice delayed is justice denied' feels very true for many survivors.

Thousands of women and girls have also shared their personal experiences of abuse and harassment online through the 'Everyone's Invited' website. The government's Call for Evidence to help shape the new national tackling violence against women and girls strategy received more than 180,000 responses. This was a record number of responses for any call of evidence request from government.

This strategy continues to build upon the work that occurs across the borough since the launch of our first VAWG strategy in 2012. Our new Domestic Abuse and VAWG Strategy is constructed around six key priorities. These align with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and Government's Violence Against Women and Girls strategy. This strategy considers key areas of information, including,

- An initial and reviewed domestic abuse needs assessment for support within safe accommodation
- The Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022/26¹

¹ <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/health-and-well-being-strategy/health-and-well-being-strategy-2022-2026>

- Lessons learnt from Domestic Homicide Reviews across Essex
- Feedback from engagement sessions with the community
- National and local data
- Best practice examples

The local authority duties within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 are detailed in Part A- this is our Domestic Abuse Strategy. Part B details the VAWG strategy and community element of domestic abuse, detailing services available to support all survivors. There is a natural overlap between part A & B, and both support each other. The Strategy will be accompanied by a robust action plan which will outline the steps we will take as a partnership to achieve our objectives. Our approach will use existing strong foundations to continue our wish to see a holistic approach to tackling VAWG crimes and the profound long-term effects on survivors and people close to them.

Legislative & Policy Framework

The Domestic Abuse Act was enacted in April 2021, complemented by the government's strategy to tackle violence against women and girls, published in July 2021. There was a commitment to continue to seek alignment between statutory Integrated Care Services (ICS) in health and social care in England and victim support services for survivors of sexual violence and domestic abuse. It separated Domestic abuse from this strategy, due to the separate statutory guidance that was due to be published to support the Domestic Abuse Act.

The national statement of expectations was refreshed, as was the male victims position statement where government reiterated their commitment to ensuring that male victims of crimes which disproportionately affect women and girls are supported. ²

Many changes have occurred in national policy and legislation since the previous strategy. These are summarised below.

- Victims Code: November 2020
- Domestic Abuse Act: April 2021
- Tackling VAWG Strategy: July 2021
- Statutory guidance: Domestic Abuse Act Statutory Guidance: August 2021
- Statutory guidance: Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services: October 2021

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-male-victims>

- Tackling domestic abuse plan: March 2022
- Supporting male victims position statement: May 2022
- Introduction of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs). Partnerships of organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined up health and care services, to improve the lives of people who live and work in their area: July 2022. Health and Care Act 2022 requires the joint forward plan for an integrated care board and its partners to set out any steps it proposes to take to address the particular needs of victims of abuse (including domestic abuse and sexual abuse, whether of children or adults)
- Violence against women and girls' national statement of expectations: July 2022
- Women's Health Strategy: August 2022. Responses highlighted the impact of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls on the mental health of women their lifetime.
- Online safety Bill- in progression. The government VAWG strategy says this Bill will require companies to take swift and effective action against illegal content targeted at women.
- Victims and Prisoners Bill-In progression.

Scrutiny of national organisational responses to VAWG

The VAWG and domestic abuse landscape has seen increased scrutiny across several organisations over the past couple of years. As the responses to scrutiny develop, this is likely to influence the services we provide to our residents at a local level. Nationally the role of the police and how they respond to VAWG has received increased criticism, resulting in a national police lead for VAWG and delivering a new police strategy that will focus on interventions to prevent violence, target perpetrators, and help victims achieve justice. Essex Police have developed a Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022-2024. This is principally an internal facing document, focusing on High Harm, Safer Spaces and Culture and Behaviours. HM Inspectorate of Probation identified in their submission to the VAWG Call for evidence that improvements could be made in their response to tackling VAWG within the services they deliver. At the time of writing, nationally, the Probation service are exploring the concept of employing more men to help bring a male perspective to cases involving violent offenders, including cases of domestic abuse. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has seen its charging rate scrutinised. The domestic abuse-related charging rate in England and Wales increased for the first time in four years to 72.7% in the year ending March 2022 but remains below the year ending March 2018 (75.9%).

There is a lot of change that is happening across multiple organisations, many are now taking a detailed look to understand what they can do to improve their organisational response to the issue of VAWG. As the responses are developed, we will begin to see the impact on matters such as cultural transformation regarding sexism and misogyny, improved justice data recording and accountability for police perpetrated violence.

Part A: Thurrock Council Domestic Abuse Strategy

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act was enacted 29th April 2021.

The Act outlines guidance and support for agencies to prevent and respond to domestic abuse. There are a range of statutory and non-statutory duties. The aims of the Act include:

- Protect and support victims – to enhance the safety of victims and the support they receive
- Transform the justice process – to provide support to victims throughout the justice process and an effective response to perpetrators to end the cycle of abuse
- Improve performance – to drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse
- Promote awareness – put domestic abuse at the top of everybody’s agenda

Crucially, children were added to the statutory definition of domestic abuse as victims in their own right if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.

The recently reappointed Domestic Abuse Commissioner carried out a mapping exercise of domestic abuse services across England and Wales. The early findings from this report suggests that there is a post code lottery response to domestic abuse. Early findings and recommendations are detailed below, a full final stage report is due shortly³

- Specialist domestic abuse services are effective in supporting victims and survivors to cope and recover from their abuse
- Most victims and survivors want some kind of community-based support
- Advocacy support alone is insufficient to meet the needs of victims and survivors
- The independence of services is vitally important
- Services in England & Wales are unable to meet demand
- Gaps in support for children, and access to perpetrator programmes, were particularly notable.
- Specialist ‘by and for’ services are disproportionately underfunded, with considerable gaps in provision across England & Wales.

³ <https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/DAC-Mapping-briefing-paper-final.pdf>

The government will now consider how it will respond to these issues; a suggestion is that the Victims Bill should be utilised to fill the gaps identified.

Local Authority duties within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The act includes new duties on tier 1 local authorities in England relating to the provision of support for victims and their children residing within relevant safe accommodation. 'Safe Accommodation' is defined in the Act.

Thurrock Council have responded to these as detailed below.

New Duties for Thurrock Council from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021	Thurrock Council progress on the new duties
Appoint a multi-agency domestic abuse local partnership board to be consulted when performing certain functions	Amended the terms of reference of the former Thurrock Violence Against Women & Girls Strategic Board to reflect the duties of the act, assisting the local authority in its functions of the newly required local domestic abuse partnership board. The Thurrock VAWG Board is the domestic abuse local partnership board for Thurrock.
Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support of survivors and their children in their area, including the need of those coming from outside the area	Completed a needs assessment regarding the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support of survivors and their children in their area, including the need of those coming from outside the area. Further details in this document
Develop and publish a strategy, by 5 January 2022, for the provision of support	Amended the previous VAWG 2020-2023 strategy to reflect the duties for local authorities under part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This strategy already detailed support for domestic abuse victims including safe accommodation provision as defined by the Act. A decision of the VAWG Strategic Board has resulted in the VAWG strategy from 2023 onwards will continue to deliver the content required of a domestic abuse strategy. This will include links to

	existing work streams such as Community Safety, Housing and Homelessness and Safeguarding strategies.
Give effect to the strategy by commissioning and de-commissioning services	Thurrock Council have commissioned new services of support as a result of the recommendations from the needs assessment. Further information is provided below.
Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy and report back to central government and to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner	Annual review by the VAWG Strategic Board to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy in order to report back to government within the timescales specified

Assessing the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support of survivors and their children.

A needs assessment was conducted capturing data from April 2018 to March 2021 (see page 11). Information collected from Thurrock Refuge during this time period indicates that 295 victims of domestic abuse were provided with safe accommodation – 120 refuge clients with 175 children. The average age of domestic abuse victims in safe accommodation was 35, however the ages ranged from 21 to 71.

72% of those provided accommodation had children, and 7% were pregnant. 88% of Thurrock Refuge clients were British nationals, 5% of clients had no recourse to public funds. The top four areas (unitary or district level local authority) where Thurrock's Refuge residents were most likely to come from were Southend-on-Sea (13%), Thurrock (11%), Basildon (10%) and Barking and Dagenham (8%).

There is a strong association between some data sets and the deprivation levels across wards in Thurrock. On average, 52% of residents in safe accommodation in Thurrock were unemployed while approximately 42% of residents' employment status was unrecorded in the same time frame, based on a three-year cohort.

The unemployment rate is high which could be for a range of reasons, such as mental health needs, or language barriers, 5% of residents required an interpreter and 9% of residents' first language was not English. These may also be potential barriers in accessing and navigating employment or being financially able to continue to alternative accommodation.

Individuals identifying as having a disability was an emerging trend in the data. Although numerically small, there is limited understanding of these needs and therefore this area required greater focus. Mental health support emerged as the largest need for residents of refuge, corroborated by the understanding that emotional or psychological and jealous or controlling behaviour abuse types affected over half of residents each year.

The Domestic Abuse Act has defined children as victims in their own right, therefore data recording across agencies will have to capture this with greater accuracy for future assessments. The specific needs of children residing in refuge is not known and will be a focus for future assessments.

This assessment has highlighted that there is a need for a regular multi-agency analytical product, overlaying partnership data sets and reviewing them all together rather than individually within own organisations. This would be of significant benefit to the local domestic abuse partnership board in assisting the local authority to deliver the duties under the Domestic Abuse Act.

'No space or capacity to provide support' was the second most recorded reason for being refused safe accommodation. There is a lack of specialised accommodation for minority groups or individuals who face additional barriers to reporting or for those who cannot/may not feel comfortable residing in current safe accommodation provision, such as males and LGBTQ+ community.

The ability to extend safe accommodation buildings and capital spending is outside of the Domestic Abuse Act new burdens funding remit, however this has emerged as gap in current service within Thurrock and will require further exploration.

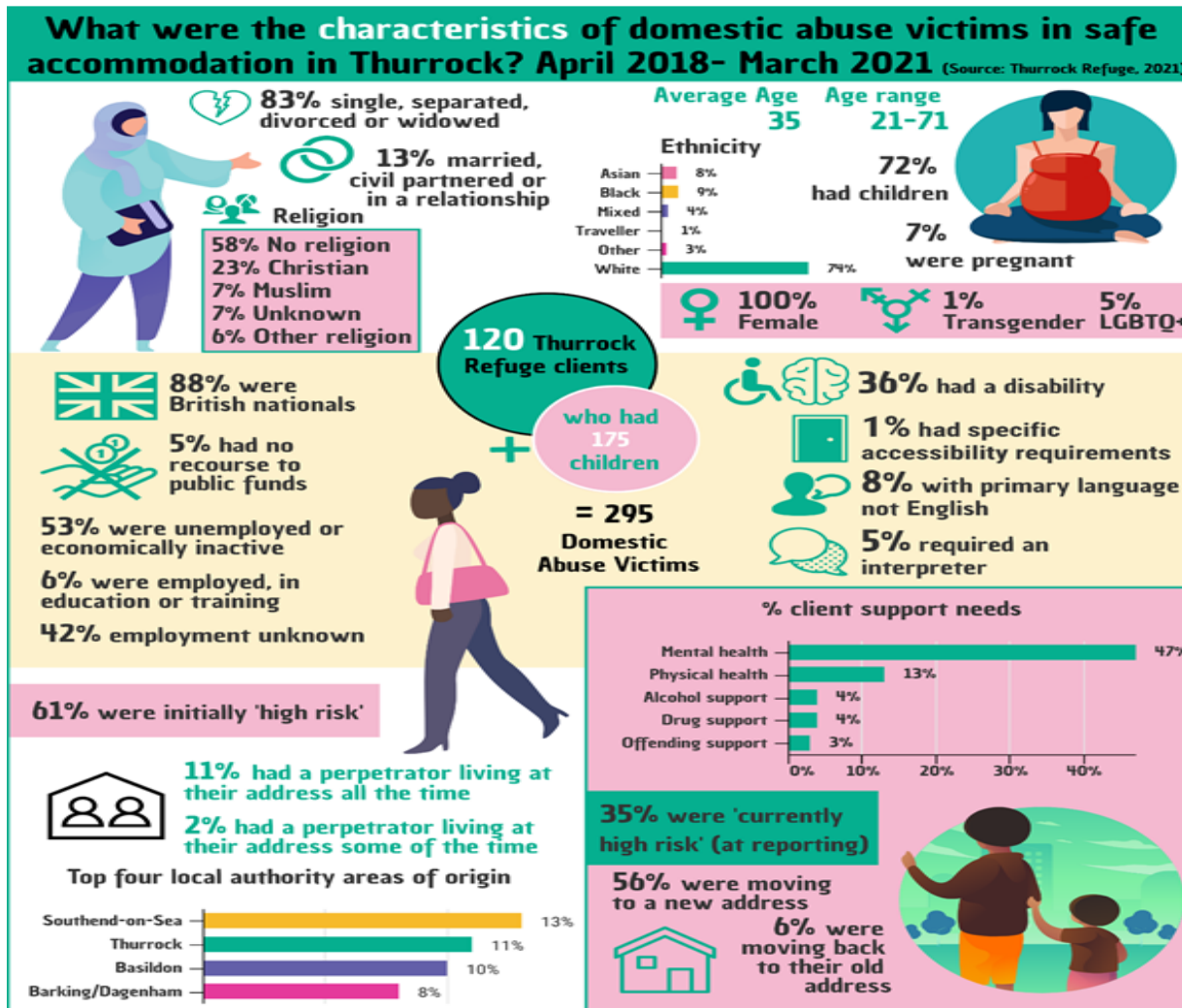


Image summary of findings from the domestic abuse needs assessment: figures detailed.2018-2021

Responding to the needs assessment- commissioning of new services

The needs assessment had several recommendations which resulted in the commissioning of new services.

New services within Refuge, a form of 'Safe Accommodation'

- Financial inclusion support officer
- Trauma focused counselling for children
- Childrens worker- increase from 4 to 5 days
- Trauma focused counselling for adults
- Specialist sexual violence and abuse counselling for survivors in Refuge and onto resettlement
- Training need identified for Refuge to better understand complexity and differing levels of mental health and disability
- Inclusion service, providing a drug and alcohol support service – building relationships with staff leading to a drop-in service.
- Tuition for Children whilst waiting for a school place when residing in safe accommodation.

Additional provision supporting residents residing in safe accommodation

- Domestic Abuse Officer: Refuge x 2 – Housing Safeguarding Team
- Flexible fund payments to organisations directly supporting clients accessing safe accommodation, following the whole housing approach
- Childrens support group delivered by Thurrock Children Social Care.

Review of services commissioned in response to needs assessment recommendations.

Local Authorities have a duty to ensure that services of support are fit for purpose and have an impact on the issues identified within the needs assessment. The following changes have occurred to commissioned services from the New Burdens Fund:

Specialist Sexual Violence counselling for survivors in Refuge and onto resettlement- this service ceased after 1 year of funding due to limited take up of the service from individuals residing in safe accommodation. The clients coming forward for this service were from community-based services, which is not covered by the remit of this funding.

The analytical support role and a multi-agency analytical product was put on hold whilst we collaborated with our Essex County Council and Southend City Council colleagues on a piece of work to explore if the current pathways of support for domestic abuse survivors across Essex was still meeting the needs of the individuals who were accessing them. This work is ongoing and has reached some initial conclusions and recommendations for future services.

Domestic Abuse Officer- Refuge- the requirement of officers reduced from 2, to 1. This is largely in part to the positive impact of the other newly commissioned services in Refuge, reducing the need for a second officer in this role.

Case Study- Impact of the Flexible Fund payment assisting a survivor to start a new life.

- ❖ Client profile: Gender – Female: Age - 51
- ❖ Domestic Abuse experienced – Emotional, physical, financial, coercive controlling behaviours
- ❖ Complexities – Alcohol dependent, language barrier

- Client entered the service via the hospital. Client had been strangled and pushed down the stairs by her abuser. The hospital identified this as a Domestic Abuse case and the Changing Pathways Essex Domestic Abuse Partnership Project (EDAPP) service was notified and a Health Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (HIDVA) was assigned.
- The HIDVA supported the client whilst in the hospital with emotional support and then by securing a refuge space.
- The caseworker identified that the client would need support with her abusive experiences, housing, alcohol misuse and mental ill health support.
- Client was referred to the local alcohol service Inclusions for support, she engaged with this service for several months and eventually ceased all alcohol misuse.
- Client completed 1-1 work with the caseworker to help ease her worries and fears about the abuse that she had experienced and to educate her about future warning signs of another potentially abusive relationship.
- Client attended 1-1 in house counselling for an allocated number of sessions.

- It was identified that the client was vulnerable and was isolated due to her language and cultural barriers.
- The caseworker made a homeless application to a Northern Authority as she had decided that she wanted to start afresh somewhere out of London and Essex, the caseworker and client researched the area and there were several community factors that would support her life moving forward, this would reduce her isolation. Client was accepted and was offered a Social Housing accommodation after 6 months.
- Due to the client's language barriers and vulnerabilities, she was unable to liaise with external agencies independently. The caseworker had to advocate on her behalf to ensure that she got the support that was available to her and to communicate clearly in relation to the providing of documents and legalities of the new tenancy.
- When it came to the client moving on to her new home, it was identified that she would require even more support. The client needed transport to get to her new home up North, due to the distance of the move, it would mean that she would need to view, sign and move in on the same day. In order to ensure that this could happen, the Flexible Fund made it possible to fuel the work vehicle for the journey (without this, it may not have been possible due to limits on charity spending), and enabled purchasing of essential items such as a bed, bedding, microwave, kettle, toaster and basic food items could be purchased to enable her to stay at the property for the first few nights with ease until the local authority were able to put a scheme in place to support her with furniture and ongoing support. The client was extremely grateful.
- Without the support that was provided from start to finish, the clients' own words were, '*I would be on the streets with nothing or dead if it wasn't for Changing Pathways*'. Changing Pathways were able to provide a safe place, able to support her move and thanks to the Flexible fund, were able to provide her with the essentials to begin her new life with minimal worry and angst.

Housing, Homelessness, and the Domestic Abuse Act

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 resulted in amendments to several pieces of legislation and guidance policies nationally. The Homelessness code of conduct was amended to reflect the new duties and implications of the Act. This included the new statutory definition of domestic abuse and in relation to housing:

- ensuring that fleeing abuse does not result in the loss of right to lifetime or assured tenancies when these were in place
- ensuring that homeless people identified as survivors of domestic abuse are given priority

The Thurrock homelessness strategy recognises that the overall under provision of safe, suitable and affordable accommodation in Thurrock for those with specific support needs is a factor in limiting positive outcomes for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse. These challenges include

- a lack of social housing stock to meet 'move on' needs
- turning to private sector renting can contribute to financial instability and insecure tenure
- engagement with specific groups requires different approaches to improve underreporting

The council has conducted a review its of policies and processes as part of its efforts to achieve DAHA accreditation – the benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse. Through this work, a new domestic abuse policy has been developed.

To reflect the council's commitment to tackling domestic abuse, the policy introduces several measures to ensure that residents receive a dedicated approach, considering the circumstance of each individual and always upholding best practice.

The policy sets out that residents can expect the council to:⁴

- get our response right first time
- work with specialist services
- be flexible in our approach

⁴ <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/housing-strategies/housing-strategy-2022-2027#:~:text=Housing%20strategies,-Show%20page%20links&text=provide%20a%20housing%20service%20that,rough%20sleeping%20in%20our%20borough>

- assist and guide survivors to obtain tailored support
- ensure survivors can remain in their property if they wish through the sanctuary scheme
- safeguard survivors and their families
- take a survivor centred approach
- adopt a coordinated multi-agency response
- proactively engage with 'hard-to-reach' groups
- promote awareness of our zero tolerance support services
- assist survivors to find alternative safe accommodation, and continue to provide support
- ensure staff safety

The work to achieve the DAHA accreditation will continue into 2023 and will demonstrate the council's commitment and coordinated community response to domestic abuse in areas such as case and risk management, inclusivity and accessibility, partnership working, and publicity and awareness.

The existing joint protocol for survivors of sexual and domestic violence has set a strong foundation, ensuring that partners commit to following good practice to provide support in a consistent, safe and effective way. Further work will be undertaken to review the joint protocol to reflect the current practice, including identifying and engaging with other agencies and organisations which work with those affected by sexual and domestic abuse.

Part B: Thurrock Council VAWG Strategy

Our vision:

Reduce the prevalence of VAWG crimes and ensure that where they do happen all those affected get the right support.

What are VAWG crimes? VAWG crimes addressed in this strategy

VAWG is a term adopted from the United Nations 1993 declaration that includes “Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”. The Council of Europe outlines four factors which lie at the root of the problem: Cultural, Legal, Economic & Political.⁵ It acknowledges that the main cause of the violence is the perpetrator and the person who has been affected is never responsible for the perpetrator’s actions. There is no single factor, but rather a myriad of factors contributes to it, and the interplay of these factors lies at the root of the problem.

Types of VAWG covered in this strategy include.

- Sexual exploitation
- Sexual violence
- Child sexual abuse and adult survivors of child sexual abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Stalking
- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- ‘Honour-based’ abuse

⁵ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/what-causes-gender-based-violence>

Modern day slavery & human trafficking crimes are now addressed with a standalone, tri- partnership, modern slavery strategy.⁶

Legislation to address VAWG crimes can be slow to change. In UK law, rape in marriage only became a criminal offence in 1991, and coercive control in 2015. In 2012 the UK signed the Istanbul Convention but were unable to ratify it due to the UK's domestic laws not being able to meet its requirements. The Convention is the first legally binding instrument which creates a comprehensive legal framework and approach to combat violence against women. It covers all forms of violence against women and girls and includes offences such as rape and stalking. In November 2022 the UK became the 37th state to ratify, with some reservations⁷, the Istanbul Convention.

How can we prevent VAWG crimes from occurring?

As we recognise the complexity of why VAWG crimes occur, the Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention⁸ offers 4 key areas that could influence the prevention of such crimes. This model considers the complex interplay between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. It explores the range of factors that put people at risk for violence or protect them from experiencing or perpetrating violence.

In the UK, the Coordinated Community Response⁹ and the Whole Housing Approach¹⁰ are two frameworks that are viewed as the most effective way to respond to domestic abuse. They recognise the importance of a whole person approach. These approaches shift responsibility for safety away from individual survivors to the community and services that exist to support them. They do not look at the issue from a single agency lens.

Thurrock has been progressing in adopting elements of both approaches throughout the previous strategy and will continue to do so in this strategy.

⁶ <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/modern-slavery/overview>

⁷ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=declarations-by-treaty&numSte=210&codeNature=2&codePays=UK>

⁸ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/about/social-ecologicalmodel.html>

⁹ In+Search+of+Excellence+2020.pdf (squarespace.com)

¹⁰ 12_-wha-housing-first-for-women.pdf (dahalliance.org.uk)

Priorities of the VAWG strategy- and how will we achieve them

Positive Communities: Understand what VAWG crimes are and know about support available locally.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2022¹¹ highlights that an estimated 6.9% of women (1.7 million) and 3.0% of men (699,000) experienced domestic abuse in the last year. A higher proportion of adults aged 20 to 24 years were victims of domestic abuse in the last year compared with adults aged 55 years and over. A higher percentage of adults with a disability experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without.

The feeling of safety on the streets and feeling safe in public spaces as you walk around in your daily life is incredibly important. In April 2021 Street Safe was launched across several police forces. This allows individuals to report anonymously where they do not feel safe across Thurrock and wider Essex. Although limited in number, Thurrock have had several reports submitted to street safe. Initial analysis has shown alcohol, drug use and areas with insufficient lighting are a concern to residents.

The top three reasons why people did not report these concerns to the police were:

- They didn't think anyone would do anything about it
- They did not consider the experience to be a crime
- They thought the experience was too trivial to report

These concerns, alongside the focused work of a programme of exploring local VAWG data sets called Minerva, will assist us to respond appropriately to the issues our residents are raising.

We will offer Bystander awareness training to members of the public so that they feel equipped to safely challenge unacceptable behaviour that they witness. This complements the existing domestic abuse awareness training, Community J9, which is offered to the public to help them spot the signs of domestic abuse and signpost individuals to support.

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabusevictimcharacteristicsenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2022>

We will ensure that Council staff and Members are offered appropriate training to identify domestic abuse and signpost survivors to the correct support. The Thurrock Community Safety Partnership provide awareness training regarding domestic abuse and sexual violence.

We will support the annual 16 Days of Action (25 November-10 December) with our daily messaging throughout the 16 days, hosting events to promote broader awareness of domestic abuse and VAWG, and the services of support that are available. Our community engagement events throughout the year, across the borough and within educational settings assist us to raise awareness of domestic abuse, VAWG issues and provide information about services available to support anyone experiencing these crimes or behaviours.

Through challenging the social and economic impact of VAWG, challenging victim blaming and gender inequality, we can increase the knowledge and understanding across our communities.

Prevention: Increased awareness and education of VAWG across education establishments/professionals

Safeguarding Boards and the Education system have a very important role to play in the preventative work we can do to reduce VAWG crimes.

When asked which of several options they thought should be the highest priorities for the government in tackling all forms of violence against women and girls, most respondents selected “more action to prevent violence against women and girls from happening. Education programmes in schools to teach children about these crimes” was the highest-ranking option.

The Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges (2021) surveyed children aged 13+ on what types of harmful sexual behaviours they think happened ‘a lot’ or ‘sometimes’ between people their age:

- 79% of girls said sexual assault
- 88% of girls said receiving pictures or videos they did not want to see
- 53% of boys said rumours about sexual activity
- 92% of girls said experiencing sexist name-calling

This rapid review concluded that sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are prevalent for children and young people. For some children, incidents were so commonplace that they saw no point in reporting them. The review did not analyse whether the issues were prevalent for different groups but found that they were so widespread it needed addressing for all children and young people. The key recommendation was that schools should assume that this is happening, even if

there were no reports of it occurring. Thurrock have recently initiated a project with the NSPCC to conduct a harmful sexual behaviour audit to better understand any gaps in professional understanding of this topic or gaps in support provision. The outcome of this will impact our support service offer.

We will utilise the annual audit tool through the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership to better understand any gaps in training or understanding of domestic abuse, the wider VAWG agenda and the services available to support education establishments to respond accordingly. We will promote existing services that are able to attend our schools and contribute to the statutory Relationship & Sex Education duty such as the Good Man & Sisters In Strength projects. We will provide relevant briefings and communication to schools, headteachers and support events such as the annual 'Walk Online Roadshow' to support schools and to raise awareness of online exploitation and how parents can help to safeguard children when they use online platforms.

Operation Encompass provides a method of sharing information between the Police and local Schools. This provides the designated "Key Adult" within the school with information where a child has been present in a household where an incident of domestic abuse has been recorded. The information is aimed to be shared with the school prior to the commencement of the next school day so that the school can provide any appropriate support within the school environment for that pupil on that day. Encompass, piloted in Thurrock, is now offered to all Thurrock schools.

Project Goldcrest is an initiative, designed collaboratively with input from young people, through focus group discussions. It was recognised that many young people say that Police/Social Care involvement can be a barrier to reporting child sexual exploitation (CSE), sexual violence and sexual abuse. Whilst Police referrals and self-referrals into the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) are preferable (for both criminal justice outcomes and improving patient outcomes), obtaining anonymous evidence and having some contact with the young person is better than none. This allows young people (who have already been identified as being at risk of CSE) to take their own forensic samples at home, with parental responsibility or an appropriate adult as a witness. Their information, along with the exhibits, are provided to the Police and stored for 25 years. The young person remains anonymous to the Police (unless they later decide they want to formally report).¹² This was also a pilot in Thurrock, following an evaluation, it is being considered for roll out elsewhere across Essex.

¹² <http://www.oakwoodplace.org.uk/professionals1.html>

Knowledge and understanding of VAWG crimes are an ongoing learning process for everyone, as these crimes and behaviours evolve and new concerns emerge, such as online crimes via technology. Nationally and locally, our understanding of the prevalence and causes of these newer forms of violence against women and girls is limited. For example, we know that online dating abuse via dating apps has become a societal concern, damaging esteem and potentially future relationships. However, we do not have numbers of those affected. There are also acknowledgement of concerns of abuse and extreme sexism surfacing in the use online forums and social media platforms as well as new apps, though again, accurate figures for this are not yet available. The government VAWG strategy acknowledged the limitations in the national data regarding crimes against women and girls in the Crime Survey for England & Wales.

The landscape can change rapidly. Most respondents in all parts of the government public survey agreed that online forms of violence against women and girls are more common now than five years ago.¹³ Any emerging concerns will be addressed within the action plan that supports this strategy, the action plan will be a 'live' document responding to changes and concerns. All our partners are stakeholders in this agenda, and we must all understand how we can respond to this issue to achieve change.

Partnership: Effective multi-agency arrangements

The governance for this area of work is through the Thurrock Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Board, this Board also fulfills the duties of the statutory required Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. The Board reports to the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Board. 'Tackling disproportional violence against women and girls' and 'breaking the cycle of domestic abuse' are priorities for the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership 2023/24¹⁴. There are strong links between this strategy and Thurrock's Health and Wellbeing Strategy which sets priorities for reducing inequalities in health and well-being, and for improving the health and well-being of the people of Thurrock. This strategy has a strong shared priority with Domain 6 which focuses on ensuring that victims/survivors of crime can access support to cope and recover from their experiences.¹⁵

At a County level, Thurrock is a member of the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) and we also work closely with the Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex (OPFCC). We share common

¹³ Domestic Abuse Act Statutory Guidance 2021 www.gov.uk

¹⁴ <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/community-safety-partnership/thurrock-community-safety-partnership>

¹⁵ <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/health-and-well-being-strategy/health-and-well-being-strategy-2022-2026>

strategic commitments within our strategies and plans with a focus on prevention and early intervention. This strategy aligns with the aims of both the SETDAB Strategy¹⁶ and Essex Police and Crime Plan¹⁷. There is an existing strong working relationship between Thurrock and our Essex and Southend colleagues, with includes jointly commissioned services and collaborative working on specific projects.

Locally we will continue to strengthen existing relationships to bring about beneficial outcomes for the wider VAWG agenda, an example is the professionals' visits to refuge. This is an opportunity for professionals working in Thurrock to visit the local women's refuge. Attendees are shown around to get a clearer picture of refuge life. The host details how the process works from a victim entering and their journey whilst staying at the refuge.

Whilst on an individual organisational level there is limited resources and capacity, through working together, we can all view tackling VAWG as core business and share our knowledge, skills and capacity to respond together.

Domestic Homicide Reviews

In 2022 at least 108 UK women were killed in circumstances where a man or men were the principal suspect. Women are murdered on average every three days in the UK, mostly, by people they know and trust.

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) came into effect on 13 April 2011. There were established on a statutory basis under Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Adults Act 2004.

The Thurrock Community Safety Partnership have the statutory duty to complete these reviews. Locally, this process is centralised across Essex and co-ordinated through the SETDAB team on behalf of all Essex Community Safety Partnerships.

A Domestic Homicide Review refers to a review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by:

- a person to whom they were related, or had been in an intimate personal relationship with
or
- a member of the same household

¹⁶<https://setdab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SETDAB-Strategy-Consultation-Draft-Jan-2020.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Police-and-Crime-Plan-2021-2024.pdf>

The purpose of the DHR review is to:

- establish what lessons are to be learned from the domestic homicide regarding the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims
- clearly identify what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result
- apply those lessons to service responses including changes to inform national and local policies and procedures as appropriate
- prevent domestic abuse and homicide and improve service responses for all domestic abuse victims and their children by developing improved intra- and inter-agency working.
- Reviews may also be carried out if it is believed that a history of domestic abuse was an influencing factor in a suicide.

Following the completion of a DHR, and approval from the Home Office quality assurance panel, community safety partnerships must publish the anonymised executive summary and action plans, unless extenuating circumstances prohibit the publication.

Since the introduction of this requirement, Thurrock have had one DHR, a joint review alongside a Thurrock Safeguarding Adults Review. Thurrock CSP and Adult Safeguarding have begun the work to implement the proposed recommendations as we wait for the final approval from the Home Office assurance panel.

Provision: Support victims of VAWG crimes with the appropriate service for their need

The support available regarding 'safe accommodation' and local authority duties under the domestic abuse is detailed in Part A. Naturally there is some fluidity between the transition of community support and 'safe accommodation' support.

The Housing Safeguarding Team (HST) is our community response to domestic abuse and other crimes and behaviours that fall under a safeguarding remit. They have an important role to play in the wider safeguarding agenda regarding many different types of abuse, and work closely with services across the borough, Essex wide and nationally. The HST are uniquely positioned within the housing team at Thurrock Council. They are a highly skilled team of Domestic Abuse

advisers, many of whom are trained Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA). They are well versed in partnership working with agencies such as Essex Police, COMPASS (partnership of domestic abuse services in Essex), NHS services, Inclusions, (Drug & Alcohol support), Childrens Social Care, Adult Social Care and specialist organisations such as SERICC (rape and sexual abuse specialist service) for individuals experiencing certain crimes, such as Honour Based Abuse or rape and sexual abuse. These organisations are vital support so that people can receive the service that is right for them.

Effective support can be lifechanging. Some examples of support this team have achieved during the time period September 2021 to August 2022 include:

- 19 survivors were found new tenancies to maintain their safety
- 1 perpetrator was evicted at an average court cost of £4,000
- 64 survivors were offered 'Sanctuary' adaptations (a form of 'safe accommodation' under the Domestic Abuse Act) to their home to ensure their safety at a cost of £52,296.

This team work closely with both the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and the Thurrock IDVA (High Risk support). These services provide the first-hand response to domestic abuse across Thurrock.

Between these services, they received the following referrals for support in 2022.

Agency	Male overall referrals 2022	Female overall referrals 2022
IDVA	13	154
Housing safeguarding Team	26	773
MARAC	23	191

This data demonstrates not only the disproportionality of women experiencing a form of domestic abuse, but also that men are experiencing it too. The HST employ a male worker who assists any client; however, some men may feel more comfortable speaking to him about their experiences. The government published a new position paper to accompany the 'Tackling violence against women and girls' strategy. Thurrock Council take the same position as the government. The use of the term 'violence against women and girls' will not negate the experiences of, or provision of support for male

victims of these crimes. The male data referenced demonstrates that service provision is available to males and is accessed.

These services of support are available to any survivor who is seeking help and Thurrock will do all it can to ensure that any survivor feels able to come forward to seek such help.

The case study below details the incredible human element of helping another, whilst also demonstrating the working relationship between community support and 'safe accommodation'.

Case Study

A male in his early 20's with learning disabilities attended Thurrock Civic Offices because of being subjected to violent physical abuse from a male family member, which resulted in him losing control of his bodily function and urinating from fear from the traumatic incident he had suffered. He did not approach the police or seek medical assistance.

An officer on duty from the Temporary Accommodation Team contacted the Housing Safeguarding Team requesting immediate safeguarding support.

Two female members of the team responded and began by creating a rapport and building trust that he would be supported, before completing a risk assessment.

This young man had fled with nothing, he had no money and had not eaten since the attack. The proprietor of the Civic Café provided him a drink and a hot meal free of charge as he could see the distressed state the young man had arrived in.

Another male member of the team who lives locally provided the client with some of his own clothes, to make him more comfortable. At this stage he was willing to make a police statement about the incidents and an officer accompanied him to the police station to support him and continue to provide him with the confidence to make the report.

Police then escorted the client into safe and secure temporary accommodation which was provided by the Housing Solutions Team. A Domestic Abuse Officer from the Housing Safeguarding Team provided some cash to ensure he could pay for gas and electric services. Another member of the team purchased essential toiletries, which they delivered to the temporary accommodation.

Following words of advice, he decided to go to a Refuge. A HST officer sought a suitable refuge space, ensuring they were able to assist clients with learning difficulties.

The refuge provided us with a travel warrant under the 'rail to refuge' scheme. Due to the distance from the temporary accommodation to the train station, he felt unable to do this alone, so a Community Liaison Officer from the HST met the client from his temporary accommodation and accompanied him onto the train, seeing him safely on his way.

We received a call from the client and the refuge stating that the client had arrived and is settling in well.

The role each team and officer played in this case demonstrates the importance of kindness and support can have on an individual's outcomes and the value of kindness in the local community to those most vulnerable and in need.

Support for survivors of childhood and adult sexual abuse

In 2019 Thurrock Public Health carried out a 'Sexual Violence and Abuse: A Thurrock Joint Strategic Needs Assessment' (JSNA). The needs assessment sought to further our understanding of the nature, prevalence and types of sexual violence and abuse occurring locally in Thurrock. This assessment is a unique piece of work, engaging local survivors and professionals. It is believed to be the first JSNA nationally to solely focus in this depth on sexual violence and abuse. The JSNA produced a series of 41 recommendations to address sexual violence and abuse (SVA) in Thurrock. These recommendations included suggestions to improve local approaches to prevention, training and education for the wider workforce, improving pathways of support for victims/survivors and setting up a communications strategy to address myths, improve reporting of SVA and raise awareness of support available to cope and recover. SERICC¹⁸ our local specialist support service, supporting anyone who is experiencing, or who has experienced, any form of sexual violence and abuse at any time in their life, were heavily involved in this needs assessment.

The JSNA recommendations were ambitious and even more challenging without additional funding to implement them. The COVID-19 pandemic has inevitably impacted on the ability for Public Health and wider stakeholders to immediately contribute to this agenda. For this reason, a decision was made to prioritise workforce training and education.

Achievements to date include

- The production of a training and resource directory for professionals and parents/carers. This is currently an electronic document, however there are plans to move this online for ease of updating and circulation

¹⁸ <https://sericc.org.uk/index.php>

- Liaising and presentations to multiple forums with education colleagues internally and within Thurrock schools to raise awareness of the existing support available and identify further training requirements
- Launch of the eLearning sexual violence and abuse animated awareness training.¹⁹
- Joint working with the NSPCC to conduct a harmful sexual behaviour audit to better understand any gaps in understanding or provision.

A key area of focus for the future will be responding locally and Essex wide with our partners to the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. Proudly, Thurrock were one of only 10 locations in the East of England to be given a bench with a message of hope on a plaque, honouring survivors. This will remain in place for 10 years²⁰.

Underrepresented communities and crime types

Domestic abuse and sexual violence related offences are the crimes that we have the most data about, we know who is accessing these support services.

It is recognised that we can always do more, the work is never 'complete'. There are communities and crime types that where we have limited data, we need to better understand how we can support in different ways. We are committed to addressing the needs of underrepresented communities within our VAWG communication messages to ensure that people are confident that they too can come forward and seek help and support. Our Community Equality Impact Assessment recognises this approach.

We know that Thurrock has a large community across the boroughs three Gypsy and Traveller sites. Despite the population, there is very little data about their experiences of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls' crimes.

Studies have shown that disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse and are also twice as likely to suffer assault and rape²¹. National data suggests that up to one third of LGBTQ+ people experience abuse by relatives, and on average, older victims experience abuse for twice as long before seeking help, compared to those aged under 61²².

¹⁹ <https://www.thurrocklscp.org.uk/lscp/e-learning-training-courses/sexual-violence-and-abuse-awareness>

²⁰ <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/our-legacy#benches-eastern>

²¹ SafeLives (2017) *Disabled survivors too: Disabled people and domestic abuse*

²² (2016) Safe Later Lives: Older people and domestic abuse.

The support offered by agencies across Thurrock are available to all our residents, and often individuals are supported by more than one agency. The remaining VAWG crimes in this strategy, such as sexual exploitation, sexual violence, sexual harassment and stalking would initially access a support service from Thurrock council, or some of the partner agencies mentioned earlier who work with the Housing Safeguarding Team, such as Essex Police. Whilst our knowledge of those experiencing stalking is increasing and we are exploring more opportunities for extending support services, there does remain some gaps in others, such as sexual exploitation. This appears to be a relatively 'hidden' crime in the borough, but anecdotally, we have awareness that it does occur.

There is currently no reliable measure of the prevalence of 'honour'-based abuse; national police recorded crime data shows that 2,725 offences were recorded by the police in the year ending March 2021, of these, there were 78 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) offences and 125 forced marriage offences.²³

For crimes such as those listed above, the HST can support in the first instance, however, they will also seek specialist support assistance if needed from another agency, for example, via Karma Nirvana or the Forced Marriage Unit.

There are several organisations offering support across the VAWG agenda, for people experiencing VAWG crimes. If someone has contacted an agency that is not best placed to support them, through our existing partnerships, the person will be helped to speak to the support service for their need. Supporting survivors of VAWG crimes can be complicated, intersectionality plays a huge role and prioritising risk over need is difficult to balance. Through a trauma informed lens and intersectional approach, we can all follow best practice and make the referrals required to support individuals in the best way possible.

Protection: Appropriate intervention for all individuals displaying concerning behaviours.

"I think we're failing perpetrators as well – I say that as a survivor. I just don't believe that we can't change behaviours. I think we're failing perpetrators, which means we're failing the public and future victims." – Call for Evidence, Focus Group, Government VAWG Strategy

Pursuing perpetrators is a key pillar in the government VAWG strategy. The call for evidence quotes detailed within it, and more recently, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner mapping exercise referred to in Part A of this strategy, highlights

²³ [Statistics on so called 'honour-based' abuse offences, England and Wales, 2020 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-on-so-called-honour-based-abuse-offences-england-and-wales-2020-to-2021)

that survivors also want to see an offer support of to perpetrators to change their behaviours, so that survivors do not have to continually change theirs.

Thurrock have a perpetrator intervention provision which is available to Thurrock residents (victims of domestic abuse and their partners) who are using violence and abuse in their relationships and want to change. At the time of writing, this offer of support is in two parts, a voluntary high-risk element, individuals who have social care involvement, delivered by a Specialist Domestic Violence Practitioner within children's social care, and a voluntary community element delivered by a commissioned service. There are also support services for young people through commissioned services to deliver support in schools and training for social care staff for intervention approaches related to adolescent to parent violence.

In the year September 2021 to August 2022 within the High-risk element, there were 85 appointments completed for risk assessments or case discussions that consisted of meeting with the high-risk perpetrator of abuse alongside the social worker. 14 individuals completed intensive direct work. Data from the community element was initially at a county level, we will be disaggregating that data to a local level for a full year from April 2023 onwards.

We work closely with Essex Police, local domestic abuse and sexual violence support services to better understand victims' decisions for withdrawing from a prosecution against their perpetrator. Recently, Essex Police and SERICC, the local rape and sexual abuse specialist service, have decided to part take in the The Better Outcomes through Linked Data (BOLD) programme, led by the Ministry of Justice. This will look at attrition rates for domestic abuse and sexual offences. We welcome this area of work which will benefit Thurrock and shape future delivery.

We are ensuring that Council procedures and policies are robust to reflect that domestic abuse and violence against women and girls will not be tolerated and that perpetrators are held to account. The council have successfully removed a perpetrator from a council tenancy because of domestic abuse and we continue to build momentum to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) status.

Looking to the future, we are awaiting the outcome of a bid with Essex for funding that will amend our perpetrator intervention support offer. Funding is one of the identified barriers to achieving change with perpetrators, there is limited funding for programmes, further challenged by a lack of evidence detailing which programmes are most successful and a cultural stance of victim blaming which then offers the perpetrator an unintentional layer of invisibility. However, by professionals safely challenging abusers and offering them the support provisions available, these services seek to change the behaviours and hold abusers to account for their action.

Participation: Ensure survivors voices are heard (and influence decision making)

The Domestic Abuse Act highlighted that the voice of the survivor was paramount. We not only want the voice heard clearly in domestic abuse work, but also within the broader VAWG agenda. It is important to increase survivor engagement, consultation and Co-Production within policies that consider domestic abuse or VAWG related responses. Addressing this will support our future needs assessments, strategies and decision making.

Our existing commissioned services collate survivor feedback to help inform service delivery. The VAWG Board have suggested that case studies are an effective mechanism and providers have extensive experience of collating input in this manner. This focus is to look at if our current mechanisms are enough or if we need to implement improvements to achieve better lived experiences within our service delivery

The recently completed piece of work across Southend, Essex, Thurrock (SET) identified a number of recommendations to improve the influence of lived experiences across the work we do. We will progress these throughout this strategy to improve the engagement of lived experience within our work and approach to commissioning services.

Closing comments

This strategy has detailed the partnership approach that Thurrock will take to continue to address VAWG and domestic abuse across the borough. Together we work towards a shared goal: to reduce the prevalence of violence against women and girls. This is an integrated approach between legislative framework, law enforcement, service providers and civil society. Together all elements are essential for tackling the issues of domestic abuse and VAWG.

Glossary

Domestic abuse is defined in section 1 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as

(1) Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if a. A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and b. The behaviour is abusive. (2) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following: a. Physical or sexual abuse. b. Violent or threatening behaviour c. Controlling or coercive behaviour. d. Economic abuse (see subsection (4)). e. Psychological, emotional, or other abuse. And it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct. (3) “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to a. Acquire, use, or maintain money or other property, or b. Obtain goods or services. (4) For the purposes of this Part A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of

conduct directed at another person (for example, B's child). (5) References in this Part to being abusive towards another person are to be read in accordance with this section.

Personally Connected is defined in section 2 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as:

(1) For the purposes of this Part, two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies— a. they are, or have been, married to each other. b. they are, or have been, civil partners of each other. c. they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated). d. they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated). e. they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other. f. they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see subsection (2)); they are relatives. (2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(f) a person has a parental relationship in relation to a child if— a. the person is a parent of the child, or b. the person has, or has had, parental responsibility for the child. (3) In this section— “child” means a person under the age of 18 years. “civil partnership agreement” has the meaning given by section 73 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004. “parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act). “relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

Forced Marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties where duress is a factor

Honour Based Violence/Abuse (so called) is an international term used by many cultures for justification of abuse and violence. It is a crime or incident committed in order to protect or defend the family or community “honour”; this can often, but not always, go hand in hand with forced marriages.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons

Sexual Violence and Abuse (SVA): Sexual Violence can be defined as any behaviour perceived to be of a sexual nature which is unwanted and takes place without consent or understanding:-

- Rape is defined as penetrative sex with another person against their will. This includes vaginal, anal and oral penetration.
- Sexual assault covers any other sort of sexual contact and behaviour that is unwanted, ranging from touching to any other activity if it is sexual.

- Child Sexual Abuse: Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent
- Sexual Harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): Sexual exploitation of children and young people involve exploitive situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive “something” (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. (This can include forms of grooming)

Sexual Exploitation including trafficking for sexual exploitation the forcible or deceptive recruitment of woman, men and children, for the purposes of forced prostitution or sexual exploitation:

Stalking. Whilst there is no strict legal definition of 'stalking', The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 created two new offences of stalking by inserting new sections 2A and 4A into the Protection from Harassment Act 1997section 2A (3) and sets out examples of acts or omissions which, are associated with stalking. For example, following a person, watching or spying on them or forcing contact with the victim through any means, including social media. The effect of such behaviour is to curtail a victim's freedom, leaving them feeling that they constantly have to be careful. In many cases, the conduct might appear innocent (if it were to be taken in isolation), but when carried out repeatedly so as to amount to a course of conduct, it may then cause significant alarm, harassment or distress to the victim.

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Domestic Abuse New Burdens Spend

Local authority support for victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation

The Act places a statutory duty on tier one local authorities relating to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within refuges and other safe accommodation.

Duties of local authorities include:

- Appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which it will consult as it performs certain specified functions.
- Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support in their area for all victims or their children, including those who come from outside the area.
- Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the needs assessment.
- Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning / de-commissioning decisions).
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.
- Report back to central government.
- Require tier two councils (district or borough councils, and London Boroughs) to co-operate with the lead local authority, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Require the Secretary of State to produce statutory guidance, having consulted the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, local authorities and such as other persons as considered appropriate.
- Require local authorities to have regard to the statutory guidance in exercising their functions.
-

The new duty will cover the provision of support to victims and their children residing in some/all of the following.

- refuge accommodation.
- specialist safe accommodation.
- dispersed accommodation.
- sanctuary schemes; and
- move-on or second stage accommodation.

The funding has been issued as an un-ringfenced Section 31 Grant to local authorities. Local authorities must have regard for the statutory guidance when exercising their duties. Government have expressed that they intend to place this funding allocation from 2025/26 onward within the local government finance settlement.

Thurrock council allocation and spending of the domestic abuse new burdens fund 2021/22

Thurrock VAWG Strategic Board is the 'domestic abuse local partnership board' for the local area. We completed our first needs assessment for accommodation-based domestic abuse support, for survivors and their children in their area, including the need of those coming from outside the area. The following provision of support was commissioned as a result of the needs assessment. To offer consistency to service provision and in line with the statutory guidance (published October 2021) funding was allocated for a 3-year period, in anticipation of continued government funding as assured.

This funding is running a year in arrears, due to the requirement to commission against the outcome of a needs assessment, having regard for statutory guidance published in late 2021 and then identifying the appropriate service for those needs, including recruitment of staff to those positions.

Where funding was not spent directly within a 'safe accommodation' it is anticipated that a proportion of the service users will be accessing a form of safe accommodation. Statutory Guidance section A3 defines safe accommodation, this includes refuge and sanctuary as types of safe accommodation. Section A4 details the 'support' that can be offered in safe accommodation. The spend meets the criteria of providing support within safe accommodation and the types of support that can be offered as detailed below and referenced against the statutory guidance:

	Year 2021/22				Comments
Gov allocation	£366,530.00				
	Allocated	Spent	Not spent-carry forward	Stat Guidance Ref	yellow highlight are external payments
Area					
Refuge - Tutoring	£40,560.00	£40,560.00	£-	A3 A4	
Refuge - Therapeutic Support (Adult and Children Counselling)	£44,923.00	£44,923.00	£-	A3 A4	

Refuge - Complex Needs / Financial Inclusion Worker	£18,818.75	£18,818.75	£-	A3 A4	
Refuge -increase in capacity Childrens Worker (4 days to 5)	£4,500.00	£4,500.00	£-	A3 A4	
Sericc SVA counselling	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£-	A3 A4i	to be provided to clients accessing safe accommodation
Flexible Funding for Refuge	£10,364.12	£10,000.00	£364.12	A3 A4	
Flexible Funding for SERICC	£10,364.12	£10,364.12	£-	A3 A4i	
DA Duty Admin	£44,601.57	£-	£44,601.57	A2.3ii, iii	
Partner link worker element of change project	£18,000.00	£-	£18,000.00	A3 A4i	supporting the partners of those being abused by a perpetrator
DA - Refuge officers	£112,000.00	£-	£112,000.00	A3 A4i	delays in recruitment - carry forward
Training for Refuge staff	£4,000.00	£390.00	£3,610.00	A3 A4	training identified for 21/22 only -subject to further requests
SET TONIC project	£18,000.00		£18,000.00	B1	tonic spend allocated but not spent this year- carry forward
Childrens Support group	£20,000.00	£-	£20,000.00	A2.1	delays in getting group started- carry forward
Unallocated from Gov fund	£398.43		£398.43		cost of a service came in slightly under -hence not allocated
TOTAL	£366,530	£149,555.87	£216,974.12		

Following a review of the commissioned services to ensure that they were still meeting the needs identified, the New Burdens spend for 2022/23 is as follows.

	22/23				Comments
GOV ALLOCATION	£367,545.00				
UNDERSPEND FROM 2021.22	£216,974.12				
TOTAL AVAILABLE FOR 22.23	£584,519.12				
	Allocated	Spend	Not spent- carry forward	Stat Guidance Ref	yellow highlight are external payments
Area					
Refuge - Tutoring	£40,560.00	£-	£40,560.00	A3 A4	
Refuge - Therapeutic Support (Adult and Children Counselling)	£44,923.00	£-	£44,923.00	A3 A4	
Refuge - Complex Needs / Financial Inclusion Worker	£18,818.75	£-	£18,818.75	A3 A4	
Refuge -increase in capacity Childrens Worker (4 days to 5)	£4,500.00	£-	£4,500.00	A3 A4	
Sericc SVA counselling	£20,000.00		£20,000.00	A3 A4i	review of service in discussion with provider decision was made to cease service
Flexible Funding for Refuge	£10,364.12	£10,000.00	£364.12	A3 A4	
Flexible Funding for SERICC	£10,364.12	£10,364.12	£-	A3 A4i	
DA Duty Admin	£47,028.61	£45,338.04	£1,690.57	A2.3ii, iii	

partner link worker element of change project	£18,000.00	£-	£18,000.00	A3 A4i	awaiting exact figure required for contribution from Thurrock to this service.
DA - Refuge officers	£112,000.00	£13,608.15	£98,391.85	A3 A4i	contract costs
Training for Refuge staff	£4,000.00		£4,000.00	A3 A4	training identified for 21/22 only -subject to further requests
SET TONIC project	£18,000.00	£16,000.00	£2,000.00	B1	spend slightly less than allocation
Childrens Support group	£20,000.00		£20,000.00	A2.1	delays in getting group started- carry forward
TOTAL GOV ALLOCATED /SPEND/CARRY FORWARD	£368,558.60	£95,310.31	£273,248.29		

**TOTAL CARRY
FORWARD TO 23.24 £490,222.41**

UNDERSPEND TOTAL= 21.22 + 22.23

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Community Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 states that public bodies must have “due regard” to a variety of Equalities objectives (Equality Act 2010, Section 149) and consequently, Equality Analysis must be carried out to demonstrate that decision-makers are fully aware of the impact that changes may have on stakeholders.

The concept of ‘due regard’ was reinforced in 2012 during the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which “requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities”

‘Due regard’ is dependent on the relevance and potential impact of the decision being considered. The greater the relevance and impact, the higher the regard due.

As an authority, we have made a commitment to apply a systematic screening process to new policy, strategy, functions or service development including reviews or changes to existing policy, strategy, functions or services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on different groups within our community.

This process has been developed, together with [full guidance](#), to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Service (Social Value) 2012 Act

In addition, the guidance supports officers to consider our commitments set out in the [Thurrock Joint Compact](#) with the voluntary sector.

As well as supporting you to look at whether there is, or will be, a significant impact, the guidance will also consider ways in which you might mitigate this in the future.

About the service and reason for the development or review process

Name of service	Thurrock Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023/26
Lead Officer	Priscilla Tsang
Contact Details	ptsnag@thurrock.gov.uk

Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development/review needed?
The current VAWG strategy of 2020/23 is due to expire. This new strategy will reflect the legislative changes that have occurred since 2020. This strategy and subsequent action plan will highlight and address any community or equalities anomalies. These will be incorporated within the three-year action plan.

1. Consultation, data and intelligence

<p>1.1 Please highlight the steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review e.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups? For further guidance please contact: consultations@thurrock.gov.uk</p> <p><i>This is a vital step</i></p>
<p>The national government VAWG strategy details the outcomes from the Call for evidence regarding the then proposed focus for new VAWG priorities. The call for evidence received over 180 thousand replies, the largest in history for a call for evidence. It identified themes and areas of priority to be addressed. The broad issues experienced are commonly the similar across geographical areas.</p> <p>This local domestic abuse and vawg strategy aligns with the national priorities. Locally, the VAWG strategic board has been consulted, which has statutory and voluntary professionals in attendance, changing Pathways, SERICC, Public Health, ICB, Inclusions Thurrock, and Essex Police.</p> <p>Locally, the Sexual Violence and Abuse: A Thurrock Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, included interviews with Thurrock survivors of sexual violence and abuse.</p> <p>This strategy will be shared with Thurrock Council staff groups. The women’s network has identified that raising awareness of domestic abuse should be a priority for the network. This strategy addresses this priority.</p> <p>The VAWG Board wishes to further consult with specific groups through service providers when developing the action plan that will support this strategy.</p>

1.2 Please also provide details on the sources of data or intelligence you have used to inform your assessment of impact and how they have helped you to understand those that will be affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review outlined?

[Government VAWG strategy and call for evidence submissions](#)

[Thurrock Council Health and Wellbeing strategy](#)

[Census data 2021](#)

Safe Lives [Spotlight series- Hidden victims](#)

[Thurrock Council Needs Assessment on Domestic Abuse Victims Residing in Safe Accommodation](#)

[Domestic Abuse Commissioner report- A Patchwork of Provision'](#)

[How to meet the needs of victims and survivors across England and Wales](#)

Crime Survey for England and Wales

Galop

2. Community and workforce impact

1.1 What impacts will this policy, strategy, function or service development/review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents? Look at what you know? What does your research tell you?

Consider:

- National and local data sets – please see guidance
- Complaints
- Consultation and service monitoring information
- Voluntary and community organisations
- The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with 'protected characteristics'. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	x			Tackling hidden offences across all spectres of society. This strategy has a specific theme of 'positive communities' to include engagement and training for local communities to help	Improved engagement and awareness raising, resulting in increased identification of these crimes, empowering communities to be

				identify and tackle VAWG crimes within Thurrock.	catalyst for societal change.
Age	x			The strategy addresses victims and perpetrators both older and younger Children are now victims of domestic abuse in their own right by law as per DA Act Elder abuse is acknowledged as under reported locally and nationally	Having regard for our population breakdown will assist us in directing services appropriately. Increased understanding of the different barriers faced by people, dependent on age, allows us to offer a person centered response
Disability	x			Identified as underreported- locally and nationally A higher percentage of adults with a disability experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without. ¹	Increase capturing of this data will enable us to see any disproportionally of individuals experiencing DA/VAWG crimes. Data helps us understand the additional barriers to reporting
Gender reassignment	x			Identified as underreported- locally and nationally	Increase capturing of this data will enable us to see any disproportionally of individuals experiencing DA/VAWG crimes
Marriage and civil partnership	x			Strategy addresses abuse within all domestic relationships	For the year ending March 2022, the Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that a significantly larger proportion of adults who were separated experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, or widowed. However, marital status may have

¹ Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2022

					changed as a result of the abuse experienced.
Pregnancy and maternity	x			Around 30% of domestic abuse begins during pregnancy, while 40–60% of women experiencing domestic abuse are abused during pregnancy. ²	Increased awareness of this issue via training to professionals and increase IDVA support across SET
Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)	x			There were no significant differences between ethnic groups experiencing domestic abuse in the year ending March 2022 GRT Identified as underreported- locally and nationally	Opportunity to engage with GRT communities due to council owed sites. Further engagement will assist in providing the correct service
Religion or belief	x			The established religions do not condone the abuse highlighted within this strategy	Awareness that region and cultural expectations are intersectional and can influence one another. This highlights the importance to understand crimes such as honour based abuse and Female genital mutilation and crimes linked to faith and beliefs.
Sex	x			Nationally there is a prevalence rate of approximately 7 in 100 women and 3 in 100 men experiencing domestic abuse 2022	Awareness of the prevalence of victims will assist us to offer the right service dependent on need. There is a good understanding of the support that men need, supported by a male worker in the community response team
Sexual orientation	x			Identified as underreported- locally and nationally	Opportunity to work with 'by and for' services

² https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/SAFJ4993_Themis_report_WEBcorrect.pdf

					locally, training or service provision
<p>Any other community issues identified for this location?</p> <p>If the project is based in a specific location please state where, or whether Borough wide. Please include any detail of relevance – for example, is it an area with high unemployment, or public transport limited?</p>	x			<p>Whilst domestic abuse affects all communities, the following wards have provided the most disclosures to the housing safeguarding team in Wards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grays • Tilbury 	Community engagement within these wards to raise awareness of support provision
<p>Workforce of Thurrock Council</p> <p>(e.g. in the case of service change/s)</p>	x			Women's staff network identified raising awareness of domestic abuse as a priority	Staff will become better informed and can use this knowledge in their engagement with the residents of Thurrock.
<p>Health and wellbeing of residents</p> <p>Please see guidance.</p>	x			Shared priorities between this strategy and HWB strategy and other Boards across Thurrock and Essex	Coordinated understanding and response
<p>Socio-economic outcomes</p> <p>Please see guidance.</p>	x			Thurrock Council Needs Assessment on Domestic Abuse Victims Residing in Safe Accommodation identified a strong association within some data sets and the deprivation levels across wards	Community engagement within these wards to raise awareness of support provision
<p>Veterans and serving members of the armed forces</p> <p>Please see guidance.</p>	x			New research found that Armed Forces personnel are significantly more likely to both experience and perpetrate intimate partner violence and	<p>Armed forces domestic abuse: a handbook for civilian support services</p> <p>Victim and perpetrator support services exist in the borough to assist anyone seeking support</p>

				abuse (IPVA) than the wider civilian population. ³	or wishing to change their own concerning behaviours.
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3. Monitoring and Review

<p>3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? <i>These actions should be developed using the information gathered in Section 1 and 2 and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.</i></p>		
Action	By when?	By who?
Incorporate an annual review alongside existing review of strategy and action plan to ensure that information is still relevant and address any significant changes	Annually April 2024 April 2025	VAWG Board

4. Next steps

It is important to ensure that the information gathered is used to inform any council reports that are presented to Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny committees. This will allow members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the community as a whole.

Take some time to précis your findings below. This can then be added to your report template and the Equality and Diversity Implications section for sign off by the Community Development and Equalities team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact

³ <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/more-than-1-in-10-armed-forces-personnel-have-experienced-intimate-partner-violence-and-abuse>

Implications/ Customer Impact

This strategy will address contribute towards Thurrock Council meeting their duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Section 17 through the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership, and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. It addresses several shared priority themes within the Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the Thurrock Adult Safeguarding Board.

The strategy continues to align to the national focus on the ever-changing VAWG landscape, whilst contributing to wider Essex priorities within the Police and Crime Plan and the Southend Essex, Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board.

Whilst every area has unique population concerns, these crimes do not know boundaries. There are common themes that are identified multiple times that tell us how to best support survivors of domestic abuse and VAWG crimes. The strategy has followed national and local data to inform its approach. Where we identified gaps in reporting, we seek to address this and increase the number of survivors coming forward. The strategy focuses on a whole societal approach, engaging communities, schools, professionals, partnerships, listening to what survivors want, and crucially, dealing with the perpetrators themselves.

5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Strategic Lead who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role – for example, project sponsor, head of service)	Date

13 June 2023	ITEM: 9
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Annual review of age restricted products work 2022-2023	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Charlotte Edwards – Trading Standards Manager	
Accountable Assistant Director: Leigh Nicholson – Assistant Director – Planning, Transport and Public Protection	
Accountable Director: Mark Bradbury – Interim Director of Place	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report has been prepared at the request of the Chair of Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee so they can be informed on the work that Trading Standards undertake on behalf of the Council with regards to age restricted products. This report sets out the work undertaken over the last twelve months on age restricted sales and outlines the way forward in the current financial year.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny note the contents of this report.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Trading Standards team has a statutory duty to enforce a variety of legislation relating to age restricted products. This includes the Licensing Act 2003, the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (as amended) and the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015. Please see table overleaf for the full breakdown.

Goods	Age restriction in England
Alcohol, Tobacco, Electronic Cigarettes, Nicotine Inhaling Products (vapes), Knives (axes or blades), Fireworks, Lottery tickets and	18 and over

Goods	Age restriction in England
scratch cards, Butane, Solvents, Sunbeds, Crossbows, Age restricted games and video recordings	
Aerosol paint, Party Poppers, Petrol and some video games	16 and over
15 rated video recordings	15 and over
Christmas crackers, Video games and video recordings	12 and over

Underage sales work makes significant contributions to the health agenda in terms of preventing youngsters under 18 having access to alcohol and tobacco. Research shows underage drinking is harmful to the development of children as well as the social welfare issues it can raise. There is also evidence from Public Health to suggest that the vast majority of smokers start before they are 18. If steps are taken to prevent this habit forming at such a young age it is unlikely that an adult will start at all.

- 2.2 This work is intelligence led and we encourage information sharing from partners, residents and members to assist us with targeting our work. Last year we received 33 intel reports mainly from partner agencies. We would encourage residents and members to use the online tool on the council website which allows individuals to report shops selling age restricted items to youngsters. This comes directly to Trading Standards and allows us to act quickly where appropriate.

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/underage-sales/age-restrictions>

The intelligence aspect also carries through to the requirement under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 that Local Authorities must seek authorisation from a magistrate to undertake covert underage sales test purchases.

- 2.3 There are three aspects to enforcement of age restricted legislation. These are,
- Advice
 - Intelligence generation
 - Underage sales test purchases

Advice

The team have promoted the “Responsible Retailer” scheme since 2018 and work with businesses to ensure that they are fully aware of their responsibilities. Initially all licensed premises and those selling tobacco were visited on an advisory basis and given a comprehensive pack of information including posters and signage they could use in their shops.

They were strongly advised to adhere to a “Challenge 25” policy where if a customer looks 25 or younger, they are asked to provide identification to prove they are over 18. This is now the industry standard amongst off licenced premises and most on licence premises. Indeed, it is a standard condition requested to be placed on all new alcohol licenses. Since the initial roll out of this scheme new retailers are visited and advised as the team become aware of them. We have also extended this to retailers of knives, fireworks, electronic cigarettes and nicotine inhaling devices (vapes).

Intelligence generation

In addition to the various reporting mechanisms, we also generate our own intelligence by undertaking “Challenge 25” test purchases (C25). These are where a young volunteer aged 18 or older attempts to buy age restricted items. This is a test of the policies the retailers have in place which should mean that as a bare minimum they ask for identification from the volunteer and when this cannot be produced, they refuse the sale. This is a useful tool in terms of identifying businesses at risk of selling to children so we can provide further advice and consider them for an underage sales test purchase

Underage sales test purchases

If we receive intelligence that a premises is selling to children and/or they fail a C25 test purchase, we seek authorisation to undertake covert surveillance. We then attend the premises with a child volunteer aged 15-16 years of age. Any sale made is a criminal offence and as such is investigated accordingly. The outcomes include a formal warning, caution, or prosecution for both the individual selling and the business. A further tool in terms of sales of alcohol is to request a review of the business’ alcohol licence, imposing additional licensing conditions and in some cases a short suspension of their licence.

2.4 Results

Over 132 engagements with businesses were undertaken including 98 advisory visits and 7 underage test purchases resulting in two sales. These two businesses sold vapes to an underage volunteer. They were formally interviewed and received warning letters for their actions and had their alcohol licence reviewed with further conditions imposed.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The year ahead

The government announced in April that they are looking to invest £3 million of funding into “illicit vapes enforcement squads.” This is intended to support Trading Standards to enforce rules on vaping and to tackle illegal sales of vapes to under 18s.

This is something we are already ahead of the curve on, as we delivered a project on vapes in summer 2022. This project involved visiting all vape retailers and promoting the responsible retailer scheme and challenge 25 policy. We also used this opportunity to educate the retailers on the illicit vapes and what to look out for. As we continue to receive intelligence on underage sales we will be fully engaged with the government initiative and utilise the expected funding.

We would encourage members to promote the underage sales reporting tool so that residents can share their intelligence.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 This report is for information as requested by the Committee.

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

5.1 None

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

6.1 The work on age restricted sales contributes to all three of Thurrock's priorities in terms of;

- People - protecting young people from gaining access to harmful goods.
- Place – safeguarding communities from the anti-social behaviour associated with underage access to goods such as alcohol, tobacco and fireworks.
- Prosperity – ensuring Thurrock has a thriving retail sector with a level playing field.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Management Accountant

This statutory work is funded by the Trading Standards budget. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kate McCrimmon**
Barrister – Prosecution & Counter Fraud

The current work of the Public Protection Service of the Council is governed

by the legislation detailed in the body of this report and Legal Service will advise appropriately on any identified legal implications arising thereof from this report as and when required.

As this paper is for reporting purposes only there are no legal implications flowing from the contents of this report.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

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

The work outlined in this report helps to improve, and safeguard, the health and wellbeing of young people aged under 18 by reducing access to alcohol and tobacco for this age group.

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**

None

Report Author:

Charlotte Edwards
Trading Standards Manager
Public Protection

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**Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme
2023/24**

Dates of Meetings: 13 June 2023, 7 September 2023, 7 November 2023 and 23 January 2024

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member	Description of Report
13 June 2023			
Terms of Reference	Democratic Services	Officers	
Provision of Tree Surgery Contract	Vince Taylor	Officers	
Annual report on Underage Sales	Charlotte Edwards	Members	
Violence against Women and Girls	Michelle Cunningham	Officers	
Fees and Charges Review 2023/24	Kelly McMillan	Officers	
Waste Report	Susan Reddick	Officers	
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Members	
7 September 2023			
Overview of responsibilities of Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sports and Leisure	Councillor Jefferies	Members	
Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Annual Overview	Michelle Cunningham	Officers	
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Members	

7 November 2023			
Fees & Charges Report		Officers	
Annual Status Report on Air Quality in Thurrock	Gavin Dennett	Members	
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Members	
23 January 2024			
Work Programme	Democratic Services	Members	
Thurrock Prevent Strategy Refresh	Michelle Cunningham	Officers	

Clerk: Rhiannon Whiteley
Last Updated: March 2023