

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 19 March 2025 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-ins is 31st March 2025 at 5pm

Present: Councillors John Kent (Chair), Lynn Worrall (Vice-Chair), Vikki Hartstean, Victoria Holloway, Mark Hooper, Valerie Morris-Cook, Sara Muldowney and Lee Watson

Apologies:

In attendance:

Paul Crick, Chief Operations Lead- Place
Claire Demmel, Executive Director Place
Sareena Gill, Senior Public Health Programme Manager
Gloria Ighodaro, Chief Officer - Housing, Economic Development and Skills, Regeneration • Directorate Management
Helen Nicol, Assistant Director Legal and Governance
Robert Persey, Interim Executive Director- Adults and Health
Alex Powell, Assistant Chief Executive
Dr Dave Smith, Chief Executive and Managing Director Commissioner
Paul Southall, Transformation Consultant - Waste
Stephen Taylor, Head of Freeport
Kerry Thomas, Chief of Staff
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.

153. Minutes

The minutes of the cabinet meetings held on 12 February and 24 February 2025 were approved as a correct record.

154. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business. The Leader indicated that he would be hearing the Great Essex Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation items first. The Leader stated that he will allow any non-executive member present to speak for 4 minutes on these items. The Leader confirmed that under Rules 2.21 to 2.23 in the Cabinet Rules (Chapter 3, Part 2) of the constitution, the Leader has the power to decide who speaks at a cabinet meeting and for how long. The Leader also highlighted that it is an executive

decision but in the spirit of being open it is right to hear the views of those across the chamber.

155. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

156. Statements by the Leader

There were no statements by the leader.

157. Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues

There were no briefings on policy, budget or other issues.

158. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

No petitions were submitted by members of the public.

159. Questions from Non-Executive Members

No questions were submitted from non-executive members.

160. Matters Referred to the Cabinet for Consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee

No matters were referred to cabinet by an overview and scrutiny committee save for the briefing note on the Waste Policy which will be considered when that substantive item is dealt with.

161. Delegated decision taken since the last meeting

The Leader noted that a list of delegated decisions taken since the last meeting was in the agenda.

162. Greater Essex Devolution, Consultation

The Leader requested comments from Non-Executive Members first.

Councillor G Coxshall stated that both parties agreed that devolution is a good thing and will present lots of opportunities. He commented that he is very mindful of the opportunities Thurrock can get out of skills, strategic transport links and spatial planning and his biggest concern is ensuring Thurrock gets the best deal. Thurrock needs to be ambitious, it has fantastic ports in Essex and he would not want Thurrock to lose the great opportunities it has with the freeport and skills academy.

Councillor N Speight read out a pre-prepared speech on behalf of the NPAIC members.

Thank-you for the opportunity to comment during this evening's debate. I am speaking on behalf of my group colleagues who have approved this statement, though they reserve the right to speak individually. Together with fellow members of the council's member devolution & LGR working group, I recently sat in a useful briefing on this evening's agenda. However, though it was a helpful and informative session, I left it with a sense of fait accompli and with a sense that Thurrock's forthcoming participation in wider debate was, at best, pallid and unimaginative. I was also disappointed to be briefed on Thurrock's official contribution to a consultation over the development of a county-wide Mayor's office. That document is available to read as an appendix to this evening's documentation and the overwhelming gist is 'strongly agrees'. I will concur that I think most elected members recognise the inevitability of the creation of this office, but I do not feel that over the seven specified answers, concerns from Thurrock are truly represented.

The council 'strongly' agrees with the delivery of benefits, governance arrangements, economic geographical support and social outcomes.

To be fair, the council does say in its response that it strongly backs: "proposed governance arrangements for the Mayoral Combined County Authority and that no one existing upper tier authority area can, on its own, direct policy and allocation of resource across the whole of Greater Essex" It's one of the few specifics that is singled out. While I have no issue about that statement, the paucity of detail – and what happens in the interim to Thurrock's best interest concerns myself and colleagues.

The council also agrees a mayor will support the interests and needs of local communities and reflect local identities? Well, the nearest thing we have had to a county mayor is a police and crime commissioner over recent years and very few people I know think that Thurrock is a better place for his influence. The council also thinks a mayor will improve the local natural environment. I suspect north and mid Essex will emerge a lot better off than Thames riverside boroughs.

Cllr Kent, has said: "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Thurrock to become part of something bigger, and to help shape a future that is right for local people. They deserve better than the failures of the past, and I can't wait to start work."

I concur wholeheartedly with that statement. The problem is I don't get any perception of Cllr Kent and the senior leadership team loading up their guns and getting ready for a confrontation. I see civic leaders in other parts of East of England challenging the government's brief and standing up for the rights of their residents.

Now Cllr Kent and Co may have a strategy of keeping their powder dry and keeping their defence of Thurrock under wraps and, if so, I wish them well.

But I fear that when anyone goes into negotiation looking weak and talking compromise, it fares less well. That's how I see Thurrock at the moment.

We are in our third year of intervention and both major groups have had seats at the top table in that time. But collectively, what have they achieved?

In their last report to government, commissioners said: "A combined county authority will improve local government services."

A lot of people in Thurrock may choose to differ with that given recent performance levels under a commissioner-led system whereby services in Thurrock have been slashed.

'Improved local government services' can have a number of different meanings - one of which is quite simply cutting services to improve the bottom line. But at what expense to the rights and requirements of people in Thurrock?'

We have a cohort of commissioners who publicly criticise those who challenge.

They have cut down on scrutiny by elected members, time-limiting the possibility to challenge decision-making. And have the temerity to call that 'good progress' even though the chairs of scrutiny, including myself, have been very critical of that action.

The commissioners say the Council is also delivering a number of major projects. I'm not sure what they are as most projects in this borough are either stagnant or stopped.

The commissioners also say: "A limited number of members have not treated officers and their decisions, or their fellow members, with the respect and courtesy that we would expect to see within a professional organisation."

Make no mistake, that is very much a jibe at myself and some of my colleagues who have not been prepared to stand idly by and remain muted.

We have challenged and where we believe wrong decisions have been made and where incompetence has been identified, we have spoken up.

But that's ended up with us on the naughty step because we used strongly worded- direct criticism. I stress it's been pointed out that we haven't uses foul or abusive language but that our comments are deemed 'offensive' because they question the capability of decision-makers and the outcomes of those decisions. In the public sector, apparently that's not de rigueur.

That independent voice that puts people before politics is going to be even more dissipated in a bigger unitary council and unheard in a mayor's office!

Yes, we need change. Thurrock Council is a busted flush, and it has let Thurrock residents down. That is indisputable.

But this latest change is one in a series.

Thurrock Urban District Council formed in 1936, was created from the former urban districts of Grays, Thurrock, Purfleet, and Tilbury, and the Orsett Rural District, and was created on government advice because 'bigger is better'.

The district was abolished in 1974, with the formation of Thurrock Borough Council which was supposed to bring a more professional approach and shiny. modern look. And we got some civic chains and a mayoral office with the chair of the council assuming the title of mayor. Bigger was going to be better with a shiny badge.

Well apparently, not, because in 1998 under another piece of intervention under the Local Government Act, Thurrock became a unitary authority with responsibility for all its own services.

Bigger, it was said again, is better.

But perhaps central government got it wrong again. In 2003 we had the formation of the Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Association, with planning and strategy removed from the council's portfolio of responsibility because it was failing in both.

TTGDC proved to be a very expensive - and achieved little. It did deliver High House Production Park and was instrumental in the creation of DP World London Gateway, but despite employing dozens of highly paid experts, a lucratively rewarded governing body and a CEO and Chairman whose efforts ended in infamy rather than success, it crashed and was burned in Eric Pickles' bonfire of the quangos.

Ironically this week the government has been calling in its boffins to work out how to cut quangos again as out of the embers of Mr Pickles' torch-burning dozens more grew. Reinventing the wheel is a government speciality.

Bigger, in the case of the TBC and planning, certainly was not better.

But that ever-turning wheel has been spun again, and we have devolution and local government reorganisation ahead of us again.

Will it make much difference to the lives of the people of Thurrock? That's a moot point, but I think it could fail unless Thurrock Council stands its ground.

Whoever we are linked with - be it northwards with Brentwood or Chelmsford - or along the Thames with Castle Point and Southend - Thurrock will be a financial powerhouse. Its economy will empower change, and Thurrock needs to be best positioned to drive that change. I'm not sure the documents before us tonight reflect that drive, but I hope I am wrong.

And finally, the elephant in the room is Thurrock's debt. To be fair, it's becoming increasingly obvious that some of our colleague councils all across Essex have debt problems too. Some are large scale - and in Basildon's case likely to grow larger. But they pall in the presence of ours.

Councillor Anderson noted that Basildon had advertised for a few policy officer positions and queried if Thurrock will be using its budget to hire officers to assist with Devolution as no funding has been forthcoming from Government yet to help with the costs of Devolution. Councillor J Kent responded that £2 million pounds has been allocated in Thurrock's budget for this.

Councillor G Byrne asked if this process will let the guilty off as Thurrock Council will cease to exist in a couple of years.

Councillor J Kent responded that they need to use the time they have to expose the guilty and recover the money. The time limit could be useful and will concentrate everyone's mind.

Councillor Shinnick queried which other councils Thurrock could be combined with, Councillor J Kent responded that they are looking at populations over 500,000 and he would want communities to have a real connection with these authorities. They should be larger and strong enough to ensure they will succeed.

Councillor D Arnold raised concerns Thurrock Council has one of the lowest council tax levels in Essex. Councillor J Kent responded that the new authorities will deliver new services in new ways.

Councillor Raper queried if there were any obvious barriers with the other councils. Councillor J Kent responded that all 15 authorities are in the same position.

Councillor A Green queried what the Leader was most worried about. Councillor J Kent responded that Thurrock has incredible potential with the Freeport, Tilbury and DP World and proximity to London and he wanted to ensure local people are best served by Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation.

Councillor R Jones asked what measures are being put in place to engage with residents. Councillor J Kent responded that there has been a Government led consultation on Devolution. With Local Government Reorganisation they will make sure enough information is put out there and will look at the best methods of engaging with the community.

Councillor Massey queried when the consultation is complete if it will come back to full council. Councillor J Kent responded that it depends how the Government rolls it out, his strong view is it will be a string of executive decisions but the executive will be as inclusive as they can.

Councillor J Kent summarised that the powers in this country are too centralised and this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to change the way the country is run.

Councillor J Kent closed the session for non-executive members to ask questions so that Cabinet members could comment.

Councillor Muldowney welcomed the report and the huge opportunities it brings. It will bring the power back so instead of waiting for Westminster to make decisions we can make those decisions. There will be more funding, infrastructure, better transport links and skills opportunities. We can secure investment otherwise not available and cut waste and avoid duplication.

Councillor Watson agreed with Councillor Muldowney's comments.

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet agreed the content of Thurrock Council's response to government's consultation on devolution in Greater Essex as set out in Appendix 1.

2.2 Cabinet agreed to delegate the submission of the consultation response including authority to make minor changes and alterations to the Assistant Chief Executive following consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader.

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

163. Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Essex, Interim Plan

Councillor G Coxshall stated that he came into this process annoyed as he found about the plan as it had been published by another Local Authority. Councillor G Coxshall commented that he would have liked to see more detail and noted that Norfolk and Suffolk had provided modelling for authorities which Thurrock has not done yet. Councillor G Coxshall stated that he detests the idea of 5 Local Authorities. Historically, Thurrock has had a low rate of council tax and he would like to see work completed on what is the right level based on evidence. Councillor G Coxshall requested that the final proposal is brought to Full Council so all 49 members can vote.

Councillor N Speight read from a pre-prepared statement:

“With the creation of a mayoral role and a much larger unitary authority set to follow, the gap between ‘grass roots’ and the power base will inevitably grow. There will be fewer locally-based councillors with a voice at the table and less of an opportunity for local voices to be heard. I have spoken critically in this piece but I would like to make a constructive suggestion to end. There are currently around 10,000 community, neighbourhood, parish and town councils in place in England run under the eye of the National Association of Parish Councils. The activities fall into three categories: delivering some local services to meet local needs, giving the community a voice and representation, and improving the quality of life and community wellbeing. These councils run numerous services, depending on their council size. These include delivering services (such as allotments, car parks, celebrations and festivals, community buses, litter bins, parks and open spaces, public toilets and street lights), improving the quality of life with community projects and services, suitable housing, setting up dementia-friendly groups, solar panels, tackling loneliness and youth projects, and giving the community a locally heard voice on planning matters. I would suggest, some, if not all of those functions, could help increase the effectiveness of local governance and assist the mayoral office and the unitary authority. We therefore have precedent and we do not need to reinvent the rule book. In Thurrock we have a network of Forums, which could perhaps take on some of these roles. There is an opportunity for Thurrock Council to consider how to create a ‘first tier’. It would mean allocating a small precept to each local group but it would be a sign that this council still values local communities and their voice. I would urge the decision-makers in our executive to give thought to supporting a first tier in the future proposals put forward. May be, in this instance it will be a case of ‘smaller is better’.”

Councillor J Halden stated that Thurrock needs to recruit a proper delivery unit on this so we can negotiate up with the Government. Councillor J Halden also supported reports going to Full Council as he was of the view it was unlikely by the time a report got to cabinet there would be time to change it.

Councillor B Johnson agreed future reports should be sent to Full Council and stated that he doesn't mind how many meetings he has to attend on this.

Councillor V Morris-Cook stated that in her view the voluntary sector should have a seat at the table as they have an awful lot to contribute. Councillor V Morris- Cook stated that the evidence base is paramount and she was concerned some of the evidence is dated. Councillor V Morris-Cook stated that she is nervous that we are asking for an inspection furlough as checks and balances are there for a reason.

Councillor Muldowney welcomed the report and stated that there will be huge challenges and lots of work to do. The main priority is making sure the changes are good for the people of Thurrock. Councillor Muldowney stated that she will only support changes backed by real evidence. There will be more information coming out. Councillor Muldowney stated that the plan does not commit Thurrock to any one course of action and if it does not hold up financially she will not support it.

Councillor Worrall stated that they are only at the beginning of the process and this cabinet will not close other members off. A cross party working group has been set up. Councillor Worrall stated that another council published the interim plan which was a draft copy and contained spelling and grammar mistakes. Councillor Worrall asked members to embrace the work they have done and stated that Thurrock will always punch above its weight and Thurrock has a secret weapon with Dr Dave Smith as he has already done this.

Councillor L Watson stated that in her opinion Thurrock is the jewel in the crown of Essex. The next 6 months are imperative and once the decision is made they will have to pull services together quickly. Councillor Watson welcomed other members to come and talk to them.

Councillor J Kent stated that it was difficult to coordinate 15 Local Authorities and he noted that Hampshire had already asked for more time. Councillor J Kent noted what had been said about the decision being brought to Full Council and stated that he would look at a themed meeting in September. Councillor J Kent added that they are looking to recruit some officers to deliver on Devolution and LGR.

Councillor J Kent noted Councillor G Coxshall's comments on voting rights and Councillor Halden's comments on Greater Manchester. Councillor J Kent summarised that the timeline for devolution and Local Government Reorganisation started on the 7th January 2025. The council is now pulling its evidence together and everybody's evidence together. Thurrock will be part of something bigger, stronger and better able to deliver the services residents deserve.

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet agreed the Essex Interim Plan (the Plan) appended to this report;

2.2 Cabinet agreed to submit the Plan to the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution on or before 21st March 2025, and to note that all local authorities in the Greater Essex area will submit the Plan as set out in the Appendix by the deadline subject to their decision making processes;

2.3 Cabinet agreed to delegate to the Assistant Chief Executive authority to submit the Plan on or before 21 March on behalf of the council and to make any amendments following consultation with the Chief Executive / Managing Director Commissioner and the Leader and Deputy Leader to ensure that any changes made by other local authorities can be agreed and reflected appropriately in the final version; and

2.4 Cabinet agreed the delegation in 2.3 includes authority to submit the Plan in circumstances where one or more local authorities in the Greater Essex area do not agree to submit the Plan as set out in the Appendix.

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

164. Parking at Schools Task and Finish Group Report

Councillor G Byrne in his capacity as Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee introduced the item and stated that he had no doubt that cabinet would welcome the report. Back in June 2025 the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended parking outside schools and S106 money as its projects. Thanks to the determination of the task and finish group there is now a way forward.

Councillor Massey as Chair of the Task and Finish group introduced the report.

"I am very pleased as Chair to present the School Parking Task and Finish Group report for cabinet this evening.

The group bought together following a motion at full council October 2023 and with cross-party member support, the T&G group in addition with internal meetings with officers have also had meetings with various different stakeholders.

We felt it was important to get various views and experiences from a good selection of the Thurrock community. This included a Q&A session with the Thurrock's Youth Cabinet who got to express as young people, their experiences while attending school.

Excellent feedback from Thurrock Council's road safety lead who shared in a lot of detail her role and good & bad practices she has witnessed. Members also took the time to attend various local schools at school movement times to see these practices both good and bad.

A joint meeting was also held with colleagues on People O&S Childhood Obesity Task and Finish Group, many issues and ideas were discussed

including the importance of exercise like walking to school with the tackling of childhood obesity through various initiatives.

An online and paper public survey/questionnaire was carried out, this has been a great aid to the members and the various teams involved with toolkit. This helped ensure the work was led by residents and in a short period of time we had a really good response in terms of numbers and responses. more details on results can be found in appendix 2 of the agenda pack.

We feel the toolkit at appendix 1 of the agenda pack has been a really useful exercise and gives many options going forward where we can make a difference on this important issue for residents, school staff and pupils. Nav and his team have done an excellent job highlighting different ways bad parking can be challenged with the potential financial side it may occur. Which as members we fully appreciate and recognise how important this is to the authority.

Some of the no cost options are campaigns around car sharing, car parking charter putting the onus on the parents on how to park. Secondly, we have drop of zones which could be implemented.

Lower costs options would overlap the people Task & Finish group would be the park and stride, walking bus & learning to ride a bike. This option would help get cars away from the schools all while giving the child exercise while walking to school.

Also based on public and stakeholder feedback are the inclusion of hard measures, which although can be costly are options which now have a structure and indicative costs. This includes measures such as restricting the road for opening and leaving school for a certain period normally 30-45 mins. More options are detailed in the appendix.

We quickly realised that there is not a 'silver bullet' which would solve every schools issues across the Borough, the T&F group based on the work we have undertaken have seen that many schools have unique and legacy issues, but if approved the toolkit will be trialled and monitored to asses the change and effect.

I just want to finish by saying a thank you to all the members who have contributed, the residents for engaging so effectively and Nav, Lucy and the rest of the Officer teams who have done some really good work which can make a big difference going forward."

Councillor J Kent disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as he lives opposite a secondary school. He stressed that he wants those people who live around schools to have a good quality of life and also for these areas to be safe for children.

Councillor Morris-Cook stated that she understands there are several measures that have been identified that can help with this problem and queried how priority is being looked at and all schools having an active travel plan. Councillor Morris-Cook stated that making some roads one-way would help as children would only have to look one way when crossing.

Councillor Muldowney queried who the toolkit was aimed at. Councillor Muldowney also queried how members feedback to residents as a lot of

residents took part in the survey and there is a need to close the communication loop.

Councillor Massey responded that they have the data and therefore priority will be easy to work out. Councillor Massey stressed that it was really important that active travel plans are in place. Councillor Massey commented that one-way streets had really worked in his ward. If any planning expansion plan comes in this will be considered. Councillor Massey stated that he would like to see the report be shared with all schools, officers and it put on the council's website and socials.

Councillor Hartstean welcomed the report and stated that as Portfolio Holder for education she would help in any way she could.

Councillor Hooper also declared a non-pecuniary interest as he also lives near a school. He encouraged schools to put together a plan using the toolkit. Councillor Hooper referenced the Thurrock Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and stated that hopefully as these are developed it will encourage children to walk or ride to school instead of travelling by car.

Councillor Massey stated that one of the issues is people are dropping their kids off at school by car and then travelling straight to their place of work.

Councillor L Watson stated that it was the best report she had seen come out of a task and finish group.

Councillor J Kent added a recommendation that officers are to bring a report back to cabinet with an action to show how it is being rolled out. This was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet endorsed the recommendations in the report

2.2 Officers are to bring back a report to cabinet with an action plan to show how it is being rolled out

165. Childhood Obesity Task and Finish Group

Councillor Speight in his role as Chair of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee introduced the item and stated that Councillor Rigby as Chair of the Task and Finish group had done an excellent job and noted that the report was a well researched document and a starting point. Councillor Speight stated that the report is for the executive to help them lay down directions to improve the short-term health of people in the borough. There is an element of cost and there is an opportunity for S106 money to come into play. Councillor Speight stated that he was proud of what the group had achieved.

Councillor Rigby as Chair of the Task and Finish Group introduced the report and explained that there will be a new Healthy Weight Strategy. Weight management is a complex issue and early intervention is vital. Councillor Rigby stated that she hoped cabinet would endorse the recommendations.

Councillor Hooper as Portfolio Holder for Adults and Health stated that he would be looking to take the recommendations forward as much as possible. The Healthy Weight Strategy should be going to the Health and Wellbeing Board in May and will hopefully be brought to cabinet in June. It is not possible to action all the recommendations in the council and they can only influence some of them.

Councillor J Kent added a recommendation that officers are to bring a report back to cabinet with an action plan. This was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet endorsed the recommendations in the report

2.2 Officers are to bring back a report to cabinet with an action plan to show how it is being rolled out

166. Q3 Corporate Performance Report

Councillor Worrall introduced the report and stated that she was pleased to present the second report on the Council's Performance Management and Assurance Framework, covering the third quarter of the 2024/25 financial year. The Commissioners highlighted in their recently published report, this framework is a crucial part of our commitment to doing things differently and doing things better. It demonstrates our continued focus on improving transparency, accountability, and delivery for the residents of Thurrock. Following feedback from our first set of reporting in Quarter 2, a number of key improvements have been made, including:

- Responding to comments from Corporate Overview and Scrutiny, services have continued to review the targets set to ensure they align with our expectations on behalf of residents.
- We have established an internal officer board to provide supportive challenge and drive continuous improvement.
- Scrutiny Committees have identified additional areas for more in-depth analysis. As a result, we have seen a more detailed briefing on the recycling metric presented to Place Scrutiny, and officers are working towards a more outcomes-focused approach for future reports.

Councillor Worrall explained that for both Milestones and Metrics, we are largely on track or within tolerance and acknowledged that a quarter of the metrics and a small percentage of milestones are currently off track. The 14 red-rated metrics span all three priorities of the Corporate Plan, and the full

report, included in appendix 1, provides a detailed breakdown of the actions being taken by services to address these challenges.

Councillor Worrall summarised that whilst there is always more work to do, she is confident that the report demonstrates an overall positive direction of travel in meeting the strategic objectives set out in the Corporate Plan.

Councillor V Holloway stated that the amber for her portfolio is likely to be turning green as figures come in later this month.

Councillor Morris Cook stated that she had a couple of ambers, there had been a delay with the communities in action but for the right reasons and the report will be going to cabinet in June. Councillor Morris Cook stated that the 'Ask the Council' events had been successful, there have been two already and the next one will be in Tilbury. She stated that the administration want to build trust and accountability.

Councillor Muldowney stated that it was a useful document to help keep them on track. Councillor Muldowney stated that in relation to the red for agency staff this remained a challenge and local government reorganisation was having a dampening effect. Councillor Muldowney highlighted that audit and risk management was making good progress but this did stall due to a staff members departure but they now had a good interim in place.

Councillor L Watson stated that they were working at pace to clear the backlog and are now having conversations with developers to steer them through the process. The Place Strategy is amber, it is in draft and will go to Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee first and then on to cabinet.

Councillor Hopper noted there were some reds in his portfolio for tenants satisfaction and feeling safe and to have better engagement with officers and officers are working on both of these issues.

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet noted the quarterly performance update report and progress made up to the end of the third quarter of 2024/25 in delivering the Year 1 priority milestones and metrics of the Corporate Plan.

2.2 Cabinet considered recommending any areas of concern within the remits of the Corporate, Place and People Overview and Scrutiny Committees to the chairs of those respective committees.

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

167. Thurrock Council's Improvement and Recovery (Second Report)

Councillor Worrall introduced the second report on the Improvement and Recovery outcomes and success criteria, covering the period up to the end of December.

'This report is part of our ongoing commitment to transparency and to ensuring that we continue to demonstrate progress in our recovery journey. Together with the Performance Report we have just discussed, this document forms part of our assessment of the impact we are having and the improvements we are embedding.

The detail in appendix 1 highlights key developments since the first report. I am pleased to report that a number of success criteria previously rated as Amber have now progressed to Green, including:

- The completion of the Annual Governance Statements;*
- Strengthened oversight of our companies and partnerships; and*
- A continued focus on collective accountability for our finances.*

However, there is one area that has moved from Green to Amber—our commitment to conducting regular Corporate Peer Challenges and other external assessments. I want to make it absolutely clear that this does not indicate any reduction in our commitment. Rather, it reflects the need for further planning and consideration, particularly in light of the ongoing discussions around Local Government Reorganisation, which we will be addressing later in this meeting.

Looking ahead, we will also be considering how best to support the Commissioners in their Best Value Assessment of the Council, as requested by the Minister of State.

It is important to acknowledge that while we have made significant progress since the start of the intervention, there is still much to do. We remain steadfast in our commitment to embedding the improvements we have made and ensuring that the progress achieved so far is sustained in the long term.

Councillor J Kent stated that the report will go on to Full Council to be fully debated.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 Cabinet noted the progress made on the Council's improvement and recovery.**
- 1.2 Cabinet referred this report to Full Council for the consideration of all Members.**

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

168. Waste Policy

Councillor V Holloway stated that the policy brings together existing documents.

Councillor Muldowney stated that she was delighted to see the introduction of the Missed Bin Policy.

Councillor J Kent stated that there were 6 million collections last year and therefore it was not surprising some were missed.

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet considered the Waste and Recycling policy attached to this report and recommended that it be included in Thurrock Council's policy framework

2.2 Cabinet reviewed and agreed the two additional sections, missed collections and collections from private and unadopted roads, not specifically covered in existing agreed policies and documents

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call*

169. Integrated Transport Block (ITB) and Maintenance Capital Programme 2025/26

Councillor V Holloway introduced the report.

Councillor Muldowney expressed concern that jet patching didn't last and requested assurance that repairs would last.

Councillor V Holloway responded that there were budget restraints.

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet approved the prioritisation and programme utilising the annual capital funding allocation from the DfT. This funding is allocated to enable Thurrock Council to deliver identified policy improvements, infrastructure and service provision within Thurrock in the 2025/26 financial year.

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

Councillor J Kent raised standing orders at 21.20 to continue the meeting after 21.30 for an additional 10 minutes.

170. Q3 Revenue and Capital Report

Councillor Muldowney introduced the report.

Councillor J Kent commented that it was a significant achievement that they would be bringing the budget in-line.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 Cabinet noted and commented on the council's operating budget and forecast overspend position as at quarter 3 of £0.991m, representing a reduction of £1.731m on the position presented at quarter 2, (as presented in Section 4.1 of this report).
- 1.2 Cabinet noted and commented on the council's overall position and forecast overspend position at quarter 3 of £0.157m, representing a reduction of £1.739m on the position presented at quarter 2, (as presented in Section 4.1 of this report).
- 1.3 Cabinet noted and commented on the projected use of reserves at quarter 3, (as presented in Section 4.14 and Appendices 1 and 2 of this report).
- 1.4 Cabinet noted and commented on the progress made on delivery against the savings target for 2024/25, (as presented in Section 4.15 and Appendix 3 of this report).
- 1.5 Cabinet noted and commented on the anticipated slippage on the General Fund Capital Program of £7.123m and expected £5.5m release of funding on the HRA Capital Program, (as presented in Section 4.16 and Appendices 4 and 5 of this report).

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

171. Southeast Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) Accountable Body Transitional Arrangements

Councillor L Watson introduced the report.

There were no questions or comments from members,

RESOLVED:

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed that Thurrock Council enter an Interim Transition Arrangement as described in Appendix 1 and paragraphs 4.11-4.13 of this report for SELEP to ensure the continuation and completion of the agreed SELEP legacy schemes ahead of the formation of a joint committee/ Partnership Board.
- 2.2 Cabinet delegated completion of the Formal Transition Agreement to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Good Growth, Executive Director of Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer
- 2.3 Cabinet delegated agreement and completion of any other interim agreements required for decision making regarding legacy agreements

as set out in paragraph 4.16 ahead of the formation of a Joint Committee/Partnership board to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Good Growth, Executive Director for Corporate Services and Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer.

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

172. Asset Disposal Report

Councillor J Kent reminded members and officers that there were two exempt appendices and therefore if officers wished to discuss their contents they would need to enter a closed session.

Councillor Muldowney introduced the report and stated that the report was seeking approval for one asset to be placed on the market and sold.

There were no comments or questions from members.

RESOLVED:

2.1 Cabinet agreed to dispose of the asset known as Land at Warren Lane, Grays.

2.2 In respect of Land at Warren Lane, Grays Cabinet delegated authority to agree the terms of disposal to the Chief Financial Officer S.151 in consultation with the Leader.

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

The meeting finished at 9.29 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