



Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report

2016-2017

Contents

What is Overview and Scrutiny	2 - 4
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny	5 - 6
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny	7 - 8
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny	9 - 10
Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny	11 - 12
Housing Overview and Scrutiny	13 - 14
Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny	15 - 16
Budget Overview and Scrutiny	17 - 18
Overview and Scrutiny Reviews	19
Call-ins	20 - 21

What is Overview & Scrutiny?

In general terms, Overview and Scrutiny is the process whereby Councillors investigate, scrutinise and oversee the work of the Council. More specifically Overview and Scrutiny pays particular attention to:

- ❖ The decisions made by Cabinet, Council and officers in relation to Council policy or key decisions.
- ❖ The activities carried out by the Council and other bodies (such as the National Health Service (NHS)).
- ❖ The performance of the Council in relation to its targets and objectives.

Work Programme

The work programme for Thurrock's Overview and Scrutiny is created by a combination of:

- ❖ What Councillors feel are important topics (this is gathered from their work in their wards and activities across the whole of the Council).
- ❖ Members of the public highlighting issues for debate, either through Call-Ins or through consultation.
- ❖ Requests by Thurrock's Cabinet for Overview and Scrutiny to undertake "pre-decision scrutiny" prior to policies being taken to Cabinet for consideration and decision. Council officers requesting Overview and Scrutiny to investigate and consider certain issues on their behalf.

The agendas and associated reports of each Committee can be accessed by the following link: <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/>

Committees

At Thurrock, the work of the Overview and Scrutiny function is carried out by six committees, which each have a specific remit:

- ❖ Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- ❖ Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- ❖ Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- ❖ Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- ❖ Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- ❖ Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership

The membership of Thurrock's Overview and Scrutiny Committees is made up of Councillors drawn from all the political parties of the Council. The Overview and Scrutiny function enables Councillors who are not members of the Cabinet (also known as the Executive) to have an active role in the decision-making process of the Council.

Thurrock has a number of non-Councillors sitting on Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Children's Services Committee has two parent-governors as well as a diocesan representative from the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches respectively. There are also two co-opted members on the Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee and one co-opted member on the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee representing health and housing interests across the borough.

In addition, sub-committees or panels may also be formed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to undertake specific tasks, such as a review, the membership of which is decided alongside the remit of the review.

The decision making process

In Thurrock, Overview and Scrutiny plays a key role in adding value to the Council's decision-making process. It also reviews the existing practices of the Council and makes recommendations to Cabinet to enhance and improve service provision.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committees meet in an informal atmosphere and engage with people who can help with their work and provide evidence for their reviews. Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Committees and at the discretion of the Chair may even be able to take part.

Overview and Scrutiny Online

Overview and Scrutiny has a dedicated section on Thurrock Council's website and can be found at (www.thurrock.gov.uk/overview-and-scrutiny/overview-and-scrutiny-committees).

Thurrock Council's website provides the most up-to-date information on Overview and Scrutiny in Thurrock. Participation from the public is actively encouraged and promoted online.

A number of documents are available and easily accessible, including our Overview and Scrutiny annual reports. Reports, agendas and minutes from each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting are also available electronically from Thurrock's website.

Getting in Touch

The Overview and Scrutiny process at Thurrock is managed by our Democratic Services Team. The Team is located within Legal Services. Democratic Services manages the Council's decision making process and services a wide range of Council decision making bodies including the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet, Planning Committee, Licensing Committee as well as full Council.

If you have any queries about this report or the Overview and Scrutiny process, or if you are interested in participating, please feel free to contact us.

Email: scrutiny.team@thurrock.gov.uk

Address: Overview and Scrutiny Team, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays
Essex RM17 6SL

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny

This year the Committee continued to build strong links with Youth Cabinet, with two Youth Cabinet Members attending meetings to give young people a voice on matters affecting children and young people in Thurrock.

The Committee started the year reviewing the Children's Centre Service. Members heard that officers were hoping to identify the most effective way of delivering a sustainable Children's Centre service by 2017. Members received numerous updates throughout the year and in December officers informed the committee that the review had only just been completed with numerous meetings being held across the borough to gain residents' views.

Members continued to consider and monitor the learning points relating to Serious Case Reviews. In July members received an update from the Serious Case Review entitled 'Megan' and in December learnt of the 'James' Serious Case Review. Members were keen to ensure that updates of all cases were presented to the Committee and related bodies were held to account. Members noted the Action Plan which would be monitored by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and its associated audit group and that partners would be asked to supply evidence to prove that work had been done and improvements had been made.

The Committee scrutinised the Ofsted Inspection Action Plan which highlighted updates on 16 recommendations made by Ofsted in relation to the practice improvements that were required in Thurrock schools. It was discussed that the new Ofsted Framework had raised the bar for services and Thurrock would continue to improve and review the progress made.

In October 2016 the committee was pleased to learn there had been a significant improvement in provisional results at GCSE level and primary schools in Thurrock. Members recognised that performance was a reflection of the positive learning environment created by Thurrock schools, their teachers, parents and carers as well as the Council's education team. The committee in a letter to all schools expressed its thanks for this important achievement.

In December 2016 Members received a report which highlighted the key strategic, and partnership developments that related to Child Sexual Exploitation. It was stated that a data analyst post for Thurrock would be created to work closely with the Police on child sexual exploitation, missing children and trafficking. The Committee also oversaw preparations for a consultation that would be delivered in partnership between Thurrock, SERICC and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board with victims of child sexual exploitation.

My year as Chair of Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been marked by particular emphasis on the Post-Ofsted Improvement Plan which has been a standing item on the agenda throughout the year. The recommendations of the 2016 Ofsted inspection were unceasingly reviewed by the committee, along with the robust action plan put in place to address the areas which require improvement.

As chair, I had the opportunity of developing an excellent rapport with councillors that constituted the committee as well as our co-opted members. It was pleasing for me to work with members who demonstrate the principles of collaboration when it comes to discharging our full remit - the work programme items and reports resulted in clear and focused undertakings of review and scrutiny process, adding great value to the good work of officers within the Children's Services directorate.

The Committee has also successfully deliberated and scrutinised many key issues over the year, including, 0-19 Wellbeing Model, Review of Children Centre Services, serious case review update actions from Megan, the serious case review report on James, school capital programme, and educational attainments.

In December 2016, we considered the academic report for children Looked-After. Although assured of a really positive direction, the committee is committed to ensuring all children have the opportunity to maximise their potential, and feeling there is always a room for improvement, led the committee to agree that a review of the virtual school which supports children in the council's care takes place. Our utmost aim is to ensure all Thurrock children get the best education and support, including those that are attending school outside of the borough.

Aside from the scrutiny committee membership, I have had instances of sharing information and encouraging participation of all 49 members of the council on important matters, such as the national funding formula proposal, and our commitments as corporate parents to the education, health and wellbeing of our looked-after children.

I must not forget to mention that during the year, the Committee and democratic services officers were pleased to receive Solihull councillors and officers to Thurrock for the purpose of understanding how our Children's Overview and Scrutiny works. Solihull Officer, Mala Mistry said that their members found it invaluable to have the opportunity to meet with us to understand how scrutiny works in Thurrock. She also added that they felt it was a worthwhile visit as they have learnt such a lot during the visit.

I would like to express my appreciation to the members on the committee for a well-structured approach embraced in scrutiny, to co-opted members for their full participation, and officers of the council and schools for great work done for our young people on education side, the social care team for supporting our children in the council's care, and the senior democratic officer for efficient facilitation of the committee



Councillor Bukky Okunade
Chair of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny

One of the key issues scrutinised by the Committee over the past year was environmental enforcement in Thurrock. Members were notified of the number of service requests received between 1 April 2015 and 28 March 2016 for potential environmental enforcement, which had totalled 3699. The types of offences included:

- ❖ Fly-Tipping
- ❖ Littering
- ❖ Abandoned Vehicles
- ❖ Waste Carrier Offences
- ❖ Fly-Posting
- ❖ Dog Fouling
- ❖ Littering From Vehicles
- ❖ Graffiti

In addition the Committee discussed the use of Community Protection Notices, what they entailed and what they had or could achieve. It was explained that Local Authorities could use a notice against any anti-social behaviour. Failure to comply would result in a fixed penalty notice and failure to pay would result in court proceedings. Members helped challenge and develop plans to introduce a Community Protection Notice to combat drinking in Grays high street.

Members maintained a watching brief on fly-tipping in the borough, as concerns continued to be raised.

High on the Committee's agenda was unauthorised traveller encampments, including the Trap Races which took place on the last weekend in July 2016 in Stanford le Hope. Members took into account the Council's response and recommendations in order to reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence.

The Chair invited the Chief Superintendent representing Essex Police to the extraordinary meeting held in September, where Members were given the opportunity to discuss the event and the learning points of the outcome. The Committee tested and subsequently agreed the new protocol which had been put in place between Essex Police and Thurrock Council regarding unauthorised traveller encampments.

Members also investigated the the flooding at Grays Beach over the summer months in 2016, during which it was acknowledged that action had been taken by Anglian Water. However, Members sought assurance that a recurrence of flooding at the site was unlikely. The Committee was assured that there were sufficient safeguards including secondary and tertiary fail safes now in place.

A key topic of conversation for the Committee was the Administration's 'Clean it, Cut it and Fill it' scheme. The scheme began in June 2017 and aimed to tackle cleanliness, pot holes and green spaces all over the borough. Throughout the year the Committee continued to put forward suggestions and recommendations on the

pilot scheme and the Portfolio Holder for Environment attended the committee to discuss such suggestions with the Committee.

It has been an important year for the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

As a key area of focus for the Council, my committee has been active on the improvements needed to Thurrock's environment. We have made recommendations on tougher environmental enforcement measures and on the Administration's "Clean it, cut it, fill it agenda". Action on litter and the cleanliness of Thurrock has been a key issue for the year, and I am grateful to the Portfolio Holder for attending the committee to take direct questions on her plans.

We have reviewed a wide number of issues, from the fly-tipping epidemic to illegal trap racing in Thurrock and the flooding of Grays Beach. We have worked successfully as a cross-party committee to seek much-needed improvements for the environment in Thurrock.

It has been particularly inspiring to hear from those with a real passion to improve Thurrock, such as the Clive Webster and Thames 21 Presentation.

My thanks go out to all that have participated in the work of the committee this year, and I hope that the committee will continue to drive forward the environment agenda next year.



Councillor Oliver Gerrish
Chair of Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny

The Committee started the year looking at the Corporate Performance Report and its new assessment system which differed from the previous Red, Amber, Green (RAG) coding. Members ensured the new system would be as effective as its predecessor. The report also reviewed which Councils would make up the benchmarking group with Thurrock and what data would be used in the process.

Members took this opportunity to engage with Officers and ensure the Council pushed for higher targets. Members investigated the proposed changes and options to the Local Council Tax Scheme. They noted the scheme would build upon the existing scheme and align with central Government changes to the Housing Benefit and Universal Credit regulations. The Committee looked at the six proposed changes to the existing scheme and while offering their opinions, sought to ensure that additional clarification was provided for Members when making the final decision at Full Council.

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee took a keen interest in consultations and their response rates throughout the year. At their meeting in March 2017 Members looked at a list of all the consultations from 2016 which included:

- ❖ Grays Town Centre Consultation
- ❖ Local Plan Issues and Options - Big Questions
- ❖ Thurrock Residents Survey
- ❖ Annual Local Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation 2017/18
- ❖ Fixed Term Tenancies
- ❖ Cycle Plans
- ❖ Air Quality Strategy Details | Air Quality Strategy

Members sought clarity as to how many consultations were the result of requests from Committees and how many were Officer-led as well as how much they were used in the decision making process. The Committee discovered there were some consultations which were a statutory duty. The Council had a responsibility to conduct consultations where there was likely to be a service change, and some ongoing feedback was used to make minor service improvements on a day to day basis. Other consultations were the result of Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations and steers from Portfolio Holders.

During discussions throughout the year on different occasions Members expressed their concerns at the low number of responses to consultations undertaken by the Council and suggested ways to improve this including when residents were visiting the Council they could be asked if they would be happy to undertake a survey or be part of a consultation.

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee looked at a number of important issues this year, making many recommendations to Officers, Cabinet and Full Council.

The Committee was particularly concerned with the cost-effectiveness and statistical relevance of consultations undertaken by the Council and scrutinised at length proposals to amend the Local Council Tax Scheme.

We have reviewed key subjects such as Council Strategy, Policy and performance. We worked successfully together as a cross-party platform to influence recommendations made to Cabinet in residents' best interests.

I would like to thank all the Officers for their hard work over the year to facilitate the Committee and my fellow Councillors on the Committee for the constructive contributions made to the scrutiny process.



Councillor John Kent
Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny

The Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee is one of busiest Committees and one which scrutinises topics of local interest. One of the topics Members have been involved in was the proposed move of the Positron Emission Tomography – Computer Tomography Scanner (PET-CT) from the Basildon Hospital to the Southend Hospital.

The PET(CT) is a scanner used to support the diagnosis of cancer. In the 2016-17 year a proposal was put forward by the providers of the PET(CT) scanner to move it to Southend Hospital,

Members of the Committee formally resolved that they did not support the decision made by NHS England to move the PET(CT) scanner away from Basildon Hospital and would be referring the matter to full Council with a view to referring the decision to the Secretary of State. The Chair received a response from the Secretary of State seeking additional information,, which was subsequently collated and supplied by officers.

In June 2016 the Committee examined Public Health Grants, during which Members endorsed the recommended course of action to ensure that when further planned cuts were made to the Public Grant in 2017/18, the best opportunities for fulfilling all statutory functions and improving the health and wellbeing of the people of Thurrock were taken.

The Committee were notified of a new initiative “Living Well in Thurrock”, whose integrated vision with the Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group was to support people to achieve fulfilled lives. The initiative highlighted the importance of preventing, reducing and delaying need for health and care services.

The Director of Public Health presented his Annual Report at the November committee which made a series of recommendations in terms of improving the quality of Primary Care in Thurrock, improving the quality of long term condition management and strengthening the local health and social care workforce. Members questioned the 101 and 999 services, the services offered by general practitioners, the usage of the ambulance service and how residents could be encouraged to exercise more. Going forward the Annual Report would be presented to the key members of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Throughout the year the Committee have continued to focus on the current situation of Domiciliary Care in Thurrock and how the effects of the current challenges on the service were being addressed. The Committee had been informed that the situation was extremely serious in Thurrock.

Members were briefed on the new direction of travel for Domiciliary Care and how this will support people at home and how the new approach will form an integral part of the second phase of Building Positive Futures, Living Well in Thurrock. It provided an update on the progression of the Living Well at Home Project and how the current crisis had impacted the delivery and implementation of the pilot.

Members of the Committee have continued to work closely with partners such as:

- ❖ Thurrock NHS Clinical Commissioning Group;
- ❖ Thurrock Council and North East London Fountain Trust;
- ❖ Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions;
- ❖ HealthWatch
- ❖ Thurrock Coalition

At their last meeting in March 2017, the Committee discussed Learning Disability Health Checks and how the service had been turned around since the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had taken over the administration of this service and were praised by Members for the work undertaken.

This year the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee looked at a wide range of topics and made a number of recommendations to Officers, Cabinet, Full Council, NHS England and Government.

The Committee were concerned about the decision by NHS England on its relocation of the PET(CT) Scanner and took the serious decision to refer our concerns to the Secretary of State. We heard updates and plans regarding the Success Regime, ensured our strong feelings on the direction and decisions proposed were heard by those drafting plans and made sure the committee would be scrutinising developments regularly. The Committee also heard about the excellent progress to ensure learning disability health checks are carried out by GPs. Ensuring some of the most vulnerable in Thurrock have access to health care is extremely important and it's wonderful to see the work that continues to make this work well.

In a time where national cuts to funding are having a devastating effect on health and social care services which local authorities can provide, Thurrock Council's Officers were able to present the Committee with a number of innovative and exciting projects - Thurrock First and Integrated Living Centres. These projects highlight the ground breaking ideas and the hard work Thurrock Council's Officers conduct every day to place Thurrock ahead of the curve and its residents at the heart of its work.

Thank you to Officers and Democratic Services for all their hard work and to fellow Councillors on the Committee for their dedication and constructive contributions.



Councillor Victoria Holloway
Chair of Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee have continued to keep up-to-date with Government policy, including the impact of the Housing and Planning and Welfare Reform Bill on Thurrock and in turn its effect on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The key issue for the Committee was the suggestion of changes to Service Charges for those residents living in Sheltered Accommodation. Members first scrutinised the matter in December 2016, where the Committee requested additional information in order to scrutinise the topic further and felt guidance from the Government White Paper, soon to be published, was important in considering this item.

Members further inspected the HRA Business Plan and Budgets in February 2017 where it was explained that the HRA had been redeveloped based on the Government's proposed changes. . During discussions Members explored concerns that the vulnerable residents living in Sheltered Housing would be paying additional costs for services.

Members also received an update from the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Working Group. The aim of the Working Group was to make recommendations that would further improve tenant satisfaction which included:

- ❖ Review of tenants rating the service as "fair" in satisfaction surveys;
- ❖ Implementation of quality pledge ID Cards for Mears operatives that provide the name, photo and trade that each operative is qualified in and;
- ❖ Undertaking the customer surveys and to presenting feedback to Housing Overview and Scrutiny annually.

Members discussed the Repairs Satisfaction which reported that 86.4% of tenants rated the service as good or excellent. Officers confirmed that in June 2016 following a satisfaction survey, 86% of Thurrock residents rated the service good or excellent.

The Committee deliberated over the change in Fixed Term Secure Tenancies which had been prompted by a change in legislation. The report outlined that lifetime tenancies could no longer be issued and so a new tenancy was to be created.

Members commented that they felt a ten year tenancy was the right way to proceed, as a way for Thurrock to reduce its housing waiting list. It was mentioned this would be the a to free up housing stock by allowing people to move on it if they wanted to and allow other families access to safe and secure property.

It has been a pleasure to Chair the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee in what has been a busy and challenging year. A key issue was the release of the Government White Paper which seeks to fix the housing market. We welcomed good initiatives from the Government to help first-time buyers get on the housing ladder and to increase security for private tenants against “rogue” landlords.

Members have encouraged social housing, particularly through the Gloriana Project which has developed 128 homes for rent in Tilbury, including a provision of 22 properties for Social Housing.

The Committee has scrutinised heavily proposals to alter charges for residents in sheltered housing and communal blocks, hoping to get the best deal for Thurrock residents.

My thanks go to all the officers who worked to bring reports and support the committee, and my fellow Councillors who were committed to the Scrutiny process.



Councillor Gerard Rice
Chair of Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny

The Planning, Transport and Regeneration Committee have had an interesting year and considered a significant number of high profile regeneration developments that are set to stimulate Thurrock's local economy for years to come.

Members continued to work closely with different partners and received continuous updates and presentations from c2c. At the March meeting the Head of Communications at c2c rail informed the Committee that:

- ❖ 1,600 more Thurrock station passengers now got a seat compared to September 2016;
- ❖ 85 per cent of Thurrock passengers were now seated despite the increase of 5.6 per cent of Thurrock passengers in the last six months;
- ❖ c2c trains are less crowded at their busiest periods;
- ❖ c2c punctuality was better now than last autumn.

During discussions the Committee heard that the latest passenger satisfaction survey undertaken by Transport Focus on 30,000 c2c passengers published an 87% of overall passenger satisfaction with key crowding metrics being scored the best results for last three years.

Members challenged the c2c representative questioning why the new trains had not been allocated to the Thurrock network. It was explained that c2c had been clear throughout that the new trains would not be coming into Thurrock and that the trains were designed for longer distance journeys. This had freed up more carriages for Thurrock which were standard 15 year old carriages.

It was queried that the report did not seem to reflect the feedback received from passengers. The representative from c2c explained that c2c had not become complacent. It had addressed the issues and improvements had been made compared to this time last year, which tackled overcrowding.

The Committee invited the Director and associates to the January meeting to discuss the expansion of the Port of Tilbury. Members were notified that the Port of Tilbury was a leading multi-purpose Port which was 130 years old. In the last 20 years the tonnage going through the port had doubled and was confident that this would continue to grow based on the increased cargo throughput and the proposed increase in space on the Port.

It was explained this was a major regeneration project and the investment of several millions of pounds had been contributed to expand the Port and contribute to the future economy growth to Thurrock. Members were reassured the Port would continue to engage with the Council, Partnerships and residents to ensure the expansion related to the community and that all would benefit.

The Committee raised concerns that the air quality in Tilbury was one of the worst in the country and that the health of Thurrock residents should be a vital part of this redevelopment. The Chair stated that regeneration was welcome but sought

reassurance that improvement to the cruise terminal frontage and the river frontage would also be part of the redevelopment.

Members congratulated Officers for the 'Grays South, delivering the pedestrian Underpass project' and for securing the monies required to complete it. Officers presented the Committee with the good news in early 2017, explaining the project aimed to transform Grays town centre, creating public squares and an underpass to replace the pedestrian level Crossing in Grays High Street together with the development of modern retail and residential units.

Officers confirmed that the Council continued to work closely with Network Rail to develop the proposals and support the project through design and their approvals process. Members were informed that, the Council received notification that its bid for £10.8 million from the Local Growth Fund had been successful and that the Council would receive the full payment requested to complete the funding package to deliver this project.

It has been my pleasure to Chair the Planning Transport and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. At a time of unprecedented regeneration and growth within Thurrock it is especially important that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are as effective as possible. I would like to thank all of the committee Members and especially Councillor Peter Smith who has done a great job as my Vice Chair.

The Committee this year had scrutinised the maintenance and capital programmes for highways an essential function for the smooth running of both traffic and ensuring potholes were filled.

Air pollution continued to be a huge concern for Thurrock residents and the Committee have ensured the air quality and health strategy is up to the job.

The regeneration of Grays has been discussed and planned for, in particular the Grays South underpass which had attracted funding.

The Port of Tilbury expansion providing jobs and wealth generation for the Borough was presented by The Port of Tilbury at Overview and Scrutiny.

I have mentioned just a few of the projects and plans that have come through the Committee in the last year, it is of the utmost importance to have a strong Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure the residents of Thurrock are represented, and the best possible outcomes are achieved.



Councillor Barbara Rice

Chair of Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Budget Overview and Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny Members were keen to scrutinise the budget to ensure that the Council was on target to achieve significant budget savings and to identify if further value for money and efficiencies could be realised. Members were keen to ensure that Thurrock was doing all it could to ensure value for money and ascertain any new income streams whilst protecting services that were important to local people.

Cleaner, Greener & Safer Overview and Scrutiny

Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed proposals for income generation, particularly around trade waste revenue and sought to ensure that savings would not result in a loss of services around ground maintenance. Members also scrutinised proposed increased performance charges at the Thameside Theatre, requesting further discussion from Cabinet to ensure the best course of action.

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted and agreed to the proposed fees and charges on school improvements, early years education and children, Grangewaters, learning and skills and school meals.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomed the aspirational approach suggested for the Capital Programme. Members expressed concern around high-level investments, particularly those linked with the Gloriana Scheme, being included within the scheme of delegations.

The Committee supported a 3% increase in the adult social care precept. Members were cautious around proposed reductions to face-to-face services for residents within the Council building and staff reductions as a result of service reviews. The Committee pushed to ensure that the current Thameside Theatre complex would not close until a replacement had been delivered.

Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny

The Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the proposed fees and charges on the relevant service income targets such as day care, extra care, blue badges, meals on wheels and community development.

Housing Overview and Scrutiny

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the Fees and Charges report presented at the February meeting. Members scrutinised the possibility of reductions in services as there was a budget gap which could not be closed through recommendations.

Planning, Transport & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny

To ensure the delivery of the income targets for 2017/18, the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed and agreed the proposed fees and charges for parking, highways maintenance, highways and transportation, development and building controls, large charges and the hire of commercial halls in Thurrock.

Overview and Scrutiny Reviews

Overview and Scrutiny Committees can establish Scrutiny Review Panels to investigate in-depth issues which have come to their attention.

Therefore a Task and Finish Group may be established by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider a specific piece of work and make recommendations to its parent committee or directly to the Cabinet. The number of Members of the Task and Finish Group and its terms of reference must be specified when it is established.

An Overview and Scrutiny Committee may establish Working Groups to consider a specific piece of work or look into a particular issue in more detail outside of the formal meeting of the Committee. Any such Working Group will comprise of members of the Committee, working informally with Officers or other Members and reporting their findings back to the Committee.

Below are a number of past reviews undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

- ❖ Thameside Complex Review Panel (Completed 2015-2016)
- ❖ Supporting Pathways into Work for Young People (Completed 2015-2016)
- ❖ Community Transport Review (2014-2015)
- ❖ Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Match Funding Review (2013-2014)
- ❖ Fairness in Thurrock Review (2013-2014)

There were no Task and Finish Groups convened this year.

Call-ins

Thurrock's Call-In process is a vital aspect of the Overview and Scrutiny function. It allows Councillors or members of the public to ask that a decision of the Cabinet not be implemented until it has been subject to scrutiny by the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A Call-In of a Cabinet decision can be requested by two elected Members who are not members of the Cabinet, a Chair of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a voluntary group with an interest in the Borough, a local business situated in the Borough or ten residents in the Borough. The Call-In must be in writing and include reasons for the Call-In together with an alternative course of action.

The Call-In once it has been verified as legitimate and in accordance with the provisions of the Council's constitution is then referred to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration. The Committee receives all the evidence relating to the issue in question and following consideration, makes recommendations about whether the original decision should stand or whether Cabinet should be requested to reconsider its original decision.

During 2016-2017 three Call-Ins were submitted as detailed below:

Twenty-First Century Wellbeing Services for Children and Young People

In October 2016 Cabinet deliberated a report which outlined a modern children's centre provision, which would integrate specialist health, education and social care services, so that holistic wrap around care could be provided for children and young people within the borough.

Following this meeting, three elected Members called in the recommendations of the Cabinet report 'Twenty-First Century Wellbeing Services for Children and Young People' (decision 01104384), in their capacity as three non-executive Members.

The call-in was taken through the validation process which is outlined in the Constitution was deemed invalid for the following reasons:

- The grounds for the call-in based on 10.4 (a) – due regard to individuals and communities served by Thurrock Borough Council – cannot be upheld due to the presence of a decision to consult the public on the proposals where there is an opportunity to have views expressed.
- In accordance with Rule 10.11 (i) the report has already been subject to a scrutiny meeting where the issue of children's centre closures could have

reasonably been explored and alternatives models of delivery discussed for inclusion in the Cabinet Report recommendations.

Procurement of Healthy Lifestyle Services

In October 2016 Cabinet were presented with a report which outlined a new focus for early years by diverting resources to help prevent the rise of poor lifestyles in school children which Cabinet Member were advised both were a financial burden to the health system, and greatly limited healthy lives.

Following this meeting, three elected Members called in the recommendations of the Cabinet report 'Procurement of the Healthy Lifestyle Service' (decision 01104386), in their capacity as three non-executive Members.

The call-in was taken through the validation process which is outlined in the Constitution was deemed invalid for the following reason:

- Based on Rule 10.11 (i)), the report has already been subject to a scrutiny meeting where the issues raised could have reasonably discussed as part of the committee's scrutiny of the contract and arrangements.

Communications Strategy 2017/20

In April 2017 Cabinet discussed the report set out the changing landscape and context for the Council's communication activity. It proposed a strategic approach in response and clear principles to guide engagement with residents, partners, staff and the media, aid reputation management and improve public perception.

Following this meeting the Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee called in the recommendations of the Cabinet report Communications Strategy 2017/20 (Decision 01104421), in his capacity as a Chair of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The call-in was taken through the validation process which is outlined in the Constitution and deemed valid. It will now progress to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2017/2018.