

**31 January 2018**

**ITEM: 15**

**Council**

**Report of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation**

**Report of:** Councillor Brian Little, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

**This report is Public**

I am pleased to introduce my second report as Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation. These services lie at the heart of shaping the quality of residents' lives and facilitate a vital growth and regeneration of Thurrock, as well as the South East of England.

As in previous years, rising congestion trends have been a major concern. I have placed real effort to develop strategies for highways infrastructure and traffic management to ensure delivery of the outcomes necessary to enable transformation and to take a more 'resident focused' approach and our efforts were recognised.

Following the Public Satisfaction Survey 2017, carried out by the National Highways and Transport (NHT) Network our Highways Team received an award for the 'Most Improved Authority' in the Highway Maintenance theme; with customer satisfaction showing an improvement of around 8%. Additionally, the council's £6 million investment project in LED retrofit of street lighting, completed in July 2017, was shortlisted for an award at the Highways Awards 2017 in the Highways Maintenance Efficiency category.

The Clean it, Cut it, Fill it 'campaign' has continued to be a high priority, with over 4,500 potholes being filled throughout the road network so far this year.

In my last Portfolio Holder report, I informed you that to improve the free flow of traffic across local and strategic networks steps were taken, as part of the Congestion Task Force work stream, to migrate from a highway noticing regime to a highway permitting scheme. I am pleased to advise that Thurrock Council is a permitting authority as of October 2017 and we have since, served over 280 Fixed Penalty Notices for noncompliance and over 90 penalties for works that have over-run. This is just a beginning, but we have already seen an improvement in provision of real time information to the residents about the road works on our network (visible on [roadworks.org](http://roadworks.org)) which allows for better journey planning and management of the traffic disruptions.

In regards to strategic projects, the business case for the A13 widening scheme was approved and £66 million was allocated to it by the Department for Transport (DfT). The South Essex Active Travel bid worth £3.3 million was successful, which will help deliver sustainable access to jobs at the ports and within the Lakeside basin.

Finally, there has been an addition to the Highways and Transportation Portfolio which now includes parking services. I am pleased to inform that a pilot of cashless machines was introduced in November 2017, allowing drivers to pay for their parking fees by debit/credit or contactless card, phone or watch, as well as cash.

This report is essentially split into two parts. The first part outlines the responsibilities of the key areas of the Portfolio and some of the key successes. The second part focuses on the main challenges in the months ahead.

## **1. THE KEY SERVICE AREAS – RESPONSIBILITIES, PERFORMANCE AND PRIORITIES**

The main service delivery units within Highways and Transportation Portfolio are:

- Transport Development Management;
- Major Projects;
- Highways Infrastructure Management; and
- Highways and Transportation Services.

### **Transport Development Management**

The Transport Development Management team co-ordinates, funds and delivers transport improvements to make Thurrock a safe, accessible and attractive place to live, work and visit.

The team deals with day to day transportation-related enquiries from the public, businesses and Members. It also provides advice and support to other Council services and other local authorities. It provides the highways and transportation interface with Thurrock's planning teams and external stakeholders with an interest in development. This is to help deliver acceptable new development projects; ensuring that they are properly integrated within the highway and transportation network without risk to safety, efficiency or the environment, in accordance with the council's and government's policies and guidelines. Additionally, the team assists in formulating and implementing appropriate measures to mitigate current issues on the borough's transportation network.

Through development proposals, the team promotes sustainable transport and optimises opportunities for the funding of transport infrastructure. The team commissions and project-manages capital transport schemes secured through developer funding. The team also checks engineering drawings and supervises adoptable highway works to ensure that new transport infrastructure is designed and constructed to appropriate standards. The team advises and assists in the preparation of highways and transportation policies, including the Local Development Framework and Thurrock's transport policies.

In regards to strategy, the Transport Act 2008 places the duty for each Local Highway Authority to produce, develop and implement a Local Transport Plan (LTP). The latest LTP was produced in 2011 and is a vital tool to help the Council work with

its stakeholders to strengthen its place-shaping role and its delivery of transport services to the community.

The Thurrock Transport Strategy (which sits above the LTP) has been developed to ensure that the key strategic objectives for transport are addressed. The strategy document was refreshed for the period 2013 – 2026 and was approved by Cabinet in February 2013 to ensure that the council's key priorities are appropriately emphasised, i.e. improvements to J30/31 of the M25 and A13 widening.

### *Air Quality and Health Strategy*

In recognition of poor air quality in many parts of the borough and the ongoing health issues arising from this, we took the decision to develop an integrated Air Quality and Health Strategy, which will tackle the health problems associated with and exacerbated by air pollution within the borough.

The Air Quality & Health Strategy has framed the authority's approach to improving air quality and reducing air pollution exposure to safe levels for human health across the borough. The strategy provides the context for the council to manage air quality through a suite of borough-wide policies to prevent new Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) from arising as well as outlining a number of actions and measures to improve air quality in each AQMA, with a view to moving towards advisory limits and future revocation.

The overall strategic aim of the Air Quality & Health Strategy, as approved by December 2016 Cabinet, is to improve air quality in the borough to reduce the health impacts of air pollution.

The strategy will be delivered through three main approaches:

- a) By implementing measures for managing air quality throughout the borough to prevent new AQMAs from arising; and
- b) By implementing measures contained within the action plans for existing AQMAs; and
- c) By working with external bodies to reduce background pollution from inside and outside the borough.

A number of the actions adopted in the Air Quality and Health Strategy have been implemented by the council during 2017/18, including AQMA-specific and borough-wide actions, such as weight restrictions, width restrictions, HGV routing, and the introduction of enforcement cameras. These measures are achieving success in reducing the air quality impacts of HGVs.

On 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017, officers organised events in recognition of National Clean Air Day (NCAD), to raise awareness of the adverse impacts to air quality arising from cars idling outside of schools. The events on NCAD included giving presentations at two (2) primary schools and involving pupils and staff in an anti-idling campaign outside of these schools. The momentum of the NCAD events has been maintained. At the beginning of the school year operators of school transport were reminded of

their contractual obligations for no idling outside of schools. It is believed that this is having some success in reducing poor air quality outside of schools.

### *South Essex Active Travel (SEAT)*

In 2016, along with Southend-on-Sea and Essex County Council, Thurrock Council submitted a joint bid for £3.3m to support walking and cycling across the borough. This bid was successful, with the formal decision by Department for Transport (DfT) announced in March. The amount of funding secured under the SEAT bid equates to roughly one-third (1/3) for each of the three partner authorities.

The South Essex Active Travel (SEAT) bid will support key groups across the borough, including jobseekers and young people, so that they can use active travel to access work, training and educational opportunities.

The SEAT programme brings together the transport authorities of South Essex (Thurrock Council, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Essex County Council) and key delivery partners (including London Gateway, Port of Tilbury, Intu Lakeside and Southend Business Park).

A key aspect of the SEAT programme is the Targeted Travel Engagement initiative. This initiative seeks to provide access to the employee target audience, particularly for new jobs and recruits. The SEAT partners will help to facilitate engagement with prospective and new employees through the provision of travel advice and support during the recruitment and induction processes. Whilst much of the work will be delivered by a trained team of volunteers, the programme will offer the opportunity to train and build the capacity of staff across our partner organisations. This targeted travel engagement will be supported by a package of travel interventions and services such as cycle provision, adult cycle training, cycle maintenance, public transport promotion and route planning.

The SEAT programme commenced in May 2017 and will run for three (3) years to 2020.

### *Measures to Manage HGVs*

I recognise that the freight and logistics sector is a key part of Thurrock's economy, making a significant contribution to the wealth of the borough, and providing thousands of jobs. However, inappropriate HGV routing and parking create significant problems for local residents. The 2016/17 financial year saw a review of HGV routing across the borough and the development of proposals for a number of locations to deter HGVs from residential streets.

I have worked closely with officers to introduce schemes in and around the borough where HGV access is causing particular problems and are developing schemes to reduce the impact of HGV movements, as identified below:

1. Upgrade of the North Stifford width restriction to enable ANPR bus lane enforcement, which include civil works as well as the installation of a camera system by Essex County Council.
2. Upgrade of the South Stifford width restriction to enable ANPR bus lane enforcement, which includes civil works as well as the installation of a camera system by Essex County Council
3. Installation of a width restriction and bus lane on Stifford Road, Aveley, which includes civil works and the installation of a camera system by Essex County Council
4. Installation of one-way routing on Cement Block Cottages and Towers Road, Grays.

### *Thurrock Freight Logistics and Transporting Partnership*

In October 2017, the Freight Quality Partnership was re-launched, and renamed “Thurrock Freight Logistics and Transporting Partnership”. The partnership is intending to bring together organisations and agencies with an interest in the safe and efficient movement of freight and logistics across the borough and will provide a forum for representatives from across the industry. The intention for these meetings is to create an inclusive environment that promotes partnership – for both large and small operators – as well as key freight origins and destination facilities, and agencies at a local, regional and national level.

It is intended that the partnership will encourage an open discussion of issues impacting the industry in Thurrock, and to develop and promote solutions and best practice amongst partners. We will also use these meetings to identify and implement practical solutions to enhance the movement of freight and logistics throughout the borough.

The Partnership will (i) seek to establish a freight action plan, which can enable short term deliverables supporting the movement of freight within the borough, (ii) set a strategic context for the industry in Thurrock via the freight strategy, and (iii) seek to influence the wider freight agenda beyond the local area.

### *Thurrock Intelligent Systems (ITS) Strategy*

In recognition of the existing congestion issues resulting from incidents and events at the existing Dartford Crossing, and the need to future-proof the local road network, we have pursued a number of collaborative actions with key stakeholders, such as a Highways England and adjoining highway authorities including the establishment of a Congestion Task Force in April 2016. In addition to the actions agreed by the Congestion Task Force, I am working closely with officers to develop and deploy technology-based solutions to better manage the local road network.

The use of information and communications technology in transport systems and infrastructure is now commonplace and offers cost-effective solutions for managing transport networks. The term Intelligent Transport System (ITS) refers to the application of information and communications technology to transport systems and infrastructure, enabling data to be collected and shared to maximise the efficiency of

the highway network. The technology used in ITS vary in complexity and functionality but are designed to: monitor and capture data, manage and control systems and communicate valuable information to end users through an array of mediums (e.g. variable message signs). An ITS Strategy for Thurrock that sets out the approach for the deployment of cloud based Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) has been developed and was approved by Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017 – with the final document for submission and adoption at January 2018 Cabinet.

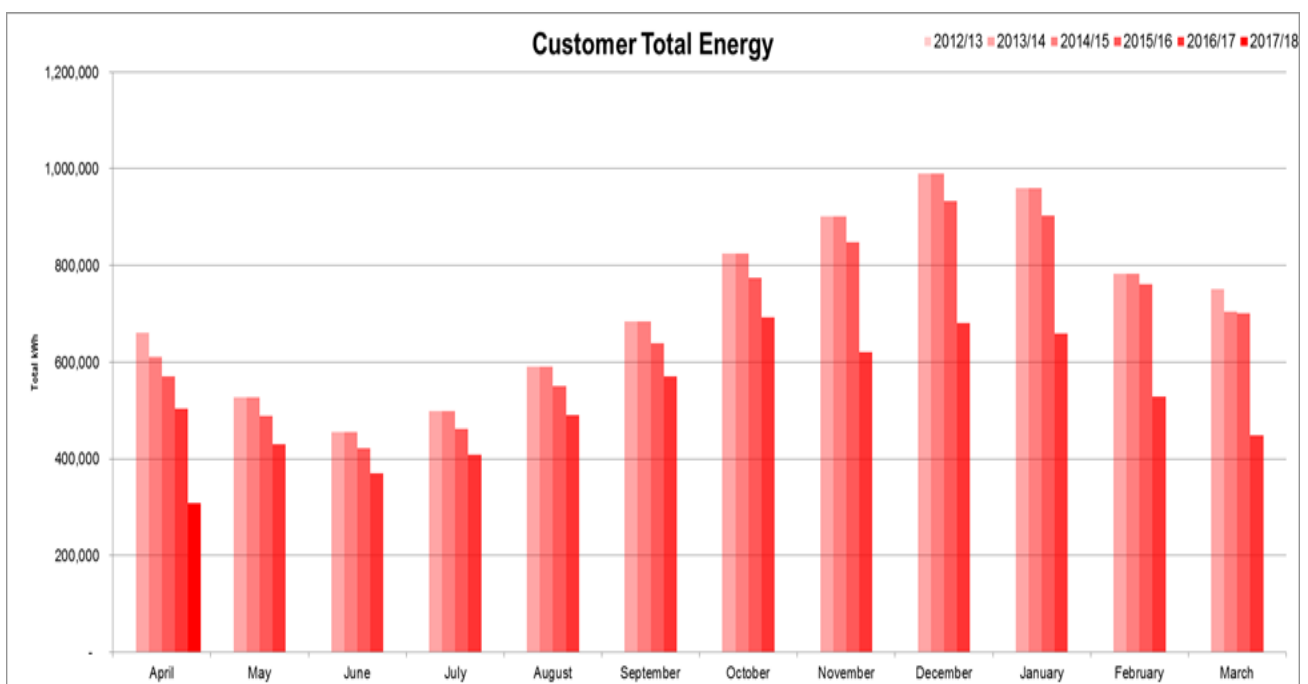
ITS for Thurrock’s road network will involve utilising open standards that will enable integration with the systems of adjoining highway authorities. The main element of the ITS in Thurrock will be the creation of a Thurrock owned and operated cloud-based Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) system, that will provide the platform for integration with other systems and allow Thurrock to manage its own road network.

The ITS Strategy will help to provide a step change in congestion management and enable innovative collaboration with Highways England, neighbouring authorities and local stakeholders to improve congestion in the area.

## Major Projects

### *Street Lighting*

This £6 million project involved the replacement of approximately 17,500 expensive and inefficient street lights with light emitting diodes (LEDs) and was funded through prudential borrowing. LEDs provide a better quality of light and are more energy efficient and more durable than the sodium lights that they replace. At the start of this programme, all street lighting columns in the borough were tested for electrical and structural integrity. This programme was completed in July 2017. Taking account of the interest charges and the reduction in energy bills and maintenance costs, the LED retrofit programme will result in a net saving of £250,000 per year from 2017/18 onwards.



Together with delivery partners Kier, Estate Lighting Solutions Ltd, Scape Procure, Urbis Schreder and Thorn, Thurrock Council was shortlisted for an award at the Highways Awards 2017 in the Highways Maintenance Efficiency category.

### *A13 Widening*

After securing the necessary funding and approvals for the major capital project, the preliminary design work including surveys and contract preparation was completed in 2016. A competitive tendering process was also undertaken to procure a detail designer and contractor from the Highways England framework. Further approvals were given to:

- Enter into an agreement with the Department for Transport (DfT) with respect to funding provided by the DfT for the A13 Widening Scheme
- Award contracts for the detail design and construction of A13 Widening
- Award any further contract(s) for the provision of works and services to progress the A13 Widening scheme
- Acquire or accept dedication of any land required for A13 Widening

In April 2017, DfT announced retained scheme funding of £66 million for A13 Widening. This is on top of the £5 million scheme development funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government and a contribution of £8 million from DP World London Gateway Port.

In May 2017, the Council awarded two separate contracts for A13 Widening. The detail design contract was awarded to Atkins and the construction contract was awarded to Kier. These contracts started at the end of June and beginning of July respectively. Since that time, both organisations have worked together to develop a joint programme and prepare for commencement of works.

In June 2017, DP World London Gateway Port Ltd acquired most of the land needed for the scheme using its powers under the London Gateway Port Harbour Empowerment Order 2008.

Advance works, including site clearance, temporary fencing and site investigations have begun. The main works are programmed to commence in May 2018 and be completed by March 2020.

### *Stanford-le-Hope Transport Interchange*

The Stanford-le-Hope project comprises of a multi-modal transport interchange with bus turn-around, enhanced cycling facilities, new footbridge and lifts, enhanced station building with improved accessibility and passenger handling capability and customer information system. This will greatly enhance the arrival experience for people visiting Stanford-le-Hope and/or travelling onward to the Port.

The project received the provisional allocation for delivery in 2016/17 in July 2014 when the Government announced first round of Local Growth Fund (LGF) allocations, known as Growth Deal, to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership

(SELEP). The project has been let under the Eastern Highways Alliance (EHA) Framework 2 as a 'design and build' NEC 3 Engineering and Construction Contract (ECC) Main Option C – Target Price with Activity Schedule where Thurrock Council is the Contracting Body and Morgan Sindall is the Supplier. To date, Morgan Sindall provided the pre-construction design services and developed the recommended feasibility design options which informed the pre-planning and planning application and the Target Price submission for the next phase of the project.

The budget is set at to £12.62m. The efforts are now made to prepare the scheme for construction, subject to planning application process and successful consultation with local residents.

### *Cycle Infrastructure Delivery Plan*

In July 2014, Thurrock was awarded £5 million towards cycle route improvements to be delivered across the borough by 2019. The cycle infrastructure enhancements support active lifestyles and therefore improve health and wellbeing of residents and reduce obesity. The council is committed to enhancing Thurrock's cycle network; making it easier and safer to get around the borough by bike, connecting routes, providing access to key employment and residential centres; offering an attractive alternative to using the car. In the long term, sustainable transport modes such as cycling will have positive impact on reduction of congestion and improved air quality.

The cycle plan has been developed in collaboration with the Local Access Forum and cycle groups. The programme was approved by the Cabinet in January 2016 and public engagement was undertaken on the emerging feasibility designs in June 2016 through an online consultation to seek feedback on the proposals.

This programme comprises of 41 schemes, of which 14 are at feasibility stage, 8 are at final design stage, 6 are under construction and 3 have been completed. All efforts are made to minimise the disruptions to the traffic and complete the construction before the end of March 2019.

## **Highways Infrastructure Management**

### *Highways Assets*

The Council, as Local Highways Authority, is responsible for maintaining highways infrastructure assets used by Thurrock residents and visitors. This includes:

- 560km of carriageway;
- 1000km of footway;
- 133 structures;
- 168 roundabouts;
- 50 traffic signals;
- 17,500 lighting columns;
- 3,500 illuminated signs;
- 1,500 illuminated bollards;
- 30,000 signs; and



- 26,500 gullies.
- 170km Public Right of Ways

To maintain our assets, in 2017-18 we procured a £40 million Highways Maintenance Term Contract which has been successfully mobilised and in operation since May 2017. Already we have ordered £4m worth of highway work through this new contract.

We have worked hard to improve the appearance of highways across the borough and to be more responsive to the residents' needs and requests. We have filled over 4,500 potholes between April and December 2017. The high number of potholes reflects the limited investment in the maintenance of roads over recent years, and the large number of locations where road surfaces are at or close to the end of their design life. Therefore, we have taken steps to increase capital investment and move towards proactive and preventive operations.

In addition, over 500 street lighting reports have been received and actioned.

Thurrock is responsible for 170km of Public Rights of Way. Of the 170km, 153km have been kept free of obstruction. A programme is in place to improve upon this until 100% of the routes are fully passable at all times.

#### *Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme*

The Highways Infrastructure Team has been working on a modernisation programme as part of the wider agenda supporting Thurrock becoming a digital council. This is also necessary for compliance with a number of quality issues principally related to the Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) ensuring eligibility for DfT's incentive funding.

From 2016/17 to 2020/21 an increasing share of the funding (incentive funding) will be allocated on the basis of compliance with the HMEP. This means that by 2020/21 low performing authorities lose 20% of their maintenance funding. Authorities in the highest band would receive 100% of incentive funding. I am pleased to announce that our endeavours have enabled us to be on target to achieve Band 3, currently the highest level, and thus maintained the annual funding allocation from central government for 2018-19. The highways improvement plan will continue next year to enable us to show continual improvement and efficiencies in the way we deliver our service.

The hard work undertaken this year has enabled us to receive well earned recognition with the Highways Team winning an award in the 'Most Improved Authority' in the Highway Maintenance theme; with customer satisfaction showing an improvement of around 8%.

## *Highways Inspectors*

The council has a statutory duty to maintain its highway network. This involves having clear policies in place and a regular highway inspection regime. Since April 2017 over 2,000 safety inspections have been carried out resulting in over 2,200 maintenance works orders being issued.

With the implementation of a Highways Asset Management system, this service has moved from using a paper based process to digital mobile working representing a major change in our processes and improved efficiency. Additionally, the 'Report It' platform that was implemented in 2016 and allows residents to report defects on Thurrock's highways network from their mobile phones is being improved as well to provide an even better resident focused customer service approach.

The Dft allocated an additional £153k to Thurrock for potholes. So far this year a total of over 4,500 potholes have been filled throughout the road network. A further £481k was allocated from DFT's National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF), this enabled the team to deliver an additional 20,000 square metres of road surface improvements.

## *Network Management*

Work to tackle the congestion problems around the West of the borough are continuing with increased collaboration with stakeholders through the Congestion Task Force that was set up in 2016. With traffic volumes increasing, this is an evolving work stream and we are committed to easing congestion particularly when there are incidents on the Dartford Bridge that bring additional problems to Thurrock's road network. One of the biggest improvements made by Highways England is the time it takes to put the tunnel contraflow in place when the bridge is closed. Over the last 12 months or so, the time to implement the contraflow has been reduced from 4 hours down to 90 minutes. This was achieved by reviewing the resources available and seeking alternative suppliers / resources that are located more locally to the Bridge, hence reducing travel time to site.

In addition to the above, efficiencies have been made to the time usually taken to repair barriers on the central reserve of the motorway. Lane closures on the M25 in the vicinity of Thurrock impact our local roads and Highways England has been working collaboratively with stakeholders and have been successful in obtaining an approved temporary barrier to replace damaged sections that can be installed relatively quickly in comparison to the length of time it took previously when lanes had to be kept closed until full repairs could be arranged.

Congestion builds very quickly and once the circulatory area of J31 becomes gridlocked, the impact on the surrounding road network rapidly becomes evident with even local roads becoming impassable. To help alleviate this, yellow box markings have been installed on the entry points to J31 to enable traffic to escape the roundabout. This enables traffic on the local network to continue flowing. 5 mobile variable message signs have also been deployed at key points around the borough

to warn local drivers of the congestion around J31 in order that alternative routes can be taken.

Thurrock Council has in the past coordinated street works under the NRSWA legislation through Notices submitted by the Statutory Undertakers. However, due to growing demand on Thurrock's network and necessity to relieve the congestion, a Permit Scheme was introduced in October 2017, with over 1,200 permit applications being processed so far.

### *Highways Objectives*

- Safety - a network of roads in poor condition has a direct correlation to highway safety. As the local highway authority, the council has a legal duty to maintain the network to a reasonable standard. Furthermore, an asset in poor condition is likely to promote a lack of pride in the community, and can be a precursor to crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Clearly, the Authority and relevant senior managers have a duty of care where any part of the asset is life expired and is prone to failure, which could result in members of the public being seriously injured.
- Promoting Healthier lifestyles - an asset in poor condition, particularly footways and cycleways, curtails promotion of sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling. Conversely, assets in good condition increase the safety and attractiveness of these modes, with the resultant health benefits and the reducing need to access healthcare.

### **Highways and Transportation Services**

The highways and transportation services include the Passenger Transport Unit, Road Safety and Parking Services.

#### *Passenger Transport*

The Passenger Transport Unit is responsible for procuring and managing the Education Transport responsible for the safe travel of 2,160 students, including more than 420 with complex needs to many and varied education establishments both in and out of the borough. The Unit is required to respond to changing demands due to the increased number of residents moving into the borough and the nearest school unable to offer places for the students who are then required to be transported to the nearest establishment with spaces.

*Tilbury Ferry* -The Council continues to financially support the Ferry in Partnership with Kent County Council. A new operator was secured last year with Jetstream Tours Ltd who operated the service under emergency procedures up to November 2017 and following a successful procurement exercise was awarded the contract for a five year period. The majority of passengers it seems are very happy with their service as there has been a reduction in the number of complaints over the past 6 months, as is the Port of Tilbury, who own the landing stage, which the Council leases.

We have maintained a good standard of turnaround when issuing bus passes to the elderly and those with disabilities, with residents receiving their bus pass within ten working days of application. There are currently over 23,000 pass holders and we have continued to support bus services in our more rural areas where operators have no commercial services.

*Thameside Rail Franchise* - c2c continue to implement the requirements of the 15 year franchise awarded in 2014.

*Buses and Community Transport* - in 2017/18, within the limited resources available, the council has continued to support bus services to more rural parts of the borough, notably bus routes 11, 265 and 374. First Essex now operates service 11 and 374 while Trans Vol continues to operate service 265.

Ensign and First Essex Buses have made no network changes since last April although Ensign will be making some minor changes in January 2018; No bus services have been withdrawn. Six communities would not receive a bus service without council support - Bulphan, Fobbing, Horndon on the Hill, Linford East and West Tilbury. .

The Bus Users' Group has met bi-monthly, enabling residents to raise bus issues directly with elected members relating to services timetables and infrastructure. The council continues to manage the concessionary cessionary fares scheme with 23,340 passes on issue.

### *Road Safety*

The Council's Road Safety Team has carried out Crucial Crew training for to over 1,250 year 6 pupils from 21 Primary Schools. This training enables pupils to be offered advice to integrate and transition their journey from Primary School into their new Senior School, with essential skills to keep them safe for the transition to senior school. Campaign aims: To focus on skills, abilities and attitudes both from a personal and practical point of view, to keep themselves safe and the need to develop their judgment, decision making and risk assessment skills in order to increase their self-esteem and confidence. in relation to Road Safety. The training has been provided by various partners and includes safety information regarding the Fire and Ambulance Services, Public Protection and health and safety advice.

The service also visited the Orsett Show to highlight services in Thurrock for local children and residents and demonstrates how Road Safety officers teach road safety and provide cycling instruction. The Road Safety Team carry out service reviews with each school ensuring that feedback, by way of questionnaires, are carried out regularly. Feedback illustrates that continued support for School Crossing Patrols is welcomed by our Primary Schools and staff members are respected by schools, parents and children alike.

School travel plans continue to be successful with the first Senior School, The Ockendon Academy, receiving a bronze accreditation and Arthur Bugler receiving a gold accreditation in the Primary School category demonstrating excellence in

supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel. Schools have invested hard work and dedication in relation to School Travel Plans and with the support of the Road Safety Team has managed well with an age group which can be difficult to engage with.

The “Surround a Town days”, working with Essex Police and our other partners within SERP (Safer Essex Road Partnership) have proven successful. Vehicles have been stopped, in and around the borough, for such offences as wearing no seatbelts, using mobile phones whilst driving and driving without tax/insurance.

### *Parking Services*

Parking Services Team (back office systems), were brought back in house in December 2016 and can now manage the recovery of debt owed in a more streamlined and robust manner, working closely with Civil enforcement Officers. A pilot of cashless machines was introduced in November 2017, allowing drivers the opportunity to pay their parking fees by debit/credit card, Apple I-Pay (via phone or watch), contactless as well as cash.

HGV Enforcement has continued to be successful due to the new twilight shift implemented in 2016 and the service is now focused on recovering foreign HGV debt which is a growing nationwide issue. A pilot scheme with Penham Excel, High Court Enforcement Officers and Agents focuses on recovering debt mainly held by foreign vehicles in relation to unpaid penalty notices. Four separate scheduled events since June 2017 have resulted in the recovery of £32,305 of unpaid penalty notices, an income of £22,000 after costs.

The Parking Services Team in partnership with the Debt Recovery Team continue to make this a priority over the next twelve months ensuring Thurrock roads are kept clear of illegally parked HGV's and to promote our message that HGV parking in residential areas and areas with restrictions is unacceptable and a zero based tolerance will apply.

## **2. THE MAIN CHALLENGES MOVING FORWARD**

Since taking responsibility for this Portfolio, I have consistently promoted my view that the services within my Portfolio should now concentrate on making the good intentions in all our strategies actually happen. I have emphasised that projects supporting job creation for local residents, growth for local businesses and inward investment must be priorities for the months, and indeed years, ahead.

However, highways and transportation provide services enjoyed by all residents of the borough, and can make a major contribution to the quality of place enjoyed by today's residents and businesses. Key challenges are to improve the condition of roads and streets, including the delivery of our ongoing ‘fill it’ campaign, and mitigate the environmental impacts caused by vehicle emissions, especially around schools.

I will continue to work with partners to improve routing for lorries in the borough, and seek to ensure that the success of our freight and logistics sector does not undermine quality of life for local residents.

In this way, I am seeking to ensure that Thurrock is well placed to maximise the opportunities available to it, that we will compete to be an attractive location for investment and that local residents will directly benefit from our successes.

In the coming months, the significant areas of work will be:

**a) Securing maximum benefit through the Local Enterprise Partnership**

With almost all transport funding now contained within the devolved Local Growth Fund (LGF) it is vital that Thurrock, together with the rest of Thames Gateway South Essex, progresses LGF project for which funding was secured. The projects such as Stanford-le-Hope Station Transport Package, Cycle Infrastructure Delivery Plan, A13 widening will improve the capacity of local infrastructure and support the delivery of our ambitious growth agenda. In addition, a good record of on time and on budget project delivery will support future bids.

**b) Progressing the Transportation Agenda**

The provision of an effective, free-flowing transportation network is an essential requirement if the council's regeneration ambitions are going to be achieved. In this regard, there are four key priorities that will be pursued with vigour; tackling congestion through the work of the Congestion Task Force, delivering the capacity enhancement schemes already secured in the Local Growth Fund, improving modal choice in the borough by supporting increased capacity for public transport, and encouraging Highways England to re-think their plans for a Lower Thames Crossing in Thurrock.

**c) Refreshing Thurrock's Transport Strategy in the context of the Emerging Local Plan**

Having a clear and positive policy framework in place is critical in ensuring that future land uses in Thurrock are supported by adequate and sustainable transport provision. This analysis will also give us the evidence base to bid for government funding for any future infrastructure which may be required.

**d) Continue to tackle congestion through the Congestion Task Force**

The Congestion Task Force made good progress in 2016, but much more needs to be done. Our challenges will be to continue to improve incident response, to improve highways network management in the borough, and to progress plans to meet future transport needs.

**e) Improve road maintenance**

In addition to working towards our target of meeting HMEP Band 3 by December 2017, we will also work to improve our response to residents' concerns and the general level of maintenance of roads in the borough.

As previously stated roads have been neglected and it will take time to bring them back into good order.

**f) Improve the management of lorry movements in Thurrock**

We will work with partners to develop a Freight and Logistic Strategy and progress schemes to reduce adverse impacts from HGV movements.

**g) Improve transport and parking services**

We take active part in x-cutting transport review which includes parking services to find more efficient ways of providing these services.

**3. FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

**Revenue**

	<b>2017/18 Budget</b>	<b>2017/18 Forecast</b>	<b>Forecast variance</b>
<b>Highways and Transportation services</b>	1,183,886	1,183,886	0
<b>Highways Infrastructure and Management</b>	4,673,721	4,673,721	0
<b>Transport Development</b>	209,882	209,882	0
<b>Major Projects</b>	19,996	19,996	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,087,485</b>	<b>6,087,485</b>	<b>0</b>

The Highways and Transportation service has a net revenue budget of £6.087m and is currently forecasting to spend to budget. Financial risks continue to be managed within the service and significant efficiency savings, such as the street lighting efficiency initiative, have been delivered. In addition to this, the service is delivering a capital improvement programme in excess of £100m.

<b>Capital Project</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>
Mardyke Bridge Works	110,896
Highways works to Purfleet Bypass	42,553
Highways Improvements in Oliver Road	306,184
Bus Link between Tesco's Lakeside and Intu Lakeside	58,566
Improvement works between Thurrock Park Way and Manor Road	652,298
East Tilbury 1st payment (CCTV / Anti-Skid / VAS / Bus Stop upgrade)	10,906
East Tilbury - Walsh development contribution	9,828
Butts Lane improvement works	10,646
Mayflower Road parking management and capacity improvements	57,764
West Thurrock Crossings and Bus Lane	250,000
Parking Restrictions on Park Lane and Bus Lane Improvements	16,084
Footway and Cycleway Extension from Development to Romford Road	131,211
South Road / Stifford Road Junction Improvements	190,012
Upgrade of Sandowne Road to adopted highway	173,776
Improvements to Towers Road - Grays	20,980
Improvements to the Manorway Interchange	76,262
<b>Total S106 Funding</b>	<b>2,117,966</b>
Congestion	276,398
Traffic Management	164,461
Safety Management Schemes	559,793
Safer Routes to Schools	111,686
Walking and Cycle Facilities	170,116
Public Transport Infrastructure	31,096
Highways Improvements	51,919
Rights of Way	95,487
Parking Restrictions	272,383
Air Quality Monitoring Equipment and Initiatives	75,000
<b>Total Integrated Transport</b>	<b>1,808,339</b>
Structural Maintenance A Class Roads	840,000
Structural Maintenance B and C Class Roads	682,000
Bridge Repair and Strengthening	750,000
Safety Fencing	79,667
White Lining	59,569
Traffic Signals	341,027
Road Signs	66,651
Pot Holes	153,000
Illuminated Signage Upgrade	400,000
National Productivity Investment Fund	481,000



Structural Maintenance Unclassified Roads	422,000
Footway Maintenance	379,784
Street Lighting	94,249
Other Infrastructure	591,941
Street Lighting LED Replacement	1,844,071
A13 Widening (Development)	2,263,448
A13 Widening (Works)	75,024,000
Stanford Le Hope Interchange	7,387,204
Local Growth Fund Measures	5,122,944
<b>Total Highways Maintenance</b>	<b>96,982,555</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100,908,860</b>

## CONCLUSION

I hope that from the contents of my report, Members will acknowledge the scale and breadth of the activities contained within this Portfolio. I am very aware of the importance of each of those services in contributing to the improvement of the quality of life for the residents of Thurrock.

There are particularly difficult challenges to my ambitions to ensure that those improvements are made, but no one should be in any doubt about my determination to deliver this important agenda, whatever the circumstance.