

30 June 2021	ITEM: 13
Council	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways	
Report of: Councillor Ben Maney, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways	
This report is Public	

Introduction

Like all areas of the council, Transport and Highways services have been impacted by COVID-19. It has also meant that many of our public transport operators have experienced difficulties with reduced passenger numbers and the council itself has seen some of our own initiatives affected. We have also seen a sharp reduction in the patronage of our car parks.

Despite the difficulties, we have risen to the challenge and managed to deliver ambitious programmes of work to help support the residents and businesses of Thurrock, such as the reconstruction of Stonehouse Lane and completion of the Orsett Road two-way scheme. The Planning team have also adapted to working restrictions while also meeting customer needs.

We have put in place measures through the government's funding for active travel in immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to make our public areas safe. In addition, in line with the government's attempts to promote sustainable and greener travel, we are looking at ways to promote walking and cycling in the borough.

In the coming months, as a result of government and private sector investment in the borough, particularly in Grays and Tilbury through the Towns Fund as well as the transformative Thames Freeport, services will be working closely with the Local Plan team to assess the transportation infrastructure needed to support growth in the future – an important part of supporting our recovery and return to growth.

1. Network Management

- 1.1 In the last 12 months the Network Management Team has received around 6,883 applications to work on the Highway Network, granting 4,385 of those applications. 730 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued for non-compliance of permit conditions which has given the team greater control of the road network ensuring inconvenience to our residents and road users is kept to a minimum.

- 1.2 The London Road medium pressure gas main renewal programme continued throughout the pandemic and was completed on time, enabling London Road to re-open to traffic.
- 1.3 10 variable messaging signs have been installed keeping our road users up to date on traffic conditions around the borough.

2. Highways Infrastructure

- 2.1 The council manages and maintains highway assets which consist of over 545km of carriageway and over 700km of footway & cycle ways. Through last years' capital programme 41 roads have been resurfaced and 16 footway reconstruction schemes have been delivered. The team have made good progress already for this year's programme with work already having started on arterial road resurfacing and footway repairs in Carnach Green and Hathaway Road.
- 2.2 The £1.5m reconstruction of Stonehouse Lane was completed ahead of schedule and within budget, restoring over 6,000sqm of road surface, with round the clock operations enabling the road to be reopened to traffic at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.3 Efficient and effective programme management and delivery through effective asset management has enabled us to maintain Level 3 in the DfT's Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme, the highest level available. This has enabled us to secure the maximum funding available, for the upkeep of our roads.
- 2.4 On our structures, 40 principal inspections were completed last financial year as part of an annual rolling programme. The results of the inspections help form the basis of our future work programmes and priorities.
- 2.5 We continue to upgrade and renew our street lighting stock following completion of the LED replacement programme. Now have turned our focus on renewing structurally unsound concrete columns throughout the Borough with £350,000 allocated over the next 2 years.

3. Reactive Maintenance

- 3.1 545km of the highway network requires safety inspections, which are completed by our Highways Safety Inspectors. So far they have carried out 3,078 inspections, resulting in the identification and repair of over 4,364 potholes, exceeding the KPI target of 98% for pothole filling within the allocated timeframe. This shows our continued commitment to the 'fill it' campaign.
- 3.2 4,498 customer enquiries were received and processed via the Highways Report It app last financial year and our in-house Highways Team continues

to be on hand to deal with out of hours emergencies, with over 250 attended last year.

4. Transport Development

- 4.1 The Transport Development Team have continued to deliver an extremely complex and diverse programme of improvements and enhancements which support the day to day need to develop the transport network as well as the more strategic and longer term need to cater for growth from the emerging Local Plan.
- 4.2 As well as the annual requirement to deliver the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) programme, additional funding in the region of £8m (Safer Roads Fund, capital bids, Active Travel, Capability Fund, Flood Resilience) has already been identified for the implementation of schemes over the next 2-3 years. Further details on these schemes is covered in section 16 below.
- 4.3 The ITB capital programme was approved early in the year, setting out how the £971,000 funding allocation from DfT is prioritised and utilised.
- 4.4 The Transport Development team leads a number of discussions with key stakeholders across the borough in regards to its highway network. To further improve community and Member engagement a new system has been established to regularly update forums and Ward Members of schemes in their respective areas, for highways maintenance, Transport Development, Highways Development Management and Major Projects.
- 4.5 Other key highlights over the past 12 months include:
- Development of an access improvement scheme on the A1013 near Treetops School in Grays is underway and a planning application is to be submitted this year.
 - Collaboration with the Port of Tilbury to provide enhanced crossing facilities for the cruise terminal, which is being fully funded by the port and implemented by the Highways Authority to provide necessary enhancements following the completion of the new port access road in Tilbury.
 - Continuing to develop enhancement for National Cycle Network 13 in Tilbury, focussing on the eastern part of the town and Civic Square.
 - The introduction of the second average speed camera system in the borough on Lodge Lane Grays under the Road Safety Engineering programme and enhancements to the A128, which has been subject to several serious incidents in the last few years.
 - The Council continues to work with all stakeholders to determine a solution to enforce bus lanes and width restrictions across the borough, including a possible camera enforcement methodology.
 - Installation of new wayfinding schemes in Grays and Tilbury, to complement the scheme in Stanford-le-Hope.

- The Council has taken over management of the ForwardMotion Cycle Hub on Calcutta Road, with funding from the Active Travel Fund securing the project until at least March 2022.
 - Increased opening hours in the hub have increased awareness and footfall within the hub, with an increase in bike sales and servicing for the community.
 - Enhancements of the Bus Station in Grays are being delivered through funding from the accelerated funding from the Grays Towns Fund. This will include replacement of the bus shelters, repairs to damaged furniture in the vicinity including guard rails, and the cycle and taxi waiting shelter, and repainted lines on the road to create a more appealing environment. Investment has also been made to replace the damaged bus and rail information signage, and the electronic bus display signs within the shelter will also be upgraded by summer 2021.
 - Collaboration with the education department to develop a branded communications programme to promote sustainable travel following lockdown.
 - As lockdown restrictions are eased, Thurrock Healthy-led walks are restarting, with one walk already launched, and a number of new walk leaders trained to the new standards.
 - The Thurrock Cycle Forum has been relaunched by the Council in May 2021, following a seven year absence, increasing active engagement with the community on the needs for enhancing cycling activities and infrastructure.
 - The Council has extended its membership of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership and signed up to a commitment of aiming towards zero road deaths and serious injury by 2040.
- 4.6 The 2021/22 ITB capital programme was approved by Cabinet at the start of the year and focuses on the policy and prioritisation approach taken to delivering key elements of the programme. Funding allocations were reviewed and amended to ensure a greater focus on these priority areas Road Safety Engineering £250k), Area Intervention Programme (£300k) and Traffic Calming and Safer Routes to Schools (£250k).
- 4.7 The progression of the five year programme of funding for Road Safety Engineering schemes was supported by Cabinet and has seen some significant enhancement coming forward this year as part of the ongoing drive to make key roads in the borough safer for all road users.
- 4.8 Similarly, the Safer Routes to School programme continues to provide enhancements around schools to promote safer walking and cycling routes to schools and to reduce incidents in the immediate area of the school.
- 4.9 This has resulted in the delivery of 4 new safety enhancement schemes, improving walking/cycling facilities in these areas. Additionally a further 2 schools have seen their cycle parking increased under this programme.

5. Emergency Active Travel

- 5.1 Within Tranche 1 of the Emergency Active Travel fund the Council was awarded £288,000. This was used to support quick-win, pop-up temporary measures to encourage walking and cycling while public transport options were reduced and to support the Government social distancing message. Signage schemes were applied in high footfall areas (approaches to shopping areas and schools) encouraging walking and cycling, urging road users not to park on footways and verges etc.
- 5.2 Traffic calming and speed reduction measures have also been applied at pinch-point locations around 4 transport hubs. Group Leaders and Ward Members were consulted on Tranche 1 measures and the consultation is due to finish in June 2021.
- 5.3 The Council's allocation from Tranche 2 of the Active Travel fund is £690,000. To date, the Council has consulted with a number of key stakeholders and local residents in a number of the scheme locations which were put forward as part of the submission to DfT. Five schemes were consulted on, including three in Stanford-le-Hope, one in Aveley, and one at the Orsett Cock Roundabout. Feedback to date has shown overwhelming support for all five schemes to progress to the next design stage. Further consultation will take place in the coming months before confirmation of scheme implementation by late 2021.

6. Road Safety

- 6.1 The Road Safety team continue to deliver a range of informative and engaging educational and practical road safety initiatives to local schools. This road safety programme ensures that road safety education, training and awareness raising are a fundamental part of the school experience.
- 6.2 Key highlights include:
- Bikeability Cycle Training (including Level 1 & 2, Balance Bike and Learn to Ride) in 21 Schools covering 1,264 pupils – 444 pupils trained to date since schools reopened in March 2021 with another 1100 scheduled by July 2021.
 - Road Safety Pedestrian training in 19 Schools for 4,591 pupils – Over 800 year 6 pupils trained since March, with a further Reception to Year 5 pupils from 19 schools by July 2021;
 - Twilight Trail events (awareness of being Bright and Being Seen during the winter months) held in 12 schools for 343 Year 3 pupils and parents;
 - Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) adopted in 12 schools. Road safety activities are taking place within schools with JRSOs including poster competitions / assemblies / fashion shows which involve both pupils and staff – the schools taking part are; Arthur Bugler / Benyon / Belmont Castle / Chadwell / Corringham / Denholm / Dilkes / Horndon / Stifford Clays / Thameside / Warren / Woodside.

- Currently 9 School Crossing Patrol (SCP) sites in active service;
- 11 School Travel Plans completed online with Modeshift STARS to accreditation standards with many more working towards developing robust achieve plans promoting sustainable travel and road safety.
- Scooter training – 12 schools and 474 Year 1 pupils have participated in scooter training during Sept 2019 - July 2020). In 2020 the Road Safety Team opened up the scooter training for years 1 and 2 (for the pupils who were unable to participate due to lockdown).
- Adult cycle training – 20 adults have received adult cycle lessons, in collaboration with the South Essex Active Travel Programme (SEAT).

6.3 In the current academic year we have seen many schools still keen to participate in Road Safety activities offered since March 2021, but lockdown closures within schools and travel restrictions have reduced participation levels against previous years. However, the levels of demand from schools for the remainder of the academic year are showing a strong bounce back.

6.4 The Council is a member of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership, in collaboration with the emergency service providers and Essex County Council and Southend Borough Council. The SERP partnership continues to provide benefits for the borough by funding road safety activities, awareness campaigns and training for residents, funded by speed enforcement notifications. The Council has entered into a new MoU with the partnership, increasing our commitment to safer roads in Essex for up to ten years. This year, the MoU includes a commitment towards eliminating all road deaths and serious injury within the Borough by 2040, through a programme of Safer Systems approach.

6.5 The sole function of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP) is to deliver Road Safety Services across its area in order to meet the casualty reduction targets set for 2020 and the longer-term aspiration of Vision Zero. The SERP Road Safety Delivery Plan (RSDP), is produced on an annual basis and details the individual activities that will be undertaken to deliver the strategy in line with the Safe System approach of Road Safety Management, Safer Roads and Mobility, Safer Vehicles, Safer Road Users, Post-crash response.

7. Highways Development Management and Traffic

7.1 The Highways Development Management Team have again provided a significant level of support for high-profile developments in the Borough. The Team continues to play a key part in pre-application dialogue with the Planning Service, providing confidence and support to the development industry, making Thurrock an attractive place to build homes, to invest and do business.

7.2 The team continue to maintain strong relationships with developers to ensure the Council's Highways Development Management policy direction is adhered to as improvements are made.

7.3 The team continues to be provide key specialist advice for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and their related Development Consent Orders (DCO).

8. Parking Enforcement

8.1 The team have worked throughout the pandemic to ensure the borough's roads are safe, accessible and clear from obstruction including implementing targeted concessions for key workers operating across the borough. The operational posture of the service balanced government guidelines and encouragement of visitors to our Town Centres to boost revenue to our businesses.

8.2 The service deploys full-time Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) to patrol the borough, to enforce parking restrictions and issue penalty charge notices where parking contraventions are deemed to have occurred. The team patrol all areas of the borough to promote and encourage compliance, updating and amending enforcement patrols based on varying priorities and requests. In addition to 10 full-time CEOs and 2 agency CEOs, the parking team was granted approval to employ 4 additional CEOs to facilitate the introduction of a dedicated night team to proactively patrol the borough and enforce the night time economy and 24 hour restrictions.

8.3 Specific issues surrounding unlawful parking of HGVs across the borough which have led to damage being caused to verges and adjacent roads was investigated by the service. The team now deploys twilight shift officers to proactively prevent further damage and parking contravention.. The size and limitations of HGVs bring inherent heightened risks to traffic flow and road user's safety. CEOs will continue with high visibility enforcement patrols in and around areas identified as hot spot locations for illegal and nuisance HGV parking. HGV data and analysis stored on the Parking Processing database is being used to identify additional hot spot locations and peak times for HGV offences. This smart data will be used to deploy Officers to achieve maximum productivity and meet the demands.

8.4 Intensive analysis and survey work has also been carried out across the whole borough this year in relation to HGV compliance, in preparation for the reintroduction of the HGV purge operations. This previously proved a successful way to help recover unpaid PCNs issued to foreign registered vehicles, whilst also reinforcing the requirement of parking compliance.-There are plans to revisit this as a priority for 2021.

8.5 Last year's partnership work between the Parking Enforcement Team and the Environmental Enforcement Officers resulted in a significant reduction in damage to verges caused by HGVs. That collaboration has ensured any evidence identifying continued unlawful activity is supplied to the Environmental Enforcement Team to process and issue Community Protection Warnings. If offenders persist in committing offences this evidence is fundamental in progressing cases through to Community Protection Notice

and Fixed Penalty Notice which then becomes a criminal offence. Partnership working has also extended to other areas highlighted as having ongoing issues, which may span across both service areas, such as Grays Pedestrian Area.

- 8.6 In December 2020 funding was secured for all members of the Enforcement Team and Parking Processing Team through a City and Guilds Training course, or for officers who already have a recognised industry qualification, a refresher training course. This training covered all aspects of enforcement and processing and will enhance the knowledge and skill set of the team and will ultimately ensure a better service delivery across the board.
- 8.7 Our Parking Services Back Office Notice Processing is now being renewed to upgrade the capabilities of the service. This new system will provide better functionality for debt management ensuring improved PCN recovery rates, as well as allow parking permits to be issued virtually, providing the facility for drivers to view PCN evidence online. That approach provides more transparency and accessibility for the public which should reduce challenges, representations and appeals. That programme of investment is also supporting the procurement of new updated hand held computer devices for the CEOs. These devices allow smarter working practices, including ANPR readers which will recognise the online virtual permits providing an even higher standard of primary evidence.
- 8.8 Like many other services across the council supporting the borough-wide response to the pandemic the Parking Team have played an integral part in identifying suitable locations to be offered as testing sites for COVID-19. The team have worked with other Council departments to ensure sites were clear of vehicles, and available for testing to commence. The team have provided officers to install signage and assist with traffic management to ensure operations have run smoothly and efficiently, with this support being ongoing as more sites are introduced. Parking enforcement measures were reviewed and relaxed in residential areas and car parks in support of residents and business owners. Parking enforcement was prioritised to higher level and obstruction type offences with a main focus on high footfall areas, junction protection and vehicles parked in a dangerous or obstructive manner. The Civil Enforcement Officers delivered essential front line patrols keeping a free flow of traffic in support of emergency vehicles and key workers.
- 8.9 In the 2020/21 financial year the parking service produced a surplus of £272,105.84, a 51% decrease compared to £533,864 in 2019/20 due to the pandemic and behaviour changes. The pay and display revenue for on and off street reduced by 71% and free parking was extended by the Council to all NHS and emergency key workers providing support during the COVID-19 pandemic. All income generated is used for the operation of public passenger transport services, highway or traffic improvement projects and maintenance of parking restrictions, as per legislation.

- 8.10 The overall number of PCNs issued for parking contraventions decreased by 17%, with the number of PCNs issued being 16,478 in 2020/21 compared to 19,989 in 2019/20.

9. Support for Growth

- 9.1 With the completion of the port expansion at Tilbury2, there are a number of obligations which the Strategic Transport Team are supporting. Within the Section 106 agreement, the Port committed a sum of money to improve real time passenger information for the Tilbury to Gravesend Ferry service, allowing users to have access to better information when approaching and waiting for the ferry. As a result, new 'Real Time' screens are to be installed at Tilbury Town station on the port side, as well as one screen on the landing stage and another at the new ferry and cruise terminal parking area. This will also enable the Port of Tilbury to provide immediate information to passengers arriving on cruise days, helping to support visitors to the borough. Secondly, officers are supporting the Port's cruise operations by procuring a Real Time Passenger information sign for Cruise passengers to use when making a day or overnight visit at London Tilbury.
- 9.2 Secondly, within the Tilbury2 Active Travel Strategy, the Port of Tilbury has an obligation to deliver wayfinding throughout Tilbury. Officers have supported the Port, ensuring a high quality product is delivered, utilising the expertise gained from other projects and existing procurement contracts already in place. Officers and the Port have worked with community groups to develop a proposal which benefits both residents and businesses. The first stage is to be implemented in early 2021, and completed by April 2021.
- 9.3 As part of the £750,000 accelerated Towns Fund award to Grays Transport Development are delivering two aspects of the works – wayfinding for Grays town centre and refurbishment of the bus station on Crown Road. £45,000 has been allocated for wayfinding and this will primarily be based in the central town area of Grays but will extend as far as Blackshots leisure centre, Chafford Gorges and West Thurrock. A new map of the town, which can be provided via both electronic and paper based forms for residents and visitors is also being considered.
- 9.4 With regards to the Bus Station, the refurbishment will include the replacement of bus shelters, new real time passenger information signs to replace those which no longer function or are no longer supported, remarking of all lines, repainting and repairs of railings and the replacement of the perspex on the cycle and taxi waiting shelters immediately to the east of the bus station. Overall, these works will improve appearance and function of the bus station and further consideration will be given to see if additional stands can be accommodated with further funds. Both the wayfinding and bus station refurbishment are sought to be delivered by the end of March 2021.

10. Passenger Transport

- 10.1 Since the start of the academic year the Passenger Transport Team have continued to procure school transport for children with special educational needs and for those of key workers, transporting 1,172 students to mainstream and SEND schools. Throughout the pandemic they also provided transport for approximately 136 students with vary needs.
- 10.2 Bus Operators nationally have been impacted by the pandemic with patronage reducing by over 90% at the height of the pandemic. Thurrock has continued to support bus operators via the COVID Bus Service Support Grant (CBSSG).
- 10.3 Throughout the National Restrictions with increased collaborative working, Commercial Operators have continually adjusted services to meet the identified needs of key workers and we have continued to support our own local bus service, serving our remote residential areas such as Orsett and Bulphan.
- 10.4 The bus shelter replacement programme commenced in February 2021, with a plan to renew shelters throughout the borough. 19 shelters have been installed from the first phase of 37 so far. The second phase will then result in further 52 being replaced. Running alongside this programme 34 new digital real time information screens will be installed within the shelters, with some large scale screens at Grays Bus Station and other key sites.

11. Fleet Management

- 11.1 99% of the council's fleet has been replaced. The Fleet Team have successfully conducted electric vehicle trials with Meals on Wheels for food delivery and are currently arranging demonstrations for street cleansing. If successful the next step is to replace 5% of the small vehicle fleet with fully electric vans. This will be the council's first steps towards having a zero emission fleet.
- 11.2 All new vehicles meet Euro 6 standards and all vehicles are ULEZ compliant, allowing them to travel into London and the ultra-low emissions zones. All vehicles over 12 tonne are also compliant with the new vision standards that were imposed in February 2021. All vehicles over 7.5 tonne are fitted with state of the art live time CCTV which has had a positive impact when dealing with insurance claims against the authority.
- 11.3 New vehicle tracking systems have been fitted to all 152 of the new vehicles which are now monitored in relation to driver behaviour, environmental impact and effective utilisation of our assets on a weekly basis.
- 11.4 The Council's in-house MOT station carried out 382 MOTs last year. The MOT station has remained open throughout the pandemic and has been available for all key workers who wished to use the service. The testing of

Thurrock licenced taxi's recommenced from the 13 April 2021 with an anticipation of over 300 tests to be conducted in the next year.

- 11.5 Throughout the pandemic, the Fleet Team have remained operational ensuring that other front line services have been able to carry on with their normal service delivery. This has involved over 500 vehicle services and inspections on council vehicles and thus far over 2,500 running repairs / defects whilst monitoring Government updates on statute requirements and vehicle exemptions.
- 11.6 Fleet stores have, since the pandemic, sourced approximately £180,000 of COVID PPE items and issued over 65,000 items to council departments to enable continued service delivery and COVID-19 secure compliance for all our frontline staff.

12. South Essex Active Travel

- 12.1 The Council, working collaboratively with Southend Borough Council and Essex County Council have continued to successfully deliver the South Essex Active Travel Fund. Initially worth £3.3m over three years, the Department for Transport extended the project by a further year and an additional £1.1m to encourage and enable sustainable and active travel trips to work, training and education. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project has been able to utilise existing underspend into a fifth year, and will end late 2021. Thurrock has been able to secure sums greater than proportion of this underspend through supporting walking and cycling.
- 12.2 One area of success which has managed to thrive during periods of lockdown and the COVID-19 crisis has been the cycle hub in Tilbury. Opened in mid-2019, lockdown presented an opportunity for the hub to be open more frequently during the week, and the demand for cycling in March saw sales significantly increase. Cycle donations to the hub also increased, with the staff taking collections from across the South Essex region to upcycle and resell low cost bicycle to the members of the community, enabling supply when new bicycles became unavailable. Thurrock Council has now taken over responsibility for the cycle hub, and has secured additional funding to extend the project until at least March 2022.
- 12.3 With the Access Fund winding down through till late 2021, focus is being directed towards continuing some of the successes of the project. The Forward Motion branding developed as part of the project is available for the Council to utilise to promote transport related themes. This is being trialled in a new communications project with the boroughs school to promote sustainable travel to school.
- 12.4 The challenges of the 2020 have meant that delivery of the project has had to be altered, with all face to face engagement being withdrawn, but the project has sought to utilise digital channels to engage with stakeholders. This has resulted in an underspend, and Officers intend to utilise any available monies

to deliver further wayfinding projects in South Ockendon and Aveley into summer 2021.

13. Capability Fund

- 13.1 Thurrock Council has been allocated a sum of c.£200,000 and these funds will be utilised against the objectives of the Capability Fund. The Transport Development team will utilise the funding to support the development of infrastructure projects to the new standards, promote increased levels of physical activity through walking and cycling for everyday journeys and support access to new and existing employment, education and training through cycling and walking.
- 13.2 Funds will also be used to raise the profile of cycling and walking within Thurrock and to develop our Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan.

14. Wayfinding

- 14.1 The Council has expanded its programme of delivering wayfinding schemes across the borough. Last year, the Council was able to deliver a new scheme in Stanford le Hope funded by the DfT's Access Fund. This year schemes have been delivered in Tilbury in collaboration with the Port of Tilbury, and a scheme in Grays funded by the Accelerated Towns Fund. A further two schemes are set to be delivered in South Ockendon and Aveley in the remainder of the year, funded by underspend from the Access Fund.

15. Travel Plans

- 15.1 Within the past year, Officers have updated the charging schedule to reflect the need to seek funds from developers to ensure approved travel plans continue to be monitored. A monitoring fee will be sought for each year of the life of the plan, ensuring new developments deliver on their commitments within the travel plans. Within these travel plans, the Council is continuing to seek the appropriate measures are provided for developments based on their nature and size, with a heavy focus on car club provision where new dwellings are being delivered to help discourage car ownership. In the next year, Officers will seek to procure a single source car club operator to deliver these planning obligations across the borough. The Council is also exploring further opportunities to work with developments to ensure travel plans are implemented as stated, utilising the expertise within the Council to deliver these commitments, providing additional funds to support the wider transport agenda.

16. Transport Strategy

- 16.1 The team are progressing the Thurrock Transport Strategy and a Vision for Connectivity / Movement that will ensure future growth is supported by transport infrastructure, providing sustainable travel options whilst reducing congestion and improving air quality in the borough. The Transport

Development (TD) Team continue to work with Highways England, encouraging them to progress a business case that will enable greater focus and commitment for various key infrastructure projects through the HE Road Investment Strategy (RIS) gateway process.

- 16.2 Working with the Safer Essex Roads Partnership, the Council has identified its commitment to working towards a reduction in fatal and serious road collisions on the Thurrock and wider south Essex road network.
- 16.3 The TD team have developed a procurement brief for a Strategic Transport Model and are currently testing the market to understand resource and cost implications. A robust transport model will be a vital component in understanding the impact of growth and other pressures on the Thurrock road network.
- 16.4 A suite of documents to assist the Council in determining suitable parking standards across the borough now and in the future were approved by Cabinet. The Parking Policy, Design & Development Standards and Parking Enforcement Policy documents inform how the Council will manage parking demand in the future and how decisions on parking and enforcement arrangements can be taken across Thurrock.
- 16.5 Success stories this year include funding for feasibility and design for the A1013 access scheme as well as funds to deliver improvements to the N13 cycle route in and round Tilbury. Additional funding has been secured to support the delivery of the A1013 scheme in 2021.
- 16.6 The team have successfully launched a consultation which enables local people to have their say and identify, through an interactive map, where they feel improvements can be applied to the walking and cycling network. This has and will continue to be influential as we work towards enhancing the walking and cycling network and developing the LCWIP in line with recently circulated Government Guidance (Local Technical Note LTN1/20 and Gear Change).
- 16.7 A Bus Investment Plan (BIP) is also under development. This will identify where network and service improvements need to be applied in order to ensure buses continue to represent a viable alternative mode of travel. The BIP will inform the production of our longer term Bus Strategy, the improvements that need to be delivered to support growth and the funding that is required from Government to deliver those improvements.
- 16.8 The Council has been awarded a total of £2.4m to deliver the Safer Roads Fund programme on the A126. Funding was formally awarded in March 2021 and the TD team are actively progressing delivery of the SRF programme over the next 3 years.

17. Development Management

- 17.1 I am pleased that my Portfolio has been expanded this year to include Planning. Like my Cabinet colleagues who have had Planning in their portfolio before me, I am enormously proud of our Development Management (DM) service who continue to top the league table nationwide as well as operating commercially to deliver the best for Thurrock. How a Local Planning Authority performs is a key driver in developer deciding where to invest and our ability to maintain high standards puts us in a good position to attract inward investment, something that is even more important in these difficult economic times.
- 17.2 Notwithstanding the difficulties presented by the global pandemic, the DM team have been able to continue to operate largely unaffected, relying on their established agile working practices. This has meant that our businesses and residents have not experienced any loss of service and can continue to have confidence in Thurrock as a place to invest.
- 17.3 Through a robust pre-application offer, applicants are able to work with the Team to 'dry run' their proposals ahead of a formal submission to ensure wherever possible, the scheme is of the highest quality and has the maximum benefit to existing communities. During the pre-application discussions, the Team will draw upon a range of specialists from across the organisation to help shape and influence the scheme, to ensure that the right development takes place in the right place at the right time.
- 17.4 The team has developed strong relationships with the development industry, championed forward thinking and commercial awareness, and created a culture which helps drive investment and growth in the Borough. This has significantly boosted investor confidence and stability in commercial decisions in an area where there are major challenges around the viability of development. It has resulted in an overall uplift in 'place value' through improvements to design and quality delivered through effective developer partnerships, maximising the contributions made from new development.
- 17.5 The DM team has continued its Managed Service arrangement with Brentwood Borough Council, whereby we provide management support to Brentwood's Development Management team. The relationship has continued to be successful, resulting in an improved service at Brentwood (both in terms of quality and performance) and by providing an income stream for Thurrock which protects jobs and services locally.

18. Gritting

- 18.1 Last winter we experienced unprecedented weather conditions weather monitoring commenced in October and the gritters were on standby for action. Last season we completed 55 runs in total, with 21 gritting runs being undertaken in January alone.

18.2 Thurrock now has its very own Weather Station which provides more accurate and localised data. This potentially saved 16 gritting actions from being undertaken last season.

19. Finance

19.1 The table below summarises the budgets and 2019/20 outturn

19.2 Variances are as a consequence of medium term financial strategy growth and savings as well as movement of budget between services. The budgets for Fleet and Logistics and Parking Enforcement are balanced by recharges and revenue respectively.

Service	Budget 19/20 (£000s)	Outturn 19/20 (£000s)	Revised Budget 20/21 (000s)
Fleet and Logistics	(484)	(484)	(373)
Highways Infrastructure	7,638	7,638	7,620
Passenger Transport	1,766	1,766	1,805
Transportation Development	834	834	877
Parking Enforcement	(506)	(506)	(494)
Planning	1,017	1,017	1,063
Total	10,265	10,265	10,498