

26 January 2023

ITEM: 5

Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Portfolio Holder Annual Report for Transport and Public Safety

Report of: Councillor Ben Maney, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Public Safety

This report is Public

Introduction

Public Realm and Resources and Place Delivery have continued to be focus on delivery for the Council over the past 12 months. This report sets out the approach and successes of the Teams from the Fleet Department, through to Enforcement, Highways and Transportation Services.

Active Travel opportunities have been identified and developed and the Transportation Services team continue to encourage sustainable modes of travel as well as public transport opportunities.

The long-term strategic vision for the transport network is being developed through an interim Thurrock Transport Strategy and a range of supporting documents. This work will account for the Council's growth aspirations and will be developed to align with opportunities from our emerging Local Plan, the LTC proposal and the Council's Highways Development Management requirements.

Road Safety continues to be a priority and DfT funding has been utilised, from a number of sources, to ensure incidents on the network are addressed and managed effectively. Road Safety Engineering schemes are complimented by the excellent work undertaken by our Road Safety Team to make our roads safer for everyone.

As the cold weather falls upon us, the winter gritting crews are prepared and ready for action, keeping our strategic roads open for traffic.

The cold and wet weather takes its toll on our carriageway surfaces resulting in an increased number of potholes appearing across our road network, all of which will be inspected and repaired, continuing to meet the targets set within the KPI.

Keeping the borough moving whilst efficiently managing and co-ordinating roadworks remains a priority for the Network Management team as they continue to keep disruption to our residents to a minimum.

1. Network Management

- 1.1 Last fiscal year Network Management Team received over 11,000 applications to work on the Highway Network, granting 6,335, of those applications. 892 Fixed Penalty Notices were 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.

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 42 roads have been attended from resurfacing to large scale patching works and 22 footway reconstruction schemes have been delivered. The team have made good progress already for this year's programme with 70% of the carriageway programme and 72% of the footway programme already having been completed.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 On our structures, 35 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. These inspections have allowed us to identify the need to complete major works of key structures within the Borough such as the Orchard Road footbridge, Fort Road bridge and Stoneness Road bridge.
- 2.4 We continue to implement the Central Management System (CMS) to our street lighting stock which started this fiscal year. The new system will allow us to remotely monitor over 17,000 street lights and allow us to action faults seamlessly without the need for our residents to call in and report faults themselves. The CMS means officers can view all our street lights from any computer and provide a live status on faults, and energy usage, amongst other things.

3. Reactive Maintenance

- 3.1 545km of the highway network requires safety inspections which are completed by our Highways Safety Inspectors. Last fiscal year we carried out 3,087 routine safety inspections and over 2000 ad-hoc inspections derived from customer enquiries via our Highway Report It website, resulting in the identification and repair of over 3,683 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 In addition to the above, a further 2,700 customer enquiries were received and processed via the Highways Report It app for other highway related issues last financial year and our in-house Highways Team continues to be on hand to deal with out of hours emergencies.
- 3.3 The Highways Infrastructure Service has been instrumental in providing assistance and support in managing the impact from the Just Stop Oil Protestors in April and August and again only recently involving an incident on the QEII bridge. The Team engaged with all stakeholders and moved swiftly into action to fill the tunnels that were created and to enable Thurrock traffic to flow again.

4. Transportation Services

- 4.1 The Transportation Services Team continue to deliver a diverse programme of strategic and physical improvements for Thurrock's transport network. The team focus upon two main areas, firstly, the strategic need for improvements to be delivered to support the Council's Local Plan and long-term growth aspirations, and secondly, delivering schemes, measures and infrastructure that tackle the key policy areas and priority issues on the network on day to day and annual basis.
- 4.2 The ITB capital programme was approved in March, setting out how the £979,000 funding allocation from DfT is prioritised and utilised across agreed policy areas of Road Safety Engineering, Safer Routes to Schools, EV Charging and the Area Intervention Programme.

The development of key schemes under the ITB programme has seen the successful installation of Thurrock's third average speed camera system on the network which has proven to be an effective tool in reducing accidents on high category routes. At the other end of the spectrum, the delivery of improved crossing facilities in Tilbury, following extensive engagement with residents under the new policy of Area Intervention Programme has seen significant investment in areas that have long been ignored.

- 4.3 In additional to the annual ITB allocation, the Transportation Services team also continue to successfully gain additional funding and have also focused on progressing areas such as:
 - o A126 Safer Roads Fund – reducing accident severity on the A126
 - o Kerb It – utilising capital bid funds to deliver Kerb It schemes in Aveley, Ockendon, SLH and CSM.

- o A1013 Treetops access – utilising capital bid funding to design and implement enhanced access arrangements to support development of Orsett Heath Academy.
- o N13 cycle route – utilising funds to deliver extended waling and cycling schemes in Tilbury.

4.4 In 2022 the team have continued to develop the Transport Strategy and Vision work to support the Local Plan and the long-term transport aspirations for the borough. A draft version of the Transport Strategy, Vision and baseline work has been presented to lead members and the Local Plan taskforce group and will be submitted to O&S and Cabinet at the turn of the year. Stakeholder engagement and wider consultation will also commence in early 2023.

4.5 Other key highlights to note include:

4.6 Strategic Transport Model

In 2022, the team commissioned a new Strategic Transport Model to support the delivery of the new Local Plan and Transport Strategy. This model will help the council to better understand the transport impacts of new developments and growth in the borough and help target where enhancements are required on the road network. The model will form a supporting tool whereby new development proposals can be tested to determine necessary mitigation measures. It is expected the model will be ready for use in Summer 2023.

4.7 Transport East Strategy

In 2022 the team have continued to work collaboratively with the Transport East STB to develop the TE Strategy document which sets out the aspirations, vision and goals for transport improvements across the Transport East area. The Transportation Services team have played a key role in ensuring that this work has developed and O&S members have been asked to endorse the Transport East Strategy work to date.

4.8 Active Travel Fund (ATF) consultation – Branksome Avenue

Following the award of ATF allocations from central government, the Transportation Services Team worked to identify various Active Travel walking and cycling schemes within the borough. Scheme ideas have been shared with Ward Members and have been taken to consultation in certain locations (including Homesteads and Stanford Le Hope West wards). The team are currently progressing ATF schemes in Stanford Le Hope West and an upgraded road crossing facility is to be provided on the A128 at Orsett Cock to support the existing A1013 spine route.

4.9 ATF consultation SLH West

A six-week consultation was undertaken within Stanford West ward over the spring/summer period. The consultation focussed upon a range of measures which would help to reduce rat running and traffic speeds within the residential side street, supporting the safer movement of cyclists and

pedestrians, as well as the creation of a small number of off-road cycle lanes. Following support for the schemes, these are being further designed for consideration in early 2023.

4.10 ATF scheme – A128 Brentwood Road

Utilising funding from the Active Travel Fund, this scheme is proposed to deliver a safe crossing across A128 Brentwood Road, connecting the cycle route on either side of the road. Feasibility studies are underway now that the A13 widening project is nearing completion

4.11 National Cycle Route 13

The delivery of this project is on track for completion by the end of the financial year and has seen significant investment in Tilbury to provide National Cycle Network 13 through the heart of the borough. This follows on from 4 years of continuous investment in this area through a combination of Council funding, development funding and external bids

4.12 Tilbury Cycle Hub

The Forward Motion Thurrock Cycle Hub is an externally funded facility through DfT funds. Originally delivered through the Access Fund via the South Essex Active Travel Project, it is now funded through DfT grants. The hub provides access to low cost refurbished cycles, as well as providing access to cycle repairs and maintenance for the community in Tilbury.

Thurrock Council took over management of the facility in April 2021. In that time, the hub has increased its revenues by 100% and increased its opening hours to six full days per week, providing support to the local community of Tilbury and beyond on all matters cycling. The hub also offers free safety checks and advice to residents and supporting events led by the council or other community groups to encourage safe cycling. The cycle hub is located on Calcutta Road. It is expected this facility will continue into 23/24 based on grants and revenues.

4.13 A126 Safer Roads Fund programme

Implementation of the A126 Safer Roads Fund has continued in 2022 and progress has been made overall to deliver measures that will reduce accident severity on the A126 route.

4.14 A1013 Treetops progress

This scheme has seen the transportation Services team work collaboratively with the Department for Education to deliver significant enhancement for not only Treetops SEN school but also providing dedicated access to the recently approved Orsett Heath Academy secondary school. The detailed design for this project is nearing finalisation and the projected start date for the highway works is scheduled for March/April 2023 and is projected to be fully open by September 2023.

4.15 East Facing Access Outline Business Case progress

The A13 East Facing Access (EFA) Outline Business Case (OBC) identifies the council's initial preferred scheme option. However, National Highways

have asked for alternative options to be explored which do not have such a direct impact on the Strategic Road Network and do not lead to the delivery of a new slip road arrangement on the A13 between A126 and Stifford. The team are working with National Highways to understand the alternatives that could be brought forward and how this will inform a revised OBC submission to DfT.

4.16 Capital Bids – Kerb-it programme

The team have been successful in gaining additional funding for Kerb-it schemes this year. The programme includes a number of schemes for implementation this year including Plaistow Close, Stanford Le Hope, Love Lane, Aveley, St Michael's Road, Chadwell St Mary and Cruick Avenue, Ockendon.

4.17 Supported Bus Services consultation

A twelve-week consultation was undertaken by the Passenger Transport team (following secondment into Transportation Services this year) to determine if the existing supported bus services offered in Thurrock – the 1, 265 and 374 should be retained. The consultation commenced in July and ended in October. A report on the consultation is to be presented to Cabinet in December to determine any future outcome on the delivery of these three services.

4.18 Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership

The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), has been developed by the team to identify opportunity to make a step-change in connectivity for those who live in, work in and visit Thurrock. A revised BSIP is to be developed in the coming year, to support further opportunities for funding to enhance bus services. The council is also required to deliver an Enhanced Partnership, formalising the existing collaborative partnership between the council and bus operators. It is expected the council will finalise this in early 2023.

4.19 Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Work is underway to develop a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan to provide Thurrock with a strategic long term infrastructure programme for walking and cycling improvements. This work forms a vital part of the Government's strategy to double the number of cycling journeys made and increase walking activity substantially by 2025.

4.20 EV Charging contract and programme

Following the Cabinet agreed Policy on infrastructure improvements and commitment to budget allocation through the ITB, the Transportation Services team secured a 3-year strategic partnership with Connected Kerb to supply and manage the EV charging infrastructure for Thurrock. The Council has submitted a bid to the Government Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) for up to 60% of the installation costs for 78 new charging sockets to be installed across the borough in 10 local centres. If this bid is successful, it will see the Council install these facilities by the end of the year. The team continue to explore opportunities in this area and a second is to be

progressed for submission by the end of the year for further charging facilities to capitalise on the Governments funding opportunities in this area.

5. Road Safety

5.1 The Road Safety team deliver a vital link between educating and enabling local people to use the road network safely. They work closely with local schools and offer a range of informative educational and practical initiatives, including School Crossing Patrols, Cycle Training, Safety Walks etc. Some of the highlights from the Council's road safety programme include:

- Bikeability Cycle Training (including Level 1, 2 & 3, Balance Bike and Learn to Ride) in 34 Schools covering 2,025 learners.
- So far this academic year (Sept 22) the team have 30 primary schools and 3 secondary schools booked in for Pedestrian training.
- 11 schools have already received Pedestrian Training, with 1004 Pupils/Parents trained.
- Twilight Trail events (awareness of being Bright and Being Seen during the winter months) will be held in 18 schools for 540 (approximately) 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 / Chadwell / Denholm / Dilkes / Horndon / Stifford Clays / Thameside / Warren / Woodside. Lansdowne/Arthur Bugler
- 12 School Crossing Patrol (SCP) sites in active service. Two additional sites currently vacant;
- 16 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 delivered at 18 schools. a total of 784 Year 1 pupils have participated in scooter training during Sept 2021 - July 2022.
- 20 adults have received Adult Cycle Training lessons.

5.2 it is worth noting that every school in Thurrock will be offered a form of Road Safety Training for their pupils during the academic year 2022/2023.

6. Highways Development Management and Traffic

6.1 Over the period, the Highways Development Management Team have continued to provide a significant support to the Council's Planning service and to high-profile developments in the Borough, including Thames Enterprise Park and, Orsett Heath Academy.

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

- 6.3 The team continue to review and update policies and standards and have overseen the development and adoption of the Council's parking standards, the first of its type to be adopted for over 20 years. They are also currently reviewing the Council's construction specification, with colleagues in Highways Maintenance and Planning, to ensure that innovative and sustainable highway design is at the forefront of new developments and highway improvements, reducing the maintenance and environmental impacts on the network

7. Freeport Opportunities

- 7.1 The team are exploring opportunities to support the Thames Freeport and provision of initial funding to support active travel and sustainable travel opportunities. The focus of this work is to deliver schemes and measures that will enable local people and Freeport employees to benefit from improved public transport and active travel options.

8. Passenger Transport

- 8.1 The Passenger Transport team was seconded into the Transportation Services team last year to provide greater integration with the strategic work that the TS team undertake.
- 8.2 The PT team continue to assess and review current bus use and suggest that patronage is approx. 80-90 % of pre-pandemic levels Central Government is continuing to financially support commercial operators and Thurrock Council maintains its support for tendered services.
- 8.3 The PT team have continued to work with Commercial Operators who have continually adjusted services serving our remote residential areas such as Orsett, Horndon on the Hill and Bulphan. Following network review meetings with commercial operators, timetables have been amended to provide a more sustainable network in which to deliver sufficient services.
- 8.4 The PT team have progressed the bus shelter replacement programme with a plan to renew shelters throughout the borough. 19 shelters have been installed from the first phase. The second phase will then result in a 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. At present 44 shelters have now been installed. Phase 2 is now underway with installations commencing this month (November 2022).
- 8.5 The team have overseen implementation of 13 new real time information (RTI) screens, including 5 totem displays within Grays Town Centre. The remainder of the Real time information screens will be installed upon completion of the phase 2 shelter installations.

- 8.6 The team continue to provide input and advice on the Tilbury – Gravesend ferry service contract which is due to be extended for a further year. The Contract manager for this service is Kent County Council, and Thurrock act as a partner. No issues of note regarding service delivery are known. Kent County Council may however look to tender the service upon contract expiry.
- 8.7 The PT team have also developed discussions with the landing stage owner (Port of Tilbury) regarding its future use as a ferry passenger boarding/disembarkation point. It is understood that the current agreement between the Port of Tilbury and Thurrock Council is to continue, with potential review to some terms and conditions in the near future.
- 8.8 The team have continued to administer the National Concessionary bus pass scheme to eligible residents on behalf of Central Government. Currently, bus pass issue stands at 21,166, of which 19,295 are older persons, 1,871 are disabled persons, of which 696 are disabled persons with companion element.

9. Wayfinding

- 9.1 The Transportation Services team has expanded its programme of delivering wayfinding schemes across the borough. Wayfinding schemes have been consulted upon and delivered in South Ockendon and Aveley this year, funded by underspend from the Access Fund.

10. Lakeside Cruisers

- 10.1 The Transportation Services team are working with Essex Police and the Council's Community Safety Partnership to find a solution to the racing and cruising issues experienced in and around the Lakeside area.

11. Fleet Management

- 11.1 Following the procurement and receipt of new Waste vehicles, eighteen old vehicles have been sold at auction generating an income back to the council of approximately 700k.
- 11.2 The Council's in-house MOT station has carried out 480 MOTs in the past twelve months, The workshop Team have carried out 600 in house services and over 400 taxi compliance tests and over 3500 vehicle defects/repairs.
- 11.3 New contracts have been tendered and awarded to ensure efficiency and best value is achieved. Contracts include fuel provision, PPE provision and the digitalisation of driving licence checks.

12. Gritting

- 12.1 Last winter we experienced unprecedented weather conditions. Weather monitoring commenced in October and the gritters were on standby for action. Last season we completed 39 runs in total, with 21 gritting runs being undertaken in January alone.
- 12.2 Thurrock has its very own Weather Station which provides more accurate and localised data. This potentially saved 19 gritting actions from being undertaken last season which produced a saving of around £66,000.

13. Parking Enforcement

13.1 Road Traffic Act 1991 (RTA91) - Decriminalised Parking Enforcement

Prior to September 1993, the enforcement of prohibited parking was carried out by police traffic wardens. Permitted parking was enforced under criminal legislation and non-payment pursued through Magistrates Courts. As a result of legislation in the Road Traffic Act 1991 (RTA91), decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) was introduced in Thurrock in 2005

- 13.2 The Parking Enforcement Team continue to provide high visibility, proactive and reactive parking enforcement patrols across the borough in response to parking contraventions. They promote and encourage sensible and legal parking by enforcing in a fair and transparent way in accordance with legislation, Policy, and Procedures.
- 13.3 All Thurrock Civil Enforcement Officers have received training in line with best practice and industry standard, receiving a specialist parking qualification produced by City and Guilds level 2. Following this training, the Parking Team has seen a significant increase in the professionalism and confidence of the front-line enforcement officers and in turn a vast improvement in the quality and number of Penalty Charge Notices issued in connection with variable contraventions.
- 13.4 The Parking Enforcement policy sits in support of and underpins the overarching Transport Strategy. The main objectives are to help maintain the free flow of traffic on our roads and in council-managed car parks to support the safety of all road users; assist the efficient movement of traffic; increase compliance and to maintain access to services and amenities.
- 13.5 Priority is given to, ensuring main traffic routes are clear of obstruction to enable free traffic flow across the borough wide road network. On a rotational basis, Officers continue to support daily patrols across residents parking zones, enabling residents to have ease of access to permit areas for themselves and their visitors. They also provide high visibility, robust enforcement patrols to hot spot school locations to encourage and promote sensible and compliant parking behaviour.

- 13.6 The Parking Team provide Officers who work on a rota basis Mon – Sat across a variable shift pattern during core hours and a resource of Officers who work a Twilight Shift in support of the evening economy in particular HGV nuisance parking. Officers are also flexible and will provide additional ad hoc enforcement out of hours including Sunday in support of, or in response to operational requirements, example: events such as Remembrance Sunday.
- 13.7 The parking service consists of 16 CEOs (Civil Enforcement Officers) who patrol across the whole borough, (10 permanent and 6 agency CEOs).
- 13.8 As a result of a successful business case, the parking team were granted approval to increase the establishment level of CEOs by 10 officers in November 2021. To date, the service has recruited, trained, and deployed 5 new front-line CEOs to post. These officers are employed on a cost neutral basis and their salary costs are offset from revenue received from penalty charge notice income.

Once the parking team have recruited to all posts, they will be working towards delivering a 24/7 parking enforcement service.

- 13.9 On January 1st, 2021, the UK left the EU. There was anticipated risk of increase in HGV (Heavy Goods Vehicles) traffic across the borough, and because of this the team provided 2 dedicated Civil Enforcement Officers throughout 2021 to target HGV vehicles parking outside of core hours. Officers worked through the night until 02.30AM to patrol known HGV hotspot areas and enforce against HGVs (Heavy Goods Vehicles) parked in contravention of restrictions. As a result of this operation which ran up until December 2021, the officers issued **1590** Penalty Charge Notices out of core hours.
- 13.10 The aftereffects of the Covid19 pandemic were still felt by the Parking Team during 2021/2022, which presented operational challenges to the team linked to officer deployment and the inability to deploy officers in the numbers required to effectively enforce, particularly in and around Schools:
- example**, Single deployment in vehicles placed operational pressure on deployment and response times. However, the officers showed resilience and increased foot patrols where required ensuring they continued to support the most vulnerable hot spot locations as a priority.
- 13.11 In the financial year 2021/2022 the team generated a parking surplus of + **£241,909.26**. This surplus was made up of income received from On-street/Off-street Pay & Display parking charges, permit income and penalty charge notice income.

There has been an increase in all revenue streams for the parking enforcement team which shows a move in the right direction towards returning to pre covid revenue levels. With an overall increase on generated income of **81.5%**.

- 13.12 The surplus income from civil parking enforcement is restricted to transport-related issues including the operation of public passenger transport services, highway or traffic improvement projects, and certain types of environmental improvement along with the maintenance of parking restrictions.
- 13.13 Pay and Display revenue alone increase by **73.55%** in 2021/2022. With the overall income generated from 158,327 transactions being **£230,893.10**, compared to 97,971 transactions bringing in **£133,037.70** in 2020/2022.
- 13.14 The overall number of Penalty Charge Notices issued for parking contraventions increased by **49%**, with the number of Penalty Charge Notices issued being **24,605** in 2021/22 compared to **16,478** in 2020/2021.
- 13.15 The parking service continues to support all PCN Notice Processing, Appeal and Representation functions and employs 3 City & Guild qualified Notice Processing and Appeals Officers.
- 13.16 During the year 2021/2022 the Notice Processing Team received a total of **1123** informal representations and **1045** formal representations which were submitted in line with the **Statutory Parking Appeals** process. The Parking Appeals and Notice Processing Officers are also responsible for responding to enquiries and complaints and provide advice and guidance to the public.
- 13.17 In the financial year 2021/2022 a total of **2612** debt registrations were submitted and accepted by the Traffic Enforcement Centre. As a result, £34,764.74 revenue was recovered.
- 13.18 The parking team have been working in partnership with highways in improving lines and signs across the borough to ensure they are up to prescribed standards to ensure fair and consistent enforcement can take place. Civil Enforcement Officers report any defects in lines or signs and refer faults to the Highways team to be scheduled for repairs.
- 13.19 The parking service has invested in new I.T solutions purchasing new ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Reader) handheld computer hardware for all front-line CEOs to assist them in issuing better quality Penalty Charge Notices and further investment in the back-office parking processing system in efforts to deliver a more streamlined back-office process which in turn will deliver a better customer experience.
- 13.20 In March 2022 the Parking Team implemented a new fully integrated Parking Permit solution which not only replaced the antiquated paper permit process but provides a greater scope with modules that underpin all the council's on and off-street enforcement requirements, inclusive of online and virtual permit processing. The benefits of Virtual Permits are detailed below:

- Permits are issued through a customer-facing web-solution, enabling users to virtually apply for, change and surrender permits, 24/7
- Reduces development input on dated system – saving time and money
- Drives efficiency and accuracy of application approval and payment
- Improves customer service and reduces administrative burdens on front office and back-office teams.
- Digital Permits – activated immediately upon approval of application.
- The Mobile Permissions Checker will automatically fetch all relevant permit data when the VRM is scanned by the ANPR function in the CEO handheld
- Visitor parking can be activated in advance and then if the visitor changes their mind these can be cancelled up to midnight the day before.
- Eco – friendly solution
- Automated renewal reminders
- Improves the experience of visitors
- Reduce number of lost and stolen permit.

14. Environmental Enforcement

14.1 The Environmental Team have continued to work proactively and reactively in partnership with internal and external partners to enable us to achieve the following:

- Reduce all types of environmental crime across the borough.
- Act as a visible deterrent to Crime and aspects of ASB across the Borough
- Increase public and business confidence in the local authority and Police
- Provide a high profiled, frontline, proactive and reactive response to all aspects of environmental crime and ASB.
- To promote social responsibility, community cohesion and awareness of the issues around environmental crime.
- To conduct specialist investigations incorporating high level legal, case preparation and case management to pursue those suspected of committing environmental crime within the borough.

This is achieved by using the “**3 E** approach”:

- **Education** - by means of community engagement, business visits, deploying signage and conducting letter drops.
- **Enforcement** - by means of issuing notices, Fixed Penalty Notices and investigation leading to prosecutions.
- **Engineering** - by means of target hardening locations used to commit environmental offences such as working with landowners to clear and secure fly tipped land and the installation of CCTV systems.

14.2 Team Dynamics

The Environmental Enforcement team is comprised of 7 Environmental Enforcement Officers (EEOs), consisting of a day shift team who cover the borough between 0800hrs – 1600hrs and a dedicated out of hours team, who

focus on the night-time economy supporting borough wide Anti-Social Behaviour patrols.

Officers are fully trained and CSAS (Community Safety Accreditation Scheme) accredited, enabling the team to utilise a wide range of devolved powers from Essex Police, which includes the seizure / confiscation of alcohol and powers to require the names and addresses in respect of those committing Anti-Social Behaviour, making them even more effective in tackling ASB. The accreditation enables officers to access the Police National Computer, increasing investigative efficiency in relation to the enforcement of environmental crime.

14.3 Summary of Enforcement Powers and Operations

The team continue to utilise all their enforcement delegated powers and have consistently issued relevant enforcement notices and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) linked to environmental crime and some aspects of Anti-Social Behaviour related offences. Officers continue to conduct inspections of business premises to determine compliance with waste duty of care. They have searched and seized vehicles for environmental offences and issued notices such as Community Protection Warnings (CPW) and Community protection Notices (CPN) to tackle some aspects of Anti-Social Behaviour.

In addition, Officers have facilitated the removal of abandoned vehicles and untaxed vehicles.

Enforcement Operations include:

The team have continued to work in partnership with internal and external partners in efforts to deliver robust enforcement linked to Environmental Crime and ASB. This includes both leading and supporting co-ordinated operations including:

- **Operation Agnes** - Working in close partnership with Essex Police to stop, search and deal with users of vehicles suspected of committing environmental offences such as fly tipping and unlicensed waste carriers.
- **Operation Abbey** - Targeting fly posting and fly stickering of shop fronts in Grays High Street.
- **Operation Abercrombie** - Targeting and reducing graffiti offences, by compiling a database of graffiti tags to evidence offences and identify offenders.
- **Operation Cue** – Supporting Essex Police operation Caesar by targeting garages being used to store stolen vehicles or vehicles concerned in Anti-Social Behaviour.

- **Operation Cape Jarvis** – Working closely with Essex farmers and Essex Police Rural Engagement Team to tackle fly tipping on rural land in the West Tilbury area.
- **Operation Croydon** - Tackling anti-social parking of moped users in Grays Town Centre.
- **Operation Canberra** – Targeting HGV nuisance and ASB parking in Manor Way (SLH)
- **Operation Collie** – Conducting community clearance of un-adopted alleyways in Grays Town Centre to reduce the opportunity of anti-social gatherings and improving the neighbourhood environment.
- **Operation Irish Lions** – Proactive enforcement of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) addressing the issue of car cruising and street racing in West Thurrock.
- **Operation Capel** - Joint patrols with the Cleansing Team targeting early morning fly tip hot spots.
- **Operation Cobram** - Patrols with Parking Enforcement and police targeting the issue of anti-social parking and vehicle idling around schools across the Borough.
- **LAG** – The dedicated night team provide a high visibility patrol resource to ASB hot spot areas identified through the local action group meetings, in support of Community Safety Partnership (**CSP**).

14.4 **Operational Highlights**

Operation Canberra

Manor Way (SLH) is a known hotspot location for HGV parking, but this area has not been decriminalised therefore the Parking Team are restricted from using their Civil Enforcement powers at this location. The lack of ability to issue parking PCNs on Manor Way make it an inviting place and hot spot for HGV parking and alternative enforcement solutions were required and explored.

Thurrock Councils Environmental Enforcement Team in partnership with Parking looked at innovative enforcement solutions that would achieve long term sustainable solutions to the HGV nuisance parking issues in Manor way.

The combined activity by the two teams supports the council's operation Canberra, a joint enforcement initiative which successfully gathered vital evidence in support of criminal enforcement action under section 43 of the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Operation Canberra started in February 2021 and continues to receive enforcement resource to date.

Offenders are issued with a **Community Protection Warning (CPW)** notice before they are issued with a formal **Community Protection Notice (CPN)**. Failure to comply with the requirements of the CPN result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued

Operation Canberra Results - February 2021 – April 22

- Total Community Protection Warnings (CPW) issued = **122**
- Total Community Protection Notices (CPN) issued = **59**
- Total Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued linked to breach of CPN = **183**

<i>Value of FPNs</i>	£18,300
<i>Amount Paid</i>	£16,836
<i>Payment rate</i>	92%

- **Operation Abbey** – All shop fronts on Grays High Street were cleared and businesses educated on how to clear, and report fly stickering incidents. This led to the identification of subsequent offenders and issuance of 18 Fixed Penalty Notices.
- **Operation Agnes** – 17 Fixed Penalty Notices issued for no Waste Carrier Licence, 20 Fixed Penalty Notices for no Waste Transfer note and 1 arrest for possession of a bladed article and possession of a controlled substance.
- **Operation Irish Lions** – 47 Fixed Penalty Notices issued for car cruising related activity.
- **Operation Cape Jarvis** – 49 Fixed Penalty Notices issued for Environmental Offences and 5 vehicles seized. The team worked in very close partnership with the private landowner who has now effectively target hardened the land in question to prevent further fly tipping.
- **Operation Collie** – 3 alleyways cleared of waste, including removal of 17 tonnes of waste from 1 alleyway.
- **Operation Croydon** – 40 mopeds moved on and warned in relation to nuisance parking on the High Street.
- **Idling** – Education delivered through our comms department. Officers are working with partners including schools to promote an anti-engine idling campaign for improved air quality around schools. Officers are conducting patrols to ensure compliance

- **Safer Streets Project**

The Grays Town Community Engagement Officers provided a dedicated uniformed presence promoting community engagement and acting as a deterrent against Crime and ASB. They delivered excellent results, improving both internal and external partner relationships and seeking to deliver long term sustainable solutions. They worked in close partnership with business owners and are the eyes and ears gathering valuable Intel and information that is shared with Police Partners, resulting in increased arrests. They are both proactive and reactive and also seek to provide long term support for those that face repeated enforcement action

The below table details the returns the Community Engagement Officers have achieved against their performance measures between 01/08/21 to 30/03/22

Performance Measure	Total
Members Enquiries	2
Service Requests	19
Stage 1 / Stage 2 Complaints	0
Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's)	34
Notices	8
Site visits	2715
KPI (1) Business engagement visits	2575
KPI (2) High Vis patrol in hours	704.75
KPI (3) Intel reports submitted	348
KPI (4) Referrals for support	551
KPI (5) CCTV interactions	216
KPI (6) Community Surgeries	8
KPI (7) Community Operations	6

14.5 Enforcement Outcomes

The below is a breakdown of the Enforcement team outcomes in relation to environmental and ASB related offences between 1st April 2021 and 30th March 2022:

Community Protection Warnings Issued	127
Community Protection Notices Issued	59
FPN for Fly tipping	211
FPN for littering	227
FPN for breach of CPN	199
FPN for breach of PSPO	55
FPN for Fly Posting	141
FPN for failing to have Waste Carriers Licence	18

FPN Failing to comply with Waste receptacle notice	15
FPN failing to produce waste transfer notes	67
FPN for Abandoned vehicles	30
Total FPNs Issued	963
FPNs issued by the Council's contractors (Kingdom Environmental Services). In the main these notices were issued for littering offences; however, they also include failing to comply with a PSPO and Fly tipping:	3695
Grand Total FPNs Issued	4658
Cases progressed to prosecution files for Environmental Offences:	495
Untaxed Vehicles Removed	765
Abandoned Vehicles Removed	22

14.6 Encampments

The borough – wide interim injunction remains in place on specific land across the borough against unauthorised encampments. The Council have applied to the High Court for a full injunction and are awaiting the outcome. This will enable action to be taken immediately in partnership with the Council, Police and Essex Countywide Travellers Unit in line with the agreed signed protocol.

There has been a noticeable and significant decrease in traveller incursions across the borough since the implementation of the injunction.

15. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

- 15.1 I am pleased that my portfolio has now expanded to include anti-social behaviour which is responded to by housing officers, environment teams and through the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) the Council have worked closely with Essex Police to address incidents of ASB across Borough.
- 15.2 Police reports for 1/4/2021 to 31/03/2022 compared to 2020/21 continue to see a downward trajectory of ASB with 3,233 reported incidents, a decrease of 48.9% however this is caveated with the fact that it is largely due to being compared against data which included COVID breaches. In the Public Perception Survey Q4 2021/22 50% of the public surveyed in Thurrock said that Essex police are dealing with crime and ASB, this was a 3% reduction on the previous year.
- 15.3 Key activity by Council teams across the year to address ASB included;
- The top 5 areas for off road motorbike nuisance were identified and plans developed to target harden.

- An interim injunction was obtained to prevent unauthorised encampments.
- The Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in West Thurrock was renewed in respect of car cruising activity.
- Training sessions were delivered to all partners on Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) and 179 HMO licenses granted under Mandatory and Additional HMO Licensing, encouraging residents to report complaints about poor housing conditions, noise, rubbish, overgrown gardens, rodents, and pests.
- Street meets were held in Op Caesar (response to motorbike nuisance) hot spots, Tilbury, and Ockendon due to high reports of ASB.

- 15.4 The Safer Streets initiative launched in Grays in August with £432k of additional Government funding. This delivered on:
- 2 community engagement officers working with the business in the High Street they have tackled the daytime street drinking, issued 34 Fixed Protection Notices (FPN's) conducted 2,575 business engagements, provided 705 hours of High Vis Patrols.
 - Installation of 14 new CCTV cameras and linked to the businesses via shop safe radios.
 - improved street lighting in 6 areas.
 - 55 solar lights implemented to improve feelings of safety.
 - 12 events and surgeries were hosted in the High Street.

- 15.5 We continue to fund an additional Essex Police Officers, deployed as part of the Town Centre Team (TCT) within Community Policing in Thurrock to provide increased visible policing and their priority is to tackle ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) in our busiest areas, protect the vulnerable, and tackle crimes against businesses.

16. Public Protection

- 16.1 The Environmental Protection Team continue to provide three officers to shared service provision at Brentwood and Uttlesford Councils, bringing income to the department. The out of hours noise team continue to provide weekend night-time enforcement enabling residents to make complaints and receive service for the abatement of potential nuisances. Numerous noise abatement notices have been served and two new noise nuisance prosecution files will be heard in court within the next 6 months.

Environmental Protection Team statutory duties:

- 16.2 LA Pollution Prevention Control – The team continue to inspect, and risk assess seventy industrial prescribed processes collecting income from this work via annual subsistence fee charges.
- 16.3 Pollution Control – successfully appointed a new acoustics EHO following a retirement. This enables the team to provide a high level of expertise and complex scientific technical knowledge to Planning and Licensing

consultations. Particularly important to ensure major development and constructions works in the borough are effectively controlled / conditioned;

- 16.4 Air Quality Management – After numerous attempts at recruitment and job re-evaluation a new AQ Officer was appointed into this hard to recruit to position. The Council's Annual Status Report has been approved by DEFRA and a borough wide AQ modelling exercise was commissioned which is due for completion in late 2023. The results of which will focus work on the Action Plan and enable revocation / declaration of Air Quality Management areas.
- 16.5 Contaminated Land – enquiries and requests for information are now back to 2018 levels and very busy, as development and house sales continue across the borough.
- 16.6 Nuisance – complaints continue to rise but are effectively dealt with by designated EP ward area officers. Complainant expectations and lower tolerance levels has been discussed as an area of concern at various professional officer groups. Seeing a larger number of formal complaints being made and unreasonable expectations placed on officers which requires a great deal of time and management.
- 16.7 Public Health – ward area officers are dealing with a number of properties using powers under The Prevention of Damage by Pests Act and properties in a Filthy and / or Verminous state. A prosecution file is being submitted to legal to deal with a very challenging residential address giving rise to odour, vermin and other public health concerns that affect neighbouring properties.
- 16.8 High Hedges – this complex work increases as the team investigate complaints across Thurrock and on behalf of Brentwood Council which brings in additional income to the department. Cases are complex and very time onerous and often require interventions over several years to check annual compliance working with the Planning Inspectorate.
- 16.9 Nuisance / Public Health Mobile cameras – 30 cameras are deployed around the borough collecting evidence to assist officer investigations. Vandalism and tampering issues are managed appropriately with increasing security measures and patrols made.
- 16.10 Drones – two team remote pilots continue to work closely with the CAA, maintaining competence and training. The pilots have submitted further evidence and changes to Thurrock EP Drone Services Operational Authorisation to allow this work to continue. The pilots routinely fly over hard to reach / dangerous sites for Thurrock Planning Enforcement and under contracts in place with Epping Forest, Basildon and Brentwood Councils. This work enables officers to collect aerial imagery for evidence gathering in support of legal proceedings.

17. Trading Standards Team

- 17.1 Trading Standards cover a wide remit in terms of consumer protection and have statutory duties from over 200 pieces of legislation ranging from animal health to food standards, product safety to scams and frauds to underage sales. With this in mind officers are dynamic and hold specialised qualifications in order to be able to deliver across the full spectrum. The team also operates on an intelligence led basis to ensure they are tackling current issues. Key highlights are;
- 17.2 Ports work – Trading Standards act as the border authority for consumer goods in terms of ensuring only safe items are allowed to enter the UK. They operate with similar powers to Border Force. The team continue to cover all four ports in the borough – London Gateway, Tilbury, Tilbury 2 and Purfleet, as well as their work at the ETSF sites. In addition to this the team are also covering the UPS site as they have changed their internal operations which means the volume of packages being processed has increased significantly. This additional burden has meant that an additional Import Surveillance Officer is being recruited in an attempt to keep up with the demand. Year to date the team have achieved the following in their border function; Removed 18,690 unsafe products from the supply chain, Removed 5.67 million non-compliant products from the supply chain. Both of these figures mean a total saving to the economy of over £188.3 million.
- 17.3 Animal health – The UK is currently subject to a nationwide housing order for farmed poultry and birds. The team (as other Trading Standards departments) are on notice from APHA and Defra for any local outbreaks. All poultry holdings are being updated regularly and have been offered support to ensure their compliance with the order. There is positive engagement from the industry. Should an outbreak occur in Thurrock then the Notifiable Disease plan will be activated.
- 17.4 Vape shops – Vaping is a popular trend amongst under 18's and causes concerns for schools and parents in the borough. To purchase a nicotine containing vape individuals must be over 18. Trading Standards are working with Public Health colleagues, schools and retailers to tackle wider concerns with these products and ensure that children do not gain access to these products. An underage operation was carried out in the borough where 2 out of 7 premises sold to a 16 year old volunteer. The investigations continue.
- 17.5 Rogue traders – There are a number of ongoing investigations into rogue traders where they have taken considerable amount of money from residents for very little work. In some cases, they have left the property in a poor state of repair much to the distress of the residents and one resident lost around £80k of his life savings. In these instances, Trading Standards are trained to take vulnerable witness statements and provide support to the residents. Expert surveyors are often called in to assess the damage whilst the team use forensic data from banks and mobile phones in order to track down the perpetrators.

17.6 Cost of living – Trading Standards have undertaken inspections throughout the borough at petrol stations to ensure the accuracy of the pumps. With petrol prices having been at an all-time high it seemed timely to ensure consumers were getting what they paid for. Over 308 pumps were tested and all but 13 were outside of their permitted allowance.

18. Licensing Team

18.1 The Licensing Team continues to be busy particularly around the recovery of licensed establishments post COVID closures and restrictions, with many businesses reopening or changing their business model to reflect the difference in customer habits.

18.2 Both the renewed Licensing Act Policy and renewed Gambling Policy have both progressed through the Licensing Committee and then through full Council, which are now republished, along a new Taxi Licensing Policy that came into effect in Oct 2022. The new taxi policy has incorporated new National Guidance, which is intended to bring standards across the country to the same minimum standard.

18.3 The Licensing Sub-committee has been extremely busy with already this year three fast track reviews of premises, brought by Essex Police because of either serious crime or disorder associated with each premises. Aswell as several taxi applications being considered around the suitability of licence holders.

18.4 The team are continuing to deliver a shared Licensing Management service of the licensing Service at Brentwood Council and have also in the last few months been undertaking animal inspections across two other Essex Authorities, due to the team's expertise's and required qualifications in this area.

19. Health & Safety Team

19.1 MST/IPL/Skin Piercing

We undertake a full range of statutory inspections. MST (Massage Special Treatments), IPL (Intense Pulsed Light (Lasers)) Skin Piercing (Tattooing, Ear Piercing, Body Piercings) These inspections are driven by applications, inspection, re-inspection and complaint / compliance visits.

19.2 Accident Investigations (RIDDOR)

Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) we will investigate accidents and injuries to members of the public, visitors and staff in workplaces. The team continue to inspect and assess business activities in the Thurrock area collating information from such visits into the annual LAE 1 return from the HSE (Health & Safety Executive) this data helps to identify countywide areas of non-compliance and

helps to target visits as part of our Essex wide Health & Safety Group, representing Thurrock.

19.3 Prosecutions

Where necessary we will take enforcement action against businesses for non-compliance. We are currently investigation three fatalities, one of which is likely to result in formal action being taken. We will also have to attend Coroners Court for all three fatalities regardless of whether formal action is being taken or not. We also have an ongoing investigation of the carbon monoxide poisoning of 9 members of staff in a Thurrock business.

19.4 Corporate Health & Safety

We are the councils Corporate Health & Safety Advisors. We investigate accidents where necessary, report to the Corporate Health & Safety Board. We look at accident/incident data, corporate health & safety policies and procedures and advise managers on compliance issues / queries.

19.5 General

Other areas we investigate and/or give advice and guidance include, asbestos, legionella, manual handling, lone working, risk assessment, comment on event management plans at the SAG (Safety Advisory Group), working at height, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) and lifting equipment. There are other areas in addition to this list, but these are the main ones where we are frequently asked to help.

We are authorised officers in our own right and fulfil our statutory duties under the Health & Safety at Work (Etc.) Act 1974 and associated Legislation, Codes of Practice and Guidance.

We also have shared services with Brentwood council for which we generate income for Thurrock Council.

20. Food Safety Team

20.1 The Food Team undertake a range of duties to make food manufactured, stored, transported, and sold in Thurrock as safe as possible. We produce export health certificates to enable local businesses to export their goods outside the UK, deal with infectious disease control functions and have been key in providing a team of Environmental Health Officers throughout the pandemic and onwards through the recovery phase. We continue to operate shared management of the food safety service at Brentwood Council which generates income and are working on further digitisation of food inspections. Our key highlights include;

20.2 Food Standards Recovery Plan – Across the UK, during the pandemic most environmental health officers were moved to deal with covid controls, whether it be advice and enforcement or as a support for the wider test and trace system. Consequently, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) recognised that

routine food inspections would be significantly impacted and introduced a risk-based framework for restarting the inspection system in line with the Food Law Code of Practice. It details expectations for inspection of new and high risk/non-compliant establishments to ensure that consumers are protected. This plan has key inspection targets to be achieved over several years, to get the inspection programme back on track. We prioritised our existing and new inspections and have provided a wide range of advice to businesses and to date, we have met the targets set by the FSA. We are also expected to meet our next milestone in the plan at the end of December 2022 which is a significant achievement.

- 20.3 Food sampling – we have restarted our food sampling programme and concentrated on known high-risk foods, local manufacturers, together with taking part in regional and national surveys relevant to Thurrock. This has proved to be an efficient and effective method to identify food safety risks in food prior to complaints or notifications of illness. The businesses are advised on the probable cause and re-sampling is undertaken to confirm that action taken has been sufficient to remedy the problem. Enforcement is undertaken if necessary.
- 20.4 Infectious disease control – the food safety team must statutorily receive information on notifiable diseases. Investigation is carried out by environmental health officers with extensive experience in infection control in close liaison with the UK Health Security Agency. Investigations have ranged from campylobacter our most common notification, to other pathogens such as e.Coli O157. We investigate individual cases or outbreaks of food or water borne illness to find the cause and to stop it spreading. Numbers of these notifications have steadily increased since the pandemic.
- 20.5 Enforcement – While we take a graduated approach to enforcement, it has been necessary to undertake a range of enforcement to secure compliance and ensure the protection of public health. The team have needed to serve several Hygiene Improvement notices, have needed to intervene, and dispose of unsafe food, together with successfully prosecuting a business for a range of serious food hygiene offenses over a prolonged period.
- 20.6 New online food hygiene training courses – an exciting development to generate income is the development of several online food hygiene training courses. Demand for face-to-face courses has fallen due to the cost to business of releasing staff for the day. Our new online courses allow students to undertake modules at their convenience until the whole course is completed. We have worked with one of the leading suppliers of online content to provide high quality content that businesses and residents of Thurrock will have access to, so they can meet all their food training needs.

21. Counter Fraud & Investigation

- 21.1 The counter fraud & investigation team supports the Chief Finance Officer in discharging his statutory duty to prevent and detect fraud committed against the council's finances.
- 21.2 Since the service was formed it has been successful in protecting us from fraud across our services, including housing fraud, and fraud in our grants and council tax schemes, recovering over £15m.
- 21.3 The National Investigation Service, which supports the wider public sector in serious fraud issues remains hosted at Thurrock Council, although ringfenced from day-to-day activity of localised counter fraud matters, the service allows for developed techniques and skill sets to be utilised by the counter fraud function at the council to its benefit.
- 21.4 The Counter Fraud team is extremely productive in managing the risk from fraud in the council. This year the counter Fraud function not only paid for itself but also allowed for a surplus of over £300,000. The counter fraud function also detected over £2.3m in fraud last year, which would have not been identified had it not been for the team's work.

Return on Investment

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of reports of Fraud	324	576	349	302	317
Sanctions	100	100	80	20	20
Detected Fraud Value	£5,138,836	£5,497,805	£3,578,285	£2,298,200	£2,317,686
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Detected Fraud	£1,179,987	£3,426,474	£3,578,285	£2,287,500	£2,317,686
Service Budget	£939,313	£945,876	£1,144,949	£1,360,983	£1,570,587
Income	£889,097	£941,155	£205,334	£198,755	£1,900,318

22. Finance

- 22.1 The data in the table below is 22/23 Q1 finance data.

Service	Budget (£000)	Forecast (£000)	Variance (£000)
Highways Infrastructure	7,964	8,411	447
Passenger Transport	1,710	1,710	0
Transportation Development	2,665	2,656	(8)
Public Protection	2,057	1,963	(94)

Fraud & Enforcement	(940)	(1,585)	(645)
Community Safety Partnership	18,000	18,000	0
Total	13,456	13,155	(300)