

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
PLAN 2010-13
FINAL DRAFT**

19 August 2010

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FOREWORD

(Co-written and signed by Lead Members and Leader of the Council/Chair of the Local Strategic Partnership)

Photos of Cllr Hale, Cllr Curtis & Cllr Kent

Our Sustainable Community Strategy states:

“We want Thurrock to be at the dynamic heart of the Thames Gateway, a place of ambition, enterprise and opportunity, where communities and businesses flourish and the quality of life for local people is continually improving.”

This is a powerful vision, fully embraced by Thurrock’s Children’s Partnership and is at the heart of this three year strategy - the Children and Young People’s Plan. The plan outlines the Partnership Board’s priorities for children and young people based on an analysis of their needs and what we have learned through consultation and involvement with children, young people, their parents, carers and professionals.

The complete Plan (a suite of electronic documents) is available on the Shaping Thurrock website of Thurrock Council. The suite includes needs assessments, consultations, improvement targets, action plans and annual reviews of implementation and impact, together with linked strategy documents belonging to the partners in the Partnership Board. The action plans will be refreshed annually and our targets will be reviewed in the light of our progress. Every partner, statutory, voluntary or private, will base their planning on the priorities set out here. In this way, everything anyone does, with and for children and young people in Thurrock, will contribute to achieving our ambitions for them.

The litmus test for the plan will be the number of good schools in Thurrock in 2013. Our intention is that every school will be good or outstanding. We also intend that every child who needs protection is protected.

On behalf of the Thurrock Local Strategic Partnership, we commend our Children and Young People’s Plan to you.

“...let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me...”

- Louis MacNeice

We treasure our children. However, the world we have created for them is complex and atomised, and they are inheriting serious dilemmas. Our children will build the future; to do this they will need courage, integrity and wisdom.

The task of life is to become fully human in relationship. We need to use our resourcefulness to continually grow communities of integrity that will hold our children while they construct the future for themselves and their children. We consider this to be our moral purpose.

For children to become fully human in relationship they need, before anything else, responsible and authoritative parenting. This plan endorses the central importance of parents. We are afforded an opportunity now to re-negotiate the relationship between the state and the individual and in particular the relationship between the state and the parent. Public services cannot replace parents or communities; attempting to do so can inadvertently lead to a relinquishment of personal agency and efficacy. Our strategy is intended to realise the untapped reservoir of capacity in parents, children and young people in our community. We intend that the

Children's Partnership Board, led by the Local Authority, will be an enabler of personal and community agency.

In Thurrock we want a good school for every child. Schools will have more independence and more opportunities to innovate and to share good practice between schools. The Children's Partnership Board will forge a new relationship with schools. Schools are responsible for standards, resilience and well-being. The Partnership Board is responsible for ensuring the community of schools works collaboratively to serve all children in this borough. The Partnership Board will be strongly focused on vulnerable children and social justice indicators, holding schools firmly to account on these matters.

Strong communities flourish when there is minimal disparity in the life chances of groups in the community. For some children the disparity is extreme. Children whose lives are unhappy and those who are in trouble are a priority and in Thurrock we will always intervene to protect children who need it.

In 2012 the Olympics will be staged on our doorstep. We will have a “once in a lifetime” opportunity to be part of a global event that is about striving for perfection to compete with the best in the world. We will harness the desire to be the best in the world and the drive and ambition needed to realise the desire.

We know that in the aftermath of an unprecedented economic crisis, we face some difficult choices. The Thurrock Children's Partnership Board will focus frontline services, targeting interventions to prevent child abuse and maximising the likelihood of vulnerable children being successful in school. We will review thresholds to ensure that core child protection and children in care services are never less than good, and that interventions are commensurate with risk and need. Children's centres will be fully aligned with the primary sector and we will capitalise on the richness and diversity of the third and voluntary sectors to provide services. The Local Authority will be principally a commissioner and an enabler, providing services itself only where there is no other option.

Our Children and Young Peoples Plan rests upon four pillars that will strengthen personal and community agency for our children, now and into the future.

- Excellent schools, colleges, child care, and services
- Everyone succeeding
- Protection when needed
- Lean and fit for the future

The architecture of the pillars shows what we intend to do. Equally important, is how we intend to do things. By a strong and committed approach to partnerships across the public sector between statutory, community and voluntary sector organisations, between commissioners and providers and, most importantly, between schools, colleges and services and the communities they serve.

The Thurrock Children's Partnership Board is committed to three core values: courage, integrity and wisdom. We intend to hold to account ourselves and each other against these values in how we work together to achieve our ambitions for our children, and our community.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THURROCK

➤ **Population –**

Thurrock is designated a priority growth area within the Thames Gateway. Thurrock's population is just over 152,000 and increasing faster than nationally. It is expected to grow by nearly another 40,000 over the next 20 years.

The age profile is younger than the national picture and a fifth (20%) are under 15 years old compared with 18% nationally and regionally. There are 39,000 children aged 0-19.

➤ **Schools, colleges and services –**

Thurrock has 15 children's centres, 43 primary schools, 10 secondary schools of which two are academies, two special schools, a pupil support service, a sixth form college and a further education college.

We have an ambitious agenda for school improvement. We have amalgamated a number of infant and junior schools, remodelled several primary schools and extensively re-developed our special school provision.

The primary schools are strong in their provision for children's personal development and well being, and in their quality of guidance and support.

As well as these strengths, the secondary schools are strong in the quality of their curriculum and their leadership and management. We have two academies, one housed in state of the art accommodation in Tilbury. Both are developing post-16 provision and there is a new

collaborative sixth form open for three schools in the north-east of the borough.

We have an outstanding sixth form college which is the key provider of academic learning opportunities for young people.

Two recent innovations which span learning opportunities post-14 through to higher education are the Thurrock Learning Campus and the Thurrock Learning Shop. The National Creative and Cultural Skills Academy on the Royal Opera House Production Park in Purfleet is due to be completed by 2011.

Between June and November 2009, 63 apprenticeships had been generated.

There are now over 400 learners undertaking work based learning.

➤ **Children and Young People's Attainment –**

Our secondary schools' GCSE results have improved significantly since the first Children and Young People's Plan in 2006 and the 2009 results five or more grades A*-C (the highest ever achieved in Thurrock) were amongst the top seven authorities in the country. Schools know that getting five 'good' GCSEs that include English and Maths is important to young people and their parents. Schools want to be in the top half of schools achieving five good GCSEs.

In 2009, children's results at Key Stage 1 improved but attainment at Key Stage 2 was too low and is a priority for improvement.

Young people's attainment at 19 is too low, as is the number of young people progressing to higher education. We are focusing on a broader curriculum offer and predict a trajectory that sees significant improvements in the achievement of level 2 qualifications at 19.

Improving the attainment of very young children in the foundation stage and the attainment of 11 year olds in the primary schools, will add to the improvement we have already seen in secondary schools.

➤ **Diversity –**

The gender balance of children and young people in Thurrock is in line with the national profile (49% girls, 51% boys)

The ethnicity of Thurrock's residents, especially children, is rapidly becoming more diverse: Asian / Asian British were historically the largest minority, but this is changing.

Data from the annual Schools Census, shows that 22% of children aged between 5 and 16 are now from ethnic groups other than 'White / British'

The largest minority is Black African who make up 8% of the school population. 50% of the school age population in South Chafford is now of Black Minority Ethnicity (BME) compared to 5% in Corringham and Fobbing

The central cluster of schools has the highest percentage (almost 33%) of BME pupils and the northeast the lowest (10%). Thurrock has a large travelling community as well as a large community of settled travellers.

We have limited data on young people's sexual orientation, (partly because they are still working it out) but we would expect to see national prevalence rates of gay and lesbian adults and young people reflected in our population.

In Thurrock we have two outstanding special schools, which are understood to attract families with disabled children to the area. Prevalence data on learning difficulties and disabilities is currently being collated nationally and in the lifetime of the plan we expect to be able to accurately compare Thurrock with other Local Authorities

➤ **Health –**

Thurrock has invested significantly in play. Equipment in schools has been transformed through critical investment. Partnership between the Partnership Board and the community has achieved transformation of parks and open spaces in the borough.

The trend is of improving health but different sections of the community have not benefited equally and substantial health inequalities exist in communities with high unemployment and poor educational attainment.

Take up of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) immunisation is lower than the recommended level. The proportion of low birth weight babies in Thurrock is higher than nationally, however, breastfeeding rates have gone from bottom to top quartile. We will continue to promote breastfeeding as the best start for babies.

Tackling childhood obesity is a national priority and in Thurrock rates of obesity in 5 and 10 year olds are too high. We have strategies to reduce this, and we are beginning to see some improvement.

Our reduction in teenage pregnancy is among the best in the country. We intend, nevertheless, to improve further. Rates of sexually transmitted infections are too high and we intend to accelerate our progress on chlamydia screening for young people

➤ **Housing –**

Housing is good in Thurrock. Through re-generation, 18,500 new homes are to be built by 2021. Rates of homelessness are slightly lower than the regional average. Small numbers are housed in temporary accommodation.

Although improving, there are areas of deprivation and inequality in parts of Tilbury, Grays, Belhus, Chadwell, Ockendon and West Thurrock.

➤ **Employment and income –**

Unemployment has increased in the last two years to 7.3%. Many workers commute to London where levels of pay are higher and jobs more plentiful.

The general skills and qualifications profile of the workforce is poor when compared to both regional and national data.

➤ **Poverty**

Overall, Thurrock is comfortably in the second quartile of authorities in terms of deprivation and has become more affluent over the past five years. This, however, masks

some pockets of significant deprivation. Five (out of 95) Super Output Areas (SOA) are within the 10% most disadvantaged in the country with a further 12 in the most disadvantaged 20% and 7% of Thurrock's population live in these SOAs.

15% of children in primary schools and 14% of young people in secondary schools claim school meals; this is in line with national averages of 16% and 13% respectively.

➤ **Crime –**

Overall crime rates are declining, nevertheless, they remain relatively higher than the national and regional averages. Rates of violent crime are relatively low and decreasing: a substantial proportion associated with alcohol misuse.

Agencies across the Children's Partnership Board are aware of the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people. There is significant local demand for prevention services and to respond to the needs of those who have been exposed to violence.

At 10%, BME young people are not overly represented in the youth justice system. However, BME young people (all Black British/African) are significantly over represented (more than double) in custodial sentences and remands in custody.

Nationally more than one third (36%) of all rapes recorded by the police are committed against children under 16 years of age.

It is estimated that up to 24,000 girls in the UK, under the age of 15 are at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

➤ **Safety –**

Road traffic accidents have decreased; we have achieved the 2010 targets set by the government. Thurrock has engaged in multi-agency activity, using shared information to target road users most at risk, including young drivers and children as pedestrians or cyclists.

➤ **Children tell us that:**

Not enough are eating healthily. In line with national figures only 19% of young people report eating five or more portions of fruit and vegetable a day. Our young people are not taking enough exercise; 24% of young people report never doing anything active during school breaks or lunch and 10% of young people report never doing anything active after school.

While the numbers of young people smoking has fallen significantly there are still 4% of our young people reporting that they smoke regularly more than one cigarette a week (this is in line with national prevalence).

A higher percentage of Thurrock young people (11%) report having tried drugs (nationally 9%). Of these, the majority

had not tried any drugs in the last four weeks but a minority were already regularly using a variety of drugs.

52% of Thurrock young people report having had an alcoholic drink (compared to 42% Nationally) with 6% reporting being drunk more than three times in the last four weeks.

Two thirds of young people felt the information they receive on healthy eating, alcohol, smoking, drugs and staying safe was useful. This was just above the national average. However, significantly fewer young people thought the advice received on sex and relationships, feelings and managing money was satisfactory.

Young people in Thurrock generally worry about the same issues as their peers in other local authority areas. 50% worry about schools and exams, 25% worry about being bullied, and 29% worry about their health. However, there are some things that Thurrock young people worry about more than their peers: these include relationships, sex, the way they look and their families. They are also more worried about the future and what to do after Year 11. Generally the young people of Thurrock feel more anxious about safety than their peers.

In line with the national averages, 48% of Thurrock young people report having been bullied in school, 14% of these report that this is occurring on most days.

58% of young people feel that their schools deal with bullying well (same as national) but some feel that their schools deal badly with it.

Generally the opinions of Thurrock young people about their schools fall broadly in line with the national picture. More Thurrock young people feel that other pupils disrupt their lessons (61% compared with nationally 54%) and fewer of our young people feel they get enough help at school (58%; 63% nationally).

Only 53% of Thurrock's young people feel that they will go to university or higher education, this is low compared to the national average of 62%. However, fewer Thurrock young people in secondary schools now want to get a job at 16 (3% compared to 16% last year), with far more young people aspiring to go to college.

If Thurrock had just 100 children aged 0-19:

- ~ 49 would be girls and 51 would be boys;
- ~ 77 would be white British and 23 would be from ethnic minorities, 8 of these would be Black African;
- ~ In a primary school there would be 58 children: 44 would be white British and 14 would be from ethnic minorities; 6 of these would be Black African, 2 would be white European;
- ~ In a secondary school there would be 40 children: 32 would be white British and 8 would be from ethnic

minorities; 2 of these would be Black African, 1 would be white European;

- ~ 11 would speak English as an additional language;
- ~ 1 child would be in special school and 1 would be attending a pupil referral unit;
- ~ 26 would have a special educational need, 4 of whom would have a statement and most probably for mild learning difficulties; and 1 would have some form of disability;
- ~ 16 would be classified as obese and few, if any, would be happy about it (based on the average obesity rate in Reception and Year 6);
- ~ 34 of the children going to primary school would walk to school, 22 would go by car, the other 2 would go by either school bus or would cycle;
22 of those going to secondary school would walk, 10 would go by car, 5 would go by school bus, 1 by service bus and 2 would cycle;
- ~ In a typical term at primary school, 56 would attend more than 4 days per week; of these 13 would not miss any days at school. But there would be 2 children attending for less than 4 days per week;
- ~ In a typical term at secondary school, 38 children would attend more than 4 days per week; of these 20 would not miss any days at school. But there would be 2 children attending less than 4 days per week;

- ~ 15 of the 58 primary school children would be struggling to read and write fluently by the time they were 11;
- ~ Overall, the 40 children in the secondary school would do better: 32 would leave school with 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE. However, 2 would not go on to any form of education, employment or training at 16;
- ~ Most would be happy at school but 4 would report being bullied at least once a week and 8 pupils would be bullied most days;
- ~ Although the majority would not have experimented with drugs, 9 young people would have tried Class A/B drugs and 5 would have used drugs once or more in the past 4 weeks;
- ~ 83 would never have smoked by age 16 but 3 would already be regular smokers. 25 young people would never have had an alcoholic drink but 11 would have been drunk at least once in the last 4 weeks;
- ~ Most children would grow up in stable, loving households of whom 20 would be living in lone parent families; mostly living with their mother but 2 would be living with their father;
- ~ 21 children would be living in poverty and 15 would be in receipt of free school meals;
- ~ 10 children would be referred to the child protection team and, as a result, 1 child would have either a child protection plan or be looked after;

- ~ 16 young people (10 girls and 6 boys) would have experienced sexual violence or abuse by the age of 16.
- ~ By 18, 3 girls would have been raped.
- ~ Most young people would make a positive contribution to their community. Only 1 would get into enough trouble to be dealt with by the Youth Offending Service; even fewer would have been charged and convicted;
- ~ 68 young people would think Thurrock is a good place to live and 10 would feel it is a poor place to live;
- ~ 15 young people would like to leave school and find work when 16 but 26 would want to study until they are 18 and then work: 46 would hope to go to university.
- ~

A series of high level data maps of Thurrock.

These show how where we will be targeting the needs of children and young people in Thurrock.

DETERMINING OUR PRIORITIES

In deciding upon the priorities for our Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2013, we have taken into account:

- **the legal and policy requirements of local government from central government, for example The Children Act (1989/2004), The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, the emerging policy of the new coalition national government**
- **our Sustainable Community Strategy's priorities:**
 - *To ensure a safe, clean and green environment*
 - *To improve the education and skills of local people*
 - *To encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity*
 - *To provide high quality and accessible public services*
 - *To build pride, respect and responsibility in Thurrock's communities and its residents*
- **the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) prepared annually by our three Directors (Children, Adults and Public Health);**
- **the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Area Assessment and findings from Ofsted inspections;**
- **the 'TellUs4' (Voices) survey we undertook with our young people, Thurrock's 2009 'Place Survey';**
- **the council's housing and private sector housing strategies**
- **the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (VAWAG)**
- **the Sexual Bullying Strategy**
- **the Children and Young People's Plan 2009-10 (Better and Better 2)**
- **the Local Strategic Partnership Economic Development Strategy and;**
- **the accumulated wisdom of the array of professional and community networks in Thurrock.**

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN PRIORITIES FOR 2010-13

Priority One: Excellent childcare, schools, colleges and services

We believe that the realisation of our ambitions for children is rooted in the everyday experience of children and families in children's centres, schools, colleges and so on. We think, for example, that midwives getting it right during pregnancy and after birth, and health visitors' input later make a huge difference to babies and mothers getting off to a good start which makes it much more likely that children and families will succeed later.

We want to be demanding in this regard, expecting and trusting that parents will deal with the 'ups and downs of life' for children. We see schools and groups of schools as the heart of the community for children and families and we intend to build the delivery of local services around school clusters. School leaders will be more than leaders of institutions delivering education; they will lead on standards and develop the well-being and resilience of our children and our communities.

Priority two: Everyone succeeding

Divided communities do not flourish; the success of some cannot be at the cost of others. We think that we have some ground to make up in this area in Thurrock. We know that children who are brought up in poverty do much worse than others. Parental conflict, domestic violence, parental substance misuse or mental ill health are just some examples of the kinds of complications some children face, and that increase the risk of health, educational and long term life chance inequalities. Approximately 20% of the children in Thurrock (about 7,500 children) will face one or more of these complications. We believe that those closest to the child are usually best placed to work with the family to find clever and creative ways to respond positively when there are problems. Existing relationships should only be disrupted where there is no alternative and, wherever possible, support should come to the child where s/he is. The younger the child the more important this is.

We are fortunate to have outstanding schools for disabled children; they have a leading role with parents for disabled children in the borough providing outreach, training and development to schools and services where needs are best met in mainstream settings.

Believing that we can make a difference, and strengthening our resolve to meet the needs of all, will drive our second priority.

Priority three: Protection when needed

Some children and young people experience serious abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual bullying. We estimate that about 10% of the child population (up to 4000 children) experience, or are at serious risk of experiencing, significant harm. Sometimes that harm arises from serious bullying or victimisation, sometimes it is attributable to parental care. We will always work with families to resolve problems but we will not hesitate to intervene, using the powers at our disposal, to ensure the child's right to protection is not compromised by other considerations.

Children in care often have the poorest outcomes in terms of health, education, future life chances and so on. This is, in part, attributable to their experience in care and partly attributable to the adverse experiences they had before coming into care. We have unique responsibilities for children in care: we have to ask the 'good enough for my child?' question and answer it truthfully. Children in trouble with the law are the third group of children and young people whose needs are multi-layered and for whom we have statutory as well as community responsibilities. We will ensure our services for children in care and for those in trouble are always good, but we need to make further progress to achieve this.

Priority four: Lean and fit for the future

In order to achieve our ambitions we have to change the way we work. We intend to strengthen, at all levels, governance, leadership, organisational discipline and transform partnership working. The context within which we work will change dramatically over the lifetime of this plan and we must work together in effective partnerships to build the resilience needed for the more adverse resources climate that we know is coming. Necessity is the mother of invention and we will be clever, creative and resourceful to ensure we discard wasteful measures and preserve those that really make the difference for children.

The four pillars of our plan are developed in the sections that follow and tables after each section chart what we intend to do to achieve our ambitions.

By implementing our Children and Young People's Plan over the next three years, we intend to achieve our ambition for improving the lives and life chances of children and young people. We will be judged by our success in our progress against Ofsted's performance framework.

EXCELLENT CHILD CARE, SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND SERVICES

Thurrock has made good progress in improving the quality of its schools, colleges and services. We have no schools in 'Special Measures'. Ofsted also considers our local colleges to be at least satisfactory or better. Every area of Children's Services is at least satisfactory. Above this baseline, we are pleased to have many examples of good, outstanding and exemplary child care, schools, colleges and services. Our network of children's centres is about to reach completion in communities across the borough. The cluster areas are identifying children's needs and targeting services to meet them.

However, too few primary schools are good or outstanding: this means that children do not get the best start and have to make up ground later. We see poor and patchy Key Stage 2 (KS2) outcomes and below-average Key Stage 4 (KS4) results. Whilst KS4 GCSE results for five or more grades A*-C (not including English and Maths) increased significantly in recent years, our results for five 'good' GCSEs (including English and Maths) remains in the bottom half of schools nationally. Other key stages remain below national levels and, at KS2, significantly below. Attainment at each key stage must rise from the fourth quartile to at least the second quartile when compared to other areas. To reduce the existing inequalities in attainment, we must ensure that Ofsted judges all schools as good or outstanding.

The government has expressed its commitment to increased independence for schools and its encouragement of innovation and "schools supporting schools". Thurrock has good experience of schools capitalising upon opportunities for independence and the government's initiatives are welcomed. The critical issues for the Partnership Board will be fairness and equity for all children. We will hold schools to account against the key social justice indicators.

Education must prepare every child to make a success of their life, developing the broader skills, knowledge and understanding that they will need for the future world and break the link between disadvantage and low achievement. School leaders will focus on higher achievement through strong leadership of an enriched curriculum and effective teaching and learning. All teachers are leaders of learning with a focus on ensuring that they provide a curriculum personalised to meet the needs of every learner. We will build a curriculum that fosters learner's different and developing abilities in all phases of education. This will demand excellent teaching of communication skills, leading to the achievement of high standards of literacy and numeracy. Schools will foster high standards of behaviour and positive attitudes and build capability with information and communication technology (ICT).

The best schools already demonstrate how literacy, numeracy, ICT skills and personal development enable learners to access a broad and balanced curriculum. High standards are best secured when essential knowledge and skills are learned both through direct, high-quality subject teaching and also through this content being applied and used in cross-curricular studies.

The number of young people over 16, in education, employment and training has increased significantly, nevertheless, the proportion doing Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications at 19 and progressing to higher education remains well below average. There are still comparatively few apprenticeship opportunities, and a low proportion of young people who have left the school system are fully engaged in alternative learning and training activities.

We have five outstanding schools: our secondary schools, Grays Convent, The Ockendon and Gable Hall, our special schools, Beacon Hill and Treetops, as is our sixth form college, Palmers. The schools will be eligible to apply immediately for academy status to increase their independence and scope for innovation. The Partnership Board believes they also give Thurrock a very strong foundation for “schools supporting schools”.

Throughout the life of the Children and Young People’s Plan, we will be developing the role of children’s centres, schools and youth centres to put them at the heart of local communities. We plan to integrate health, education and social care services much more closely. Through these integrated delivery networks, we will be able to meet better the needs of a higher proportion of children and young people than we do now. We will fully roll out programmes, and other engagement activities to meet the requirements of young people. An improved 14-19 Entitlement will address the widely different needs of young people for personalised types of learning. This programme will be supported by new infrastructure and facilities. Families will find significant support and learning opportunities locally available to them.

EXCELLENT CHILD CARE, SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND SERVICES

<p>Raising aspirations & promoting engagement, resilience, active learning & economic well-being</p> <p>We will Strengthen school improvement so that all schools in Thurrock are good or outstanding.</p> <p>Increase participation in learning & assuring high quality learning opportunities for all.</p> <p>Promote family learning to support the whole school community.</p> <p>Equip young people with the skills required to take advantage of local economic opportunities.</p>	<p>Personalisation of education, training and services for children, young people and families.</p> <p>We will Commission high quality early years settings & family support.</p> <p>Integrate service delivery to meet the needs of children families & communities.</p> <p>Ensure effective early identification & intervention by universal services, to ensure equal access.</p>	<p>Ensuring sustainable progression routes to higher level qualifications.</p> <p>We will Deliver the 14-19 Entitlement, including diplomas & specialist learning.</p> <p>Expand the delivery of apprenticeships & work-related learning.</p> <p>Develop 21st Century specialist learning facilities.</p>
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EVERYONE SUCCEEDING

Too many children are struggling to read and write fluently at 11 and a number of children make limited educational progress because they are persistently absent from school.

The achievement gap, at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, has increased between children in poorer neighbourhoods and all other children. The gap widened in 2009 at the end of KS 2 and KS4 between children who have free school meals and those who do not, as did the gap between pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those who do not have SEN... Currently most BME groups do better than the indigenous population, with white working class boys doing less well than other groups, at each key stage. Boys achieve lower than girls at each key stage and lower than boys nationally.

There are some groups of children and young people who for a variety of reasons struggle in school and college. The behaviour of these children and young people can become progressively harder to manage if interventions are insufficiently attenuated to the individual need. Clever and sophisticated strategies are needed to ensure that these young people get the same chance as everyone else to fulfil their potential. The management of learning in some schools and colleges is excellent. We want to share the learning so that all can engage positively with the services they use. Personalisation will ensure every single child's right to an education, that matches their need challenges their potential and builds their capacity will be secured. We plan to significantly narrow the gaps in achievement by 2012. We know that inclusion is a critical area where we need to accelerate our progress and the specialist services we provide, for example our Short Stay Schools, are not good enough and must be significantly enhanced. Through our Behaviour and Attendance Partnership, we will improve attendance and reduce the number of permanent exclusions to put Thurrock in the first quartile. We intend to transform our strategy, provision and outcomes

The data in our JSNA reveals the extent of health inequalities in the borough. Breastfeeding has improved remarkably but low birth weight and immunisation rates are all targeted for improvement. The Partnership Board intends to overhaul its childhood obesity strategy as we are not satisfied that we are getting to the nub of healthy eating/healthy living in Thurrock.

The gap between KS2 level 4 (including English and Maths) attainment of children with free school meals (FSM) compared to those who do not have FSM will be reduced to 20 percentage points and lower than that nationally. The gap between the attainment of children with special educational needs (SEN) compared to those who do not will be reduced to 48 percentage points. By then, the performance of boys will have increased at a faster rate than girls and will be in line with that nationally.

The new opportunities afforded to strong school leaders offer huge potential advantage to children and young people in Thurrock; but the future is not without risk. We want to avoid the culture of a competitive market place and create a culture of partnership that builds capacity across the borough and does not create winners and losers as ultimately the losers will be children and young people in the borough and probably the most vulnerable young people. The Partnership Board will review school admissions policy and practice as an urgent priority to ensure fairness and equity for all children and young people as we move into the new organisational arrangements.

EVERYONE SUCCEEDING

<p>Promote the attainment & achievement of children with disadvantaged backgrounds so that all fulfil their potential</p> <p>We will</p> <p>Align teaching & learning through transitions.</p> <p>Improve identification and tracking of under-performing groups through better monitoring & disaggregation of data.</p> <p>Raise attainment of targeted groups by adopting best practice from within & beyond Thurrock.</p> <p>Improve the attainment of under-performing boys, particularly white boys.</p> <p>Reduce gaps in basic literacy & numeracy between most advantaged & disadvantaged pupils by the age of 5.</p>	<p>Promote & support inclusion</p> <p>We will</p> <p>Meet the needs of children & young people with SEN and LDD more effectively.</p> <p>Improve outcomes and life chances of pupils in short stay school provision.</p> <p>Reduce levels of fixed term exclusions.</p>	<p>Reduce & mitigate the impact of child poverty & disadvantage</p> <p>We will</p> <p>Prepare & publish a child poverty needs assessment.</p> <p>Prepare & publish a joint child poverty strategy setting out measures that LSP & Partnership Board partners will take to reduce & mitigate the impact of child poverty.</p> <p>Improve school attendance and tackle persistent absence.</p> <p>Build an integrated approach between Partnership Board partners to remove barriers to learning.</p>
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PROTECTION WHEN NEEDED

The services for the most vulnerable children and young people in Thurrock were almost all inspected more than two years ago. Inspections covered child protection, children in care, services for disabled children, adoption, fostering, private fostering and youth offending. At that time the services were all graded satisfactory. Our most recent unannounced Ofsted inspection of safeguarding services in November 2009 was very pleasing. These inspections are not graded but it is clear from comparing Thurrock's report with those of other authorities that we have done very well.

We don't think we have got our anti-bullying strategy right yet; reducing bullying, in particular sexual bullying is a priority for us. We are fortunate in Thurrock to have a very comprehensive range of services for women and girls experiencing domestic and sexual violence, probably more than any other area in the country, mostly provided within the third sector. We are not satisfied that our systems are sufficiently coherent for us to fully realise the potential capital; for example we know that our social workers are not as confident as they need to be in identifying and responding to sexual abuse. We intend to redress the system deficits.

Parents are responsible for ensuring the safety of children, drawing upon the resources in their extended family and community to support them. The state cannot and should not attempt to undermine this fundamental responsibility.

We have published thresholds for intervention and service access. These were built around an early intervention and prevention strategy. The more adverse economic climate will require us to be thoughtful about how best we target resources to achieve maximum impact. We intend to review our strategy and ensure a sharp focus on preventing children coming into care. Transition from children's to adult service is demanding of disabled young people and their parents. We want to develop transition to reduce the stress and anxiety for young people and their parents/carers. We must establish closer alignments with our colleagues in Adult Services so that, together, we respond appropriately to meet the needs of vulnerable adults who are also parents. We must translate our knowledge about the impact on children of living with multiple disadvantage into tangible, joined up responses that really make a difference.

We are working towards closer integration of our Youth Offending Service and Targeted Youth. This will ensure more effective early intervention and prevention and better re-integration into learning, employment and the community. We are also developing effective arrangements to meet the diverse needs of homeless adolescents.

We have successfully recruited permanent social work managers. This is one of the most important features of effective child protection practice. National interest in, and concern about, child protection led to a significant increase in activity, creating serious service pressures, locally and nationally. Practice in Thurrock is measured and reflective and we intend that it will remain so. For children and young people in care, we want to 'up our game' and we are confident that we can do so. We already have strong evidence of sustained good performance, we want to move on now to being 'outstanding'.

We will ensure that our social work capacity is properly focussed on the most vulnerable children and families and that interventions are based upon high quality assessments and care plans. We intend to significantly strengthen our quality assurance function so that Partnership Board partners can be confident that those who need protection are protected.

PROTECTION WHEN NEEDED

<p>Building resilience in the community.</p> <p>We will</p> <p>Deliver flexible & diverse solutions to meeting problems caused by domestic abuse.</p> <p>Improve community cohesion by working innovatively & creatively to find family & community based solutions to anti-social behaviour, hate crime & so on.</p> <p>Develop specific approaches for preventing & intervening in sexual, homophobic & racist bullying in all settings, schools, colleges & services.</p> <p>Reduce youth crime by focussing on what is proven to work in prevention & reducing repeat offending.</p>	<p>Outstanding services for children who have been or may be abused.</p> <p>We will</p> <p>Develop & maintain excellent practice in core safeguarding services.</p> <p>Ensure interventions are timely, appropriate & based upon good quality assessments & care plans.</p> <p>Develop a local strategy & intervention plan to respond to gender based abuse & violence (including sexual bullying trafficking, domestic violence, forced marriage, FGM).</p> <p>Strengthen quality assurance functions ensuring sufficient systemic checks & balances.</p>	<p>Outstanding services that build resilience & transform the life chances of disabled children, children in trouble and children in need of care.</p> <p>We will</p> <p>Support disabled children & their families to enable access to activities, prevent family breakdown & effective transition to adult services.</p> <p>Reserve public care for those children for whom there is no safe & appropriate alternative.</p> <p>Deliver outstanding fostering, private fostering & adoption; develop & maintain excellent services for children in care.</p>
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LEAN AND FIT FOR THE FUTURE

In Thurrock, excellent relationships between partners (especially schools) and effective joint working are critical to the achievement of our 'moral purpose'. In a turbulent period of economic challenge, resilient systems and strong leadership and governance are the key components. The resources of all partners will need to be maximised and our priorities will need to be the right ones chosen at the right time. We intend to actively seek partnership opportunities to maximise and enhance service provision.

Over the last three years, Thurrock has made considerable progress in developing an infrastructure that can assist partner services to improve outcomes and raise aspirations for our children, young people and their families.

We understand that the voluntary and community sector has deep and sustainable roots in the community of Thurrock. We believe that this adds the kind of resilience we will need in the future. Partnership and a higher level of mutual respect and understanding will be required if we are to realise the potential of the social and emotional capital held within the third sector and in the relationship between the sector and the range of communities in Thurrock.

We intend that all services provided by the statutory partners in the Partnership Board will all be reviewed with the question "could this be provided by the third sector and should this".

Increasingly we want the role of the Partnership Board, led by the Local Authority, to be one of facilitator, enabling the community to meet their own identified needs.

Across the next three years, we will build strong and resilient Children's Partnership Board and LSCB structures which, together, will govern our drive for change and improvement, and which will ensure our capacity and service management are judged as outstanding by external inspectors. We will ensure the services, we commission or provide, offer excellent value for money within a structure that is able to withstand the future effects of the current economic recession. Leadership is a priority for us. However, leadership in the primary sector is a serious challenge. We intend to take every opportunity to strengthen leadership in the primary sector. We will actively seek to achieve federations and amalgamations of schools. This will ensure we achieve the quality and quantity of leadership we need to move our primary schools to good or outstanding and to ensure our Key Stage 2 outcomes are second quartile and never again at the bottom of the national league table.

By the end of 2013, we expect our use of resources judged as good by external inspectors. We will have extended the range of services where partners come together to align, and then pool their resources, including developing approaches to sharing staff, facilities and technology.

We will increase the range of co-located services through our innovative use of capital resources, which will see us re-engineer a number of our secondary and primary schools to include community facilities. These extended co-located and jointly delivered services will meet the needs of different parts of Thurrock. The first step in this will be to commission, rather than provide, children centres and achieve full alignment with schools, including shared governance arrangements.

We know that anything we do is only purposeful if it makes a difference for children and young people and their families; and particularly if it makes a difference for those who are disenfranchised. We intend to review all of our charging policies to ensure we are not unfairly advantaging some in the community at the expense of others.

We will ensure the support services are organised, rigorous and timely. With anticipated changes in the external regulatory framework we require performance management which drives improvements across all of our key performance indicators. We will further develop our capacity to develop and implement new policies and strategies so that by 2013, Thurrock's Children's Partnership Board and the services which all the partners provide, are judged as good or outstanding and able to provide the basis for further change and improvement from 2013 onwards as Thurrock continues to grow and regenerate.

We will transform learning (and our secondary school estate) through continuing capital investment wherever possible, targeting investment to provide all learners with access to appropriate, local facilities which will meet their educational and training needs. Thurrock's children's services will be at the heart of the regeneration of the borough and our young people will be equipped with the skills and abilities to realise all of their potential. We will ensure that all capital projects are developed in ways that accelerate our progress in relation to carbon footprint reduction and increased building sustainability.

We are committed to delivering our single equalities duty. The first action we will take is to ensure that every data report we provide is sufficiently disaggregated for us to understand what it means in relation to the overlapping constructs of gender, ethnicity and disability. This will enable us to build services that are properly attenuated to the specific needs of groups in our community.

LEAN AND FIT FOR THE FUTURE

<p>Strong & resilient governance & leadership across the Children’s Partnership Board & LSCB.</p> <p>We will Use the Children’s Partnership Board for joint strategic & operational planning, delivering & sharing resources.</p> <p>Balance challenge and delivery roles of the Partnership Board & the LSCB.</p> <p>Engineer new models of leadership across schools & services through federations, amalgamations & co-location.</p> <p>Transfer more resources and responsibilities for local service delivery to schools, clusters & children centres.</p>	<p>Strong organisational discipline.</p> <p>We will</p> <p>Ensure business processes are effective & efficient.</p> <p>Improve the use of performance management across all agencies within the Partnership Board & the LSCB.</p> <p>Enhance skills, quality & capacity within our workforce.</p> <p>Improve policy & strategy development.</p>	<p>Capital planning & commissioned services.</p> <p>We will Further develop framework & capacity for single & joint commissioning.</p> <p>Develop forward financial planning across all agencies.</p> <p>Improve Capital Strategic Planning & asset management.</p> <p>Reduce our carbon footprint & increase sustainability.</p> <p>Deliver transformation in quality of schools & co-located community facilities through available capital programmes.</p>
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RESOURCES FOR THIS PLAN

In our plan, how we do things is just as important as the things we will do. As a part of demonstrating our values of courage, integrity and wisdom, we know that in the current challenging economic climate we will need to ensure that we use our resources to maximum effect so that we make the biggest possible difference. This will require all of us to demonstrate our courage in taking what we anticipate will be some complex, difficult and crucial decisions to ensure our priorities are fully resourced; to demonstrate our integrity by ensuring our resources are deployed transparently, fairly, and coherently; and demonstrate our wisdom through a sound understanding of how our collective resources are deployed, through effective forward planning which negates the impact of any reduction in the level of resource available to the public sector over the next five years and through making accurate judgements about the extent to which we are using our resources to secure the best outcomes and the best value for money.

The Children's Partnership Board knows that the improved outcomes we seek depend on the effective co-ordination and use of resources, which includes not only the revenue funds we need to deliver services and the capital funds we need to invest in facilities but more importantly our staff and our partners, especially our valued voluntary and community sector organisations. We will continue to work closely with them to identify needs, commission activities and support capacity building. We will continue to build on the experience gained in our successful joint commissioning arrangements that are in place for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services and our 'Think Families' programme.

Resourcing Our Priorities

The lifetime for this plan will coincide with an extremely demanding economic climate for all of us working in the public and voluntary sectors in support of the children and families of Thurrock. It will demand that we ensure our resources are targeted at our priorities. It will also demand that we not only manage the allocation of our resources very carefully but that we also do this very creatively and all partners are agreed that the key to this is to work increasingly together.

In 2010-11, Thurrock Council's Children's Services budget will total £88.3 million, of which over £25 million is funded directly from Council taxes and Council revenues, with the remaining funding being secured from grants and other sources of income. In line with the Council's budget strategy, our children's services are working with colleagues across the Council and in partner agencies to secure year on year efficiency savings. The Council's funding for its services, is complemented by £86.5 million devolved directly to schools and a further combined grant funding direct to schools of approximately £7 million. The total Primary Care Partnership Board (PCT) funding for children's health services in the area in 2010-11 will be £x million.

However, over the life of this plan there will be reduced levels of funding available in at least some of the key partner budgets outlined above. The Council's Children's Services budget is predicted to fall in both Council core and grant funding, so that by 2013-14 the total Children's

Services budget will have reduced to around £85.6 million. To ensure that we continue to invest appropriately in our priorities and secure improved outcomes, the partners on the Children’s Partnership Board will maximise every opportunity to align and pool together their resources and budgets so that these can be used more efficiently to plan and deliver the services which will be needed to meet our priorities. The Council, the PCT and schools already work together in a number of areas sharing resources and facilities, pooling budgets for specific activities and through delegating and commissioning some functions to and from each other. We will continue to extend the number of areas where partnership working and resource provision is used to support the delivery of this Children’s Plan. We will strategically plan for opportunities to further align resources across the partnership.

With increasing tightening of budgets across public sector organisations over the coming years, we will review expenditure and costs in the light of emerging needs and priorities and continue to develop and commission services to deliver efficiency savings and secure better value for money. Through strategic commissioning, supported through the Partnership Board’s governance arrangements, we will increasingly allocate resources based on key partnership priority outcome delivery and we will strategically plan for opportunities to further align resources across the partnership and continue to develop and commission services to deliver greater efficiency.

Planned Expenditure on Services for Children, Young People and Families

Partner Agency	Funding in 10-11	Funding in 11-12
Thurrock Council Children’s Services	£88.3 million	£87.5 million (estimate)
South West Essex PCT	£X million	£X million (estimate)
Thurrock Schools	£94 million	£94 million (estimate)

Pie Chart – **Thurrock Council Expenditure on services for Children, Young People and Families for 2010-11**

Pie Chart – **South West Essex PCT Expenditure on services for Children, Young People and Families for 2010-11**

The improved outcomes we seek depend on the effective co-ordination and use of resources, including finance, capital and staff.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE PLAN

AEN

Additional Educational Needs

BME

Black Minority Ethnic

BSF

Building Schools for the Future

CAF

Common Assessment Framework

CAMHS

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

Core Assessment

In-depth assessment which addresses the most important needs of a child and the capacity of parents or caregivers to respond appropriately

Care Partnership Board

Local organisation responsible for local health care services

Children's Centres

Provide services for under fives offering early education, day care, health and family support

Cluster

A local group of schools and children's centres working together to offer a range of extended services and activities

Disabled child

Has substantial difficulty, either permanent or temporary, in achieving his or her full potential in areas of personal or social development, emotional or physical health, family life, schooling further education/training or employment.

ECM

Every Child Matters – government agenda incorporated into the 2004 Children Act

EET

Education, Employment and Training

Extended School

School offering extended range of services

Foundation Stage

Education of children aged 3-5

FSM

Free School Meals

GCE A level

General Certificate of Education Advanced level offered from Year 12

GCSE

The General Certificate of Secondary Education

GP

General Practitioner – family doctor

IAG

Information, Advice and Guidance

IA

Initial Assessment – identifies whether a child or young person is in need and the services and interventions required to respond to those needs. It will also identify if a core assessment is necessary to develop a fuller understanding of what is happening to the individual in complex circumstances

Integrated Working

Focuses on enabling and encouraging professionals to work together effectively to deliver frontline services

JSNA

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

KS

Key Stage – four stages in the national curriculum: KS1 5-7 yrs; KS2 8-11 yrs; KS3 12-14 yrs; KS4 15-16 yrs

LA

Local Authority

LAA

Local Area Agreement between central government and partners in the local area setting out local priorities

LAC

Looked After Children – a child in the care of the local authority

LDD

Learning difficulties and disabilities

Learning Disability

Significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills with a reduced ability to cope independently.

LSC

Learning and Skills Council responsible for planning and funding education and training for over 16s

LSCB

Local Safeguarding Children's Board - a statutory local board of local agencies involved with children which co-ordinates and

ensures the effectiveness of those agencies in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

MMR

Measles, Mumps and Rubella

NEET

Not in Education, Employment and Training

OfSTED

Office for Standards in Education

PSHE

Personal, Social and Health Education

PCT

Primary Care Trust

Respite Care

The provision of short term, temporary relief for carers

Restorative Justice

Working with victims and perpetrators of crime in order to reduce repeat offending

SEN

Special Educational Needs

SIP

School Improvement Partner

VAWG

Violence against women and girls

VCS

Non-profit Voluntary and Community Sector also known as Third Sector, government and the private sector being the first two.

Ward

An electoral district at a local level represented by one or more councillors.

Vulnerable children

Children at risk of significant harm

Children in care or leaving care

Children with disabilities including LDD

Young carers

Children living with vulnerable adults

Children who experience racial abuse and discrimination

Children who are not fluent in English

Children who are asylum seekers, failed asylum seekers or refugees

Children from poorer socio-economic groups (including working class boys)

Children from families with high mobility

Children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

Children affected by family breakdown

Children with a low rate of school attendance or whose education has been interrupted

Children excluded or at risk of exclusion from school

Children receiving elective home education

Children who experience discrimination and bullying as a result of disability, gender and sexual orientation

YOS

Youth Offending Service