

BSIP
June 2024

Thurrock Council – Bus Service Improvement Plan – 2024

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Executive summary

Overview

This 2024 Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is an update to the 2021 BSIP and has been restructured and updated in light of the revised guidance provided by DfT in January 2024.

The BSIP represents the opportunity to make a step-change in connectivity for those who live in, work in and visit Thurrock. For many local residents, Thurrock has an efficient bus service, which provides a good level of connectivity. Fares are largely affordable, and the infrastructure is of a high quality. Every bus stop has a timetable case provided and maintained by the Council, with timetable information provided by the local operators. Most important bus stops have shelters and a contract to renew these is in place.

Despite this, there remains the potential and necessity for improvement. Commuting in Thurrock is largely undertaken by private car – only 4% journeys to work are made by bus.¹ The range of negative externalities this causes is broad: worsened air quality, congestion, and greater volumes of carbon dioxide emissions. Increasing the proportion of motorised trips made by bus is the ultimate aim of this BSIP; the interventions described here have been designed with this aim in mind.

Many of these interventions focus upon the frequency of these services, at all times of day, every day in the week. Providing a regular service is critical for ensuring that bus use increases. If people feel like they can ‘turn up and go’, with a low risk of being stranded by bus services not running in the evening, or at the weekend, they are more likely to consider it a credible mode of transport. As volumes of passengers increase, fare revenues will increase, allowing operators to further improve services – a virtuous cycle, which has been observed elsewhere.

The interventions identified here could not be delivered by the private sector alone; neither can the council realistically solely subsidise them. As such, central government funding will be critical for their delivery. Over the past decade, Thurrock has seen its budget become increasingly stretched, with a commensurate drop in bus ridership on reducing supported services. Should the interventions in this BSIP be delivered – and the funding to do so be provided – the trend in reducing ridership should be reversed.

Growth within the borough provides this opportunity to increase patronage on sustainable modes of transport. Increasing levels of investment in new employment sites in the past ten years, and further expected growth in jobs and housing provide opportunities to encourage sustainable travel behaviours. New emerging policies such as the Local Plan and Transport Strategy will support Thurrock in promoting and making available buses through infrastructure and service enhancements. The new Local Plan projects a need for over 23,000 new homes and 27,000 new jobs² by 2050 in Thurrock.

In many ways, Thurrock’s geography lends itself to the delivery of a networked bus service with its numerous settlements. This means that a well-designed network should provide good connectivity for residents to travel across the borough from one area to another. This BSIP is designed to help the area reach this potential, making the bus network a key part of the area’s transport infrastructure, one which local communities can rely upon.

¹ The 2021 census, which was heavily influenced by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, showed a travel to work mode share of 3%. At the time of writing in 2024, bus patronage is closer to pre-pandemic levels, thus the 2011 travel to work mode share is expected to be more representative.

² [Creating Successful Places, Local Plan Initial Proposals Document, Regulation 18 December 2023](#)

1 Our bus vision

General context

- 1.1 Thurrock is a Unitary Authority of approximately 176,000 people,³ located on the Northern side of the Thames Estuary, on the outskirts of London (context map in Figure 1.1 with more detail in Figure 1.2). Thurrock's strong road transport connections with the rest of the country form a key part of its economic offer. It is home to three nationally strategic ports, lies at one end of the Dartford Crossing, is served by the M25, and has regular rail connections to London and Essex. This good connectivity has made the area an attractive site for freight and distribution centres. For example, in 2017, Amazon situated one of its largest 'fulfilment centres' in the area and the popular Lakeside Shopping Centre is home to more than 300 shops.⁴

Figure 1.1: Context Map for Thurrock



³ [Population | Thurrock facts and statistics | Thurrock Council](#)

⁴ <https://www.amazon.jobs/en/locations/tilbury-uk>

Clarification of Enhanced Partnership schemes

1.2 The following schemes are included within the Enhanced Partnership⁵ which was published in March 2024:

Table 1.1: Enhanced Partnership schemes

Aspect	Proposed Intervention	Desired Outcome
Bus promotion	Maintain and extend current bus promotion activities by Thurrock Council and operators	Promote use of bus, particularly to non (or lapsed) users. Allowing both users and non-users access to many channels of information about the local bus network
More frequent and comprehensive services	Targeting specific bus services to provide a more frequent and comprehensive service across Thurrock	Improvements for areas with poor provision or with potential demand that is not met fully at all times of day by the current bus service offer
Better integrated services	Amend and/or extend bus services to provide better connections with railway stations and ferry services	Increase potential for effective multi-mode trips, particularly facilitating cross boundary trips in and out of Thurrock
Bus speed and reliability measures	Develop measures that will permit an increase in bus speeds and/or punctuality thus reducing journey times	Making bus travel more attractive by improving its journey time relative to other modes. Reduce operating costs for operators to assist in making longer term, sustainable, bus networks viable while minimising ongoing pressures on the public purse
Cheaper, simpler fares	Thurrock Council to work with operators to seek to develop solutions to deliver this goal	Making travel cheaper for users
Easier to understand and to use services	Thurrock Council to work with operators to seek to develop solutions to deliver this goal	Making travel by bus easier and, particularly for non-users, easier to understand and thus appreciate its benefits to them
Quality of Fleet	Maintain current fleet renewal	Support long term move to zero-emission fleet
Monitoring	Re-establish bus user satisfaction survey	Ensure effective feedback loop to maintain knowledge of success of interventions

Duration of the published BSIP

1.3 The duration of the published BSIP covers the period to 2030.

Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review

- 1.4 Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review are detailed in Chapter 6. They will be coordinated by Thurrock Council's Bus Information and Monitoring Assistant.

Alignment with LTP

Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development (as amended) (2015)

- 1.5 The strategic framework governing transport interventions and planning within Thurrock is supported by land use policy and transport policy documents. The overarching policy is the existing Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policies for Management and Development. This provides the planning policy framework for land use and new development within the borough. Adopted in 2015, this proposed the development of approximately 18,000 new homes by 2026 supported by 26,000 new jobs.
- 1.6 Policies within the Core Strategy support enhancements to bus networks, to help make existing communities and new developments to become more sustainable. Policy CSSP3 identifies bus service infrastructure improvements and rail station enhancements as key infrastructure needs to deliver the plan. Transport specific policies also seek to enhance the bus network. Policy CSTP 14 sought to reduce car traffic by 10% by 2026 using a broad range of measures. Policy CSTP 15 proposed to increase accessibility to places of work, education and healthcare, while Policy CSTP 16 states improvements to transport networks to minimise capacity constraints with high quality inter-urban public transport routes running on a 30-minute frequency.
- 1.7 A new Local Plan is currently in development (see paragraph 1.11 below).

Thurrock Transport Strategy

- 1.8 The Thurrock Transport Strategy, adopted in 2013, sets out the strategic framework for transport provision across the borough, and in support of the overarching goals of the Core Strategy and Local Development Framework. The strategy recognises the wider need for transport to help deliver sustainable growth and regeneration in the borough.
- 1.9 The Transport Strategy provides a supportive local policy environment, which aligns closely with the objectives in the government's Bus Back Better documentation, and the BSIP guidance, with a number of elements within the strategy overlapping with the proposed BSIP. The most pertinent of these are summarised in Table 1.2.

Enhanced Partnership

- 1.10 Thurrock Council has made and published its Enhanced Partnership (EP) for bus services in the area. This follows lengthy discussions with operators and other interested stakeholders. The EP was published in March 2024.⁶

Emerging Strategies

- 1.11 Thurrock Council is in the process of developing a new planning policy strategy which will help support land use planning and new development within the borough until 2040. The Local Plan is indicatively looking to propose over 23,000 new homes and 27,000 jobs across Thurrock over the life of the strategy. This will see new housing sites be developed, allowing new opportunities to develop sustainable communities with active and sustainable transport opportunities at the heart of their development, including bus through enhanced

infrastructure and increased frequency of new routes. The new Local Plan is due to be adopted in 2025, with the next consultation occurring in early 2025.

1.12 Alongside the Local Plan is a new Transport Strategy, which at the time of this BSIP update (early 2024), is in development and will identify how sustainable transport opportunities are core to the sustainability of communities within and beyond the borough. Extensive work is being undertaken to review existing provision, and those enhancements which are required to link the borough with its neighbouring communities. The transport strategy is expected to be adopted in late 2024. The Transport Strategy will inform the new Thurrock Local Transport Plan 4, which will be comprised of a high level 2050 Vision, the Transport Strategy, and supporting sub-strategies including but not exclusive to parking, freight, alternate fuels, passenger transport.

Table 1.2: Relevance of Thurrock Transport Strategy to the BSIP

Relevant Elements	Detail relevant to BSIP
Delivering Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrating with other service providers and planners to influence where and how facilities and services are delivered to improve accessibility, especially the location of new education or hospital facilities - Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector in developing Demand Responsive and Community Transport - Improving connections between modes and enhancing the public realm at transport interchanges/ rail stations in Tilbury, Grays, Chafford Hundred, South Ockendon, Purfleet-on-Thames and Stanford le Hope (London Gateway) to aid access to Thurrock’s key strategic economic hubs in particular - Improving information and ticketing arrangements - Ensuring equality of opportunity by incorporating the needs of people with mobility impairments or disabilities in the design and delivery of improvements
Tackling Congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using an intensive programme of smarter choices to deliver a modal shift, especially in urban areas, in particular workplace and school travel plans. This will support the delivery of better sustainable transport infrastructure, such as cycle routes and public transport priority - Promoting modal shift on interurban journeys through high quality public transport between growth areas, key strategic economic hubs and to other Regional Transport Nodes - Promoting capacity improvements on the Strategic Road Network, with priority for freight routes to key strategic economic hubs and interurban bus routes, where modal shift and network management are insufficient. Improvements have been identified on M25, A13 and A1014
Improving Air Quality and Addressing Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prioritising actions that both improve local air quality and reduce CO₂ emissions. These will include working with partners and transport operators to increase the use of low emission vehicles or using retrofitting, better operating practices such as switching off engines or eco-driving, and preferential car parking opportunities for low emission cars
Safer Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give priority to improving road safety in disadvantaged communities, integrating with wider programmes such as neighbourhood renewal, as well around schools and major workplaces. Again, the focus will be on reducing the adverse impact of traffic, such as traffic speed and volume, and helping support modal shift programmes

Climate Policies

- 1.17 Thurrock has a number of climate policies, which are supportive of modal shift towards public transportation. For example, the Thurrock Climate Change Action Plan Update Note recognises the urgency and importance of cutting carbon dioxide emissions. It provides evidence that although Thurrock cut its emissions by 37% from 2005 to 2011, transport emissions have remained essentially constant (and therefore the transport percentage has increased). To help accelerate reduction in emissions, this plan recommends following the suggestions of the Transport Strategy (as set out above), in addition to converting current bus vehicles to electric and/or hydrogen fuel.⁷

Thurrock Council's vision for bus

- 1.18 The vision for bus in Thurrock is for bus to be a key pillar of our local transport network: a transport option that is reliable, affordable, accessible, inclusive, safe, integrated and which supports evolving travel patterns, regeneration, net-zero aspirations and housing and employment growth.
- 1.19 The bus network will provide fast, frequent, reliable connections between all the borough's key urban centres. It will deliver an excellent level of service which provides a realistic alternative to the private car, including for those in smaller settlements and new developments, and support improved connectivity as part of a multi-modal offer.
- 1.20 Our aim is to deliver this vision through effective partnership working with bus operators in the borough and a wider pool of stakeholders as identified through the Thurrock Enhanced Partnership. The strategy will draw upon resources from all EP members, using existing resources in more efficient ways, and harness new funding opportunities as they become available.

Local context

- 1.21 Thurrock's average household income is £37,018,⁸. This is relatively high in comparison to the UK national average of £35,448.⁹ However, the cost of living in south-eastern England is higher than most places meaning that the average net household income after housing costs falls to £26,500,¹⁰ lower than the national average of £29,545.¹¹
- 1.22 Table 1.3 provides a summary breakdown of the top 10 employment categories in the Thurrock area for residents of the area, whilst Table 1.4 breaks down the top 10 employment types in the area. The breakdown of jobs for residents highlights the fact that Education, Construction, and Transport & Storage make up a significantly higher proportion of Thurrock's economic background than is typical across England. Jobs in these sectors may not be as high paying as jobs in other professional categories common in South East England, such as financial services, business and administration, and information and communications technologies. This may go some way toward explaining why the net income after housing is lower in Thurrock than the English average.

⁷ Climate Change Action Plan Update Note Thurrock Council, 2021

⁸ ONS (2023) Annual survey of hours and earnings - resident analysis

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ ONS (2020) Income estimates for small areas, England and Wales

¹¹ ONS (2022) Effects on Taxes and Benefits

Table 1.3: Employment Breakdown: Residents of Thurrock Area

Employment Category	Percentage	England Average
Education	17.9%	8.4%
Health	11.3%	12.4%
Construction	11.0%	5.0%
Transport & storage (incl. postal)	10.5%	5.0%
Retail	8.3%	9.2%
Accommodation & food services	6.6%	7.5%
Business administration & support services	6.4%	8.9%
Professional, scientific & technical	5.5%	9.2%
Manufacturing	4.5%	7.8%
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	4.2%	4.6%

Source: Steer Analysis of BRES Data

- 1.23 The breakdown of employment types in the Thurrock area demonstrates the fact that the wholesale and retail trade and transport and storage employment comprises almost half (43%) of all employment types, higher than the UK average of 19.5%.

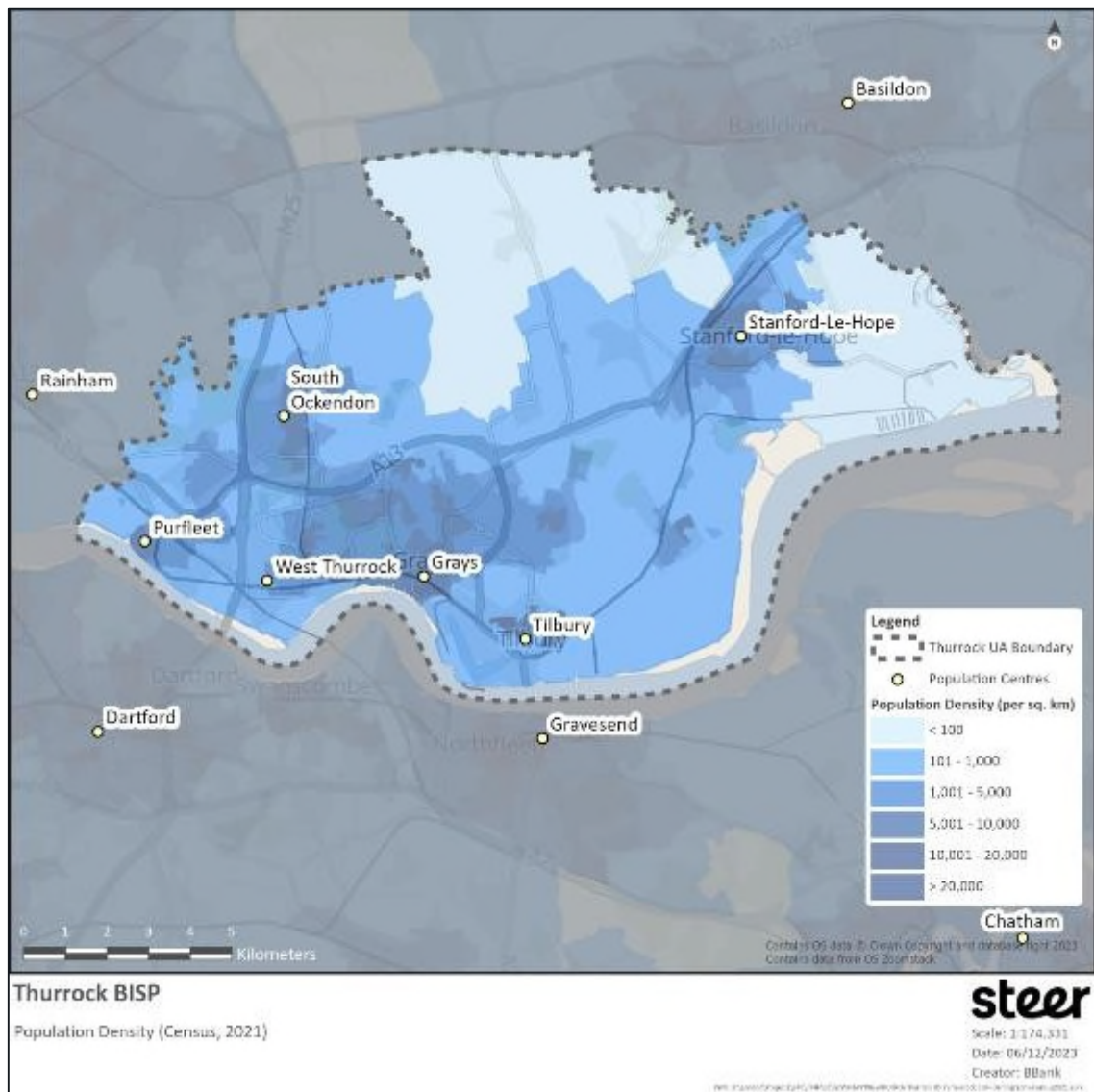
Table 1.4: Employment Breakdown: Employment types in Thurrock Area

Employment Category	Percentage	England Average
Wholesale & retail trade; repair of motor vehicles & motorcycles	21.6%	14.4%
Transport & storage	21.6%	5.1%
Construction	8.1%	4.9%
Administrative & support service activities	8.1%	8.9%
Public administration & defence; compulsory social security	8.1%	4.6%
Education	8.1%	8.8%
Accommodation & food service activities	5.4%	7.5%
Manufacturing	4.7%	7.6%
Human health & social work activities	4.7%	13.7%

Source: ONS (2022) BRES Data

- 1.24 Currently, Thurrock's population is concentrated into three major conurbations – South Ockendon, Grays, and Stanford-Le-Hope. The northern and eastern portions of the area are more rural in nature, with significant areas of farmland and some smaller hamlets. The distribution of resident population density for Thurrock is shown in Figure 1.3.

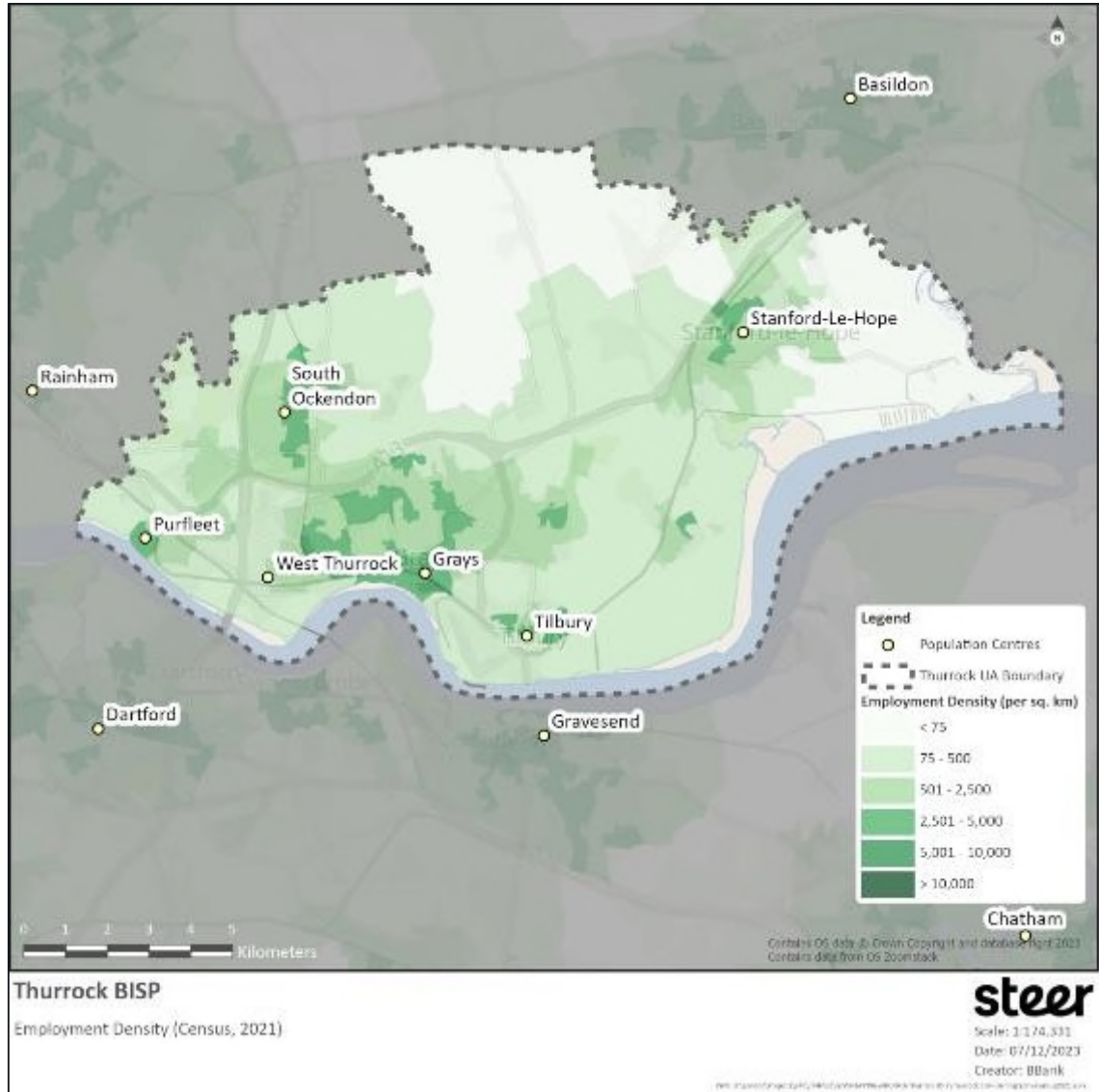
Figure 1.3: Population Density



Source: Census 2021

1.25 Employment density follows a similar, albeit more pronounced, trend to population density. This is illustrated in Figure 1.4. Particularly high employment densities are found along the River Thames – these are traditional employment centres, historically dependent upon the docks, but now refocused towards transportation, freight, construction and retail jobs. Future development in the area is expected to be significant as indicated in the Local Plan.

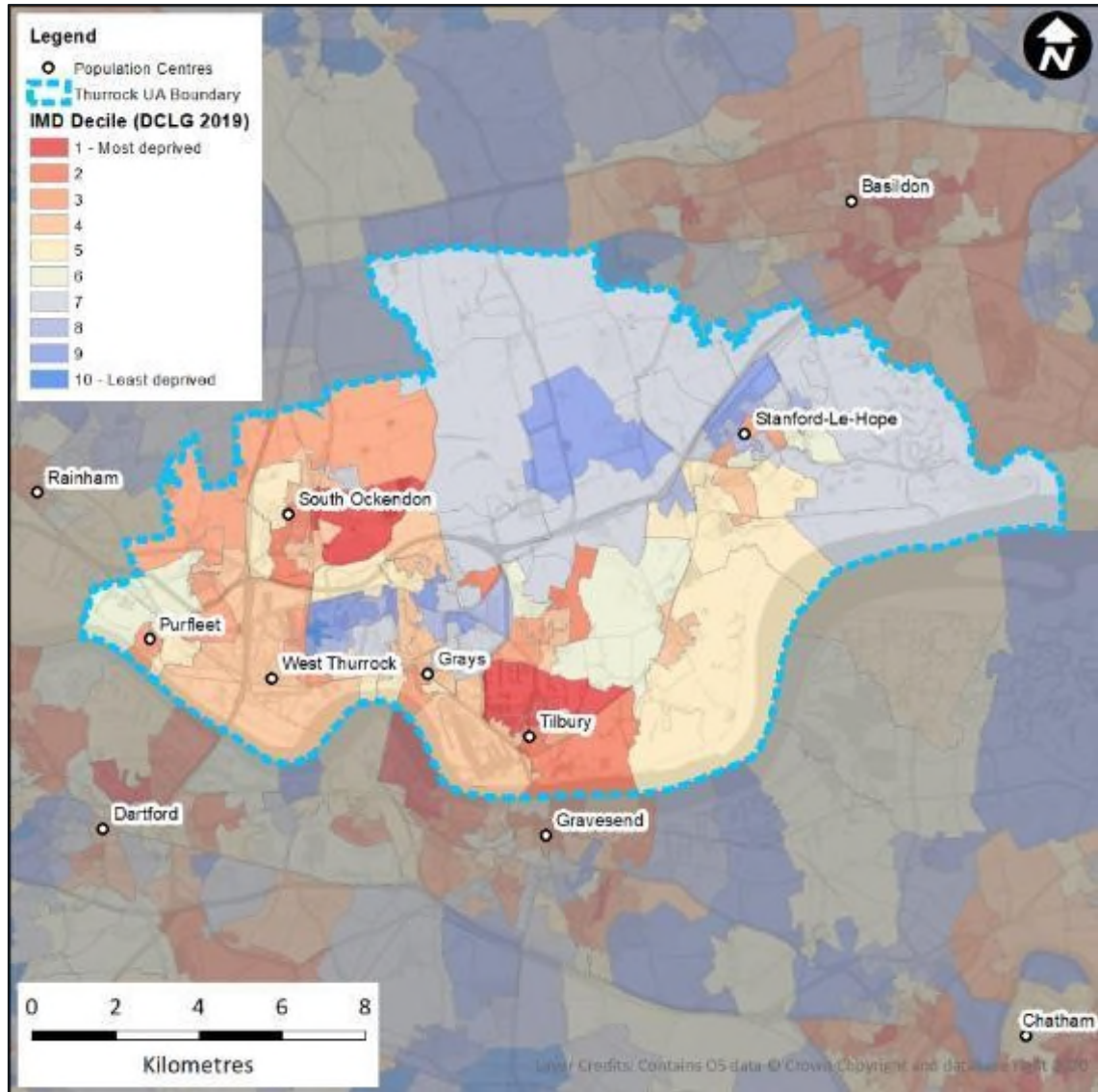
Figure 1.4: Employment Density



Source: Census 2021

1.26 Thurrock has relatively high levels of deprivation, with several areas falling within the most deprived 10% of all areas in the country. This is illustrated by Figure 1.5. The main areas of deprivation are concentrated in the South and West of Thurrock, around Tilbury and South Ockendon. However, it is important to note that this is partially the nature of the way that the Index of Multiple Deprivation is calculated – rural areas tend to fare better when appraised using this metric, due to the lower concentrations of any single social group.

Figure 1.5: Index of Multiple Deprivation

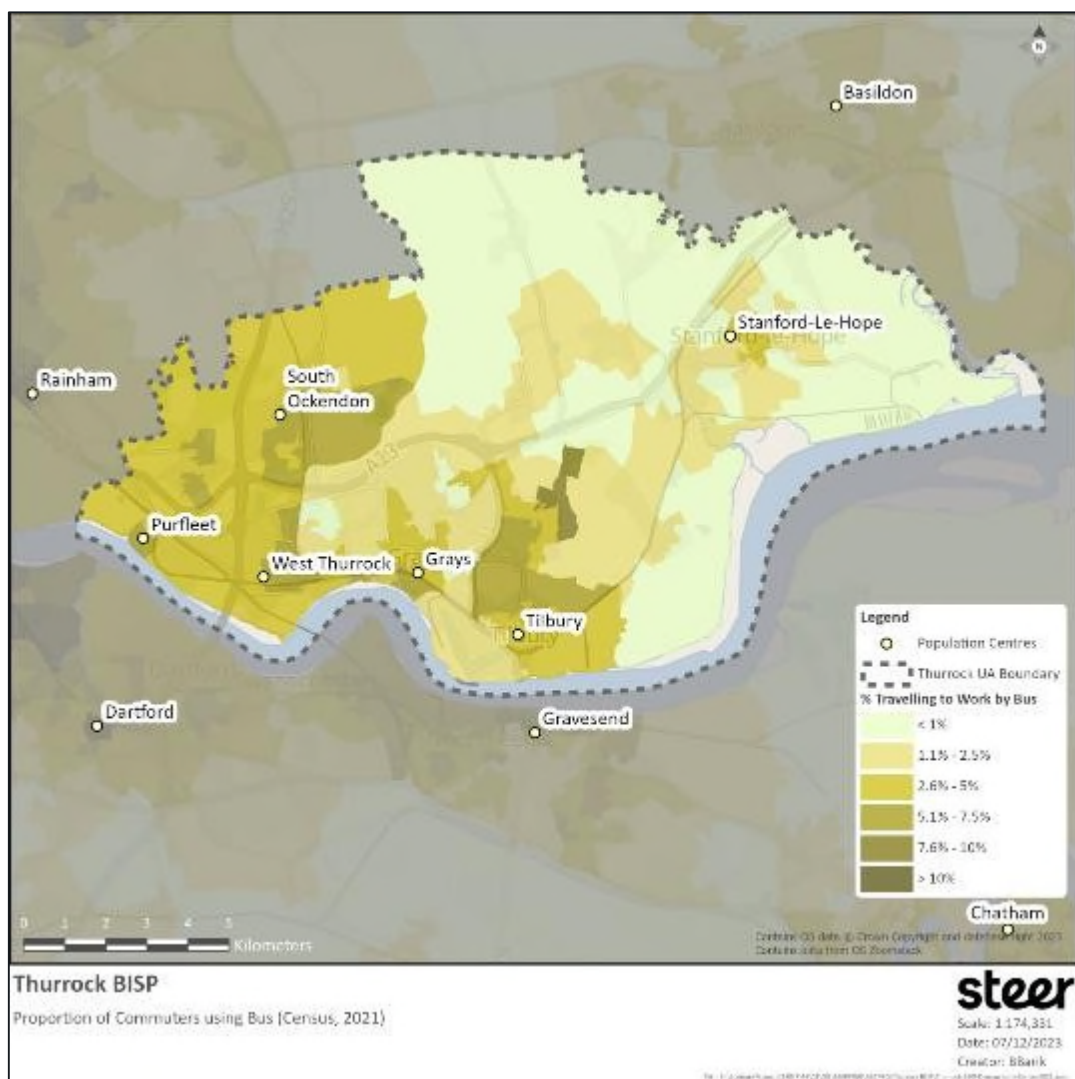


Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation, MHCLG 2019

General transport context

- 1.27 Here a broad overview of Transport within Thurrock is provided. Detail about the bus network is available in Chapter 3. As mentioned previously, Thurrock has relatively good connections to the rest of the country; it lies on the M25, the River Thames, and has rail links to London and south Essex. However, public transport connectivity within Thurrock is variable, leading to low public transport mode shares, and relatively high private car use. This is illustrated by Figure 1.6 and Figure 1.7. Figure 1.6 illustrates that the proportion of people using bus to travel to work is relatively low in Thurrock, with the majority of areas below 5% mode share. In general, mode shares are higher in areas with higher population and employment densities (as shown in Figure 1.3 and Figure 1.4), and lower in more rural areas. Within Thurrock, in 2019/20 (before the pandemic) there were approximately 29 journeys per head, as compared to the England average of 72, and the London average of 233.¹²

Figure 1.6: Proportion of Commuters using Bus

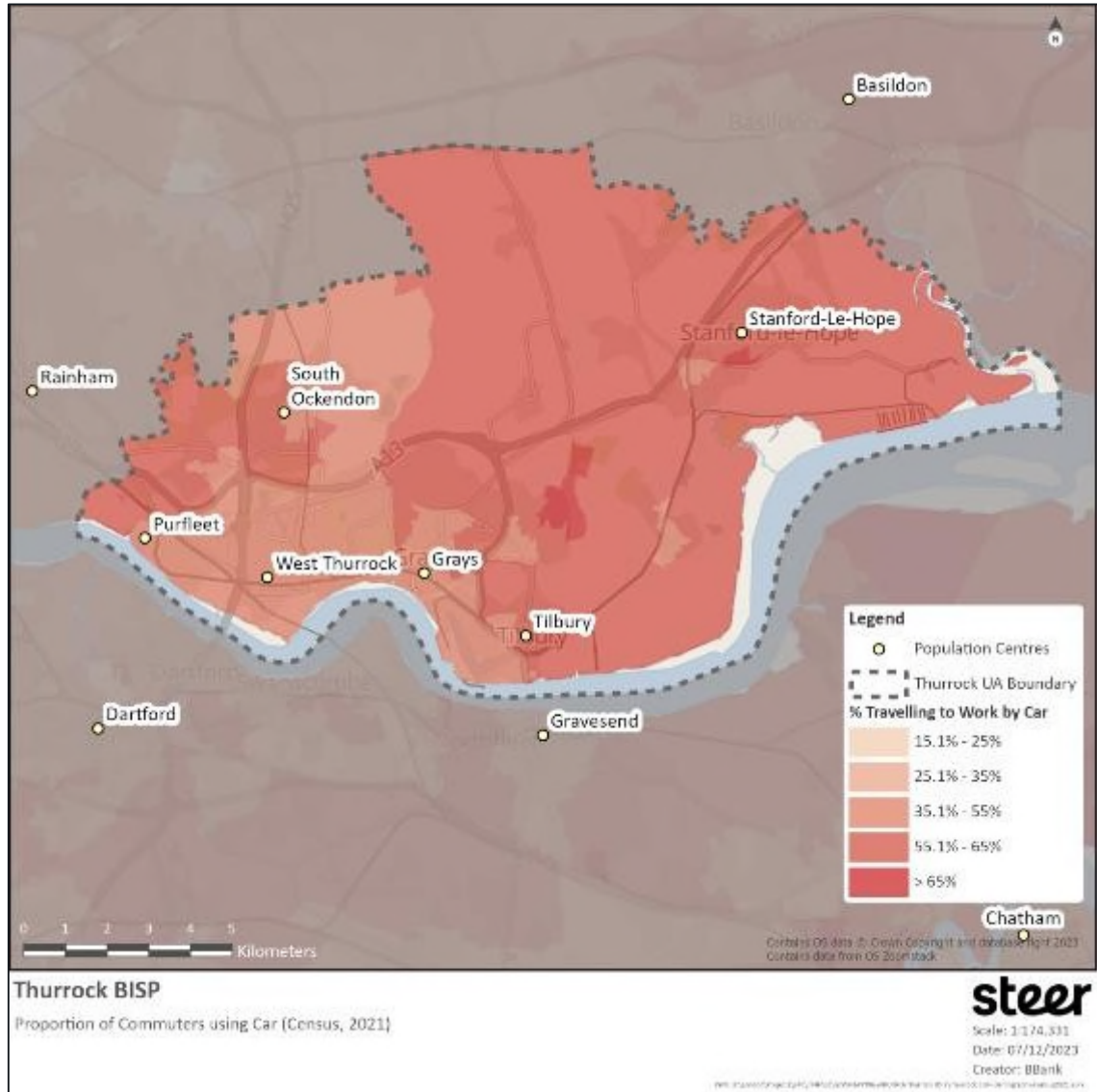


Source: Census 2021

¹² Passenger journeys on local bus services per head by local authority: BUS 0110

1.28 The low bus patronage is reflected by relatively high car usage for commuting journeys. This is illustrated by Figure 1.7. In many areas, the car is the dominant mode of transport for travelling to work, with some areas seeing a mode share greater than 60%. Unsurprisingly, Car mode share is particularly high in areas outside the main urban conurbations.

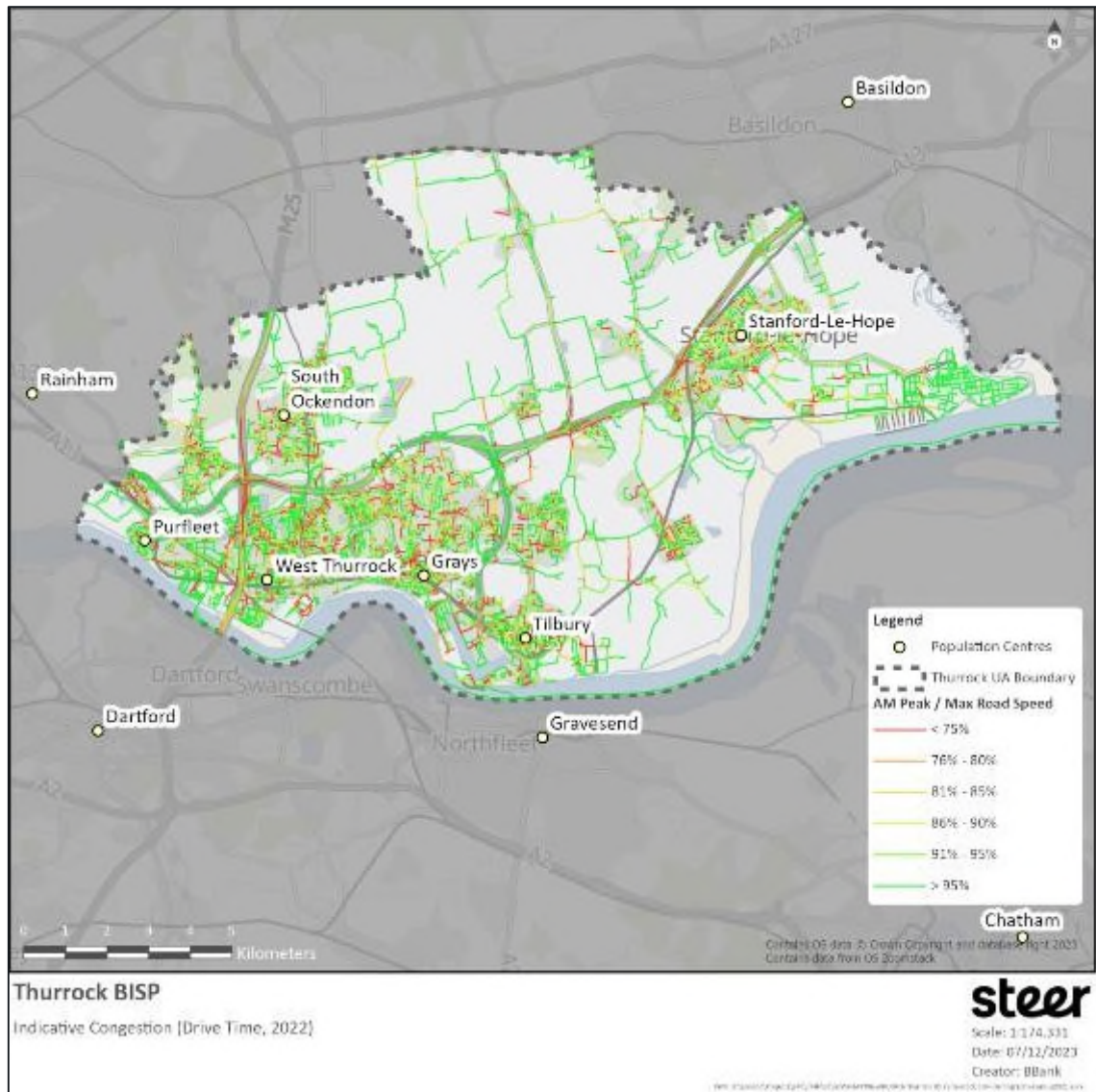
Figure 1.7: Proportion of Commuters using Car



Source: Census 2021

1.29 Congestion on the road network is illustrated in Figure 1.8, which maps the free flow speed (speed during the night when road usage is low), against congested road speeds. Congestion is a significant issue in Grays, and also causes problems in Stanford-Le-Hope. However, this fails to fully represent congestion experienced in the area. This is because congestion tends to become a major issue when the M25 and/or A13 are affected by incidents. When this happens, traffic across the area is impacted, with major spill-over congestion into the surrounding local areas.

Figure 1.8: Indicative Congestion



Source: Pitney Bowes Drivetime Data (2022)

Overall summary

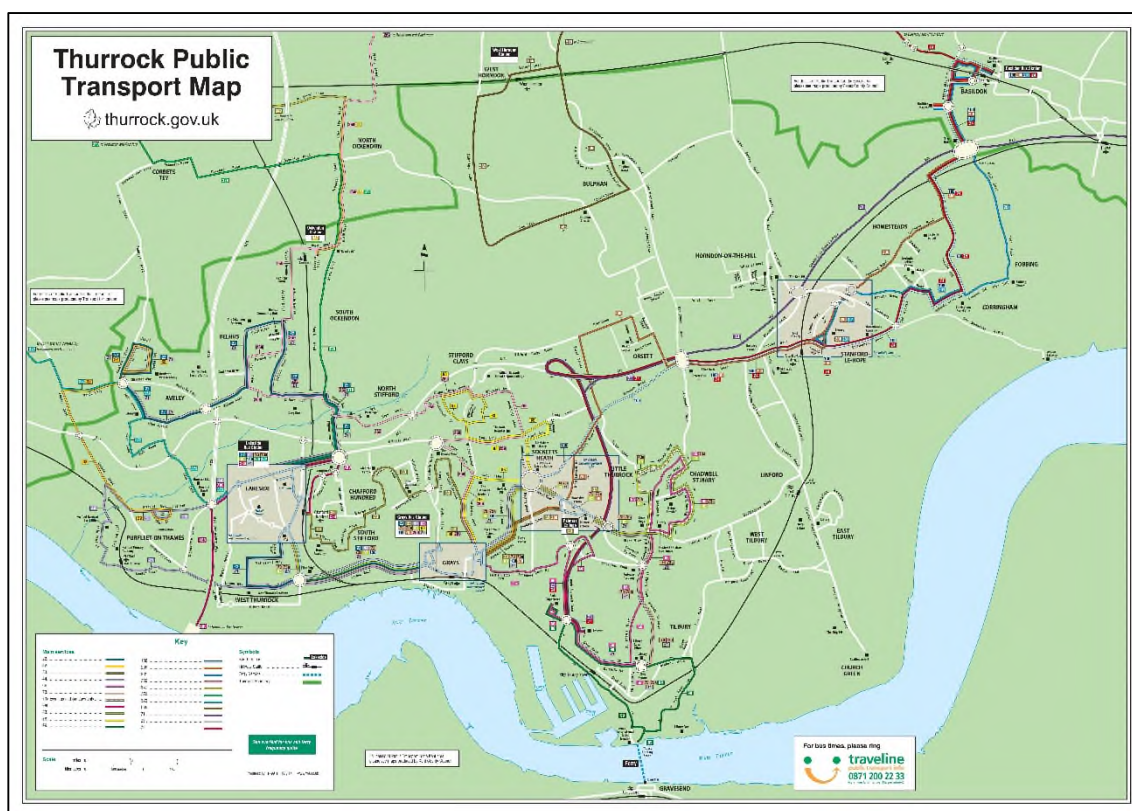
- 1.30 Thurrock is an area with a mixed socioeconomic geography. Despite high employment, economic outcomes are not as strong as other areas with similar proximity to London. The transportation network is both one of the area's strengths and weaknesses. It provides good connectivity for freight, but is not well designed for public transportation. Moreover, the polycentric and dispersed geography mean that clear options for the development of an effective transport network are not easy to identify and implement.
- 1.31 Overall, this means that public transport mode share is relatively low across the area; Bus patronage in particular is very low. As will be explored in subsequent chapters, this means that it is difficult to commercially justify the type of service provision necessary to cater for all communities effectively. This, of course, means that bus services are less attractive to potential passengers, leading to a downward spiral as regards patronage, revenues, and provision.
- 1.32 Ultimately then, there is high potential for a transformative change in the way that transportation – and buses in particular – are delivered across the area. The subsequent chapters outline the steps necessary to achieve this.

2 Current bus offer to passengers

Overview

- 2.1 In this chapter, an overview of Thurrock’s current bus network is provided. This information, along with input from local stakeholders, has been used to develop the recommendations which are set out in Chapters 3 and 4. In particular, areas where there are significant gaps in the network, or where it is clear that improved network provision would help to alleviate underlying socioeconomic issues, have been taken forward into the recommendations for enhancement. An overall map of the Thurrock Bus network is provided in Figure 2.1.
- 2.2 It is important to note that the network of services that operators provide is based upon achieving a commercially viable service, but does not explicitly acknowledge need. A number of the current commercial services are marginal, and over recent years, changes to the network have resulted in greater concentration on the core network. Although the council now financially supports few services, it is not able to support all the services it would like, to provide the high-quality service desired for all communities.

Figure 2.1: Map of Thurrock Bus Network

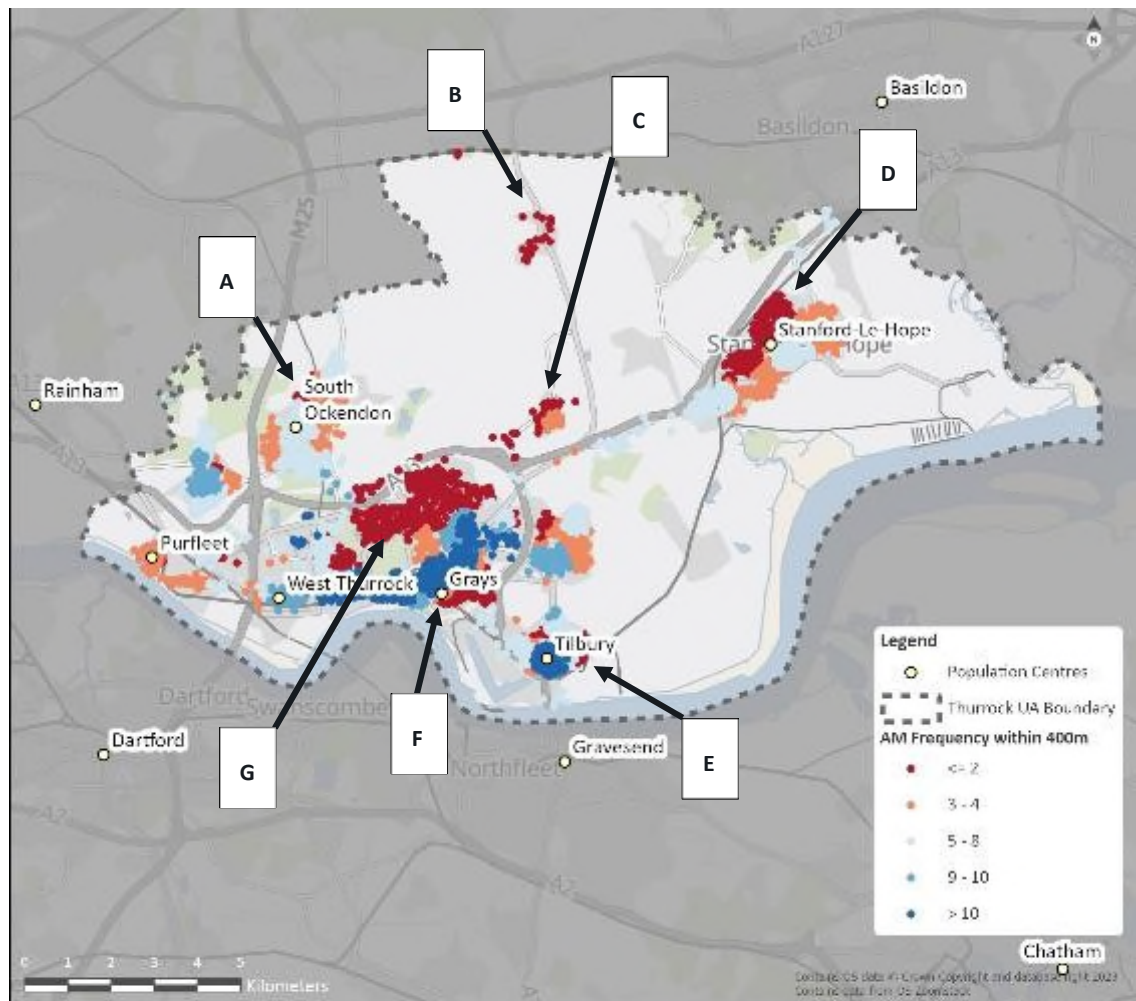


Source: Thurrock Council (2024)

Accessibility

- 2.3 Analysis examining the frequency of bus services by proportion and spatial location across Thurrock has been conducted to highlight locations where there is currently poor or no service provision in the AM peak period (08:00-08:59). This analysis is limited by the input data¹³ and should not be considered in terms of the absolute numbers presented below, however, it is a good indication of the relative level of service across the borough and is a useful indication of potential gaps in the service.
- 2.4 Figure 2.2 shows postcodes within 400 m of Bus Stops. They are coloured by service frequency, revealing concentrations population served by a low level of frequency.

Figure 2.2: Population (Postcodes) by access to their highest bus service Frequency within 400 m



Thurrock BISP

Population (Postcodes) by access to their highest bus service Frequency within 400 m

steer

Series: 1.0 (A, 3.5)

Date: 11/12/2023

Created: BBlank

- 2.5 The figure reveals:

- significant parts of urban Thurrock are well served with at least three buses per hour; and
- low levels of service are concentrated at the locations shown in Table 2.1.

¹³ The data records services at each bus stop in the hour between 08:00 and 08:59. Therefore a location with its only service at 07:55 (even though it might arrive at Grays or Basildon between 08:00 and 08:59) will show as having “no service”

Table 2.1: Poorly Served Communities in Thurrock

ID	Location	Notes on Bus Service
A	Part of South Ockendon	No service east of South road
B	Bulphan	Infrequent Monday to Saturday service to Brentwood (565).
C	Orsett	Hourly service Monday to Saturday daytimes (200)
D	Fobbing	Currently served three days a week (MWF) between peak hours
E	Fort Road, Tilbury	Just over 400 m from regular service. Little housing
F	Grays Beach	No bus service. Approx. 600 m from transport interchange and 800 m from Grays shopping centre
G	Badgers Dene	No bus service. Approx. 800 m from transport interchange and 600 m from Grays shopping centre

2.6 Other areas indicating a low level of service frequency are largely trading estates and warehouses.

Current bus services

2.7 There are four operators running services in the area. These are:

- *Ensignbus*
 - Ensignbus is a subsidiary bus company owned by the First Bus Group. It emerged as a spin out from a long-established bus dealership which buys and sells second hand buses. Ensignbus operates the bulk of local services within Thurrock. In the past it operated TfL contracted services, but does not do so at present. It has a substantial business in rail replacement services and private hire of, often vintage, buses.
- *First Essex*
 - First Essex is part of the national First Group. Its headquarters are in Chelmsford. It has no depots in Thurrock and operates medium distance inter-urban services linking Thurrock with Essex.
- *NIBS Buses/Stephensons*
 - These are two parts of a group of independent operators under common ownership. They operate across wide parts of Thurrock, Essex and Suffolk. Most services it operates are tendered by local authorities as socially necessary services. NIBS buses previously operated supported services 11, 265 and 374 before these were withdrawn in Summer 2023.
- *Transport for London (TfL)*
 - For the purposes of this BSIP, TfL is regarded as an “operator” as it fully controls the service specification and fares charged on its services. Three TfL services operate into Thurrock linking with parts of greater London. TfL services are provided by other operators under contract to TfL.

2.8 The high frequency services are shown in Table 2.2 (A full list of all bus services in Thurrock is provided in Appendix A). This shows that while Monday to Saturday daytime services are comprehensive, evening and Sunday services have less coverage.

2.9 The network is generally comprehensive, but in some areas, complex. The complexity is primarily seen where the provision of Ensignbus services to particular areas at different times of day is by different service numbers.

- 2.10 For example, Monday to Saturday early mornings routes 22 and 73 are merged to form route 77, but Monday to Saturday evenings routes 22 and 73A are merged to form route 77A. On Sundays, route 73 becomes route 73A to serve part of Chadwell served during the week by route 83.
- 2.11 However, it is important to emphasise that this has been forced on Ensignbus to achieve reliability. Both passenger demand and the operator's preference would be to run the 77 service at all times, but unpredictable instances of delay caused by traffic congestion has continued to make this impossible during the daytime. This congestion is caused by incidents which primarily occur on the Strategic Road Network (SRN), such as the A282 Dartford Crossing Southbound (the Bridge), M25 (Junctions 30 and 31), and the A13, which is exacerbated by the way Thurrock's road network is connected to and interacts with the SRN, creating inconvenience for passengers and costs Ensignbus resources.

Table 2.2: Frequent Bus Services in Thurrock Area (Approximate Buses per Hour)

Route	Links	Operator	Mon-Fri Daytime	Mon-Fri Evening	Sat Daytime	Sat Evening	Sun Daytime	Sun Evening
22	Aveley – Lakeside – Grays	Ensignbus	3	0 ¹⁴	2	0 ¹⁴	1	0
33	Chafford Hundred – Grays	Ensignbus	2	1	1	0	0	0
44	Lakeside – Purfleet-on-Thames – Grays	Ensignbus	2	1 ¹⁵	2	1	1	1
66	Chadwell – Tilbury – Grays	Ensignbus	2	0	2	0	1	0
73/73A	Lakeside – Grays – Tilbury	Ensignbus	2	2 ¹⁴	2	0 ¹⁴	2	1
77/77A	Aveley – Lakeside – Grays – Tilbury	Ensignbus	0 ¹⁶	2	0 ¹⁶	2	0	0
83	Lakeside – Grays – Chadwell St. Mary	Ensignbus	2	0	2	0	0	0
88	Stifford Clays – Grays	Ensignbus	1 ¹⁷	0	1	0	0	0
99	Tilbury Ferry – Tilbury Station	Ensignbus ¹⁸	2	0	2	0	0	0
100	Basildon – Grays – Lakeside	First Essex	3	1	3	1	2	0
200	Basildon – Grays	First Essex	1	0	1	0	0	0
370	Lakeside – Romford	TfL ¹⁹	4	2	4	2	2	2
372	Lakeside – Hornchurch	TfL ²⁰	3	2	3	2	2	2
X80	Chafford Hundred – Bluewater	Ensignbus	1	1	1	1	1	0

¹⁴ Evening service provided by service 77/77A

¹⁵ Part route only

¹⁶ Daytime service provided by services 22 and 73

¹⁷ Two buses per hour at peak times

¹⁸ Supported by c2c as required by the Essex Thameside rail franchise

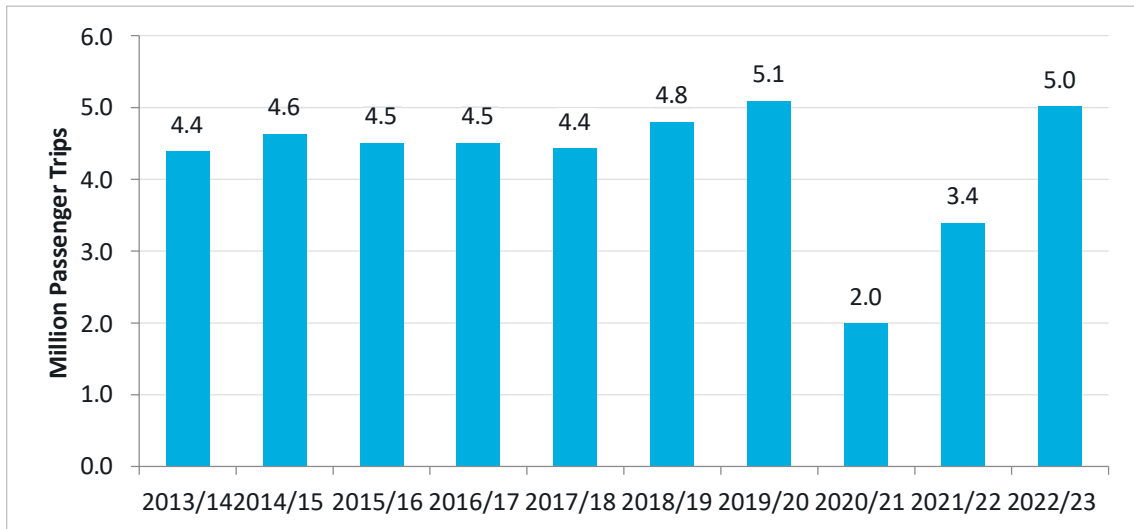
¹⁹ Currently contracted to Arriva

²⁰ Currently contracted to Stagecoach

Patronage

2.2 The number of passenger trips recorded in the borough by DfT bus statistics had shown a rise in the two years prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The numbers are shown in Figure 2.3.

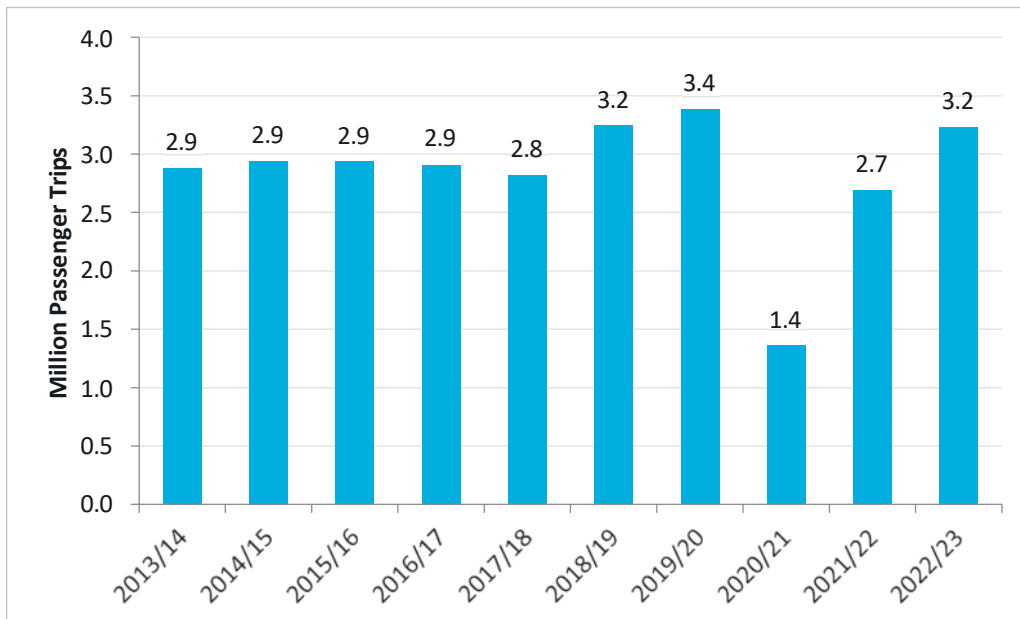
Figure 2.3: Annual Bus Passenger Trips (2013-2023)



Source: DfT Bus Statistics (Passenger journeys on local bus services by local authority)

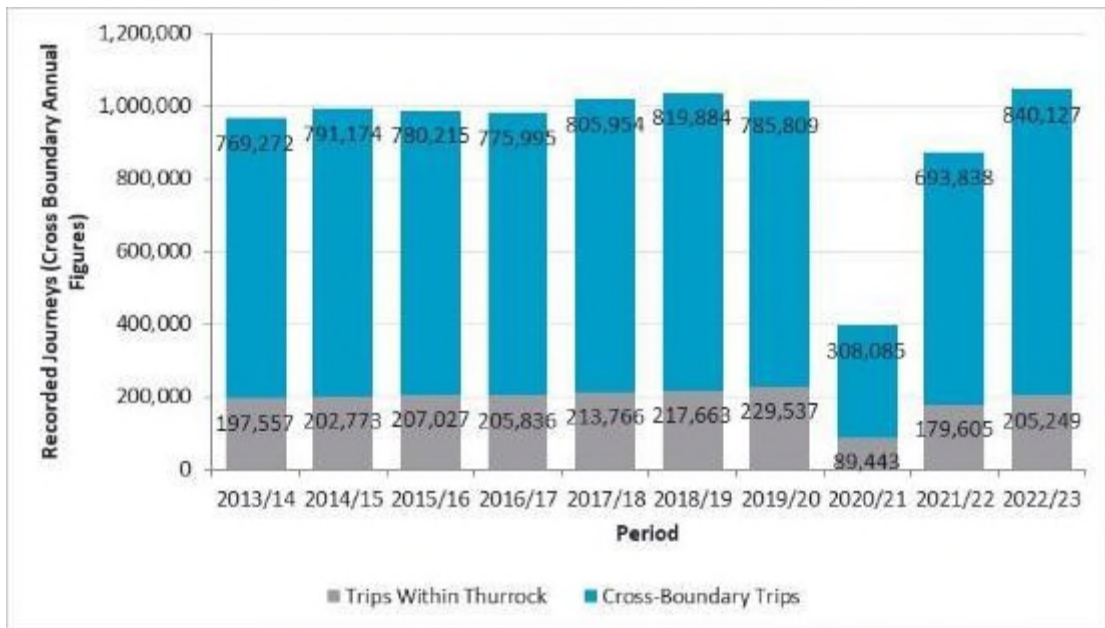
2.3 Breaking this down by operator, the corresponding graph for Ensignbus is shown in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Annual Ensignbus Bus Passenger Trips (2013-2023)



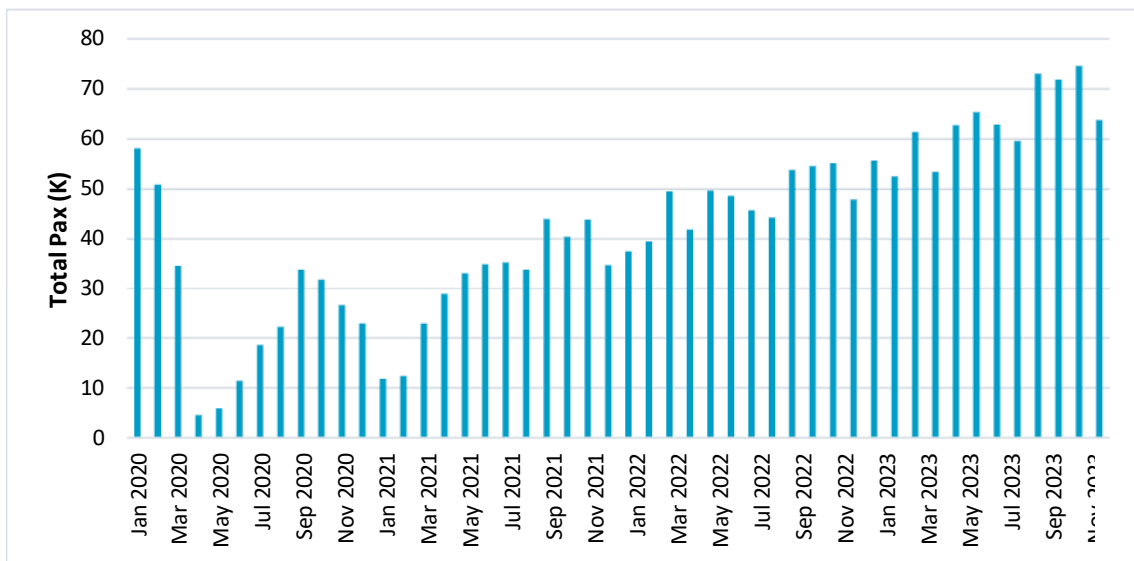
2.4 Data from TfL shows that the recorded journeys on its three routes into Thurrock have remained largely constant. The results for the **whole** routes are disaggregated by trips within Thurrock and cross-boundary trips and shown in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: Annual TfL Recorded Journeys on routes 347, 370 and 372 (2013-2023)



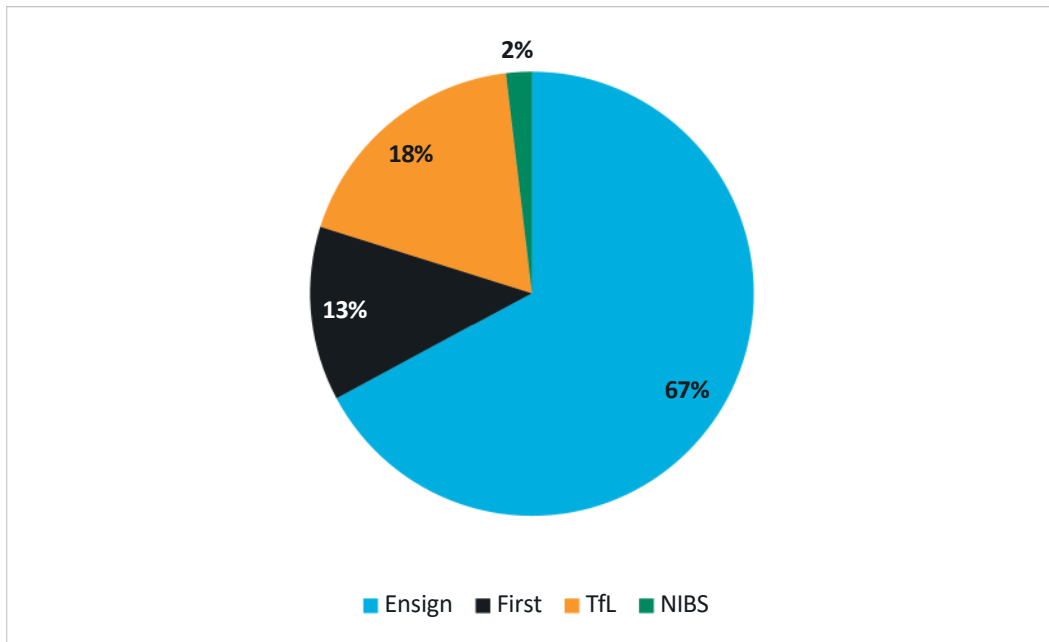
2.5 First Essex has provided a display of graphs for demand in Thurrock over the pandemic period shown in Figure 2.6. A detailed monthly total passenger shown in Figure 2.6 has also been provided by First Essex which shows a similar story of slow recovery from 2019 levels (further details on impacts of Covid-19 are outlined below).

Figure 2.6: First Bus Monthly Passenger Patronage in Thurrock Jan 2020 to Dec 2023



2.6 Based on the passenger numbers above, it is possible estimate the market share in Thurrock between the operators as shown in Figure 2.7.

Figure 2.7: Estimated operator market share by passenger trips within Thurrock (2023)



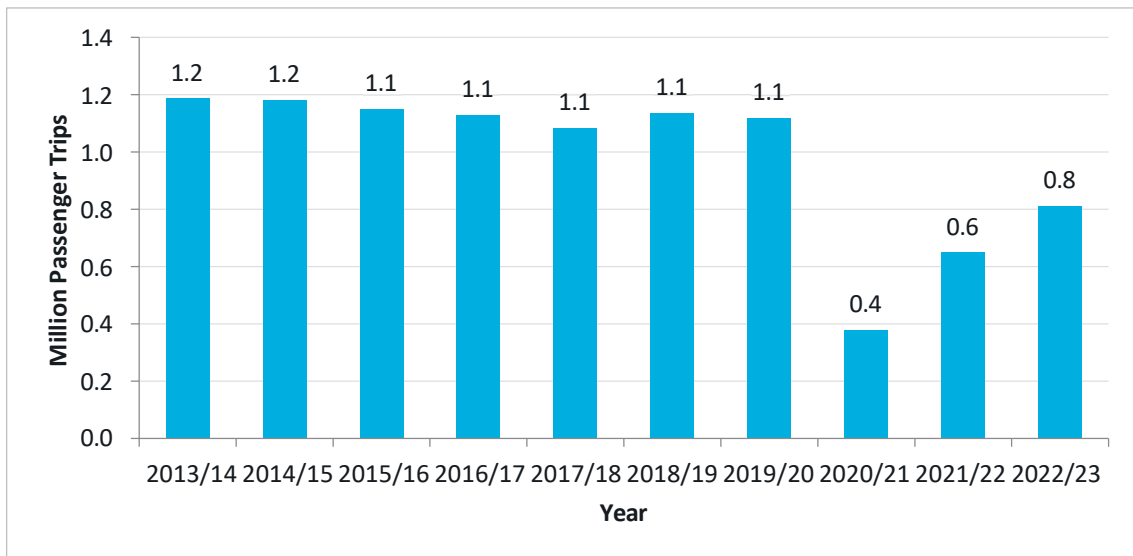
Source: Steer Analysis

Concessions

2.7

Pre-pandemic trips made by concessionary pass holders remained broadly constant. The numbers travelling are shown in Figure 2.8. The steep fall seen in 2020/21 is due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic at the beginning of the year. The rise in female retirement age (and therefore the qualification for a bus pass) potentially could also have had an impact, however, up to then no discernible effect was visible. As of end of March 2024, there are 21,797 concessionary pass holders in Thurrock of which 19,664 are older persons. The remainder are those with a registered disability, 764 of whom have a Companion pass.

Figure 2.8: Annual Concessionary Pass Holder Bus Passenger Trips (2013-2021)



Source: DfT Bus Statistics (Elderly and disabled concessionary passenger journeys on local bus services by local authority)

Passenger Charter

2.8 All bus operators in Thurrock maintain and publicise a Customer Charter, or equivalent policy, which, as a minimum:

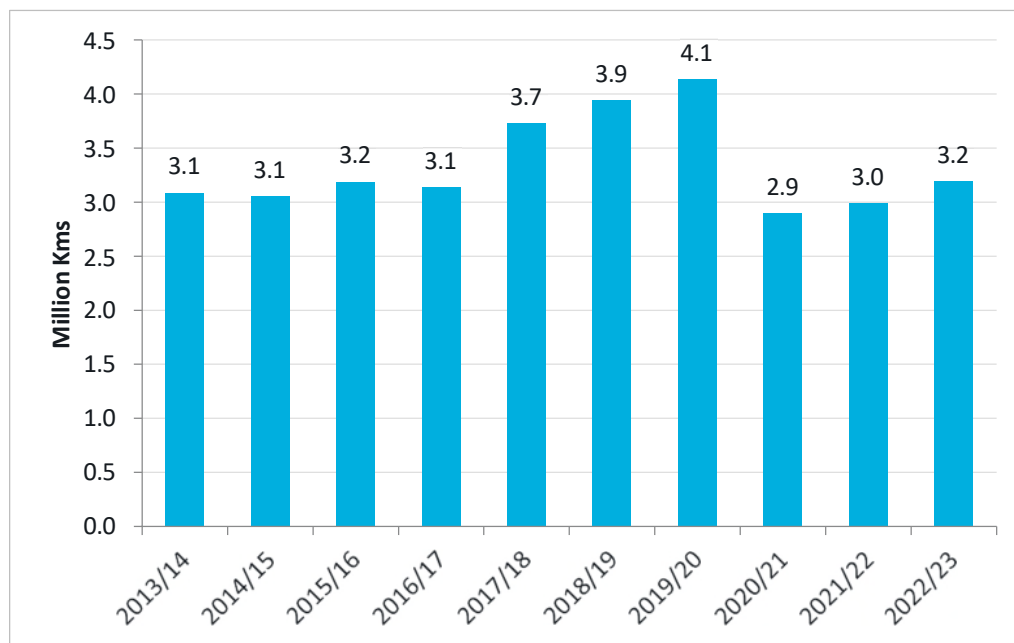
- i. encourages customer feedback, both positive and negative, in a variety of channels;
- ii. promises to acknowledge receipt of any customer communication at the earliest opportunity;
- iii. provides an appropriate full reply to the customer in a reasonable timeframe;
- iv. offers refunds and/or compensation if appropriate; and
- v. undertakes to use customer feedback as part of their review processes for future service improvements.

2.9 Thurrock Council has an ambition to work with operators to develop a single Customer Charter, which is identified in Objective F2 in Chapter 5 to align with the above and the Thurrock Enhanced Partnership.

Mileage

2.10 The mileage operated was rising pre-pandemic. Mileage is now increasing but is still well below pre-pandemic levels. The changes are shown in Figure 2.9.

Figure 2.9: Annual Bus Kilometres (2013-2023)



Analysis of DfT Bus Statistics Bus0208

Supported Services

2.11 A total of six services operating within Thurrock are not commercial, supported by public authorities as stated below.

2.12 One service is funded by Thurrock Council:

- (a) 201 linking Stanford le Hope, Fobbing, Basildon.
- (b) Thurrock Council is tendering an additional service for commencement in Summer 2024. This will link East Tilbury and Horndon on the Hill, funded through BSIP+

2.13 TfL services are also not commercially operated, but are contracted by TfL (with no financial support from Thurrock Council). These are:

- 347 linking Romford with Ockendon;
- 370 linking Romford with Lakeside;
- 372 linking Hornchurch with Lakeside;

2.14 Two services are fully supported by Essex County Council.²¹ These are:

- 269 linking Grays with Brentwood; and
- 565 linking Bulphan with Brentwood.

2.15 Supported services represent approximately 14% of bus mileage in the East of England area in 2023. The services supported by public authorities represent 15% of bus mileage in Thurrock in 2023.²²

2.16 The funding spent on supported services within Thurrock has declined significantly over the past 10 years, as illustrated in Figure 2.10.

Figure 2.10: Funding for Supported Bus Services: 2011 – 2024



Source: Thurrock Council

2.17 This has resulted in not all areas of the borough being served by a bus service, with the communities of East Tilbury, Horndon on the Hill and West Tilbury without any bus provision. Following the withdrawal of services in September 2023, those communities without bus provision are being impacted with accessibility issues to key services and facilities.

Reliability

2.18 The Traffic Commissioners set a reliability target that 95% of services should be within a window of tolerance of one minute early and five minutes late. Table 2.3 shows how reliability levels are worse than pre-pandemic across all operators and most operators do not reach the reliability target.

²¹ These services are at risk of withdrawal by Essex CC in July 2024.

²² **BUS02 mi: Vehicle distance travelled (miles)**

Table 2.3: Bus reliability by operator (2019-2023)²³

	Ensign	First Essex	Nibs	Stephen-sons	TFL	Overall
2019-2020	94.5%	77.7%	94.3%	100%	94.3%	91.2%
2020-2021	97.6%	93.6%	98.9%	100%	99.4%	96.9%
2021-2022	95.8%	86.4%	92.5%	94.7%	91.3%	93.1%
2022-2023	89.4%	72.1%	89.6%	96.9%	83.8%	85.7%

- 2.19 The general characteristic of bus service time keeping in Thurrock is that most services run punctually much of the time; but that any significant disruption the adjoining trunk roads (M25 and A13) has a disproportionate effect on congestion on the conventional street network in Thurrock. In extreme circumstances this can result in buses running many hours late. Much of the good timekeeping is delivered by the operators adding contingency time in their timetables and terminus buffer times. This “padding” slows down journey times, making the bus less attractive to passengers and adds to the operators’ costs.
- 2.20 In addition, service X80 – linking Lakeside and Bluewater shopping centre in Kent – is particularly prone to disruption as it uses the Dartford Crossing to cross the River Thames.
- 2.21 In recent years, First Essex has experienced lower punctuality levels on its longer routes crossing into Essex. As a consequence, it has split these routes so that they only link Thurrock with Basildon. Through passengers (for example to/from Chelmsford) now have to change buses in Basildon.
- 2.22 Ensignbus prides itself in never cancelling a bus journey for reasons within its control, such as unavailability of bus drivers or vehicles (though there are occasions though where delays or closures on the highway network may result in the service needing to be paused). This is achieved by having spare buses and drivers available at all times. This no doubt adds to Ensignbus’ operating costs which, in turn, may be reflected in its fare levels, particularly should the £2 fare cap be removed.
- 2.23 Ensignbus cites examples where planned bus journey times have had to be lengthened in recent years to maintain punctuality and provide some resilience from delays. For example;
- Service 44 08:30 from Lakeside to Grays: In 2010, morning peak services took 29 minutes; today these services take 33 minutes (a 14% worsening);
 - Service 73 Lakeside to Grays: in 2010, morning peak services took 10 minutes; today these services take 14 minutes (a 40% worsening);
 - Service 100 Basildon to Lakeside: In 2010, morning peak services took 57 minutes; today these services take 63 minutes (a 7% worsening); and
 - Service 370 from Romford to Lakeside at 09:04: in 2010, morning peak services took 58 minutes; today these services take 62 minutes (a 7% worsening).
- 2.24 These examples, together with the inability to reliably operate service 77 all day (paragraph 2.7) are indicative of the need for more measures in Thurrock to improve bus service reliability.

²³ Data sourced from combination of physical on-site monitoring and web-based tracking software

Bus Stops

- 2.25 There are a total of 612 bus stops in Thurrock. 140 of these are currently equipped with a passenger waiting shelter.
- 2.26 TfL has noted that the condition of some of the bus stop infrastructure is of a lower quality than generally provided in Greater London, such as kerb heights, lighting availability and information.

Bus Priority

- 2.27 Bus Priority infrastructure provision is limited in Thurrock. Currently there are only three areas with significant bus priority measures;
- Askews Farm Lane/London Road, South Stifford. Eastbound, close to the junction for Askews Farm Lane:
 - Section 1: 35 m (Figure 2.11)
 - Section 2: 35 m (Figure 2.12)
 - High Road, North Stifford (next to the North Stifford interchange):
 - Eastbound: 24 m (Figure 2.13)
 - Westbound: 21 m (Figure 2.14)
 - Stifford Road, entering Aveley: 44 m (Figure 2.15)
 - There is also a developer provided bus link between Meadow Drive and Park Lane in Aveley. However this is not in use at this time as no buses currently serve this residential area.
- 2.28 These are generally in place to allow full size buses to use roads that have physical 6'6" width restrictions. Illustrations of these sections are provided in the figures below.

Figure 2.11: Askews Farm Lane/London Road, South Stifford, Section 1



Source: Thurrock Council

Figure 2.12: Askews Farm Lane/London Road, South Stifford, Section 2



Source: Thurrock Council

Figure 2.13: High Road, North Stifford (next to the North Stifford interchange); Eastbound



Source: Thurrock Council

Figure 2.14: High Road, North Stifford (next to the North Stifford interchange); Westbound



Source: Thurrock Council

Figure 2.15: Stifford Road, entering Aveley



Source: Thurrock Council

Parking

- 2.29 In 2021 Thurrock Council adopted a Parking Policy and Strategy for Thurrock. The three tables presented below show the current number of parking spaces across the borough and their distribution.

Table 2.4: Total On-Street and Off-Street Spaces (2021)

Location	Number of Spaces
Marked bays for off-street parking	1,139
Marked bays for on-street parking	3,086
On-street parking spaces not marked out as individual bays	1,836

Source: Parking Policy and Strategy, Thurrock Council (2021)

Table 2.5: Car Parks in Grays (2021)

Location	Number of Spaces
Darnley Road (off-street short-stay)	30
Argent Street (off-street long-stay)	42
Cromwell Road (off-street long-stay)	60
Crown Road (off-street long-stay)	96
Station House, opposite rail station main entrance (off-street long-stay)	10
Grays Beach, Thames Road (off-street long-stay)	182
Grays Shopping Centre Multi-storey car park	700
Morrison's supermarket	540
Grays Station	98

Source: Parking Policy and Strategy, Thurrock Council (2021)

Table 2.6: Car Parks Outside Grays (2018)

Location	Number of Spaces	Charges
Gordon Road (Grover Walk), Corringham	112	Free
Gordon Road (Police station), Corringham	53	Free
Giffords Cross, Corringham	78	Free
Defoe Parade, Chadwell St Mary	56	Free
Lodge Lane, Grays (Socketts Heath)	56	Free
Tamarisk Road, South Ockendon	27	Pay
Canterbury Parade, South Ockendon	100	Pay

Source: Parking Policy and Strategy, Thurrock Council (2021)

- 2.30 The high availability of parking, and the price of short-stay parking across Thurrock presents a challenge to encourage modal shift away from the private car. Car parking for up to four hours is at most £3.20 in Grays town centre (£6 for all day), with much cheaper or free parking provision elsewhere across the borough. Key destinations, such as Lakeside offer free parking, and Morrisons in Grays enables users to reclaim their parking fees if spending over £5 instore. Thurrock residents are used to having low costs associated with parking in the borough, with residents permits as little as £20 per annum.

- 2.31 The total direct cost of parking enforcement in Thurrock in 2022/23 was £1,096,080. Adding in the administration, infrastructure and capital costs, this figure comes to £1,222,897. However, parking enforcement remains a net generator of income for the area – in 2021/22 once the income from charges is considered, the net income from parking is £75,993.²⁴

Current Staffing

- 2.32 Thurrock has four key staff members working on bus related activities in the Thurrock Passenger Transport Unit (PTU). Their job titles and roles are explained in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7: Staff working on Public Transportation

Title	Task	Time per week spent on public transport
Strategic Transport Manager	Transport policy, road safety education, passenger transport, modal shift.	25%
Passenger Transport Manager (Team Leader)	Passenger transport	100%
Transport Officer	Public transport	100%
Information and Monitoring Assistant	Public transport, other	90%

- 2.33 The PTU provides daily customer service on a variety of issues ranging from requests for new bus stops through to quality of service and safety of passengers, and provision of concessionary passes. The PTU also works in connection with Thurrock’s Procurement team for the tendering and deployment of contracts for local supported bus services. These are invariably large-scale projects which can take some months to complete.
- 2.34 PTU’s Information and Monitoring Assistant regularly inspects and checks local bus services at certain areas/points within the borough. A total of 23 local bus routes are monitored at 11 sites every month. Monitoring sites include (but are not limited to) passenger interchanges at Grays and Lakeside Bus Stations, Socketts Heath Parade, Purfleet and Ockendon Rail stations. The team monitors most bus shelters and stops within the borough and carries out condition checks to ensure these are functioning sufficiently (sample images of the types of shelters which can be found in the Thurrock area are in Appendix B). Any vandalism or substantial damage is reported to a maintenance contractor for remedial action. Any small-scale maintenance required is usually completed in-house.
- 2.35 Bus services are monitored for their punctuality and to ensure their timetable remains reliable. Additionally, operational issues are checked and reported if necessary.

Changing travel patterns

- 2.36 From March 2020, passenger numbers were significantly hit by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. It can be seen that passenger demand has almost returned to pre-Covid levels (see Figure 2.3), travel patterns have changed, with increased levels of working from home reducing traditional commute trips, particularly on Fridays, and increased levels of off-peak travel. The reduction in commuter traffic, particularly into London will have had a significant knock-on effect on Ensignbus patronage feeding into Grays and Chafford Hundred stations.
- 2.37 The opportunities provided by enforced lockdown for more people to work from home has also meant a new way of working away from the office, negating the traditional commute. The reduction in rail commuter travel has had a knock-on effect on commuters using the bus to access railway stations. At the time of this update, though patronage levels are nearing pre-

²⁴ [Thurrock Council - Annual parking report 2023](#)

Covid levels, patterns of usage remain different, with reduced levels of commuting and increases in travel at interpeak, evenings and weekends, due to changes in travel habits. To some extent patronage increases have been driven by the £2.00 fare cap, making bus journeys a more attractive option, however, moving forward, there are concerns that once bus users are exposed to fares with lower levels of subsidy, patronage may drop again.

- 2.38 Increases in running costs impact on the profitability of operators, and the viability of their routes. Due to the way bus services are funded at present, the Thurrock network is supported by Government and/or Local Authority funding to maintain services, and is likely to be the case for the foreseeable future. Thus funding may come through direct financial support to procure the service (e.g. 201 service to Fobbing) or through grants made available direct to operators to help offset expenditure such as Bus Service Operators Grant.
- 2.39 The measures identified in the next sections of this BSIP, if funded, would further financially support services across Thurrock, though supporting these services and operators is key to making services sustainable and with minimal needs for funding support.

3 Improvement programme to 2024/25

Overview

- 3.1 This section of the plan provides an overview of the Improvement Programme for 2024/25 and the areas this will focus on. These programmes have been developed through collaboration with bus operators in Thurrock and examination of the information in the preceding chapters. Ultimately this means that the plans for improvement here are based upon a detailed understanding of the local geography, developed through experience, and quantitative analysis.
- 3.2 In particular, stakeholders identified a need for more comprehensive timetabling on existing routes. A primary objective of BSIP's is to offer bus services over a larger part of the day and during more days of the week; as can be seen in the table of frequent services (Table 2.2). While there is some need to provide additional routes, this was not seen as a particularly key priority by stakeholders. As progression is made in modal shift, this should increase the viability of additional services.
- 3.3 This BSIP is therefore focussed on providing higher levels of service, thus providing a more attractive service, ultimately generating additional patronage, to ensure that service improvements can be maintained without public financial support. This aligns with latest DfT's BSIP guidance, which states that BSIPs should "describe in outline how LTAs and operators in an area can achieve the overarching goal of the National Bus Strategy – **to grow bus patronage: both to build it back after the pandemic and then to increase it and raise buses' mode share.**"²⁵ This can be considered the ultimate aim of this BSIP, and all elements of it build in this direction.
- 3.4 This chapter is built around 'Proposals for Improvement' section of Chapter 2 of the UK National Bus Strategy: Bus Service Improvement Plans Guidance.²⁶

Public Engagement

- 3.5 For the 2021 BSIP, public engagement was undertaken to identify the priorities for improvement via an online survey promoted on bus services.
- 3.6 There are few structural changes within the 2024 BSIP, so this consultation has not been repeated, through the council will endeavour to undertake further public engagement ahead of the next BSIP refresh. However, it is material to report that the key highlights from the 2021 consultation were the following:
- a higher level of service frequency is the key requirement;

²⁵ pp. 12 (Emphasis Added); [National Bus Strategy: Bus Service Improvement Plans Guidance to local authorities and bus operators](#), Department for Transport, May 2021

²⁶ *Ibid.*

- concerns raised about the effect of a probable health service reorganisation (a network of GP “superhubs” was previously proposed but has subsequently been revised) on accessing healthcare;
- concerns on the effect of changes in educational opportunities; and
- shortages of bus stands at Grays Bus Station.

3.7 Information received into the Council via the engagement portal allowed for the collection of a rich database of responses. High level responses showed:

- 70% of respondents use the bus at least monthly, however only 60% of respondents perceived themselves to be regular bus users;
- two thirds of respondents had used the bus within the previous month, and the majority of these respondents had used the bus in the past week;
- of the 30% of respondents who hadn’t used the bus in the last six months, all had not used the bus prior to the first national lockdown in March 2020;
- the primary purpose for using the bus by respondents was to undertake journeys for utility, recreation and leisure, with shopping, for leisure, and meeting friends and family as the three most popular answers. Travelling for work was the next most popular answer;
- bus users were most likely to purchase their ticket via contactless means (52%), with concessionary fare travel the next popular (35%). Only 20% of respondents used cash to purchase their tickets;
- return journey tickets were the most likely purchase (37%) followed by single journey (17%) and Day and Monthly passes (15% each);
- there was a mixed response towards ticket pricing. While some responses identified that prices were reasonable (28%), especially those as part of a multi-day pass, there was a perception that prices were too high or expensive by nearly half of respondents (47%);
- safety on buses was of minimal concern to respondents, with 100% of bus users expressing that they felt safe using the bus (84% always, 16% sometimes). Only one respondent from non-users stated they did not feel safe using the bus, with 97% perceiving buses to be safe or somewhat safe. Concerns raised were related to mask wearing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, behaviour of school children following the end of the school day or anti-social behaviour. Two comments related to physical safety – specific to trips and falls. Security was a greater concern for non-users;
- when asked about punctuality of buses, 80% of respondents had a favourable view, with 4% stating always and 76% stating usually. A similar response was seen amongst non-users, though 33% viewed services as punctual and reliable and 46% stating somewhat;
- service frequency saw 45% of bus users state that services did not run frequently enough in Thurrock. Amongst non-users this increased to 53% stating no, and 38% stating somewhat;
- nearly two thirds of bus users felt comfortable being able to access bus information. Over 50% of non-users also stated they would feel comfortable accessing information to enable them to use the bus for their next journey;
- over 75% of bus users did feel there was insufficient infrastructure to help them use the bus; and
- almost all respondents (98%) were residents of the borough, and only two (2%) stated they lived outside Thurrock but worked or studied in the borough.

3.8 Through this public engagement exercise, the Council identified an opportunity to remain engaged with respondents. Two thirds of respondents were happy to engage in the future with the Council to get further views about buses in particular, and over 70% wished to be

engaged with the new upcoming Transport Strategy, though only 40% wanted to contribute to focus groups to discuss other transport related issues within the borough.

- 3.9 Specific to the BSIP, 88% of participants in the online public engagement portal wished to be informed of the publication of the Thurrock Bus Service Improvement Plan. These respondents were informed of the publication of the BSIP in 2021.

Transport Focus

- 3.10 Research undertaken on behalf of Transport Focus in 2023 considered results for key metrics in relation to bus services in Thurrock. This included:

- how satisfied were you with your bus journey?
- how satisfied were you with the value for money of your journey?
- what had the biggest influence on your rating of the value for money?

- 3.11 Considering satisfaction with the bus journey, 84% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied, compared to 6% who were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied.

- 3.12 Considering satisfaction with value for money, 66% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied, compared to 20% who were very unsatisfied or unsatisfied.

- 3.13 The three areas of biggest influences on rating for value for money were:

- the cost for the distance travelled (24%);
- the cost of fares now compared to what they were 12 months ago (16%); and
- the cost of bus fares here compared to those in other places (13%).

- 3.14 These results indicate that though only a small proportion of respondents indicate dissatisfaction with the bus journey, levels of dissatisfaction with value for money are much higher, with a fifth of respondents feeling dissatisfied.

Interventions 2024/25

- 3.15 The following interventions are planned for financial year 2024/25, funded through BSIP+ and grouped into four key areas:

- bus priority infrastructure (BPI);
- bus service support (BSS);
- bus strategy support (BST); and
- undertaking Bus Passenger Satisfaction surveys to monitor performance and perceptions of performance (BPS).

Bus priority infrastructure (BPI)

- 3.16 A study will be funded to consider what interventions could address journey time and reliability issues in Thurrock. Through analysis of data considering bus journey times throughout the day over a period of time, combined with bus frequency data, evidence of pinch points in the network will be obtained to further support local authority and operator views. These pinch points will be reviewed to consider junction or link-based interventions to improve journey speeds and reliability in areas which will deliver the greatest impact.

- 3.17 The Council has estimated this study will cost approximately £50,000.

Objective BPI1:

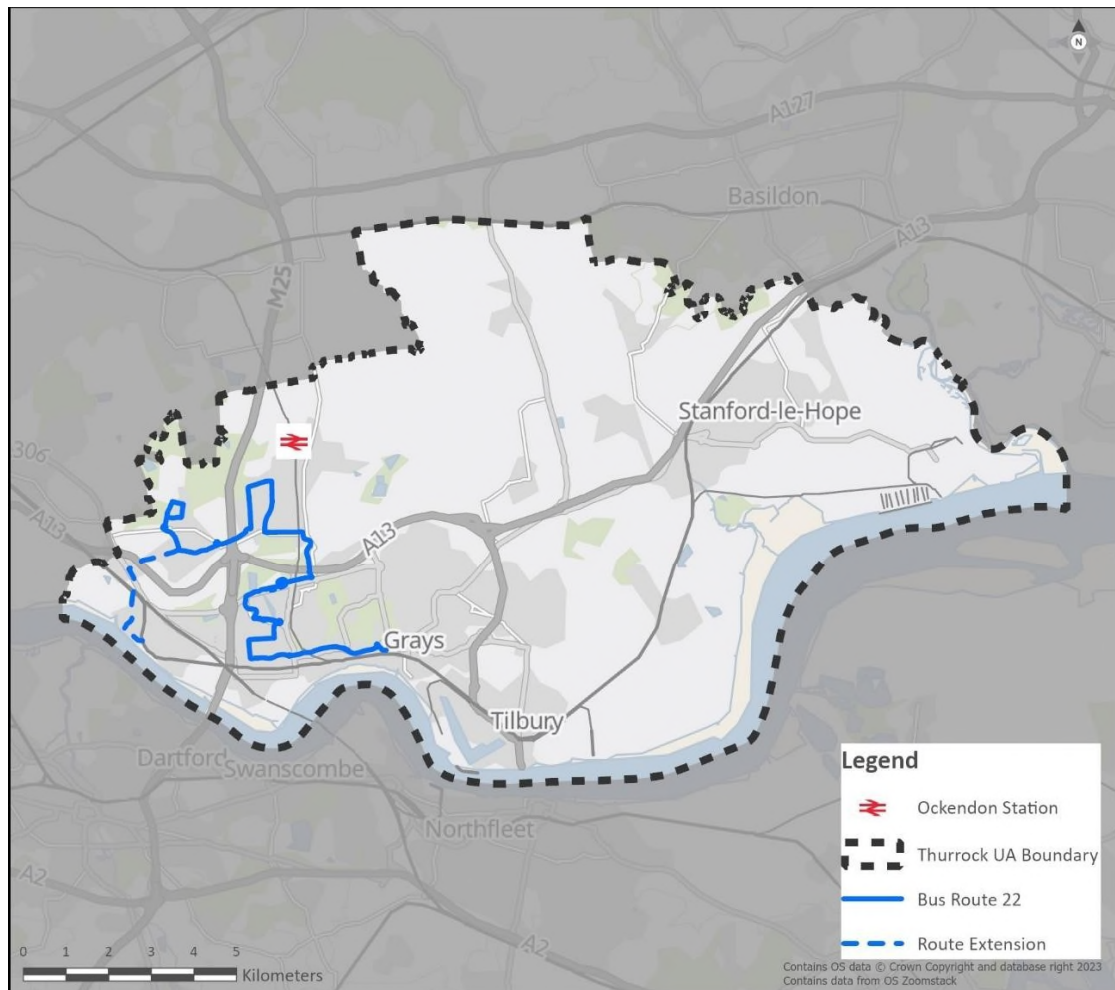
To identify infrastructure interventions to improve service reliability and journey times.

Bus service support (BSS)

Enhancement of the 22 service in line with additional S106 contribution

- 3.18 Service 22 (Figure 3.1) links Aveley, Lakeside and Grays. It runs every 20 minutes, Mondays to Fridays, every 30 minutes on Saturdays and hourly on Sundays. It is part of Ensignbus' core commercial network. However, the bulk of the Thurrock core network runs at 30-minute intervals, leaving service 22 (and the 100, see below) as an inconsistent outlier. Improving to a 15-minute service frequency will provide a consistency in service levels into Grays, the main urban centre in the South of Thurrock. In addition one bus per hour will be extended to serve Purfleet railway station via the Ocado facility on Purfleet Road, Aveley. This link was lost following withdrawal of the 11 bus service in September 2023.

Figure 3.1: 22 Bus Route



Thurrock BISP

22 Bus Route and it's Extension

steer

Scale: 1:174,331
Date: 25/04/2024
Creator: BBarik

Path: U:\London\Projects\240\746\GIS\MAPPING\ARC/INFO\Thurrock BISP\Thurrock BISP-Bus Routes.aprx

- 3.19 To achieve this improvement, an additional two vehicles will be required. A net cost estimate of approximately £225,000 per annum has been projected. 50% of this contribution will be sought from S106 development contributions. This support has been agreed for a 12-month period.

Objective BSS1:

To improve the Service 22's frequency to 15-minute intervals, Mondays to Fridays, and from every 30 minutes to every 20 minutes on Saturdays, with an hourly extension to Purfleet railway station.

Funding support for the 33 Saturday service

- 3.20 Service 33 links Grays and Chafford Hundred Station via Drake Road, Chafford Hundred Medical Centre and The Sandmartin. It runs every 30 minutes Monday to Friday and hourly on a Saturday. It is operated by Ensignbus. BSIP+ funding being is being used for a 12-month period to support ongoing delivery of the 33 Saturday service which Ensign were considering withdrawing due to reduced patronage. This equates to £300 per day. (£15,6000 total support)

Objective BSS2:

To financially support service 33 to help maintain Saturday running of the route to support its long-term viability.

Funding Support for the 88 Service

- 3.21 Service 88 links Stifford Clays with Grays and runs hourly Monday to Saturdays with additional peak buses during the week. Due to low patronage, Ensignbus is seeking to make amendments to enhance the longer-term viability of the route. Funding support is being offered through the BSIP+ programme to support this transition for a 12-month period. This funding equates to £300 per day. Without this assistance, Ensignbus was considering withdrawing this service, which would leave Thurrock Hospital unserved by a bus service, alongside large areas of residential communities in the north of Grays. The total annual support is £93,600 per annum.

Objective BSS3:

To financially support service 88 to help implement changes to the route to support its long-term viability.

Pilot bus service in unserved rural communities

- 3.22 Following the withdrawal of previously supported bus services in September 2023, Thurrock Council is tendering a pilot bus service to support rural communities, namely: East Tilbury and Horndon on the Hill – areas which currently have no bus transport provision. The council has sought the views of the market to identify how these communities can be best served with a service that can become sustainable without long-term subsidy through engagement and a tender exercise. This service is projected to go live in August 2024 and be funded through BSIP+ for a minimum period of 15 months. This will cost £200,000 per annum.

Objective BSS4:

Procurement of trial rural bus service to support communities which have been left unserved by withdrawal of previously supported bus services

Bus Strategy Support (BST)

BSIP and EP Resource Support

- 3.23 Securing short-term in-house support for resource to proceed with the refresh of the Enhanced Partnership in line with requirements to include BSIP+ measures, as well as to implement and develop measures in the Thurrock BSIP, and commission a new Bus Strategy and MRT/BRT scoping document which threads between the new Thurrock Transport Strategy and Vision, LTP 4 and Local Plan to support future BSIP measures. This resource is envisioned for an initial three-to-six-month period. An indicative sum of £50,000 has been allocated for this support.

Objective BST1

Recruiting short-term in-house support to progress the BSIP and update EP and commission and oversee the production of a new Thurrock Bus Strategy

New Thurrock Bus Strategy

- 3.24 Developing a new strategy to support the future direction of bus and passenger transportation in the borough, to feed into the respective Thurrock Local Plan, Transport Strategy and Vision, and LTP4 above, and to guide future iterations of the BSIP below. This strategy will also set ambitions for MRT/BRT proposals. An indicative sum of £50,000 has been allocated for a new bus strategy.

Objective BST2

Commission and adoption of a Thurrock Bus Strategy to feed into a wider suite of transport policies to shape future bus provision across and beyond the borough,

Mass Rapid Transit/Bus Rapid Transit Scoping Note

- 3.25 The draft Thurrock Transport Vision 2050 sets out ambitious plans for a connected MRT/BRT programme both within and extending beyond the Thurrock borough boundary, connecting with the existing Fastrack network in north Kent, as well as extending into neighbouring districts within Essex, enabling high quality connections to key employment sites within Thurrock. An initial scoping note is to be commissioned to investigate any proposal for an MRT/BRT proposal in Thurrock and will dovetail with the wider strategic framework. An indicative sum of £50,000 has been allocated for this scoping note.

Objective BST3

Commission of a Mass Rapid Transit/Bus Rapid Transit Scoping Note to inform any future proposals across Thurrock.

Undertaking Bus Passenger Satisfaction surveys to monitor performance and perceptions of performance (BPS)

- 3.26 This will support monitoring of performance and perceptions of performance for end users. The Council has determined a sum of £30,000 is required to complete and report on Bus Passenger Satisfaction within the borough and provide monitoring and evaluation of measures.

Objective BPS1

Undertake a Bus Passenger Satisfaction survey and associated monitoring and develop an evaluation report.

4 Ambitions and proposals for 2025-2030

Overview

4.1 This chapter expands on the areas highlighted in Chapter 3 and provides more specific interventions relating to each of the targeted areas:

- A. Service level and network coverage;
- B. Bus priority;
- C. Lower and simpler fares & ticketing;
- D. Waiting and interchange facilities;
- E. Bus information and network identity;
- F. Bus passenger experience;
- G. Bus fleet;
- H. Accessibility and inclusion; and
- I. Monitoring & Evaluation.

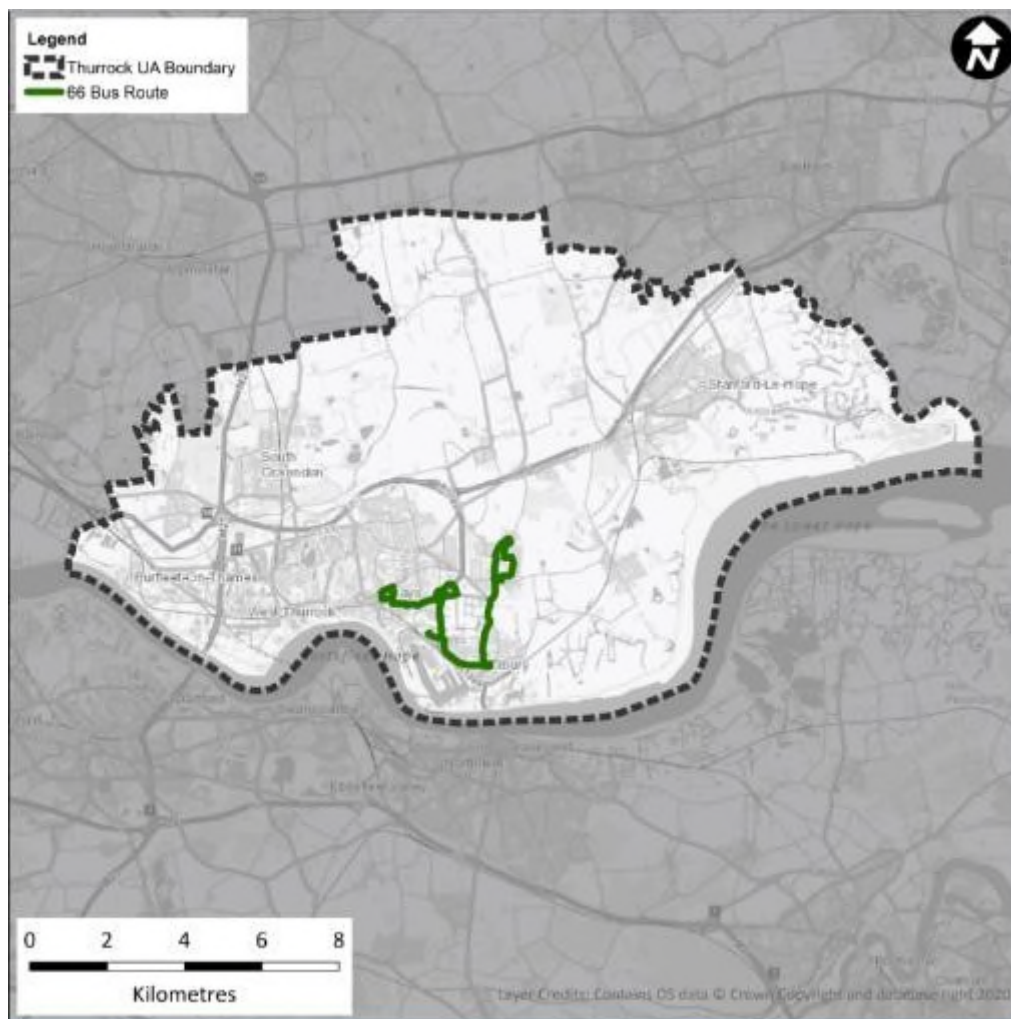
A – Service level and network coverage

4.2 To increase the offer of more frequent and comprehensive services and address areas of poor accessibility as indicated earlier in Figure 2.2, the following specific interventions are proposed.

Service 66

4.3 Service 66 (Figure 4.1) links Grays, Tilbury and Chadwell St Mary. It runs every half hour Mondays to Saturdays and hourly on Sundays. However, there is no evening service after 19:00 and on Saturdays and Sundays there is no service after 17:50. The section of route between Tilbury and Chadwell St Mary is not served on Saturdays and Sundays. It provides vital connectivity for the Tilbury area, including the Amazon warehouse located there. Many of the employees in the Tilbury area do not work 'normal' office hours but work shifts with varying start times and lengths. It is operated commercially by Ensignbus.

Figure 4.1: 66 Bus Route



- 4.4 The council plans to provide an hourly Monday to Saturday evening service (running until 23:00) and that Saturday service is enhanced to include the section between Tilbury and Chadwell St Mary. This will improve connectivity to Tilbury and ensure that a wide range of workers have access to the transport network at most times of day.
- 4.5 In consultation with the service provider, the Council has projected an annual gross cost estimate of approximately £165,000.

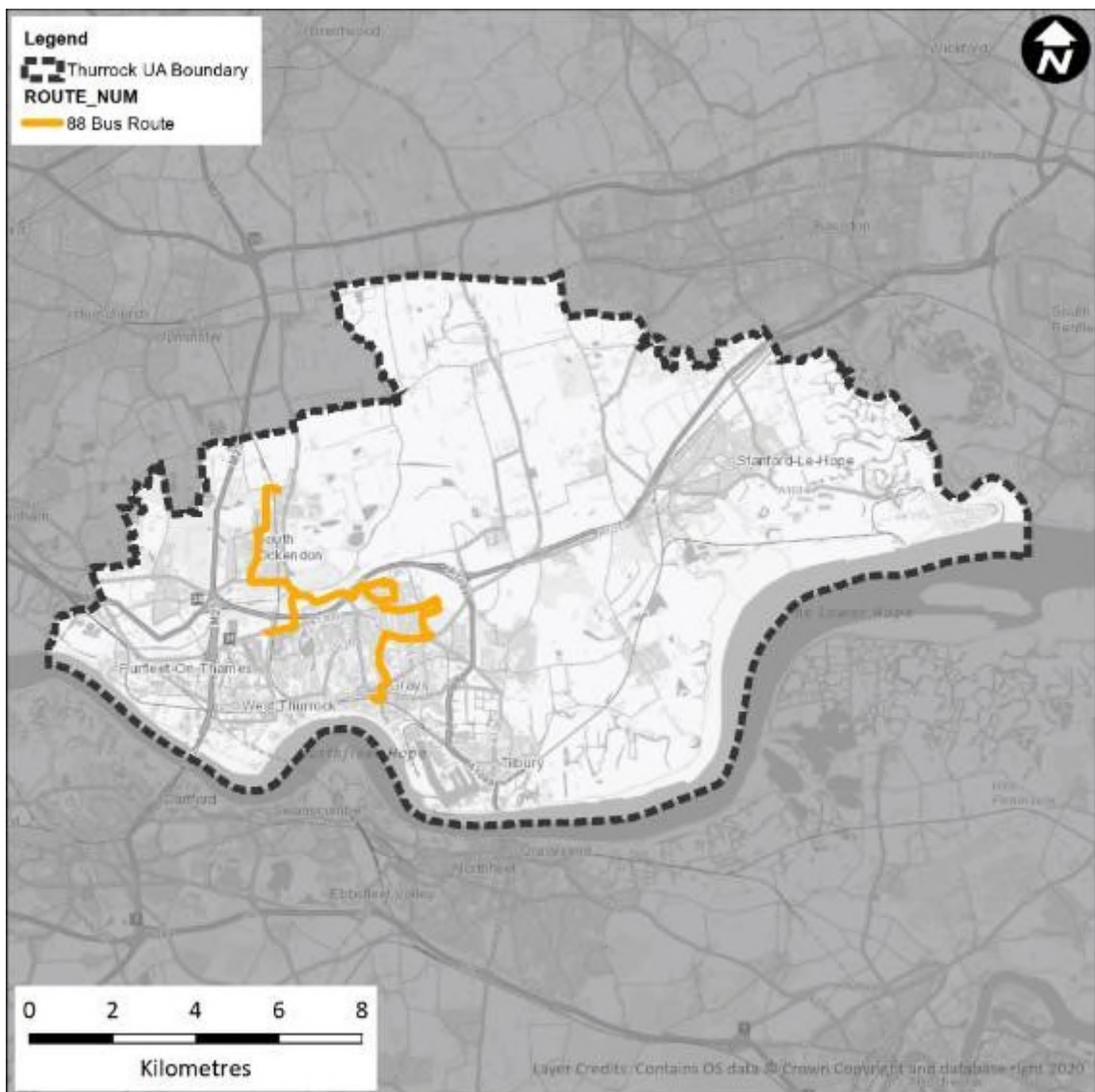
Objective A1

To enhance Service 66 so as to provide an evening service and a Saturday link between Tilbury and Chadwell St Mary.

Service 88

- 4.6 Ockendon station is poorly served by bus, the Council will extend service 88 to link Stifford Clays with Lakeside and Ockendon station. The service will operate between 06:00 and 22:00, Monday to Saturday. In consultation with the service provider, the Council has projected an annual gross cost estimate of approximately £900,000.

Figure 4.2: 88 Bus Route



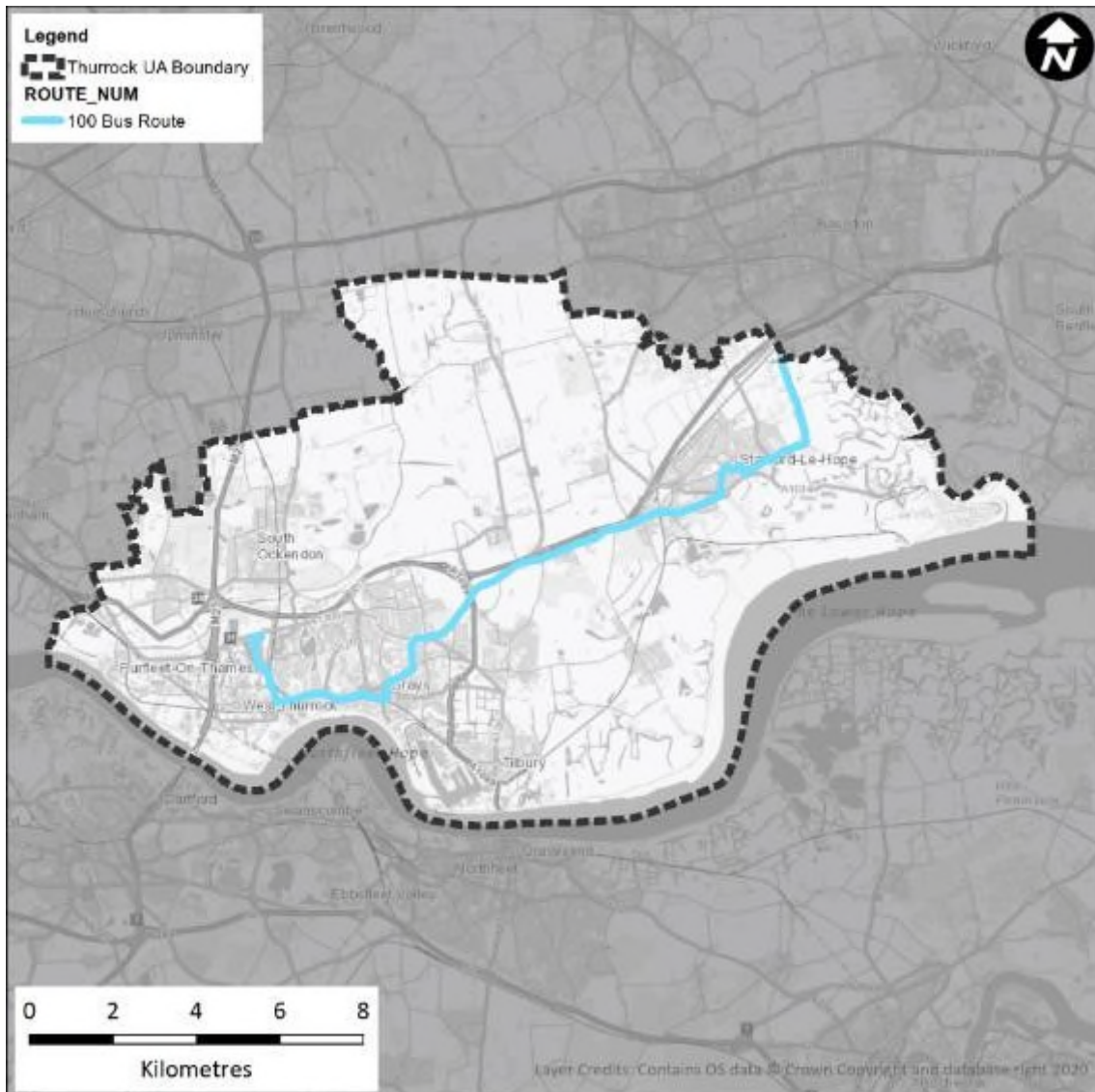
Objective A2

To extend service 88 to link Stifford Clays with Lakeside and Ockendon Station; thereby significantly improving bus access to Ockendon station.

Service 100

- 4.7 Service 100 links Basildon, Basildon Hospital, Stanford-le-Hope, Grays and Lakeside with a Monday to Saturday service frequency of approximately 20 minutes. On Sundays it operates every 30 minutes.

Figure 4.3: 100 Bus Route



- 4.8 It is operated commercially by First. The Council will enhance the Monday to Saturday service to every 15 minutes to provide a “turn up and go” service and that a Sunday evening service is added. In consultation with the service provider, the Council has projected gross cost estimates for this change at approximately £200,000 per annum.

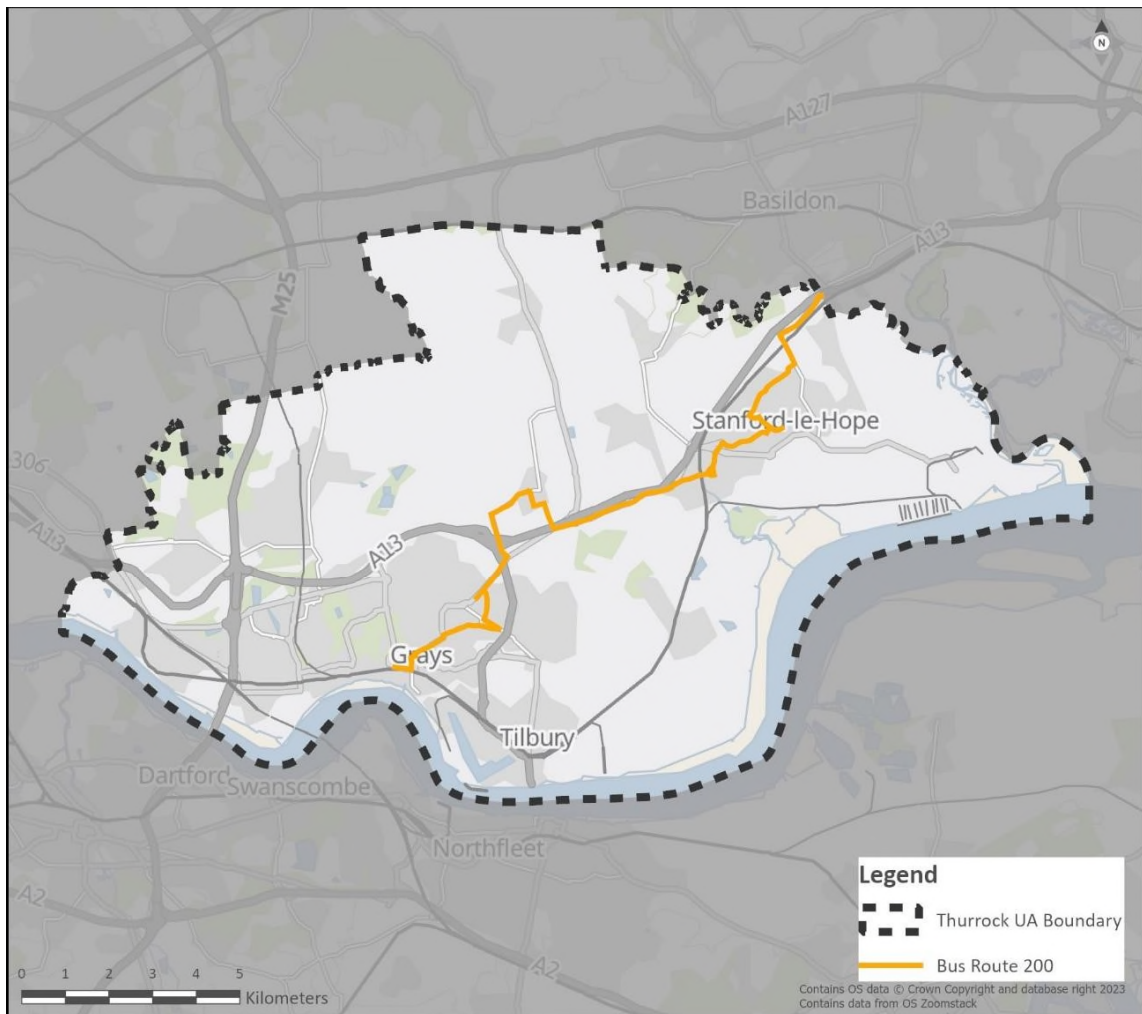
Objective A3

To provide a Monday to Saturday “turn up and go” service and Sunday evening service on route 100.

Service 200

- 4.9 Service 200 (Figure 4.4) runs between Basildon and Grays via Stanford-le-Hope. Up until June 2024, the 200 served Orsett, however this section of the route has now been withdrawn. Orsett has been highlighted in the analysis (Community C in Figure 2.2) as an area with poor connectivity bus services.
- 4.10 Service 200 is provided commercially by First. There is no evening or Sunday service. Extension of the timetable to provide half-hourly running during existing days of operation, and an hourly service on Sundays is desirable.
- 4.11 In consultation with the service provider, the Council has projected an annual gross cost estimate of approximately £375,000.

Figure 4.4: 200 Bus Route



Thurrock BISP

200 Bus Route

steer

Scale: 1:174,331

Date: 16/04/2024

Creator: BBarik

Path: U:\London\Projects\2407\46\03\GIS\MAPPING\A02P00\Thurrock BISP\Thurrock BISP Bus Routes.aprx

Objective A4

To provide a minimum half-hourly Monday to Saturday and hourly Sunday service.

Superbus Services

- 4.12 The decision to split the 100 service into two parts either side of Basildon has removed the direct connection between Thurrock and points north of Basildon including Stansted Airport. This direct connection is desirable to be reinstated to provide direct connectivity between Thurrock and Stansted Airport.
- 4.13 In consultation with the service provider, the Council has projected an annual gross cost estimate of approximately £700,000 per annum (tbc). This proposed service would create an alternative link to Chelmsford via Brentwood and beyond to Stanstead Airport. A further assessment of demand will have to be completed alongside operators to determine the case for this proposal.

Objective A5

To provide a link between Grays, Lakeside, Brentwood, Chelmsford and Stansted Airport on an hourly, daily basis.

Grays – North Stifford Service

- 4.14 A Monday to Saturday service linking Grays, North Stifford, Arisdale Avenue, Ockendon and Lakeside would improve connectivity between these areas of Thurrock.
- 4.15 In consultation with the service provider, the Council has projected an annual gross cost estimate of approximately £200,000.

Objective A6

To provide a link between Grays, North Stifford, Arisdale Avenue, Ockendon and Lakeside on an hourly basis on Monday to Saturday.

Extension of Pilot Bus Service

- 4.16 The council has tendered for a pilot bus service to support those communities which are not currently supported by a bus service, particularly East Tilbury and Horndon on the Hill. While a 15-month period is being funded through the BSIP+ grant, additional funding for a period of three to five years to enable the service to become sustainable would be supportive to the communities. Funding of £200,000 is sought per year for a defined period of no more than five years.

Objective A7

To maintain the link between East Tilbury and Horndon on the Hill with other communities as delivered through the formal procurement process.

Local Bus Services for Remaining Unserved Communities

- 4.17 A bus service to support underserved communities is needed to ensure residents are not left isolated with access to key services and facilities within Thurrock. Currently West Tilbury is not served by any form of bus service, and Bulphan is only served by a bus service heading towards the District of Brentwood. Supporting these communities with buses running 2-3 days per week is expected to cost up to £50,000 per annum each. (£100,000 total per annum).

Objective A8

To provide a rural bus service to support two communities which have been left unserved by withdrawal of previously supported bus services.

B – Bus priority

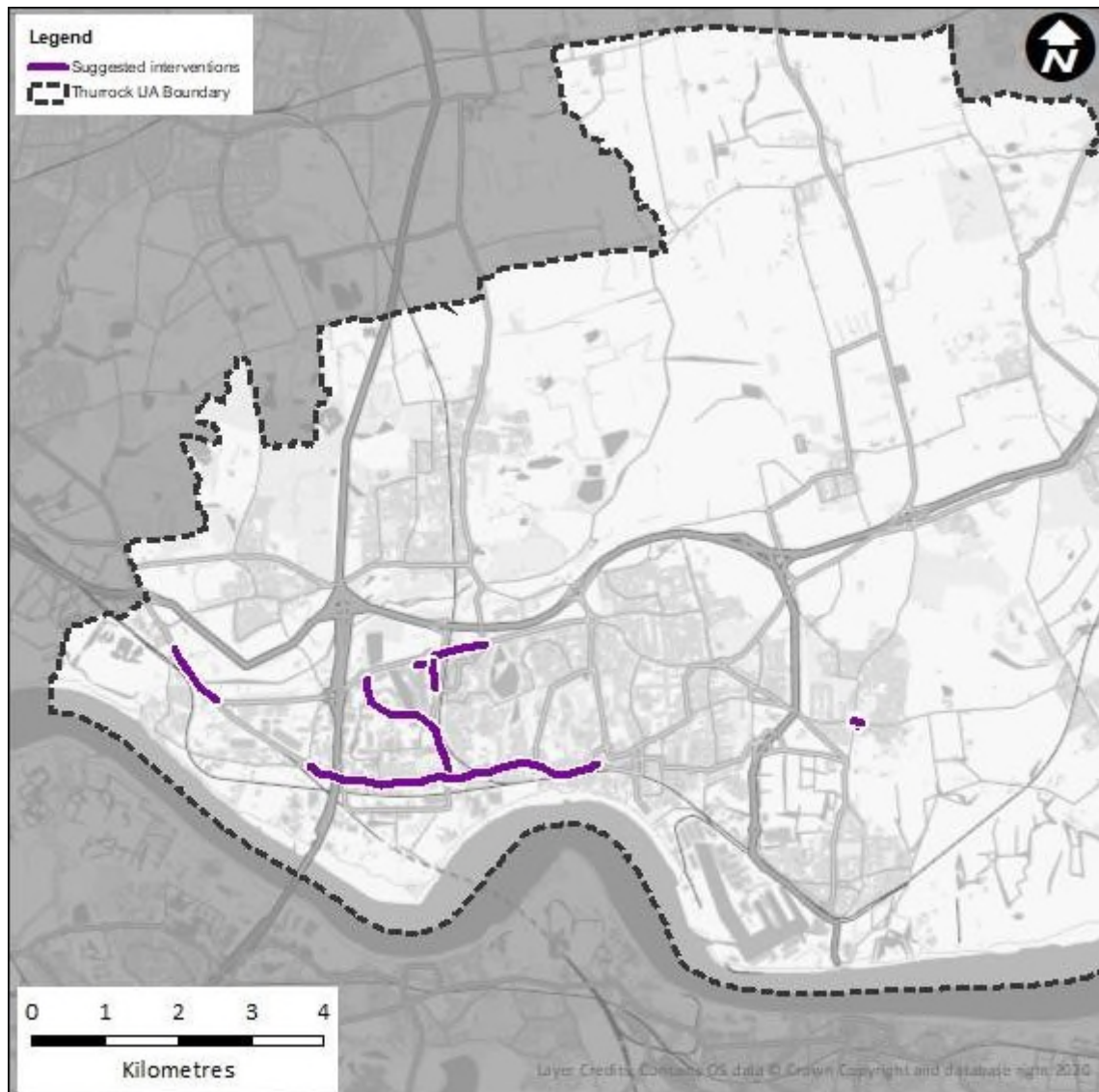
Bus Speed and Journey Time Reliability Improvement Measures on Lakeside – London Road – Grays – Socketts Heath corridor

- 4.18 In consultation with operators they identified key locations within their networks where services experience regular delays. These are shown in Figure 4.5. Operators are seeking measures that would improve bus speeds and reliability in these areas. Further investigation to determine what opportunities could be provided is needed and had been considered as part of the production of Thurrock’s Enhanced Partnership.
- 4.19 Currently London Road is a key route along which significant numbers of Thurrock’s buses run. It is also one of the areas of Grays with the highest levels of air pollution with multiple designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), largely generated by the high levels of road traffic along this corridor with large numbers of residential properties fronting onto the highway. Measures to remove through car use, reduce local car use and improve bus speeds would be beneficial to the provision of cost-effective bus services in Thurrock and help improve air quality. Thurrock Council wishes to commission a study to work through options for this area and to develop a business case for the resulting preferred option. This route is a high priority for intervention and supported by bus operators whose services travel along this route.
- 4.20 It is estimated that the study will cost around £100k and that any scheme could have an indicative cost of between £2m and £3m.

Objective B1a and B1b

To investigate Bus Speed and Journey Time Reliability Improvement on the London Road – Grays – Socketts Heath corridor

Figure 4.5: Operator Suggested Corridors Needing Intervention



Traffic Light Priority

- 4.21 Traffic Signals in Thurrock are managed through a central system, however they are not optimised to support bus movements. Enhancing the traffic signal systems to cooperate with oncoming buses would help to support bus services in Thurrock, and minimise delays. Assuming Thurrock’s SCOOT (and the Urban Traffic Control System it runs on), is compatible with current AVL technology this would allow set up of Selective Vehicle Detection (SVD) at SCOOT junctions. This would provide dedicated priority to individual buses as it detects when they are on approach and can either keep the lights on green until they get through (called an EXTENSION) or, if the bus arrives while the lights are red, trigger what is called a RECALL and cycle the lights back round to green quicker than under normal SCOOT operation. This can be done without the need for any additional infrastructure and requires existing AVL bus locators talking to the UTC system. The whole network would be treated.

- 4.22 It is estimated this intervention would cost approximately £100,000.

Objective B2

To implement Traffic Signal Optimisation to support Bus Movements across Thurrock across the network.

C – Lower and simpler fares/ticketing

- 4.23 Outcomes from the public engagement demonstrated a clear desire by communities and bus users for enhancements to bus ticketing so that payments for journeys are easier, and that ticketing and fares across different bus operators can be simplified and reduced and integrated with other modes such as rail. Early engagement with rail operator C2C has already taken place and they have expressed an interest in working with Thurrock Council to develop and integrating bus and rail price capping within the borough, as contactless payments are rolled out across the rail line. This could then be implemented across the franchise area into Essex and Southend, enabling more rail and bus users to integrate sustainable multi-modal journeys.
- 4.24 The Council will commission the following research projects as intermediate steps towards cheaper simpler fares:
- Evening and weekend flat fares; and
 - Multi-modal integrated ticketing in Thurrock.
- 4.25 The estimated cost for such a study is £50,000.

Objective C1

Research a capped fare structure (including multi-modal ticketing integration) for Thurrock.

- 4.26 Early engagement has been undertaken with operators within the borough, and the challenges that need to be explored further to enable measures such as simplification of fares, price capping and integrated tickets to be implemented have been identified. Thurrock Council will continue to work with our operators to move towards this goal.
- 4.27 However, it has been noted that investing in fare capping infrastructure – both physical and background systems, would be essential to deliver this functionality. If appropriate, smart/contactless card readers mounted at appropriate locations²⁷ at bus exits would permit the introduction of “tap and cap” (in effect post) purchase of tickets which could then subsequently be used to facilitate capping. These cost around £1,500 per vehicle.
- 4.28 The estimated cost for tap and cap readers for the various buses used in Thurrock is £150,000. Further market engagement and research is required to identify the cost of the background system and infrastructure.

Objective C2

Procure “tap and cap” card readers for all buses used on local services in Thurrock.

D – Waiting and interchange facilities

Stanford Station Interchange

- 4.29 Thurrock Council has a long-established ambition to deliver a bus turnaround facility with transport interchange opportunities to service Stanford-le-Hope Railway Station. Following the consent of DP World London Gateway, Thurrock Council has been working with Network Rail and C2C to enhance the railway station facility for Stanford-le-Hope by creating a new station building with increased gate lines to accommodate growth at the station led through economic growth and employment.

²⁷ i.e. away from the boarding flow where passengers use the tap and cap reader on the driver’s ticket machine

- 4.30 Within the proposals was to develop a bus turn around to provide bus access to the station without having to traverse a level-crossing and sitting in traffic congestion as a result. The council has subsequently acquired land opposite the station frontage, on the northern side of London Road, to build both a bus turnaround facility/transport interchange with allocation for two bus drop-off points. This facility would provide bus waiting/layover capacity and passenger shelters and facilities including active travel/cycle hire scheme with secure provision for 84 cycles. Additionally the scheme would provide spaces for two taxis and two passenger drop-off spaces, with safe pedestrian routes following desire lines through to the station and appropriate road crossing facility. Following further permissions for a new business park to the east of London Gateway, Thames Enterprise Park, the council has secured funding for additional bus services to link to the station and further afield, to promote sustainable bus travel to these sites, therefore it is critical to deliver this interchange facility. To enable its delivery, the council are seeking funding of £5,201,818. This funding will then release other funds to see the construction of the new Station building and gate lines, creating a new, high quality Railway Station and Transport Interchange to service Stanford-le-Hope for future years.
- 4.31 This interchange sits on the route of the main local bus services in the Stanford-le-Hope area, the 100 & 200, which the council aspires through this BSIP to create a turn up and go service linking the station with Lakeside and Grays in the west and Basildon in the east.

Objective D1

To deliver an enhanced Transport Interchange facility at Stanford-le-Hope Station, unlocking investment for an enhanced Station Building to promote bus travel from the station/town centre to key employment sites, the Thurrock Freeport, and neighbouring communities using turn up and go level of frequency services.

E – Bus information and network identity

Bus promotion

- 4.32 £100,000 funding is sought to develop a comprehensive bus promotion scheme working collaboratively with operators and stakeholders. This marketing campaign will raise awareness of the Thurrock bus brand and aim to encourage increased bus use.

Objective E1

To provide an effective bus promotion scheme for all bus services in Thurrock.

New shelters and real time information

- 4.33 The National Bus Strategy and BSIP guidance puts an emphasis on demystifying buses and making them easier to use and understand by all users. To support this aim, Thurrock Council will look to expand its provision of information for all users to help make it easier for users to understand when and where bus services go, and making this information more accessible to more users through audio and visual mediums.
- 4.34 The Council already has invested in Real Time Passenger information displays, however some of these have reached the end of their design life, and the technologies have been surpassed. A programme of renewal is funded to replace the legacy estate of older dot-matrix displays, but there remains a large number of stops which could benefit from the provision of RTPI. Each display costs £8,500 with an annual maintenance cost of approximately £200. There is a need for up to an additional 50 display units which will require funding of £425,000.

Objective E2a & E2b

Add a series of real-time information stands to bus stops. Consider introduction of QR codes for more remote stops to link to real time info. Associated annual maintenance.

- 4.35 The Council will seek to increase its display unit stock to ensure adequate provision for service users. It is hoped to deliver this in ten locations between 2025 and 2030 at an average annual cost of £6,000 per unit, thus totalling £60,000.

Objective E3

Add additional display units at ten key locations.

- 4.36 To support Real Time information, the Council wishes to support all users, particularly those with visual impairments and users who are unfamiliar with the bus route. The provision of audio-visual announcements on buses will enable this measure to be undertaken. The Council is aware of at least 60 buses within fleets in the borough which will require retrofitting with audio-visual announcements. Costs are identified at being approximately £8,000 per vehicle, though there is a reduction in price for single decker vehicles. This approximates to a minimum sum of £480,000 to retrofit the remaining fleet, but additional vehicles may also be identified.

Objective E4

Retrofit audio-visual announcements to buses.

- 4.37 The Council will further enhance the information available about bus service provision in the borough. The development of high-quality information and timetables, with a more accessible and attractive website with higher awareness will help to achieve this. A sum of £100,000 will help to support this measure, involving specialist creative content and design support to help deliver information to the intended audience. Collaborative working with other Essex Authorities could enhance this outcome and be supported by the ForwardMotion brand that was developed by Thurrock, Southend and Essex Councils through the DfT Access Fund.

Objective E5

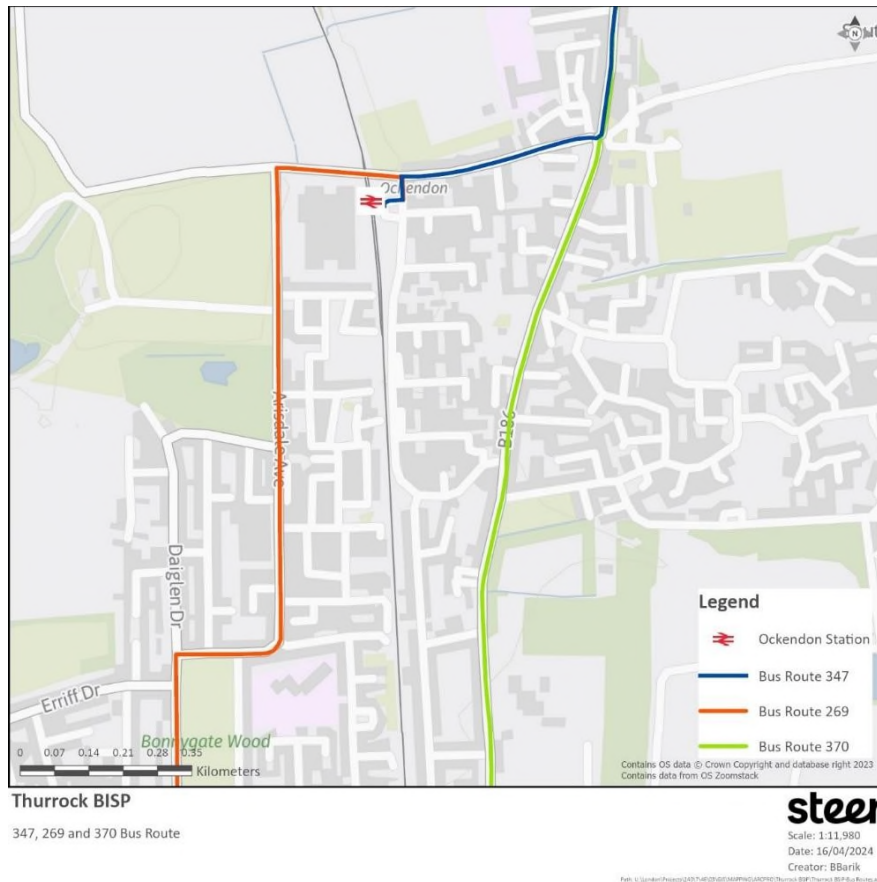
Provide high quality printed timetable and map information. Provide one-stop website where maps, timetables and fares for all operators in Thurrock can be obtained collectively

F – Bus passenger experience

Ockendon Station

- 4.38 Ockendon station, on the c2c route between Upminster and Grays has frequent²⁸ train services to London and Southend.

Figure 4.6: 269, 347 and 370 Bus Routes



- 4.39 The station has a small car park and there is a larger car park nearby at Canterbury Parade. Whilst the station is served by routes 269 and 347 (Figure 4.6), all of these routes are infrequent and uncoordinated. TfL route 370 (which runs every 15 minutes) passes near the station, but the nearest stops are 500 m away. To provide a reliable all-day interchange, a better bus service level to the station is desirable.
- 4.40 Diverting the frequent TfL service 370 was rejected as having a too poor effect on existing route 370 customers. After discussion with Ensignbus, the Council plans to extend service 88 to terminate at Ockendon station every 30 minutes connecting with trains to and from London (Figure 4.2). The cost is provided in paragraph 4.6. If funding were available, this project could be brought forward and implemented with relative pace.

Objective F1

To better improve bus service levels at Ockendon station

²⁸ Half hourly all day with additional peak services to/from London

Customer charter

- 4.41 BSIPs must include a passengers' charter giving bus users rights to certain standards of service, including punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, proportion of services operated, information and redress. Thurrock Council and operators will develop a Thurrock wide customer charter building on existing work by specific operators.
- 4.42 The development cost of this is estimated to be £25,000.

Objective F2

To develop a Thurrock wide customer charter setting standards for punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, proportion of services operated, information and redress.

G – Bus fleet

- 4.43 The three objectives relating to this theme are set out below.

Fleet conversion

- 4.44 Thurrock has a desire for all buses operating in the borough to be using vehicle engines which meet the high air quality emission standards of Euro-VI specification. Only a small number of vehicles within Thurrock are not meeting this standard - six Euro V hybrid buses operated by Ensignbus.
- 4.45 The cost of upgrading each vehicle is £20,000. Indicative pricing for converting the services to Euro VI for three years would be £120,000.

Objective G1

To convert the subsidised fleet to Euro VI technology.

Research on zero-carbon technologies

- 4.46 Thurrock, and the operators within the area, also recognise that there will be a need to keep moving towards new technologies, particularly those which reduce emissions from buses. As such, Thurrock will undertake a study to optimise the introduction of zero-carbon buses, to make sure that their fleet remains at the forefront of bus technology.
- 4.47 The estimated cost for such a study is £25,000.

Objective G2

To undertake research and studies to help understand new bus zero-carbon technologies.

On-bus USB charging

- 4.48 Thurrock, and the operators within the area, will consider the retrofitting of USB charging points to the fleet so that all buses offer this provision. Indicative costs established through engagement with operators is approximately £2,000 for a single decker bus, and £4,000 for a double decker bus.
- 4.49 For the Thurrock operators' fleets this amounts to a total of £320,000.

Objective G3

Fund the installation of USB chargers on existing buses.

H – Accessibility and inclusion

Demand Responsive Services

- 4.50 A number of rural communities within Thurrock – East and West Tilbury, Linford, Horndon on the Hill, Bulphan and Fobbing lost their main local bus services in September 2023 following the withdrawal of funding for the three supported services – the 11, 265 and 374. A one-year trial to support Fobbing was funded with a service running three days a week, and a pilot bus services is now being tendered for East Tilbury and Horndon on the Hill. However, the council would like to explore whether these rural communities would benefit from a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service which could operate across the day and into the evening.
- 4.51 Thurrock Council would like to explore working with neighbouring authorities to expand on DRT services already offered in the Essex County Council area, to identify if there is scope or opportunity to operate within the more rural communities of Thurrock, where a long-term traditional bus service may not be viable. An initial study on the costing and viability of a rural DRT service is initially sought, costing £50,000 followed by funding to deliver such a service if scope exists. Indicative funding of £500,000 per annum would be required to cover costs of service delivery in one pilot area and costs for buying into the service.

Objective H1

To undertake an initial feasibility study to launch a DRT service amongst rural communities in Thurrock, which may not be best served by conventional buses.

Research into transport needs of isolated communities

- 4.52 As already identified, parts of Thurrock are less well served by bus, leaving some communities isolated for some or all of the day and/or week.
- 4.53 The Council will commission research into the transport needs for such communities, including study of the effects of access to key medical facilities across Thurrock and beyond the borough boundary. Ensuring accessibility to these facilities for residents and service users should be a key component in the success of these facilities, and managing space for private car parking.
- 4.54 A comprehensive study, including development of options for solutions could be procured for around £65,000.

Objective H2

To better understand the transport needs of more isolated communities in Thurrock.

I – Monitoring & evaluation

- 4.55 Ongoing monitoring of bus services is crucial, in particular where investment has been made to enhance the service through a range of measures. In addition, understanding the level of satisfaction by users is also critical. Thurrock Council will undertake further annual monitoring of Bus Passenger Satisfaction as well as monitoring and evaluation of schemes implemented through the BSIP.
- 4.56 The Council has determined a sum of £30,000 per year is required to complete and report on Bus Passenger Satisfaction within the borough and provide monitoring and evaluation of measures. In 2023/24 Thurrock Council used a customer satisfaction survey led by Transport Focus and would look to explore this opportunity into future years.

Objective I1

Fund annual Bus Passenger Satisfaction surveys and undertake monitoring and evaluation.

5 Targets, performance monitoring and reporting

Summary

- 5.1 Thurrock Council will publish six-monthly performance figures against the targets set down in this BSIP. These are given in Table 5.1.
- 5.2 These will be made available on the Thurrock Council website and local bus operators will be encouraged to include them on their websites.
- 5.3 Thurrock Council will engage with key stakeholders, such as the Thurrock Bus User Group, to discuss the outcomes of targets and where further enhancements can be made. This will also provide an opportunity to review measures listed within the BSIP.
- 5.4 Hard copies will be made available on request.

Table 5.1: BSIP Targets

Targets	2018/19	2019/20	2022/23	Target for 2024/25	Target for 2029/30	Description of how each will be measured (max 50 words)
Journey Time:	N/A	N/A	85.5% ²⁹ = 1	>1.05	1.1	Determined through annual Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey. ³⁰
Reliability:	91.2%	91.2%	85.7%	90%	95%	Based on reliability data compiled by Thurrock Council for the Traffic Commissioner
Passenger Numbers:	4.8 million	5.1 million	5.0 million	5.25 million	5.5 million	Based on combined annual passenger numbers recorded from all bus operators within Thurrock
Average passenger satisfaction:	89% ³¹	83% ³²	84% ³³	87%	90%	Determined through annual Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey to identify overall satisfaction with the bus user experience

²⁹ Your Bus Journey 2023 Provisional results for key metrics – Thurrock score taken as average percentage of total respondents indicating ‘fairly satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ (January and February 2023) – length of time you had to wait for the bus

³⁰ Baseline (2022/23) given a score of 1.0, and annual scores will be rated against this index.

³¹ Bus Passenger Survey Autumn 2019, Passenger Focus – England-wide score

³² The route ahead: getting passengers back on buses, June 2021, Passenger Focus – England-wide score

³³ Your Bus Journey 2023 Provisional results for key metrics – Thurrock score

6 DfT format BSIP Overview Table

Introduction

- 6.1 This section summarises the key outputs of the BSIP and how it meets requirements set out in the Strategy. The purpose of this section is to give readers, including passengers and the Department, an overview of the commitments in the BSIP which Thurrock and bus operators will work towards to improve local bus services.

Table 6.1: BSIP Overview Table Template

BSIP Overview Table Template	
Name of authority or authorities:	Thurrock Council
Franchising or Enhanced Partnership (or both):	Enhanced Partnership
Date of publication:	June 2024
Date of next annual update:	June 2025
URL of the published report:	https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/travel-strategies/strategy-documents

Table 6.2: Improvements programme to 2025

Improvements programme to 2025	Description (60 words max) Description of proposals listing named schemes/measures with location where appropriate	Estimated cost/order of cost (£k)
Bus priority infrastructure	BPI1 – Funding of study into bus journey time reliability measures.	£50,000
Bus service support	BSS1 – Route 22: To improve the service frequency to 15-minute intervals, Mondays to Fridays, and from every 30 minutes to every 20 minutes on Saturdays. Provide route extension to serve Purfleet Rail Station and Ocado facility in Aveley	£225,000 pa
	BSS2 – Route 33: Funding to support the Saturday hourly service.	£15,600 pa
	BSS3 – Route 88: To extend service to link Stifford Clays with Lakeside and Ockendon.	£93,600 pa
	BSS4 – Procurement of trial rural bus service to support communities which have been left unserved by withdrawal of previously supported bus services	£200,000 pa
Bus Strategy Support	BST1 - Recruiting short-term in-house support to progress the BSIP and update EP and commission and oversee the production of a new Thurrock Bus Strategy	£50,000
	BST2 - Commission and adoption of a Thurrock Bus Strategy to feed into a wider suite of transport policies to shape future bus provision across and beyond the borough	£50,000
	BST3 - Commission of a Mass Rapid Transit/Bus Rapid Transit Scoping Note to inform any future proposals across Thurrock.	£50,000
Other schemes and measures	BPS1 – Undertaking Bus Passenger Satisfaction survey to monitor performance and perceptions of performance	£30,000

Table 6.3: Ambitions and proposals for 2025 and beyond

Ambitions and proposals for 2025 and beyond	Description (60 words max) Description of proposals listing named schemes/measures with location where appropriate	Estimated cost/order of cost (£k)
A – Service level and network coverage	A1 – Route 66: To enhance service so to provide an evening service and a Saturday link between Tilbury and Chadwell St Mary.	£165,000 per annum
	A2 – Route 88: To extend service to link Stifford Clays with Lakeside and Ockendon Station; thereby significantly improving bus access to Ockendon station. Service will operate between 6am and 10pm Mon-Saturday.	£900,000 per annum
	A3 – Route 100: To provide a Monday to Saturday at 15 min frequency service and Sunday evening service.	£200,000 per annum
	A4 – Route 200: To provide a minimum half-hourly Monday to Saturday and hourly Sunday service.	£375,000 per annum
	A5 – Superbus: To provide a link between Grays, Lakeside, Brentwood, Chelmsford and Stansted Airport on an hourly, daily basis.	£700,000 per annum (tbc)
	A6 – To provide a link between Grays, North Stifford, Arisdale Avenue, Ockendon and Lakeside on an hourly basis on Monday to Saturday.	£200,000 per annum
	A7 – To maintain the link between East Tilbury and Horndon on the Hill with other communities as delivered through the formal procurement process.	£200,000 per annum
	A8 – To provide a rural bus service to support two communities which have been left unserved by withdrawal of previously supported bus services.	£100,000 per annum (£50,000 per route)
B – Bus priority	B1a – Study: Further investigation to determine what opportunities could be provided to overcome regular delays	£100,000
	B1b – Implementation: Implementation of Bus Speed and Reliability measures will enable simplification of the network due to the need to remove congestion contingency currently built in at busy times of day.	£2m - £3m
	B2 – To implement Traffic Signal Optimisation to support Bus Movements across Thurrock across the network.	£100,000
C – Lower and simpler fares/Ticketing	C1 – Fares study: Research a capped fare structure (including multi-modal ticketing integration) for Thurrock.	£20,000
	C2 – Tap & Cap: Procure “tap and cap” card readers for all buses used on local services in Thurrock	£150,000

Ambitions and proposals for 2025 and beyond	Description (60 words max) Description of proposals listing named schemes/measures with location where appropriate	Estimated cost/order of cost (£k)
D – Waiting and interchange facilities	D1 – Creation of bus turnaround and interchange facilities at Stanford le Hope station	£201,818
E – Bus information and network identity	E1 – Effective bus promotion scheme: To provide an effective bus promotion scheme for all bus services in Thurrock.	£100,000
	E2a – Real time information at bus stops: Add a series of real-time information stands to 50 bus stops. Consider introduction of QR codes for more remote stops to link to real time info.	£425,000 (8,500 per stop)
	E2b – RTI maintenance: annual maintenance of 50 stops	£10,000 per annum (£200 per stop)
	E3 – Add additional display units at ten key locations.	£60,000 (£6,000 per unit)
	E4 – Retrofit audio-visual announcements to buses. 60 x buses to be adapted.	£480,000 (£8,000 per vehicle)
F – Bus passenger experience	F1 – To better improve bus service levels at Ockendon station: The BSIP will develop better connections between C2C train services stopping at Ockendon and routes 269, and 374. This will involve rerouting some services, in order to provide closer connections between the bus stops and the rail station.	No additional cost (included in A2)
	F2 – Development of a Customer Charter: To develop a Thurrock wide customer charter setting standards for punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, proportion of services operated, information and redress.	£25,000
G – Bus fleet	G1 – To convert the subsidised fleet to Euro VI technology: Currently the majority of the bus network in Thurrock is relatively modern – almost all vehicles are Euro VI. This funding will be used to convert the remaining six buses to Euro VI standards.	£120,000 (£20,000 per vehicle)
	G2 – Research study to understand new bus technologies: Research which will enable operators to make informed decisions about how best to move towards decarbonisation, as the technology becomes available.	£25,000
	G3 – Retrofitting USB charging points: Fund installation of USB chargers on existing buses	£320,000 (£2,000-£4,000 per vehicle)

Ambitions and proposals for 2025 and beyond	Description (60 words max) Description of proposals listing named schemes/measures with location where appropriate	Estimated cost/order of cost (£k)
H – Accessibility and inclusion	H1 – To launch a DRT trial for evening and Sunday provision to smaller communities unserved by conventional buses Launch a DRT trial for evening and Sunday provision to Horndon on the Hill, Fobbing and East Tilbury.	£500,000 pa
	H2 - Research into transport needs of isolated communities: To better understand the transport needs of more isolated communities in Thurrock.	£65,000
I – Monitoring	I1 - Fund annual Bus Passenger Satisfaction surveys and undertake monitoring and evaluation: Monitoring and associated report on Bus Passenger Satisfaction within the borough and provide monitoring and evaluation of measures	£30,000 pa

Appendices

A Thurrock Bus Services

A.1 Table A-1 shows the frequent bus services in Thurrock, while Table A-2 shows those that only operate occasionally.

Route	Links	Operator	Services per hour					
			Mon-Fri Daytime	Mon-Fri Evening	Sat Daytime	Sat Evening	Sun Daytime	Sun Evening
22	Aveley – Lakeside – Grays	Ensignbus	3	0 ³⁴	2	0 ³⁴	1	0
33	Chafford Hundred – Grays	Ensignbus	2	1	1	0	0	0
44	Lakeside – Purfleet-on-Thames – Grays	Ensignbus	2	1 ³⁵	2	1	1	1
66	Chadwell – Tilbury – Grays	Ensignbus	2	0	2	0	1	0
73/73A	Lakeside – Grays – Tilbury	Ensignbus	2	2 ³⁴	2	0 ³⁴	2	1
77/77A	Aveley – Lakeside – Grays – Tilbury	Ensignbus	0 ³⁶	2	0 ³⁶	2	0	0
83	Lakeside – Grays – Chadwell St. Mary	Ensignbus	2	0	2	0	0	0
88	Stifford Clays – Grays	Ensignbus	1 ³⁷	0	1	0	0	0
99	Tilbury Ferry – Tilbury Station	Ensignbus ³⁸	2	0	2	0	0	0
100	Basildon – Grays – Lakeside	First Essex	3	1	3	1	2	0
200	Basildon – Grays	First Essex	1	0	1	0	0	0
370	Lakeside – Romford	TfL ³⁹	4	2	4	2	2	2
372	Lakeside – Hornchurch	TfL ⁴⁰	3	2	3	2	2	2
X80	Chafford Hundred – Bluewater	Ensignbus	1	21	1	1	1	0

³⁴ Evening service provided by service 77/77A

³⁵ Part route only

³⁶ Daytime service provided by services 22 and 73

³⁷ Two buses per hour at peak times

³⁸ Supported by c2c as required by the Essex Thameside rail franchise

³⁹ Currently contracted to Arriva

⁴⁰ Currently contracted to Stagecoach

Route	Links	Operator	Monday – Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Note
32	Aveley – Grays	Ensignbus	School Service	No service	No service	
51	Chafford Hundred – Grays – Tilbury – Orsett – Pitsea	NIBS Buses	School Service	No service	No service	
269	Grays – South Ockendon – Brentwood	NIBS Buses	4/5 services per day	4/5 services per day	No service	Supported by Essex County Council
347	Ockendon – Romford	TfL ⁴¹	4 services per day	4 services per day	No service	Supported by TfL
475	Stanford-le-Hope – Tilbury – Grays – Orsett – Brentwood	NIBS Buses	School Service	No service	No service	
565	Bulphan – West Horndon – Brentwood	First Essex	7 services per day	4 services per day	No service	Supported by Essex County Council
Z1	Aveley – Lakeside – Grays – Chadwell – Tilbury – Amazon Tilbury	Ensignbus	4/5 services per day at peak hours	4/5 services per day at peak hours	4/5 services per day at peak hours	
Z2	Canning Town – Barking – Dagenham – Rainham – Amazon Tilbury	Ensignbus	19 services per day at peak hours	19 services per day at peak hours	19 services per day at peak hours	
Z4	Pitsea – Basildon – Corringham – Stanford-le-Hope – Amazon Tilbury	Ensignbus	4/5 services per day at peak hours	4/5 services per day at peak hours	4/5 services per day at peak hours	

⁴¹ Currently contracted to Arriva

B Bus Shelter Design

Bus Shelter Design

Figure B.1: Sample Bus Shelter



- B.1 There are 140 sheltered bus stops within Thurrock, with a combination of those funded directly by the local authority, and some funded through an arrangement with Clear Channel, on which advertising was sold. The contract with the supplier came to an end in 2019, and the Council has implemented a new refresh programme. A sum of £1.26m has been allocated to replace 90 of the 140 shelters, and a decision will be made in the future whether to fund or remove those shelters not initially prioritised. An example of a new shelter as part of the renewal programme is shown in Figure B-1. In addition, shelters which had a legacy Real Time Passenger Information display, will be replaced as part of the programme. These Real Time displays have become obsolete, with parts being sourced from other live or damaged units. They will be replaced by modern LED display with sizing and form factor appropriate to the location. Digital advertising is also being led in-house on shelters and Real Time displays, allowing the Council to generate a revenue to ensure the ongoing maintenance of real time displays and shelters.

Control Information

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