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Report to Cabinet

Report Title	Pride in Place Impact Fund
Date of Meeting	Wednesday 15 July 2026
Report Author	Louise Neilan, Director Communications & Engagement
Corporate Director	Robert Persey, Executive Director, Adults & Health
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr George Monk
Why is this a key decision?	1. Expenditure over £500K yes 2. Significant impact on 2 or more wards yes
Wards Affected	Boroughwide
Identify exempt information and exemption category	Choose an item.

Is report Urgent?	No
Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)	
Appendices (if any)	1. Appendix 1 - Evidence of Engagement and Data to Support Proposed Projects 2. Appendix 2 - Project Specific Evidence and Engagement

1. Executive Summary

This report seeks Cabinet approval for the proposed approach to allocating Pride in Place Impact Fund to projects that meet community need following extensive consultation, engagement and data analysis.

2. Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, the Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1 Agree the approach (as set out in sections 5 and 6 of this report) to ensure the Pride in Place Impact Fund benefits Thurrock communities with a range of projects informed by local engagement and data and insight, that meet the Government requirements by the end of March 2027 deadline.

Agree that decisions about individual projects are delegated to the lead Director in consultation with their Executive Director, S151 officer and Cabinet Member for Deregulation, Civic Pride and Heritage.

3. Commissioner's Comments

3.1 The Pride in Place Impact Fund is a time-limited, 100% capital programme focused on making rapid, visible improvements that rebuild community pride. As the accountable body it is essential that the Council implement robust administration processes with appropriate value for money evaluations, due diligence on receiving bodies and embedded delivery and assurance processes to ensure the impact, outcomes and funding deadline of March 2027 is achieved.

3.2 Commissioners are content for this report to be considered.

Background & Context

3.3 The Pride in Place Impact Fund (PiPIF) is a Government capital investment programme running for two years (2025/26–2026/27). It aims to restore pride in local areas**,** strengthen community cohesion**,** and stimulate local economic activity through visible, community-led improvements**.** Thurrock Council is one of the local authorities to receive an investment of £1.5 million.

3.4 Any investment must align with one or more of the three fund objectives:

1. **Community spaces -** Improve or create community facilities and support community ownership of valued local assets.
2. **Public Spaces** - Enhance the public realm, including green spaces, play and leisure areas, street furniture, public art and wayfinding.
3. **High Streets & Town Centres** – Revitalise these areas to make them more attractive, welcoming and economically active.

3.5 Funding may be spent anywhere in the local authority area, whilst being mindful of the importance of supporting communities most in need.

3.6 Match funding is not required, although it is encouraged to consider match funding from public, private and third sectors.

3.7 Councils will act as the accountable body for any funding received. They will manage how funding is allocated, approve grants to other organisations, ensure value for money, and oversee delivery through existing financial governance arrangements under the Section 151 Officer. Funding may be given to any organisation with legal status.

3.8 Local Authorities must engage local MPs and are asked to engage other stakeholders and communities; engagement quality is reviewed as part of the reporting process to MHCLG.

3.9 Thurrock has also been successful in securing investment through the Pride in Place programme, providing £20m investment for Tilbury of revenue and capital funding over 10 years. That investment will be subject to a different, community-led, decision-making process, and is not covered by this paper.

3.10 The cross-council neighbourhoods board has been working closely together to ensure that where other funding pots exist, such as the Towns Funding that was allocated to Tilbury and Grays in 2021, there is no duplication, and that the benefits of the Pride in Place Impact Fund are felt in other parts of the borough too.

3.11 Over time, our ambition is to adopt the evidence and community-led approach to decision making about external funding set out in this paper, across all programmes and projects that benefit the community. This will help to avoid some of the concerns raised by residents in the past that significant sums of money did not go towards the things they wanted to see in their communities.

4. Proposed Delivery Approach

- The Pride in Place Impact Fund is being managed through the Transforming Neighbourhoods Programme within the council. A Programme Board has been set up which consists of senior representatives from service areas across the council to contribute to and facilitate decision making on the Programme, including Pride in Place Impact Fund project proposals. The board meets monthly to assess progress against a range of milestones, including the Pride in Place Impact Fund.

- The Board will continue to oversee the implementation of the programme, considering individual project plans and the community engagement that has informed them. These plans will then be escalated for agreement to the Executive Director, S151 officer and Cabinet Member for Deregulation, Civic Pride and Heritage for a final decision.

- The Board will continue to evaluate progress, and consider evidence, risks and stakeholder engagement related to the programme.

4.1 The proposed approach to allocating Pride in Place Impact Funding will be evidence-led and locally-focussed ensuring that all project proposals have either originated from the community or offer solutions to issues frequently identified by residents. All proposed projects have sustainable, long-term benefits that directly respond to local challenges, such as anti-social behaviour, loneliness and inactivity. Initial investment themes and proposals for the PiPIF have derived from robust stakeholder engagement, supported by

the analysis of existing data, such as our recent resident survey data, complaints, deprivation data, and public health data.

4.2 Engagement with MPs Jen Craft and James McMurdock on the Transforming Neighbourhoods Programme and PiPIF was carried out in February 2026 where insights and feedback were gathered on projects within their constituencies for the PiPIF. This engagement has fed into the development of initial proposals so far, and MPs are being kept updated.

4.3 The council has also engaged with a range of people and organisations who have a good local understanding of issues and opportunities in our neighbourhoods, particularly in our priority neighbourhoods of Chadwell St Mary, Tilbury and Grays, including the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFSE), community leaders, and council frontline staff. These insights have helped shape our proposals.

4.4 Our most advanced work in neighbourhoods, the recent Communities in Action Pilot in Chadwell St Mary has increased the council's understanding of the needs of residents living in this area and has shaped ideas for PiPIF investment in this Neighbourhood. The Communities in Action Pilot started in Chadwell St Mary in late 2024. It involved extensive community and partner engagement which resulted in the development of community priorities and a co-produced Plan for Chadwell in June 2025. This has meant that the council already has a solid understanding of the needs and wants of the Chadwell St Mary community and therefore where investments would be most beneficial to the community and fit the criteria. The council continues to engage regularly in Chadwell through well-established mechanisms such as a monthly Steering Group and resident forum.

The Transforming Neighbourhoods Programme aims to extend the Communities in Action approach into other neighbourhoods across the borough and work is underway to plan for these engagements. It is intended that engagement carried out across other neighbourhoods through the programme will support with informing and shaping investment opportunities for PiPIF and future sources of external funding.

4.5 Utilising the comprehensive community evidence base gathered through Communities in Action Pilot (Chadwell), our 2025 resident satisfaction survey, complaints data, MP and Member engagement, and other internal data and intelligence, initial investments will focus on delivering capital projects with tangible benefits for local communities. Annex A sets out the supporting evidence and data that has supported in the development of the proposed projects.

5. Proposals

5.1 Initial proposed ideas for Pride in Place Impact Fund investment fell into two broad categories:

a) Area-specific projects identified through community engagement in our priority neighbourhoods of Chadwell St Mary; Tilbury and Grays.

b) Boroughwide projects that will respond to issues frequently raised by residents, councillors and MPs.

5.2 Following the announcement of Tilbury's £20m Pride in Place funding, we have reprioritised the PiPiF investment to reflect this. The Tilbury Pride in Place programme will be subject to a different, community-led, decision-making process, and is not covered by this paper.

5.3 The proposed investments outlined below are indicative and subject to further exploration and detailed planning. These proposals, along with any additional proposals where appropriate, will continue to be developed collaboratively with communities and key stakeholders across the borough.

5.4 Once a community led investment opportunity is agreed to be a shared priority, we will also explore other sources of funding outside of the PiPIF where possible (such as S106, PH grant etc) and potential matched funding from external providers.

5.5 Below we set out the initial proposed projects and indicative costs in more detail:

Proposed Pride in Place Impact Fund projects			
Area	**Project**	**Indicative cost**	**Community input**
Chadwell St Mary	**Public space improvements around the tower blocks** Investment in the green spaces around the high-rise block flats in Chadwell St Mary e.g. potential for play equipment, gardening / growing. Also, investment in improving the small community kitchen that provides daily community facilities e.g. breakfast club	£150k	The initial request came through the Communities in Action project. The details are being co-designed with the community through a survey and engagement events.
Chadwell St Mary	**Other investment in the local area to support pride in place, in line with the Plan for Chadwell St Mary**	Up to £150k	A Plan for Chadwell St Mary.pdf

	The plan identifies many opportunities to improve the local area and we will work with the established community steering group, local political representatives and the community forum to agree on projects		
Grays	**Investment in Grays Town Park** to improve the park and community facilities	£100k	Residents regularly raise the need for investment in Grays town centre and the park, and this is supported by the MP. Other improvements are budgeted for through the Towns Fund in the Grays riverside area, but the wider town has not received recent investment.
Grays	**High Street improvements** Grays town centre lacks appeal to many local residents and work is required to create a nicer, more appealing environment. Improvements to the high street will enhance the local environment and encourage footfall.	£150k	Responses to a recent consultation about antisocial behaviour in Grays, suggested a wide unhappiness with the town centre, and a reluctance to go there due to its rundown feel and lack of shops or restaurants.
Boroughwide	**New playgrounds and exercise equipment in parks** Investment in upgrading parks / play facilities, adding accessible play equipment, and improving	Up to £600k to install or renovate 5-6 playgrounds across the borough, with the potential for match	Resident engagement through surveys and forums have indicated high demand for improvement to parks and green spaces across the borough, with some particular parks being noted by

	green spaces across the borough. Initial reviews are underway and development of criteria to define selection process for playgrounds to ensure there is Boroughwide coverage and investment. Looking at approx. 5-6 playgrounds.	funding from adult social care grant funding to encourage activity in older/less able groups.	residents. Public Health data also flags the need for more opportunities for outdoor activity across the borough for both physical and mental health priorities. Investment in parks and open spaces was also supported by both MPs, particularly investment in accessible equipment
Boroughwide	**CCTV expansion** Investment in additional CCTV equipment to help the council address persistent antisocial behaviour (ASB) and illegal fly-tipping at identified hotspot locations within Thurrock.	£100k	Complaints data, resident engagement and service reporting has flagged a significant increase in cases of fly tipping and targeted fly tipping hotspots. Residents frequently complain about flytipping and other forms of antisocial behaviour, and also that often perpetrators go unpunished. CCTV evidence will help the council pursue action against those responsible, as well as acting as a deterrent.
Boroughwide	**Pride in Place community grants scheme** Smaller investments in visual, sustainable improvements to neighbourhoods such as: High street signage, lighting/decoration, or trees and other planting Community litter picking or gardening equipment. Improvements to parks and open spaces, such as benches, bins or planters.	Up to £250k	We know from all our data sources and resident engagement that in every area there are issues that residents know how to solve, and that with a small amount of investment and community effort, could be achieved.

6. Approach to Decision Making

- All proposals for investment will be assessed based on the agreed criteria set out by MHCLG for the PiPIF.

- Value for money will be assessed on community benefit rather than pure economic appraisal, considering factors such as visible local impact, community pride, accessibility improvements etc. Individual project plans and procurement will follow council policy and best practice with regards to ensuring all projects achieve the best price and deliver value for money.

- There will also be careful consideration given to limiting any ongoing revenue costs attached to any project, by selecting projects with low maintenance requirements; replacing existing facilities that are in poor condition but are already maintained by the council; or by working with the community to ensure a collaborative approach to maintenance.

- With regards to the community grant schemes, awards will be allocated based on value for money considerations to ensure that the projects maximise impact for every pound spent, by evaluating economy (minimizing input costs), efficiency (converting inputs to outputs), and effectiveness (achieving intended outcomes).

6.1 The proposed approach seeks to ensure we can achieve both the council's and Government's desire for the funding to go towards projects that the community want and need, and at a pace that ensures all the money will be spent by the deadline of March 2027.

7. Alternative options considered

7.1 N/A

8. Consultation

8.1 As set out in sections 5 and 6, community engagement, MP and Member engagement has been and will continue to be a central to shaping the development of any of the Pride in Place Impact Fund investments.

8.2 Every project or investment will be community led and will have come through a range of engagement and consultation sources.

8.3 It is likely that individual resident consultations will take place for many of the project proposals due to the nature and impact of the proposals.

8.4 As an example, resident consultation has already been taking place during May 2026 in Chadwell St Mary High Rise Flats regarding potential investment into improving their green spaces.

8.5 It is also expected that the council will consult with residents and communities on shaping the parks and playground improvement initiatives, and will also

ask residents, community groups and businesses to submit proposals for the community grants scheme.

9. Financial Implications

9.1 The council has been awarded the £1.5m funding from MHCLG and this is currently within the council's Capital Programme. No expenditure has been incurred on the fund as of May 2026.

9.2 There is no further budget allocated to this programme. Any projects that are agreed to be funded by the Pride in Place Impact Fund will need to be contained within the £1.5m envelope.

9.3 The programme payment profile allocates 50% of funding in 2025/26 (from November 2025 following signing of an MoU) and 50% in quarter one 2026 (subject to a satisfactory February 2026 report/return). During 2025/26 any underspend will be included in the outturn slippage request to be carried forward into 2026/27. All funds must be committed by March 2027.

9.4 Financial & performance monitoring will need to be undertaken in **May 2026, October 2026, June 2027**. This requires details as to actual spend, commitments, updated forecasts; counts against six PiPIF progress metrics plus narrative progress and engagement update. All financial reports have been and will continue to be certified by the council's Section 151 officer.

9.5 If funding is committed by 31 March 2027 but not yet fully spent, further monitoring after this date is expected; any uncommitted funding at 31 March 2027 (or subsequently unspent commitments) must be repaid.

9.6 Subject to approvals, the initial proposals set out in Section 6 will be further defined and costed in detail to start investments through the Pride in Place Impact Fund.

9.7 The activity covered by this funding stream will be monitored as part of the council's financial management process and reported to Cabinet on a regular basis.

Implications Verified by Victoria Baldwin, Head of Finance Business Partnering (Place & Corporate) Date 28th May 2026

10. Risk Implications

Implications Verified by: Janki Patel, Risk Manager Date 28th May 2026

RISK DESCRIPTION & CONSEQUENCE	MITIGATIONS	RESIDUAL RISK STATUS (after mitigations)

Failure to commit funding by 31 March 2027. Requiring funding to be returned to MHCLG. **Impact:** Reputational damage, political scrutiny, reduced stakeholder confidence and support	Monthly review of progress, RAG rating project progress. Close working with service areas to deliver projects. Governance monitoring through Neighbourhoods Programme Board. Proactive reallocation if slippage emerges. Request delegated authority for allocating investments.	**Medium**
Inadequate MP, Member and Community engagement to shape proposals **Impact:** Delays to investments / project delivery	Engage with MPs at an early stage. Conduct Member engagement. Conduct resident engagement exercises in specific neighbourhoods as well as boroughwide. Document all engagement and feedback.	**Medium / Low**
Failure to agree project / investment proposals **Impact:** Delays to delivery, reduced stakeholder confidence and support	Adhere to criteria and ensure each proposal is carefully reviewed against set criteria. Engage key stakeholders and decision-makers early to shape and test proposals.	**Medium**
Investment may be perceived as unevenly distributed geographically, leading to perceptions of unfairness **Impact:** Reputational damage, political scrutiny, reduced stakeholder confidence and support	Ensure there is fair distribution of investment which includes borough-wide investment alongside targeted, Neighbourhood investment. Clearly record how decisions align with the Pride in Place Impact Fund objectives. Ensure funding and activity in each town is clearly communicated and visible. Look to explore other funding sources to deliver projects identified through this process where required.	**Medium**

11. Legal and Governance Implications

11.1 Pride in Place funding is not subject to a statutory framework, the Council has the power to take the decisions recommended in this report pursuant to the general power of competence set out in section 1 Localism Act 2011, which allows a council to take any action that an individual may. None of the restrictions to the power as set out as sections 2 – 4 of the Act are applicable.

11.2 The funding is provided in accordance with the Pride in Place scheme and therefore funding has to allocated in accordance with the principles of the scheme and the terms of any grant funding agreement. As Accountable Body for the funding, the council has responsibility to ensure that funding is utilised in accordance with the scheme and is subject to reporting requirements to MHCLG as set out in the report. The proposed approach to delivering the scheme as set out in the report demonstrates how compliance and governance will operate.

11.3 If decisions are taking to grant funding to other organisations for delivery of projects, then the council will need to consider at this stage having appropriate enforceable agreements in place to protect the funds, and also will need to consider requirements of the Subsidy Act 2022.

11.4 The council is also subject to the best value duty as set out in section 3 Local Government Act 1999.

Implications Verified by Helen Nicol, Director Legal and Governance
Date 29th May 2026

12. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)

12.1 As set out in section 9, proposals for PiPIF respond to known community need, and involve those they seek to benefit. Individual proposals relating to spend will be fully assessed to ensure they are inclusive and comply with statutory access requirements.

Implications Verified by Natalie Smith, Head of Community Development
Date 28th May 2026

13. Other Relevant Implications

N/A

14. Background Documents

- Public Health Ward Profiles 2026 - Local statistics and ward profiles - 2026 | Public Health | Thurrock Council
- June 2025 Resident Satisfaction Survey Results
- Communities in Action: Chadwell St Mary Action plan - Chadwell St Mary - A Plan for your Community
- Service specific complaints and member enquiries data
- 2025-26 Mid-Year Report - Appendix 1 - Corporate Complaints.pdf
- Indices of deprivation 2025

Appendix 1 - Evidence of Engagement and Data to Support Proposed Projects

A range of engagement activities have been undertaken with key stakeholder groups to help shape the proposed projects. The Council will continue to work closely with communities and VCSE partners to further refine and strengthen proposals through ongoing engagement.

Engagement with MPs

In February 2026, initial engagement was undertaken with MPs James McMurdock and Jen Craft on the Neighbourhood Programme and Pride in Place Impact Fund approach.

Some of the key highlights from these engagements include:

- Emphasis on delivering visible, long-term improvements to public spaces rather than one-off or cosmetic interventions.

- Strong focus on public value, fairness, and evidence-based investment decisions.
- Support for enhancing green spaces and outdoor play areas, alongside concerns about the quality of some recent repairs.
- Recognition of the need for SEND-inclusive provision and more accessible play and community facilities.
- Acknowledgement of the importance of improving existing community assets across Chadwell, Tilbury and Grays.
- Community assets highlighted as key to supporting areas facing economic challenges and poverty across the borough.
- Importance placed on ensuring all proposals have a clear evidence base and strong justification.
- Concerns raised about long-term maintenance and vandalism, particularly for new investments such as playgrounds.
- For Grays, support for town centre improvements, including bringing vacant units back into use for community purposes (e.g. café or soft play).Support for tackling fly-tipping across the borough, including ideas such as community skips with ward councillors, though noted as potentially less immediately visible in impact.

Resident satisfaction survey 2025

- The Resident Satisfaction Survey undertaken in June 2025 identified a range of key issues and priorities for residents. These findings have provided valuable further insight and have directly informed the development of the proposed Pride in Place projects, ensuring that investment is aligned with resident-led priorities and focused on addressing the issues that matter most to local communities.
- Some of the key highlights that support proposed projects:

Theme	Details
Declining confidence and pride in the borough	• 56% satisfied with their local area • 57% say it has got worse in the last two years • Only 48% feel proud to live in Thurrock
Crime, safety and anti-social behaviour	• Anti-social behaviour consistently identified as the primary concern • Seen as the top priority for improvement across the borough
Cleaner, better-maintained environments	• Strong demand for improved cleanliness • Clean streets (23%) • Refuse collection (17%)
Parks, green spaces and community assets	• Viewed as a positive across the borough • Still identified as a top 5 improvement priority

Inequalities and differing experiences	• Lower satisfaction in Grays and Tilbury (including Chadwell) • Reinforces the need for targeted neighbourhood focus alongside borough-wide investment

Council staff engagement

Staff engagement was carried out earlier this year across a range of council services, including the Managers Conference, targeted sessions, programme boards, and workshops. Insights from frontline staff have been invaluable in shaping the proposed investments and strengthening the evidence base. Importantly, the themes identified closely align with feedback from residents, VCSE partners, and MPs, giving confidence that the proposals reflect local priorities and community needs.

A summary of the key themes:

Theme	Key Points
Community Spaces	• Demand for more community hubs and spaces to meet (e.g. youth clubs, cafés, networking spaces) • Need for inclusive facilities • Desire for more community events and activities
Parks, Public Realm & Cleaner, better maintained environments	• Improved and inclusive playgrounds • Better green spaces (tree planting, improved access) • Cleaner environments (litter, fly-tipping, waste) • Cleaner beaches and riverfront areas
Town Centres & High Street Decline	• Need for visible improvements and better cleanliness • Concern about declining high streets (empty shops, over-concentration of vape/fast food outlets) • Desire for revitalisation and modernisation • Loss of markets and community spirit noted Emphasis on more appealing town centres
Crime, safety and anti-social behaviour	• Desire for safer, better-maintained neighbourhoods • Concerns about fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour, and poor street lighting
Inclusion, Inequality & Vulnerable Groups	• Strong focus on supporting vulnerable groups (e.g. SEND, older people facing isolation) • Concerns about declining physical and mental wellbeing

	• Importance of improving facilities that support health and wellbeing

Indices of Deprivation 2025 Data

The Indices of Deprivation 2025 provide clear evidence of the need for targeted investment through the Pride in Place Impact Fund. While Thurrock sits broadly around the national average, there are clear neighbourhoods of more significant deprivation, such as Chadwell St Mary, Tilbury and Belhus, with around 14% of neighbourhoods among the most deprived nationally.

The main issues driving this include low income, unemployment, lower levels of education and skills, barriers to housing and services, and crime. These all also reflect the priorities raised through wider engagement with residents and partners. These challenges have remained largely consistent over time, highlighting the need for sustained, neighbourhood-based interventions. The Pride in Place Impact Fund is therefore appropriately targeted, focusing investment on the areas of greatest need and supporting improvements that address both underlying challenges and the day-to-day issues that matter most to residents.

Top Member enquiries and Complaints

2025-26 Mid-Year Report - Appendix 1 - Corporate Complaints.pdf

The 2025–26 Mid-Year Report has been reviewed to provide a clearer understanding of the key issues raised by residents and through Member enquiries. While many of the issues identified extend beyond the direct scope of the Pride in Place Impact Fund, the data offers valuable insight into areas where the fund could align to help address local challenges.

The report highlights fly-tipping and waste related complaints as among the most frequently reported issues across the Borough. Further detailed analysis of complaints and Member enquiries will be undertaken to identify more specific, location-based concerns within individual neighbourhoods. This will support a more targeted understanding of the challenges faced locally and help inform the development of responsive and place-based interventions.

Appendix 2 - Project Specific Evidence and Engagement

Chadwell St Mary – targeted project proposals

Following the Communities in Action engagement across Chadwell St Mary which launched in November 2024, a co-produced action plan was produced with the community and published in June 2025.

The action plan produced 6 priorities for Chadwell St Mary:

1. Activities for young people & community events
2. Health and wellbeing
3. Better engagement and communication
4. Green spaces and environment
5. Community safety
6. Public transport and road safety

Further details on these priorities can be found in the full published action plan: Chadwell St Mary - A Plan for your Community

The Council has continued working with services, residents and VCSE partners to progress delivery of the Chadwell St Mary priorities, strengthening engagement through the Residents Forum and a monthly steering group. The Pride in Place Impact Fund will support further targeted investment to accelerate delivery. Investments will be directly informed by community engagement through the Communities in Action Pilot and align with the agreed action plan priorities. These include:

- **Improvements to green spaces around the high-rise flats** - enhance the local environment for residents, including many young families, by creating more accessible and usable outdoor areas. These proposals have strong community backing and are expected to deliver meaningful local benefit.

Boroughwide - New playgrounds and exercise equipment in parks

Evidence from resident complaints, Member & MP enquiries, and frontline reporting demonstrates consistent and widespread concerns regarding the condition, safety, and availability of play equipment across Thurrock.

The issues being raised are not limited to individual sites, but are reported across multiple neighbourhoods throughout the Borough, highlighting a clear need for investment.

Some examples include:

- Equipment described as faulty, dangerous and disrepair at sites such as Elm Park (Grays), East Tilbury Village Park, Martin Road (Averly) and High House Opera Park.
- Reports of missing play equipment, the need for greater play equipment and lack of funding for provision across areas such as Gumley Street (Grays) and Dippings Park in Grays.

- Wider concerns across sites about disabled access across Thurrock parks and concerns about pathways, cleanliness, and supporting infrastructure such as toilets and seating.

A coordinated borough-wide investment would help address these issues, it aligns with several of the Pride in Place Impact Fund objectives and will deliver visible benefits to help boost the use of local community assets and support health and wellbeing.

A range of data sources, engagement activity and clearly defined criteria will be developed to ensure decisions on playground improvements are fair, balanced, and evidence led. This will help ensure investment is prioritised consistently and targeted where it is most needed across the Borough.

Grays Town centre community space

A Public Space Protection Order consultation was carried out for Grays Town Centre from January – March 2026. This led to significant levels of social media feedback regarding the town centre which highlighted the consistent perception among residents that Grays has experienced a significant long-term decline, with many describing it as no longer safe, welcoming, or attractive to visit.

The key themes of the comments centred around:

- Crime and anti-social behaviour with comments stating they feel unsafe in the town centre
- The physical environment is also highlighted as poor with comments centred around litter, deteriorating public spaces, and a “run down” or “ghost town” feel.
- Many comments noted a lack of appealing retail or leisure offer and a perception that there is “nothing to go to Grays for.”
- Many residents express frustration with the current mix of shops, alongside wider concerns about accessibility, transport, and declining footfall.

Despite largely negative views, there remains a clear sense of local attachment and a desire for improvement, with residents identifying opportunities around improvements and revitalisation of the high street. These views demonstrate a compelling case for targeted intervention through the Pride in Place Impact Fund to address safety, environmental quality, and town centre improvements, and to help restore community confidence and pride in place

Boroughwide – CCTV Expansion

Persistent antisocial behaviour (ASB) and illegal fly tipping at identified hotspot locations within Thurrock have been raised by several sources including by council officers, Councillor enquiries, frontline staff and communities.

The proposal focuses on small scale, high visibility CCTV deployment, designed to deliver immediate, tangible improvements to neighbourhood safety and

environmental quality, fully aligned with the objectives and funding conditions of the Pride in Place Programme.

In Thurrock, a small number of locations generate:

- Disproportionate fly-tipping incidents
- Repeated ASB complaints
- Environmental degradation and reduced community confidence

These issues have a knock on effect on the local area and how local residents perceive their own environment.

Targeted CCTV deployment provides:

- Deterrence from offending and fear of enforcement
- Evidential support for effective enforcement and prosecution of serious offenders
- Increased resident reassurance through active enforcement and promotion of successes

Evidence supporting the proposed borough-wide investment in CCTV is drawn from multiple sources, including regular resident complaints, reports from frontline staff across Enforcement and Place, Member enquiries, and findings from the resident survey.