



Independent Chair

Start Thurrock Core Consortium

Paid role

Freelance - £400 per day

Client:

Tilbury on the Thames Trust – Lead
Organisation for Start Thurrock

**Closing date for applications:
Thursday 3rd September 2026**





Part 1: About Us

Start Thurrock is a Creative People and Places programme funded by Arts Council England. We work with Thurrock residents to create brilliant arts and cultural experiences in places and spaces across Thurrock. Our work is supported by Arts Council England who have awarded us £1M thanks to deliver grassroots-led cultural experiences across Thurrock until at least March 2029.

With our support, residents take the lead in what creative activity and experiences happen here. Our community engagement processes enable residents to be makers, performers, producers and leaders. Their ideas feed ambitious projects, commissions and events which leads to broader and deeper cultural engagement amongst our communities.

Hazel Edwards, South East Area Director for Arts Council England has said "Start Thurrock shows what's possible when creativity is rooted in the community. By placing decision making in the hands of local residents, it's not just transforming cultural engagement; it's re-shaping how people see themselves and their towns".

To date, our programme has achieved 89,000 engagements through projects and events we directly co-commissioned with residents and through inspiring partnerships with creatives and cultural organisations, including NPOs. And we haven't stopped yet!



We are proud to have organised inspirational trips for residents to see and experience professional work at festivals and theatres across our region and involved 70 residents on decision-making panels, selecting and commissioning artists and creatives to work in local communities.

Our work responds to community voice and has included neighbourhood community plays with site specific experts Teatro Vivo, a two-week Green Light programme packed full of workshops and tasters, a major public event at Lakeside Shopping Centre and 14 Big Top performances of *The Nose Dive Assembly* by The Revel Puck Circus.

www.startthurrock.org



Start Thurrock is hosted by Tilbury on the Thames Trust CIO as lead organisation with support as 'custodians' from Thurrock Council, Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions CIC, Thurrock CVS and the Royal Ballet & Opera who form our Core Consortium.

Our ambitions are supported by Arts Council England through to March 2029.

About Creative People and Places

Creative People and Places is a national action learning programme funded by Arts Council England. It's about more people taking the lead in choosing, creating and taking part in exciting art experiences in the places where they live. It focuses on parts of the country where involvement in arts and culture is significantly below the national average.

About Thurrock

Thurrock is located on the north shore of the River Thames, a short distance from the east of London, and Essex to the north and east. Thurrock's location includes towns and villages surrounded by acres of parks, countryside and heritage sites. Urban centres are a vibrant mix of established towns and new young communities, with a diverse and growing population of around 176,000 residents. Our location as the fulcrum of the Thames Estuary – Gateway to the Globe - underpins major investments in regeneration, infrastructure and industry.

Nationally significant cultural organisations and artists coexist with emerging creative practitioners and a vibrant amateur sector to develop talent and serve diverse audiences. High House Production Park is an international centre of creative and cultural excellence and learning. Our heritage assets and maritime industry connect to a global narrative of trade and migration. We are a nexus for Creative and Cultural Industries within the Thames Estuary Production Corridor, a sector which generates skilled jobs and productivity across the UK.



Part 2: About the Role

Having completed the start-up of Thurrock's *Creative People and Places* Programme, the Core Consortium is looking to appoint an independent chair to strengthen the governance for the programme and support Start Thurrock through its 2026-2029 phase.

Start Thurrock's core consortium members (Thurrock Council, Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions CIC, Royal Ballet & Opera, Thurrock CVS and Tilbury on the Thames Trust) have a collective responsibility for providing strategic oversight and direction for the Start Thurrock programme, with operational management from the Start Thurrock team, whose posts are hosted and thus employed by Tilbury on the Thames Trust.



The Chair will have the ability to work with a range of strategic partners and across sectors, with the ability to mediate and facilitate strategic responses to community needs and interests. As Independent Chair you will be an experienced senior leader who passionately believes in the value of art and culture in people's lives and who wants to make a difference.

The Core Consortium meets 4 times a year in person, in Thurrock. The Chair would be expected to attend (in person or virtual) and engage with associated preparation and follow up meetings with Core Consortium members and/or Start Thurrock Directors, and occasional meetings with stakeholders and funders. The time commitment equates to approx. 0.5 days per month.

We actively encourage people from a variety of backgrounds with different lived experiences, skills and stories to apply for this opportunity.



Role Description

Role Title:	Independent Chair
General purpose: The role of the Chair is to lead the Start Thurrock core consortium, ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of the project, and to work in conjunction with the Tilbury on the Thames Trust CEO, Start Thurrock Creative Director and Executive Director, helping them to achieve the aims of the project.	

Key responsibilities:

Overall

- The role of the Independent Chair is to enable the Start Thurrock Core Consortium to work well and efficiently whilst delivering to our communities.
- The Independent Chair will support all Start Thurrock Core Consortium Partners to ensure that the flow of information and decision-making is maintained, and that the Consortium works within its Terms of Reference.
- The Independent Chair role is to ensure solid and efficient governance of Start Thurrock in line with the funding agreement between Arts Council England and the lead organisation Tilbury on the Thames Trust.
- The chair is responsible for chairing meetings for the Creative People and Places programme. This is not a Trustee role, and you will NOT be accountable to Companies House or the Charity Commission.

Core responsibilities:

The Independent Chair will support the Core Consortium and the Start Thurrock programme by:

- Acting as an independent focal point for discussion and sound out how the Start Thurrock Core Consortium is working.
- Scoping and confirming the Start Thurrock Core Consortium meeting agenda items and matters for discussion.
- Enabling and overseeing the processes of decision-making, conflict resolution and actual or perceived conflicts of interest where they may arise.
- Chairing the Start Thurrock Core Consortium Meetings in line with agreed ways of working and ensuring all members have an opportunity to be fully heard.



- As and when they arise, helping in assuring a fair and objective process for any applications for membership of the Start Thurrock Core Consortium
- Advocate for 'community voice' and ensure Start Thurrock actively involves local communities in decision-making at all levels.
- Providing strategic leadership.
- To exercise delegated authority as approved by the Start Thurrock Core Consortium between meetings, to ensure that urgent matters are dealt with promptly.
- Supporting the Creative Director and Executive Director in a non-line management capacity, to ensure the Start Thurrock programme is delivered in accordance with Creative People and Place principles.
- To represent and act as an advocate for the Start Thurrock project.

Person Specification

Essential Commitment

- Understanding and empathy with the mission, vision and aims of Start Thurrock
- Committed to working in partnership, harnessing the strengths and skills of the Core Consortium
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

Essential Competencies

- An experienced facilitator able to guide purposeful meetings and support the Core Consortium to take balanced and objective decisions
- An excellent understanding of good governance
- High level advocacy, communications and influencing skills
- Strategic and forward-thinking approach, with an ability to anticipate issues and risks and to identify opportunities
- Sensitivity to diverse perspectives and where a range of stakeholders are coming from, and their needs and requirements, and finding positive ways to resolve differences
- Understanding of who Start Thurrock seeks to engage through its activities
- Highly organised and able to prioritise effective use of Core Consortium time, facilitate timely and focussed distribution of information and ensure appropriate follow up to Core Consortium decisions
- Previous experience in successfully chairing a board and/or committee/s
- Able to maintain an independent perspective with no significant conflicts of interest



Part 3: Recruitment Process

To apply, please send a CV and covering letter explaining how you will meet the role description above to hr@choiceandcontrol.co.uk

Closing date for applications: Thursday 3rd September 2026

Interviews will take place Thursday 10th September 2026 at the Thameside Complex, Grays, RM17 5DX

If you require any adjustments to the application process, please contact hr@choiceandcontrol.co.uk

For an informal discussion about this role, please contact Neil Woodbridge neil@choiceandcontrol.co.uk

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