

Thurrock: A place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish

General Services Committee

The meeting will be held at **5.00 pm** on **23 October 2017**

Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL

Membership:

Councillors Robert Gledhill, Shane Hebb, Mark Coxshall, Oliver Gerrish, Gerard Rice, Graham Snell and Roy Jones

Substitutes:

Councillors Brian Little, James Halden, Bukky Okunade, Jack Duffin and Peter Smith

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

	Page
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Minutes	5 - 8
To approve as a correct record the minutes of General Services Committee meeting held on 24 August 2017.	
3. Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
4. Declarations of Interests	

Exclusion of the Public and Press

Members are asked to consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt

information as specified in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 or it being confidential for the purposes of Section 100A(2) of that Act.

In each case, Members are asked to decide whether, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

5. Interviews for the Director of Environment and Highways

Information for members of the public and councillors

Access to Information and Meetings

Members of the public can attend all meetings of the council and its committees and have the right to see the agenda, which will be published no later than 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published.

Recording of meetings

This meeting may be recorded for transmission and publication on the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be recorded.

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If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Guidelines on filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings

The council welcomes the filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings as a means of reporting on its proceedings because it helps to make the council more transparent and accountable to its local communities.

If you wish to film or photograph the proceedings of a meeting and have any special requirements or are intending to bring in large equipment please contact the Communications Team at CommunicationsTeam@thurrock.gov.uk before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will then be consulted and their agreement sought to any specific request made.

Where members of the public use a laptop, tablet device, smart phone or similar devices to use social media, make recordings or take photographs these devices must be set to 'silent' mode to avoid interrupting proceedings of the council or committee.

The use of flash photography or additional lighting may be allowed provided it has been discussed prior to the meeting and agreement reached to ensure that it will not disrupt proceedings.

The Chair of the meeting may terminate or suspend filming, photography, recording and use of social media if any of these activities, in their opinion, are disrupting proceedings at the meeting.

Thurrock Council Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is available throughout the Civic Offices. You can access Wi-Fi on your device by simply turning on the Wi-Fi on your laptop, Smartphone or tablet.

- You should connect to TBC-CIVIC
- Enter the password **Thurrock** to connect to/join the Wi-Fi network.
- A Terms & Conditions page should appear and you have to accept these before you can begin using Wi-Fi. Some devices require you to access your browser to bring up the Terms & Conditions page, which you must accept.

The ICT department can offer support for council owned devices only.

Evacuation Procedures

In the case of an emergency, you should evacuate the building using the nearest available exit and congregate at the assembly point at Kings Walk.

How to view this agenda on a tablet device



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Members of the Council should ensure that their device is sufficiently charged, although a limited number of charging points will be available in Members Services.

To view any “exempt” information that may be included on the agenda for this meeting, Councillors should:

- Access the modern.gov app
- Enter your username and password

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

What is a Non-Pecuniary interest? – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;
- Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and
- leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature



You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

Thurrock: A place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish

To achieve our vision, we have identified five strategic priorities:

1. Create a great place for learning and opportunity

- Ensure that every place of learning is rated “Good” or better
- Raise levels of aspirations and attainment so that local residents can take advantage of job opportunities in the local area
- Support families to give children the best possible start in life

2. Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- Provide the infrastructure to promote and sustain growth and prosperity
- Support local businesses and develop the skilled workforce they will require
- Work with communities to regenerate Thurrock’s physical environment

3. Build pride, responsibility and respect to create safer communities

- Create safer welcoming communities who value diversity and respect cultural heritage
- Involve communities in shaping where they live and their quality of life
- Reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and safeguard the vulnerable

4. Improve health and well-being

- Ensure people stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years
- Reduce inequalities in health and well-being
- Empower communities to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing

5. Protect and promote our clean and green environment

- Enhance access to Thurrock’s river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock’s natural environment and biodiversity
- Ensure Thurrock’s streets and parks and open spaces are clean and well maintained

Minutes of the Meeting of the General Services Committee held on 24 August 2017 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill, Oliver Gerrish, Gerard Rice, Graham Snell, Roy Jones, Brian Little (Substitute) (substitute for Shane Hebb) and James Halden (Substitute) (substitute for Mark Coxshall)

Apologies: Councillors Shane Hebb and Mark Coxshall

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Environment and Place
David Lawson, Deputy Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Wendy Le, Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

1. Minutes

The meeting of the General Services Committee held on 3 May 2017 was approved as a correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

3. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Amendment to Polling Place: Polling District F - Belhus Ward

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that due to the closure of the Culver Centre, a new polling station was required for District F of the Belhus ward. The Chair felt that the reference to police stations not being open to the public, which was mentioned in the report, was not accurate and that these premises could and should be considered in any future reviews.

RESOLVED:

That the location of Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Daiglen Drive, South Ockendon be approved as the polling place for Polling District F (Belhus Ward, Culverhouse)

5. Council Questions Procedures

The Committee recognised that in relation to recommendation 1.1 the Mayor had always had the power to allow a public question at his or her discretion. Officers stated that the recommendation would help clarify the Mayor's powers in relation to this issue.

Councillor Gerrish, as Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, stated he was happy to undertake a review into public participation procedures of the council as outlined in the recommendations. Councillor Halden added that he felt the recommendations should not prescribe the areas of review for the overview and scrutiny committee and to allow the committee freedom to look at all aspects of public participation at committees.

There was a brief discussion on the Council's use of forward plans and whether these were understood by general members of the public. Councillor Gerrish stated that the scrutiny review could include this aspect as well.

The Committee continued to debate the recommendations and the Chair stated that the Mayor's powers as outlined in 1.1 should not be seen as party political and therefore, he was of a mind to remove it. He agreed with Councillor Halden that recommendation 1.2 did not need to be prescriptive for the overview and scrutiny committee. The Chair also felt that the second half of recommendation 1.3 (relating to the repetition rule for council questions) could be added to recommendation 1.2. The remaining wording of 1.3 could be amended to include reference to those decisions that were not part of the forward plans as allowed by the constitution. The Committee agreed these suggested changes.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. The committee, within its remit of considering changes to the constitution, request Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review public participation options in the constitution and to report back to general services committee for them to consider the need to make recommendations to full council on possible changes to the constitution. Any further options such as allowing receipt of public questions after publication of the agenda or moving the publication to an earlier date and whether the repetition rule, upon which a public or member question cannot be substantially the same as one previously asked in the preceding 12 months is reduced to 3 or 6 months, will also be considered by the overview and scrutiny committee.**
- 2. To note that the council already publishes forward plans for both cabinet and full council giving 1 months public notice of forthcoming decisions and agenda items (excluding non-key decisions and any urgent decisions, as prescribed by the constitution, that arise) for those meetings.**

6. Establishment of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Working Group/Task Force in relation to the Lower Thames Crossing

Councillor Snell supported the Task Force for the main reason that it could be established with immediate effect and be responsive to the issues relating to the Lower Thames Crossing as they arose. Councillor Little agreed with this and added that the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee could still engage with the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) issue and request any information or report it wished.

Councillor Gerrish felt that an overview and scrutiny committee would be better defined and supported to carry out the work.

The Chair recognised both proposals as being able to respond to the LTC issues. However, he felt the Task Force allowed co-opted Members to vote and he thought this would be seen as fair and democratic in the eyes of the public. He also felt that the draft terms of reference should be amended to reflect the following co-opted Members:

- One representative from the Lower Thames Action Group. They must be a resident of Thurrock.
- One representative from Thurrock business.
- One representative from the wider Thurrock community who may be either for or against the LTC proposal.

The committee noted that either option would be fully resourced and supported by the officer body.

Councillor Little raised a query of whether MPs could or should be invited to sit on the group. Members felt generally that the group should be representative of Thurrock Council's view of the LTC and not include MPs but officers agreed to check the legal rules around this issue.

The Committee voted on the recommendations with the creation of a Task Force being passed 5 votes to 2.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. A Lower Thames Crossing Task Force is established.**
- 2. The terms of reference are agreed as amended to reflect the new composition of co-opted members.**

The meeting finished at 6.45 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**