

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Extraordinary Council held on 27 September 2017 at 7.00 pm

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**Present:** Councillors Tunde Ojetola (Mayor), Michael Stone (Deputy Mayor), Tim Aker, John Allen, Chris Baker, James Baker, Jan Baker, Clare Baldwin, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Tony Fish, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Robert Gledhill, Garry Hague, James Halden, Graham Hamilton, Shane Hebb, Clifford Holloway, Victoria Holloway, Deborah Huelin, Roy Jones, Tom Kelly, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Brian Little, Susan Little, Ben Maney, Bukky Okunade, Terry Piccolo, Jane Potheary, Joycelyn Redsell, Barbara Rice, Gerard Rice, Sue Sammons, Angela Sheridan, Peter Smith, Graham Snell, Luke Spillman, Aaron Watkins and Kevin Wheeler

**Apologies:** Councillors Russell Cherry, Sue MacPherson, David Potter and Pauline Tolson

**In attendance:** Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive  
Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Environment and Place  
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health  
Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT  
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation  
David Lawson, Deputy Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer  
Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services  
Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Service  
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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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.

#### **44. Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

#### **45. Electoral Cycle**

Councillor Hebb presented the report that advised Members of the outcome of the consultation on a possible move from elections by thirds to election of the whole-council once every four years from May 2018. Members were asked to note the preferred option recommended by the General Services Committee that was to move to whole-council elections from May 2018 and that the

report had been presented to Full Council for Members to decide. Councillor Hebb stated that Thurrock was ready for this change having listened to the voice of the residents as part of the consultation, which having put their trust in the powers of elections deserved the right outcomes and looked forward to the debate this would generate this evening.

Councillor Snell stated that he would not be supporting the recommendations as the number of responses received as part of the consultation did not represent Thurrock and that out of the 466 responses some would have been linked to this Chamber. Councillor Snell stated that it should be fair and democratic to give residents the option to vote yearly. Councillor Snell stated that UKIP would not have been able to represent if it were not for the elections by third. He believed elections by third brought stability to the Council and that the Council was in a better position because of this.

Councillor Gerrish agreed with Councillor Snell's comments and would be against the recommendations. Councillor Gerrish questioned why an extraordinary meeting had been arranged for this item where there were far more important items that could have been discussed instead.

*At 7.12pm, Councillor Gerrish called a Notice of Motion that the report go straight to the vote. This was seconded by Councillor G Rice. The Mayor announced that he would allow those Members who had already requested to speak to ask their questions.*

Councillor Kelly stated his support for the recommendations as the four yearly cycle would allow Officers to dedicate time to elections and do the job they should be doing.

Councillor G Rice spoke on behalf of democracy that the recommendations would not be good for the residents of Thurrock and focused on the responses rates compared to other consultations.

Councillor Piccolo would be supporting the recommendations as there was a need to forward plan over a number of years and see actions through and the four yearly cycle would give the Council the stability and give confidence to residents.

Councillor Halden would be supporting the recommendations and stated that a proper whole borough election should take place. Councillor Halden highlighted that a number of wards would not go to the vote next year as some wards had 2 or 3 members. Councillor Halden continued to state that the voting procedures for elections by third were not clear enough for residents to understand.

Councillor Huelin stated her support for the recommendations and that the Council would save money and give Officers the opportunity and time to build on policies and gain the stability that the Council needed.

Councillor Gledhill stated his support for the recommendations as residents had asked for this particular item as part of the consultation. The consultation was undertaken fairly and gave all Thurrock residents the opportunity to speak. Councillor Gledhill also echoed Councillor Halden's comments that the voting procedure for elections by third were not clear enough for residents to understand.

Councillor Coxshall stated that the report was critical for regeneration and for future investments into Thurrock and would be voting in favour as this would be the right thing to do.

*At 7.33pm, on a Point of Order, Councillor Jones stated that swearing was unacceptable in the Chamber and that Councillor Coxshall should stand up and apologise. Councillor Coxshall responded by apologising for the bad language used.*

Councillor Hebb summed up and stated that the UKIP and Labour Parties had requested that the extraordinary meeting be held tonight before Full Council and not another night reserved for this discussion and that other committees and task force groups were discussing other urgent matters. Councillor Hebb stated that residents had been given the option to vote and we should agree to that.

The Mayor invited the Chamber to vote on the recommendations.

Members voted unanimously in favour of recommendations 1.1 and 1.2.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted as follows for recommendation 1.3:

For	:	17
Against	:	28
Abstain	:	0

Whereupon the Mayor declared recommendation 1.3 lost.

The Mayor stated as recommendation 1.4 was dependent on recommendation 1.3 being carried this recommendation would also be declared lost.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the Council noted the results of the consultation in relation to the election cycle.**
- 2. That the Council noted the preferred option recommended by General Services Committee to move to whole-council elections with effect from May 2018.**

**The meeting finished at 7.40 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

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Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**