

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 28 June 2017 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Tunde Ojetola (Mayor), Michael Stone (Deputy Mayor), John Allen, Chris Baker, Jan Baker, Russell Cherry, 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, Roy Jones, Tom Kelly, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Brian Little, Susan Little, Sue MacPherson, Ben Maney, Bukky Okunade, Terry Piccolo, Jane Potheary, David Potter, Joycelyn Redsell, Sue Sammons, Angela Sheridan, Peter Smith, Graham Snell, Luke Spillman, Pauline Tolson, Aaron Watkins and Kevin Wheeler

Apologies: Councillors Tim Aker, James Baker, Clare Baldwin, Deborah Huelin, Barbara Rice and Gerard Rice

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

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.

The Mayor invited Reverend Canon Darren Barlow to lead those present in prayer and a one minute's silence was held as a mark of respect to reflect the recent tragedies that had taken place.

12. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 24 May 2017 were approved as a correct record.

13. Items of Urgent Business

The Mayor informed the Council that he had not agreed to the consideration of any items of urgent business.

14. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

15. Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council

The Mayor invited all those present to reflect on and remember Thurrock's fallen of World War One.

The Mayor made the following announcements:

The Mayor congratulated the newly elected MPs, Jackie Doyle-Price and Stephen Metcalfe following the General Election on the 8 June 2017.

A service was held at St Peter and St Paul's Church to commemorate the first year anniversary of the murder of Jo Cox, MP.

That Stephen Cottrell, Church of England Bishop, visited the borough last week visiting residents and attending a service at St Peter and St Paul's Church.

The Mayor invited all Officers and Members to a Civic and Thanksgiving Service on Sunday 2 July 2017 at 4.00pm at St Peter and St Paul's Church. This would be the first Thanksgiving Service for a number of years.

The Mayor was pleased to announce that his first event as Mayor was to commend the numerous volunteers who give their time to help others in Thurrock.

It was the Mayor's intention to improve Thurrock's social media presence with a Facebook page dedicated to the Mayor of Thurrock being set up to promote #proudoftthurrock whenever Thurrock tweeted or posted updates on social media.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Gledhill, updated Members on the following:

Councillor Gledhill stated that his thoughts were with those who had lost their lives in the Grenfell Tower and he reassured Thurrock residents who lived in high rise blocks that they were safe. Thurrock Council had 15 high rise tower blocks, 981 flats in all the properties, located in Chadwell, Grays, Blackshots and Tilbury with all properties managed in-house by Council staff. The Council worked in partnership with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and in accordance with their guidance; the 'stay put' policy would be the safest procedure in the event of a fire in high rise accommodation.

Councillor Gledhill confirmed that all 15 blocks had a central fire alarm system and there were smoke detectors on each floor linked to fire doors and that the system was tested every day by Housing staff. There were heat detectors and sprinkler systems located in bin rooms with each flat having heat detectors in the kitchen and smoke detectors in the main hallway.

Councillor Gledhill confirmed that 12 of the 15 high rises had an insulated cladding system which had been installed over ten years ago. The materials used were not the same as the materials used at Grenfell Tower and the Council do not have any materials in the cladding which had been identified as possibly unsafe. The materials have the highest possible rating for fire resistance (Type O).

Work continued with the Fire Service to review all the fire risk assessments and those samples of cladding would be sent for testing for additional reassurance.

Councillor Gledhill stated that the Housing Team have been in close contact with tenants to let them know what steps were being taken. Councillor Gledhill also attended a public meeting that morning with the Fire Service to reassure tenants.

Parking Enforcements will continue to be issued where vehicles are blocking service bays and emergency exits.

There were 1490 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering issued since the beginning of December 2016 with 21 successful prosecutions after failure to pay. A four year cost neutral contract to expand the powers of environment enforcement from the 1 July 2016 will mean that there will no longer be discounts for early payment on Fixed Penalty Notices, the minimum age a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued will drop to 16 and there will be an increase in the value of tickets.

That 2013 potholes had been filled since April this year and work continued to make improvements through the government's National Productivity Investment Fund with £481,000 being awarded to Thurrock to resurface roads across the borough.

A Waste Vehicle Procurement process was underway to spend £5.2 million upgrading the Council's fleet for the first time in 8 years. With over 40,000 bins collected each day. Councillor Gledhill thanked the team who went above and beyond last week in the extremely hot weather.

Many Members joined together on Monday to raise the Armed Forces Day Flag and the armed forces should be honoured every day as they serve our great nation and help keep us all safe. Councillor Gledhill had tasked Officers to organise a larger event next year and make it something that the Council would be proud of.

That all 34 Care Home provisions in Thurrock had been rated as good or better by the Care Quality Commission. Looking after nearly 740 local residents to which had been inspected by the Health Watchdog and graded on whether they were safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led. Councillor Gledhill thanked Councillor S Little and her team.

The Leader encouraged Members and residents to apply for the Community Environmental Development Fund that was launched this week, with more than £300,000 being made available to help local groups fund projects in their area. The closing date for application would be the 20 August.

16. Questions from Members of the Public

A copy of the transcript of questions and answers can be viewed under the relevant meeting date at <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock> and are attached at Appendix A to these minutes.

17. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors

The Mayor informed Members that in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, the requisite notice had been given by two members who wished to present a petition at the meeting.

Councillor Piccolo presented a petition with regards to the Kings Street Car Park in Stanford Le Hope.

Councillor Allen presented a petition with regards to the Council charges in relation to the clearing of the alleyway between Salisbury Road and Kent Road.

18. Petitions Update Report

Members received a report on the status of those petitions handed into Council Meetings and Council Officers over the past six months.

Councillor Potheary requested a written update from the Portfolio Holder on Petition 489. "Conservative's proposed £15 per week charge for all sheltered housing tenants in Thurrock".

19. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels

The Mayor enquired whether Group Leaders wished for any changes to be made to the appointments previously made to Committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Gledhill, informed the Chamber that he wished to make the following change:

For Councillor Watkins to be appointed as member of the Corporate Parenting Committee to replace Councillor S Little.

Councillor Snell, Leader of the UKIP Group, informed the Council Chamber he had no further changes to make.

Councillor Gerrish, Leader of the Labour Group, informed the Chamber that he wished to make the following change:

For Councillor Potheary to be appointed as substitute member of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Councillor Watkins be appointed as member of the Corporate Parenting Committee.**
- 2. That Councillor Potheary be appointed as substitute member of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

20. Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2016-17

The Mayor referred Members to the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report for 2016-17 as published in the Agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17 be noted.

21. Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing

Councillor Gledhill, Portfolio Holder for Housing, presented his Portfolio Holder report and updated Members on the following items:

- That the Rents Team had worked effectively with 650 tenants to help them sustain their tenancies through budgeting support and brokering repayment agreements to reduce arrears.
- That the number of tenants evicted for rent arrears this year now stood at 60.
- A reported customer satisfaction with Mears Limited showed a year-on-year improvement of 15%, from 78% in March 2016 to 93% in January 2017.

Councillor Gledhill referred Members to those performance measures which had not met expectations but explained some were out of the Council's control.

Councillor Gledhill praised the Housing Team for the hard work undertaken.

Councillor Spillman asked the Council to agree to build more homes by borrowing from the Housing Revenue Account. Councillor Gledhill stated that preliminary questions had already been asked on the need to “borrow to build”, with the need to build new homes urgently in the borough.

Councillor Gerrish thanked Councillor Gledhill for the report and asked what improvements would be made on anti-social behaviour. Councillor Gledhill stated that the Thurrock Safety Partnership was in place and working with the police was a priority. That a better way of notifying the Council of incidents would be reviewed alongside how the Police and the Council react to such incidents.

Councillor Collins asked what work had been undertaken on other properties other than the tower blocks following the fire at Grenfell Tower. Councillor Gledhill stated that safety work had been carried out on medium and high rise blocks and contact would be made with all managing agents reiterating their obligations to keep hall ways and emergency exits clear. Councillor Gledhill stated that residents had the right to live safely.

Councillor Potheary stated that homelessness had rocketed and asked what the plans were going forward. Councillor Gledhill stated that there had been little investment as there had been no social housing in the last 10 years. There was also a need to attract more landlords into Thurrock and to look at alternative methods of building new homes.

Councillor Piccolo asked about those residents living in Council properties with more bedrooms that they needed. Councillor Gledhill stated that a match-up exercise would commence following the completion of the Housing Stock Review.

Councillor Redsell asked whether a review to make garages look better in the borough was near conclusion. Councillor Gledhill stated that a programme would be run but not at great cost to the Council.

Councillor Maney asked with 8000 people on the housing waiting list what would be the cost to build enough houses to home them all. Councillor Gledhill worked out that it would take £2.2 billion and would take approximately 20 years.

Councillor Watkins asked whether there were plans to regenerate Council estates. Councillor Gledhill stated there was money to regenerate, with areas highlighted but that plans would be put on hold until there was sufficient money to move forward.

Councillor Kelly asked whether Council developments were good value for money. Councillor Gledhill stated that they represented good value for money for those residents living in them but the Council needed to build future properties more cost effectively.

22. Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Health

Councillor Halden, Portfolio Holder for Education and Health, presented his Portfolio Holder report and updated Members on the following items:

- Progress in leadership working with schools and attracting investments into Thurrock.
- Three free schools bids won, two secondary schools and a special needs school in addition to the £10 million that will be invested through the Council's capital over the next three years. That £70 million had been invested into school places.
- A General Practitioners standards plan was in place with staff actioning this plan working with general practitioners and driving forward surgery by surgery plans showing them how rates can be improved to save the health care millions of pounds.
- Children's Centres were reformed to save millions of pounds by getting rid of expensive buildings and fragmented contracts.
- The 1-2-1 sessions offered to children will be increased from 240 up to 480.
- The Portfolio Holder's fourth objective must now be delivery.
- Cabinet will receive a report in July 2017 to begin the process of constructing the first Integrated Medical Centres.
- Doors to the free school in Purfleet will open to students in September 2017.

Councillor Halden stated that next year will present similar challenges and opportunities.

Councillor Halden thanked all Officers and staff for their hard work.

Councillor Snell thanked the Portfolio Holder for his very positive report but questioned whether cuts were being made in education to fund Clean It Cut It Fill It. Councillor Halden stated that moving services out of expensive buildings generated funds to go into initiatives such as Clean It Cut It Fill It.

Councillor Snell asked the Portfolio that following the Queens speech how did Thurrock stand with having a grammar school in the borough. Councillor Halden stated that there was a clear demand for grammar school education and that a pilot area had been identified. Thurrock would not back down and would have a grammar school in the borough.

Councillor Okunade asked whether an impact assessment had been carried out when considering the closure of the children centres with regards to funding and future provision. Councillor Halden stated that this should have been a question for Overview and Scrutiny to answer last year and confirmed that a full consultation had been carried out.

Councillor Gerrish questioned whether the Portfolio Holder supported the amalgamation of Accident and Emergency Units across Essex. Councillor

Halden stated that the Sustainable Transformations Plan was not to amalgamate units but to establish centres of excellence. The Annual Health Report identified that there were unnecessary Accident and Emergency admissions and these had to be addressed.

Councillor Sheridan thanked the Portfolio Holder for the report and was pleased to hear his passion and pride on building new schools in the borough but had concerns on the letters parents were receiving regarding funding reforms and proposed cuts. Councillor Halden stated that the net effect would be a net increase to Thurrock of £1.5 million. The funding formula was based on a block based formula and a calculation rebalancing bid was currently being undertaken. The cuts that schools were referencing parents to were pension cuts which would be an entirely different issue and should be addressed separately.

23. Questions from Members

A copy of the transcript of questions and answers can be found at Appendix A to these minutes.

At 8.38pm Councillor Gerrish requested that standing orders be suspended to provide time to hear and debate the remaining Member Questions. Members voted in favour of this.

24. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies

Councillor Ojetola provided an update on the work of the Standard Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and stated how vital it was to have this in Thurrock with a good cross party structure. Councillor Ojetola drew Member's attention to the one committee vacancy.

25. Minutes of Committees

The Minutes of Committee as set out in the Agenda were received.

26. Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year

Members received an information report updating the progress in respect of Motions received at Council over the last year.

Councillor Jones requested a written update from Portfolio Holder on his motion agreed on the 28 September 2016. "We call on Thurrock Council to write to the Secretary of State to express many residents' views that in its present state the police service contact number 101 is not fit for purpose".

27. Motion submitted by Councillor Gerrish

At 8.57pm, the Mayor moved a motion to suspend Council Procedure Rule 11.1 to allow the meeting to continue beyond the 2.5 hour time limit until 10.00pm. Members indicated their agreement to the proposal.

The Motion, as printed in the Agenda was proposed by Councillor Gerrish and seconded by Councillor Kerin. The Motion read as follows:

Council calls on the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee to conduct a full review of fly tipping in private alleys, in order to:

- Understand the scale of the issue across the borough.
- Review the impact on residents of the council's policy on fly tipping in private alleys.
- Evaluate potential policy responses, including understanding the cost to the council of taking action and exploring new, more innovative solutions.
- Make recommendations on the best approach to improving the situation.

Councillor Gerrish stated that a change was required on how fly tipping was dealt with in the borough and appreciated that there was not an easy solution. That the Cleaner Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee should lead on this initiative to recommend a clear unified approach.

Councillor Jones stated that this item would appear on the Cleaner Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme and looked forward to its discussion and debate.

Councillor Tolson stated that fly tipping was a national problem and the practice needed to be changed as it was unfair to ask residents to pay more council tax for this. The Council would also not be responsible of removing fly tipping from private land and that the Bulk Waste Service was available with details on the Thurrock website.

Councillor Maney stated that the Cleaner Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee should not just look at fly tipping in alleyways but also private parking areas that seem to attract a lot of fly tipping. That the Council should also look at the Bulk Waste Service collection charges which he thought were expensive when compared to similar collections made by Basildon and Southend Councils.

Councillor Piccolo stated that the item should have been added to the Cleaner Green Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme last year rather than it coming as a Motion.

Councillor Cherry suggested that some fly tipping was carried by tenants or landlords in short term rental properties where house contents were often left in the street. The Council should enforce the law on private landlords when taking properties back from rentals that all rubbish was disposed of in the correct manner.

Councillor Gledhill agreed that it was not just alleyways being affected and that it was unfair on everybody to have to pay. It should be those responsible

that should pay. Councillor Gledhill stated that care and consistency would need to be given when helping residents or large land owners with the proper level of costs for clearing away fly tipping.

Councillor Gledhill offered assistance to the Cleaner Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee to supply contact details of registered landlords in the borough.

Councillor Watkins thanked the Environment Team for their hard work and stated that he was surprised with Councillor Gerrish's statement that Clean It Cut It Fill It was not working and suggested that the item should have been placed on the Cleaner Green Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme when he was Chair to this committee last year.

Councillor Redsell suggested that a regular "Pick Up" service could be offered that was similar to a service offered by Basildon Council. The Council needed to look at the bigger picture and how items should be disposed of correctly.

Councillor S Little encouraged residents to ensure that the person removing any bulk waste held a Waste Transfer Licence.

Councillor Kerin stated that the borough needed consistency with cross party involvement to discourage fly tipping anywhere in the borough and believed that this could be done through the Cleaner Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to ensure that residents understood the rules and procedures.

Councillor Gerrish summed up by thanking Members for their support and their contributions.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion.

Following a clear majority in favour, the Mayor declared the Motion carried.

(a) Motion submitted by Councillor V Holloway

The Motion, as printed in the Agenda was proposed by Councillor V Holloway and seconded by Councillor Gerrish. The Motion read as follows:

Thurrock Council stands opposed to the closure of Orsett Hospital because of the valuable services delivered to Thurrock residents and urges that Council resist attempts to move any resources or capacity from Orsett Hospital out of Thurrock.

Councillor Holloway introduced the Motion and in doing so stated that the National Health Service was failing too many people and the back drop to this was that Orsett Hospital was to be closed. That the Integrated Medical Centres were welcomed but plans were still at an early stage and whether they would offer a like-for-like service and had concerns that the centres would not be in place before Orsett Hospital closed.

A proposed amendment to the Motion had been submitted by Councillor Halden and seconded by Councillor Hebb. The amended Motion read as follows:

Thurrock Council would oppose any closure of Orsett Hospital until new and modern facilities are put in place first to ensure that clinical services are maintained and improved in Thurrock and urges that Council resist attempts to move clinical resources or capacity from Orsett Hospital out of Thurrock.

Councillor Halden introduced his amendment and stated that the National Health Service needed to be funded properly and the amended motion addressed this local provision. Councillor Halden stated that Orsett Hospital was owned by Basildon Hospital and that consultations to co locate acute and primary care services were being undertaken by the Clinical Commissioning Group.

The outcomes would be that no changes would be made until these Centres were up and running in modern purpose built buildings with some services being migrated into General Practitioners surgeries. The Consultation would concentrate on how services would be delivered to residents and how these services will remain in the borough.

Councillor Halden stated that he and Tom Abel, Managing Director, from Basildon Hospital will be attending the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Monday 3 July. At the request of the Chair, Councillor Snell, they would be more than happy to comment further.

Councillor Snell thanked the Portfolio Holder for his report and welcomed him and Tom Abel to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 3 July.

Councillor Snell stated he supported the amended motion and that the Portfolio Holder was right that plans had to change to move the services forward. The proposed first centre was scheduled to open soon but residents would still need to be convinced that services would not be lost and should see these before Orsett Hospital was closed.

Councillor Gledhill supported the amended motion and agreed that residents would need convincing first and how these services would be accessible as and when required.

Councillor Gledhill stated that times had changed and that changes were due to how the National Health Service was run. Councillor Gledhill agreed that a hospital in Thurrock would help move the borough into the 21st century.

Councillor Maney felt the original motion was presumptive and stated it would be common sense for Councillor V Holloway to withdraw her motion and support the amendment.

Councillor Hebb stated the overview and scrutiny would be the appropriate mechanism to interview and challenge the leadership and governance group of Basildon University Trust Hospital and the Clinical Commissioning Group as this would be articulated in the correct way where the committee could be critical but constructive at the same time. Councillor Hebb referenced that residents would not worry where they go for the right clinical treatment and attention especially if these services were in their local domains.

Councillor Halden requested that the amended Motion went to the vote.

Councillor Gerrish thanked Councillor Halden for his amended motion but stood opposed to the closure of Orsett Hospital and the loss of services that this would create. Not sufficient information was available or debate had occurred and that Councillor Gerrish was not satisfied that all services would be available. This required clarification and should be scrutinised more by the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor V Holloway summed up by questioning whether Councillor Halden would actually get the centres up and running before Orsett Hospital closed and that decisions were being made on the financial elements instead of the residents. Councillor V Holloway also stated that Health Centres should be built alongside hospitals not instead of.

The Mayor called a vote on the amended Motion.

Upon being put to the vote, 32 Members voted in favour of the Amendment with 12 Members abstaining whereupon the Mayor declared the Amendment carried.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion as amended.

Following a clear majority in favour, the Mayor declared the Amended Motion carried.

28. Motion submitted by Councillor Spillman

The Motion, as printed in the Agenda was proposed by Councillor Spillman and seconded by Councillor Duffin. The Motion read as follows:

Thurrock Council can place families in temporary accommodation outside the borough. In cases of families with children, who are subsequently found to be intentionally homeless, the Council would not then have a statutory duty under the Children's Act to process a social care assessment for such children.

That statutory duty would instead reside with the Council in which they have been placed. This is the case no matter how long the families may have previously lived within the borough.

This Chamber calls on Thurrock Council Children Services to accept a non-statutory duty to such children whose family have been placed in temporary accommodation outside the borough.

Councillor Spillman stated that Thurrock's children formed part of the Thurrock family and should not be abandoned and that it should be the statutory duty of Thurrock to process assessments for those children that had been placed outside the borough.

Councillor S Little stated that she would have been happy to have discussed this Motion or any individual cases with Councillor Spillman beforehand. Councillor S Little would not be supporting the Motion from a Children's Services point of view as this was not a statutory duty of Thurrock if a child was not placed in the borough. Councillor S Little explained that if a Thurrock child was to be placed outside the borough it would be that authority that would take the responsibility for that child.

Councillor Halden stated as Portfolio Holder for Education he had sympathy with Councillor Spillman's motion that schooling was paramount and that every child should go to school. Councillor Halden would not be supporting the Motion as the Children's Act was in place and that local authorities should not cut across each other. Councillor Halden would be happy to discuss any individual cases with Councillor Spillman outside of the meeting.

Councillor Okunade stated that as Chair to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and her involvement in Corporate Parenting that it was paramount that no child should suffer and that Members should be assured that authorities have the right processes in place. Based on this Councillor Okunade would be unable to support the Motion.

Councillor Gledhill stated that it was the statutory duty of every local authority to look after the children in their locality so as to avoid any duplication of effort. Councillor Gledhill also stated that the processes for Thurrock residents who became intentionally homeless had to be addressed.

Councillor Cherry stated that as Corporate Parents, Members must have a continued interest in Thurrock children placed outside the borough in the hope that a child may one day return to the borough. Likewise their extended family would most likely remain in Thurrock. Members needed an active interest that all other authorities were doing the right thing for the child.

Councillor Duffin stated that this should not be about finance but about the best care and support Thurrock children get in or outside the borough.

Councillor Spillman summed up by stating that this was an opportunity to protect the children of Thurrock and not abandon them in their time of need.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion.

Upon being put to the vote, 15 Members voted in favour of the Motion with 25 Members against, whereupon the Mayor declared the Amendment lost.

The Mayor declared the Motion Lost.

The meeting finished at 9.57 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**