

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 29 November 2017 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Tunde Ojetola (Mayor), John Allen, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Tony Fish, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Robert Gledhill, James Halden, Graham Hamilton, Clifford Holloway, Victoria Holloway (*arrived 8.10pm*), Deborah Huelin, Roy Jones, Tom Kelly, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Brian Little, Susan Little, Sue MacPherson, Ben Maney, Bukky Okunade, Terry Piccolo, David Potter, Joycelyn Redsell, Barbara Rice, Gerard Rice, Sue Sammons, Angela Sheridan (*arrived 7.16pm*), Peter Smith, Graham Snell, Luke Spillman, Pauline Tolson and Aaron Watkins

Apologies: Councillors Michael Stone (Deputy Mayor), Tim Aker, Chris Baker, James Baker, Jan Baker, Clare Baldwin, Russell Cherry, Jack Duffin, Garry Hague, Shane Hebb, Steve Liddiard, Jane Potheary and Kevin Wheeler

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Sharon Bayliss (Director of Commercial Services)
Steve Cox, Corporate Director Place
Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation
David Lawson, Assistant Director of Law & Governance
Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways
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 Pastor Akin Laosun to lead those present in Prayer

84. Minutes

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 25 October 2017 were approved as a correct record.

85. Items of Urgent Business

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

86. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

87. 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 welcomed Members to the last Full Council of the year and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

The Mayor thanked Well House Gallery and the artist, Phil Smith, for continuing to allow him to showcase their work in the parlour.

The Mayor held a 'best of Thurrock variety night' to promote the wide range of skills in Thurrock and to promote and raise funds for Contact the Elderly and Thurrock Community Chest. The Mayor commended the work of Thurrock Young Producers with the event being organised by 18 year old Franki McEwen. The event had generated around £1500 with about 150 people in attendance. The Mayor also thanked Members for the cross party support.

Thank you to Councillors Redsell and Maney for taking the time to plant a tree at St George's playing field to commemorate the Queen's 70th wedding anniversary.

Congratulations were given to Mr and Mrs England who had celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary this week.

The Mayor also commended Jasmine Collier, Thurrock's Head Cadet and the winner of Essex Police Cadet of the Year. That the Volunteer Police cadets had recently started in Thurrock and had been growing from strength to strength with Jasmine being a role model to young people across the borough.

That the Thurrock Highways Team led by Councillor Brian Little had recently won an Award for the Best Use of New Technology for Thurrock's collaboration on the Pothole spotter pilot scheme. That Councillor Sue Little and the Health Team had won the Local Government Information Unit Health and Care Award. The Mayor congratulated everyone involved.

The Mayor reminded Members that only a few days were left for nominations for the Thurrock Civic Awards 2018 with more information and how to make your nomination available on the Council's website.

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

Councillor Gledhill echoed the Christmas wishes made by Councillor Ojetola and thanked those that had helped with the switching on of the Christmas lights in Grays last weekend and all other events around the borough. That funding from the Community Economic Development Fund helped to assist with the lighting in Corringham and that the Tilbury lights would be switched on this Friday.

The fantastic partnership project of Give a Gift being run at Intu Lakeside where hundreds of hours had been donated by Officers, residents and Councillors to ensure the shop was well staffed. Councillor Gledhill encouraged Members to continue to volunteer for such a good cause.

An update on Fill It showed that since April 2017, 1276 potholes had been filled, with 124 potholes filled in November 2017.

The Leader thanked Councillors Redsell and Maney for taking the time to plant a tree at St George's playing field to commemorate the Queen's 70th wedding anniversary which demonstrated that Thurrock showed commitment to the Royal Family.

Congratulations were also given to Mr and Mrs England who had celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary this week.

That Lisa Holliday had made the finals of the prestigious annual social awards and although she had not won the Council should be incredibly proud of her hard work.

That Councillor Halden had also been shortlisted for the Local Government Information Unit national award.

That Inspection Coachworks had been awarded a £20,000 grant from the Low Carbon across the South East which had enabled them to invest a much greater amount in their company to reduce the electricity use and therefore their carbon footprint. This had meant they could use that money to employ more local people for local jobs supporting other local industries in the Thurrock area. That every opportunity should be made to get Thurrock businesses to make an application to help businesses reduce their footprint and make Thurrock a cleaner and greener place.

88. 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 at these minutes.

89. 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 Allen presented a petition on behalf of residents who are fully opposed to any future building on the King George's Playing Field.

Councillor Gerrish presented a petition on behalf of residents to review the parking situation in Angle Road, South Stifford.

90. Petitions Update Report

Members received a report on the status of those petitions handed in at Council Meetings and Council Offices over the past six months.

91. 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 he had no further changes to make.

Councillor Snell, Leader of the UKIP Group, informed the Chamber that he wished to make the following changes:

For Councillor Duffin to replace Councillor Sheridan on the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Spillman to replace Councillor Sheridan on the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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

For Councillor Kerin to become a substitute Member on the General Services Committee.

For Councillors Gerrish and C Holloway to become substitute Members on the Lower Thames Task Force.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Councillor Duffin be appointed as Member of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- 2. That Councillor Spillman be appointed as Member of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

3. **That Councillor Kerin be appointed as substitute Member of the General Services Committee.**
4. **That Councillors Gerrish and C Holloway become substitute Members of the Lower Thames Task Force.**

92. Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment

Councillor Watkins, Cabinet Member for Environment, introduced the report and stated that it had been an honour to present his first annual portfolio holder report and believed that the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It had made Thurrock a proud place for residents to live in.

Councillor Watkins updated Members on the services provided and the work undertaken and quoted the following achievements from the Clean It, Cut It.

9000 acres of grass had been cut
1000 tonnes of rubbish collected
2400 fines for littering
100 people prosecuted for not paying fines
70,801 tonnes of household waste collected
10,422,828 number of domestic bins collection per year
622 miles of road swept

Councillor Watkins stated that the weekly bin review had been introduced and the commercial trade waste scheme will be introduced following Cabinet approval.

Councillor Watkins stated that he was proud with what the Council had achieved this year but more had to be done in 2018 and that it was important to get the services right first time.

Councillor Watkins thanked Senior Officers and the unsung heroes of the Environment Team for all their hard work.

Councillor Snell thanked the Portfolio Holder for his report and questioned what works were being undertaken on plain services such as ground maintenance of sports fields. Councillor Watkins stated that it had been identified that communications could be improved and that a specific email address was now available to report any issues and that a grounds maintenance action plan was now being put in place. With the winter maintenance work starting on cricket grounds to ensure they were ready for next year.

Councillor Gerrish thanked the Portfolio Holder for his report but stated the biggest concern was the poor performance of bin emptying on Thurrock's streets. Councillor Watkins stated that the Council was working hard to get the targets met and that route optimisation had been highly effective. That

investment had been made in purchasing further waste vehicles and that the Council were investing and making positive approaches.

Councillor Jones thanked the Portfolio Holder for his in-depth report and personally thanked Officers and crew members for all their hard work and although it was positive there was still some way to go. Councillor Jones questioned anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces and how this was being addressed. Councillor Watkins stated that the Council was working with the Police on all issues raised by residents and that this work will continue.

Councillor Smith thanked the Portfolio Holder for his report and for his assistance with the failed bin collections in Aveley. Councillor Smith stated that tonnes of industrial waste had been dumped recently in Aveley and asked the Portfolio Holder what plans were in place to stop this happening in the future. Councillor Watkins stated he was working with Officers to address this area and that decisions from Cabinet and approval of planning application for the commercial trade waste scheme on the Linford Site were still awaited.

Councillor Watkins stated how impressed he was with the work already undertaken and thanked the Officers and teams again. That Members should contact him directly with any individual concerns and would be more than happy to attend site visits. Councillor Watkins wished Members a Merry Christmas.

93. Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that 7 questions to the Leader of the Council had been received and 9 questions to Cabinet Members.

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

At 8.00pm, the Leader requested Council Procedure Rule 14.18 to be suspended so that Member questions could continue. The Mayor asked consent for this and by implication suspension of Council Procedure Rule 11.1 for the meeting to continue to 10.00pm. Members voted 17 in favour and 13 against. The Mayor declared the Motion carried.

94. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies

The Mayor informed the Chambers that no reports had been received.

95. Minutes of Committees

The Minutes of Committees as set out in the Agenda was received.

96. 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.

97. Motion submitted by Councillor J Kent

The Motion, as printed in the Agenda was proposed by Councillor J Kent and seconded by Councillor Okunade. The Motion read as follows:

Care leavers who were looked after by the Council are amongst the most vulnerable groups in our community. As Corporate parents we should aim to keep young people safe and improve their life chances. Therefore Thurrock Council resolves that - to help ensure the transition from care to adult life is as smooth as possible, and to mitigate the chances of care leavers falling into debt as they begin to manage their own finances, that the executive bring forward plans and a decision to exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax up to the age of 25 from 2018/19.

Councillor J Kent introduced the Motion and stated that he would not be supporting the proposed amendment and urged all Members to vote against it. Councillor J Kent stated that it was the responsibility of Members as Corporate Parents to take this role seriously and to help and ease the care leaver's transition into independent adults. In some cases this was not always straight forward and some had poorer life chances than others. Councillor J Kent urged all members to support.

Councillor Okunade, as seconder to the Motion, stated the comments made by the Section 151 Officer should be considered and noted. That there was a lot of pressure on care leavers to pay this council tax and although independency was good it had to be financially stable.

Councillors Tolson and MacPherson left the Council Chamber at 9.10pm.

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

Care leavers who were looked after by the Council are amongst the most vulnerable groups in our community. As Corporate parents we should aim to keep young people safe and improve their life chances. Therefore Thurrock Council resolves that - to help ensure the transition from care to adult life is as smooth as possible, and to mitigate the chances of care leavers falling into debt as they begin to manage their own finances, that the executive bring forward plans in its "headstart housing paper - supporting care leavers", which is proposed for December Scrutiny, includes proposals for targeted Council tax relief and for Scrutiny to make recommendations to Cabinet regarding a whole package of support for these young people and that Council now adds it's support for an executive decision for start of the year 2018/19.

Councillor Halden stated the Headstart Housing Paper in Supporting Care Leavers should be considered by scrutiny at the December committee as a straight forward exemption for care leavers paying council tax may not be the best option. That he encouraged Members to take the amendment, work as a

cross party to look at options and ensure the balance was right that it was being offered to people based on what they need.

Councillor S Little stated her support for the Amendment and confirmed that the Council supported care leavers up to the age of 25 with a few having been extended beyond that age. That the paper should go to scrutiny to address all the different needs so that it creates a dependent culture.

Councillor Spillman stated this was a brilliant motion.

Councillor Huelin stated her support for the Motion provided Councillor Halden's amendment was made.

Councillor Halden stated it was a good motion which was going to be implemented in the future anyway. That the Policy had to be comprehensive so that it supported care leavers into independency and to help them get out of the system. That some care leavers may require more help than others and that a detailed target approach was required. Councillor Halden volunteered to attend the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to talk Members through the paper.

Councillor J Kent welcomed Councillor Halden's suggestion to widen and broaden the package but stated it had not meant that the Council could not make that decision tonight and agree that tax council should be exempt for care leavers up to the age of 25. Councillor J Kent had taken advice from two reports written by the Children's Society and that the amendment should be rejected to ensure that all care leavers got exemption.

The Mayor called a vote on the amended Motion.

Upon being put to the vote, 24 Members voted in favour of the Amendment with 10 Members against 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.

98. Motion submitted by Councillor Snell

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

This Council calls on government to reject the idea of piloting the re-integration of former extremists and returning jihadists by giving them priority on housing waiting lists which this Council would oppose.

Councillor Snell presented the Motion and stated that this pilot would cause great harm and stress to the residents of Thurrock. There are 8,000 decent

residents on Thurrock's housing waiting list who were expected to score points for social house but the pilot was suggesting that extremists would be given priority over those residents and this was so wrong. Those Thurrock residents should always come first and when the Government makes a request for Thurrock to do so, Thurrock will say no.

Councillor Gledhill stated this was a fantastic Motion and that it was a possibility not a fact that this would happen. That as Portfolio Holder for Housing he was contacted regularly by residents in need of housing and that Thurrock veterans were given priority for those in need of housing. Councillor Gledhill would continue to fight against those that have fought against those that had fought and have done the right thing. That Government should understand that Thurrock would not be supporting this policy locally or nationally.

Councillor Hamilton stated his full support on this Motion.

Councillor Smith stated his full support on this Motion.

Councillor Spillman stated his support for the Motion with the country already failing to prevent young people from extremists and that a proper plan had to be put in place.

Councillor Snell thanked Members for their support and agreed that it was a local matter for local people.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the Motion whereupon the Mayor declared the Motion carried.

99. Motion submitted by Councillor Jones

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

We call on Thurrock Council to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner, Roger Hirst, and Essex Police to ask them to outline their strategy to reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and violent attacks in Thurrock.

Councillor Jones presented the Motion and stated that crimes continued to take place every day in Thurrock and questioned why there was no police on Thurrock streets to deal with such crimes. That residents were continuing to report these crimes, with some being threatened by anti-social behaviour in their own premises. That Thurrock was an industrial hub and should be a special case for police presence. Councillor Jones stated that the Police and Crime Commissioner and Essex Police had to urgently re-evaluate the number of police on the streets of Thurrock.

Councillor Spillman, as seconder to the Motion, supported the Motion and stated that the Police had lost control of public places and that Thurrock had to make a noise to get this changed. Councillor Spillman stated that it was only luck that the situation had not got any worse.

Councillor G Rice stated his support for the Motion and stated that it was absolutely appalling that residents did not feel safe anymore following so many cuts made by the neglect of the Conservative Government. That the administration should speak to Thurrock Members of Parliament to ensure that they raised this issue with Government that more budgets are allocated to police resources.

Councillor Kerin stated his support for the Motion as he was campaigning against anti-social behaviour and questioned whether a letter had been received back from the Police and Crime Commissioner following Councillor B Rice Motion presented at September Full Council.

Councillor Snell stated that this issue continued to come back to Full Council and questioned why crime was getting worse when the Police are supposed to be getting smarter for less. That crimes never heard of were now taking place in Thurrock and that this was not good enough and offered no protection for Thurrock residents. That it was vital that the Police got the balance right soon.

Councillor B Rice welcomed this Motion and stated that anti-social behaviour was affecting all residents and it was a disgrace. That the Government had got it all wrong and that more police were required so that Thurrock could get back to being a civilised society.

Councillor Allen stated his support for the Motion and that the balance had to be found and more action taken before someone was seriously hurt or killed.

Councillor Gerrish stated the Police and Crime Commissioner had to acknowledge the position that additional police were required to deal with anti-social behaviour and that there was only so much the Council could do. Councillor Gerrish requested that the Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to a future Full Council.

The Mayor stated that the Police and Crime Commissioner had been invited to the 31 January 2018 Full Council.

Councillor Gledhill stated his support for the Motion and agreed that these issues should be addressed at Full Council. That Councillor Jones as chair of the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee use his powers and call a special meeting to ask more in depth questions to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Councillor Fish stated that the attitude of residents had changed and that they felt they had to just accept it. That it was not acceptable and that a cross party decision had to be made to get something done.

Councillor Redsell reiterated the comments already made and that the Police and Crime Commissioner should be held to account.

Councillor Coxshall stated he met with the Police and Crime Commissioner this week to express his concerns and the issue of funding for more Police. It was vital to get the Police and Crime Commissioner on the same side as Thurrock.

Councillor Jones stated that the Police and Crime Commissioner had attended a community group meeting in Corringham and the points addressed to him had still not been resolved and that residents had requested he return to explain why.

Councillor Jones thanked Members for their comments and support and stated that the Motion was not an attack on the Police only that more police were required on the streets of Thurrock.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the Motion whereupon the Mayor declared the Motion carried.

The meeting finished at 9.55 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**