

Minutes of the Meeting of the Extraordinary Council held on 11 December 2018 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Barbara Rice (Mayor), Terry Piccolo (Deputy Mayor), Abbie Akinbohun (*arrived 7.06pm*), John Allen, Alex Anderson, Russell Cherry, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Tony Fish, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Robert Gledhill, Garry Hague, James Halden, Shane Hebb, Victoria Holloway, Deborah Huelin, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Angela Lawrence, Steve Liddiard, Susan Little, Ben Maney, Bukky Okunade, Jane Potheary, David Potter, Joycelyn Redsell, Gerard Rice, Elizabeth Rigby, Aaron Watkins and Lynn Worrall

Apologies: Councillors Qaisar Abbas, Tim Aker, James Baker, Clare Baldwin, Mike Fletcher, Graham Hamilton, Sue MacPherson, Sue Sammons and Pauline Tolson

In attendance: Laura Blake, LTC Task Force, Thames Crossing Action Group
Linda Mulley, LTC Task Force, Resident Representative
Peter Ward, LTC Task Force, Port of Tilbury
Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Steve Cox, Corporate Director Place
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT
David Lawson, Assistant Director of Law & Governance
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.

A two minutes silence was held in memory of Grace Millane, the young British backpacker who had tragically been killed in New Zealand. The Mayor stated that Grace's grandfather, Martin Millane, had served as a Labour Councillor and as Mayor in Thurrock for a period of time. The Mayor expressed her sadness and thoughts were with the family at this sad time.

83. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

84. Urgent Item: Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation

Councillor Coxshall, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, presented the report and stated the Local Plan would be guided and shaped throughout by the right infrastructure, positive health and wellbeing impact, the housing needs of the borough, to protect and enhance the character of communities, maintain effective green belt and to meet employment needs. Councillor Coxshall stated the report was not the final plan nor was it about numbers or specific sites. It was the commitment to residents on the quality and new infrastructure into the borough and for residents to decide on the shape of future plans. Councillor Coxshall thanked the cross party working group and specifically thanked Councillor G Rice, Councillor Gerrish, Councillor Spillman and Councillor J Kent.

Councillor Kerin as Chair of the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee stated the document was not perfect but good enough to agree to the consultation process. That the success of the Local Plan to be adopted in 2022 and beyond would be to address affordable, low cost and Council housing, that it was crucial that communities were involved and to ensure that the urban extensions and new settlements would not destroy the character and history of the borough.

Councillor J Kent agreed that the consultation be undertaken with residents and businesses of Thurrock to see how the borough be shaped. That this would now be for the Council to take forward and was pleased that the document was in a much better place compared to several months ago. Councillor J Kent suggested a new recommendation that the consultation process be extended to allow sufficient time for all residents to have their say.

Councillor Spillman stated he would not be blocking the Local Plan and thanked Officers for the hard work undertaken.

Councillor Potheary stated that the document was now in a better place and in a healthier shape with good communications amongst all groups taking place and agreed that the consultation process should be extended to allow all residents to have time to response. Councillor Potheary stated her concern how evidence on the connection between congestion and air quality could be proven, referred Members to the development of Grays Town Centre and the proposed Urban Extensions of the Local Plan and had serious concern how these would impact those residents in the areas mentioned. Councillor Potheary stated that she was not against going to the consultation stage only that this should have happened much sooner and that all analyse should be included in the report.

Councillor G Rice stated this support for the Local Plan and was pleased that the document had been in good order and the Council had committed to the infrastructure led plan in the borough. Councillor G Rice thanked Officers for the hard work undertaken and agreed that further discussions should still continue.

Councillor Gledhill stated that infrastructure in the borough was key alongside affordable and Council homes. That a thorough consultation would take place to involve residents through the whole process were all points would be taken forward to strengthen the commitment being made.

Councillor Gerrish had several concerns and referred Members to Page 40 of the Local Plan, Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and questioned how the consultation around housing numbers would be undertaken. Page 85 of the Local Plan, Digital Infrastructure, how would all residents be given the opportunity to engage with the consultation process. That question 35 on Page 99 of the Local Plan, Car Parking, was a leading question. Councillor Gerrish stated concerns that assessments of Air Quality be feed back into the consultation. There had been no mention of Member Workshops where all 49 Members should be given the opportunity to feed into the process.

Councillor Worrall stated that the time framework was not long enough to allow residents to have their say and questioned how the consultation would be made available to every resident in Thurrock. Councillor Worrall referred Members to Page 33 of the Local Plan, Managing Waste, and stated a further consultation may get lost in the process and should be included as part of the whole Local Plan proposal. That the Local Plan had not mentioned any new cemeteries and parks to ensure that Thurrock's green belt was protected from developments, the Government and from ourselves.

Councillor Coxshall summed up but stating the debate tonight had been helpful. That the consultation period should be extended in light of the Christmas period to ensure that all residents had the opportunity to respond. That cross party workshops would continue to ensure that member engagement would drive ideas together and all 49 Members had a stake in the document.

Councillor Spillman requested a requisition vote.

The Mayor called a requisition vote. A requisition vote took place, the result of which was:

For: Councillors Akinbohun, Anderson, Churchman, Collins, Coxshall, Fish, Gledhill, Hague, Halden, Hebb, Holloway, Huelin, Jefferies, Johnson, Kelly, C Kent, J Kent, Kerin, Lawrence, Liddiard, Little, Maney, Okunade, Piccolo, Pothecary, Redsell, B Rice, G Rice, Rigby, Shinnick, Watkins and Worrall
(32)

Against: Councillor Gerrish **(1)**

Abstain: Councillors Allen, Cherry, Duffin, Gamester, Potter, Smith, Spillman **(7)**

Whereupon the Mayor declared the recommendations carried.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Full Council agree the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document for public consultation.**
- 2. That Full Council delegate to the Corporate Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration the authority make any factual changes that may arise and any other inconsequential alterations to the wording of the Issues and Options (Stage 2) consultation document arising from the Council meeting.**
- 3. That Full Council agree the Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) – Engagement Strategy.**

85. Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) - Consultation Response

Councillor Gledhill presented the report which set out the draft response of the Council to the Statutory Consultation from Highways England (HE) on the proposals for the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) which commenced on 10 October 2018 and closes on 20 December 2018. Councillor Gledhill stated that in April 2017, the preferred route for the proposed LTC was announced and the Council had been clear in its unanimous objections to the LTC, setting up the cross party LTC Taskforce, including resident and business representation, and continued to raise objections to the proposals. With the Council actively working with stakeholders in sharing the concerns about the proposal including no discernible benefits for Thurrock or the surrounding South Essex areas. With Thurrock standing opposed to the LTC it was now time to say no by preparing a constructive response setting out the reasons and the shortfalls of the report.

Councillor Gledhill summarised the detail of the consultation response and referred Members to Appendix A, the Local Authority Response and Appendix B, the Interest in Land response.

Councillor Smith as Chair of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force reported on a couple of the points raised by the task force group on the LTC consultation covered their concerns on questionable value for money, response rates, lack of information, physical design and environmental standards. Councillor Smith stated there had been gaps in the LTC report and that Highways England strategic tests had not been met. Councillor Smith believed that the LTC proposal was now out of date with the consultation full of holes. That Highways England should now take away the proposals and listen to the residents of Thurrock.

Linda Mulley, LTC Resident Representative, stated that the Highways England proposals would destroy huge areas of greenbelt agricultural and environmentally sensitive and historic sites in Thurrock. That the loss of this land could have been used for building much needed homes that would now

leave much of Thurrock population and the most vulnerable without homes in years to come. That the quality of life for those Thurrock residents would be irreversibly damaged with the potential levels of pollution that the LTC will cause. Linda Mulley stated that going forward a united resolve by every Member, cross party, to use their contacts, office and determination to prevent Highways England from going into the final approval with this destructive and flawed plan.

Laura Blake, Thames Crossing Action Group, thanked the Mayor for the opportunity to speak and thanked Officers who had worked on the LTC response. That time had been extremely tight for the response to be prepared adequately. Laura Blake stated her concern on the consultation being full of inadequacies such as inadequate connections to and from the LTC, the A13 detour, how traffic would be migrated between the two crossings, the increase in congestion, the increase in pollution and errors made in letters sent to residents and businesses in Thurrock from Highways England. That the LTC had not one single true benefit to the people of Thurrock with any regard to resident's life, home, health, communities, greenbelt, farmland and forests and mental wellbeing. That the Council and residents should continue to stand opposed to the LTC and encourage all to take part in the consultation.

Peter Ward, Port of Tilbury, stated that Port of Tilbury was the largest employer in Thurrock and stood opposed to the LTC in the form that had been released for consultation. In particular disappointed in the omission of the Tilbury link road from the plans. That it was inconceivable that one of the UK's largest ports will not have adequate connectivity to the LTC. That the LTC had not met the tests required under the National Network policy and informed Members of the 7 key objectives of that policy; Peter Ward stated the reinstatement of the Tilbury link road would greatly assist in meeting a number of these objectives. The Port of Tilbury response would be submitted next week which will address all the points of concern.

Councillor Kerin as Chair of the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee stated that it was a clear message a crossing was needed but not this crossing. That all 49 members and residents should say no to the proposed LTC as this was the wrong crossing in the wrong place.

Councillor J Kent stated the LTC had been debated for nearly 10 years and that the expectation was that it would not be as bad as it was. The point made was that it was the wrong crossing in the wrong place. That the LTC would split the borough into two separate communities and residents would feel isolated. Councillor J Kent stated the LTC would increase congestion, increase traffic and increase pollution and urged all Members to support the recommendations.

Councillor Spillman echoed comments made by Members and stated that not one person with any regard to the residents of Thurrock would not see that the LTC proposal was a catastrophe. Councillor Spillman thanked Directors, Assistant Director, Task Force and residents for their contributions and that it

was good to see all parties working together and agreed that the time period should be extended to ensure everyone had an opportunity to respond. Councillor Spillman questioned that more logistical and financial support should be given to support these local groups.

Councillor G Rice stated an alternative option had been put on the table some 18 months ago to build a crossing from Essex to Kent via Canvey from a Chinese State Railway Company. With the cost involved being the payment of tolls over a number of years but unfortunately no local MPs had spoken to them. Councillor G Rice stated to improve environment heavy trucks needed to go onto a railway scheme which would take traffic away from the M25 and all major junctions. Councillor G Rice pleaded to the Conservatives to reach out to Government to get a meeting with the Chinese State Railway Company organised.

Councillor Potheary welcomed the consultation response and acknowledged the cross party task force that had been identified in the response. Councillor Potheary thanked Laura Blake and Linda Mulley for their contributions as part of the task force group.

Councillor Little stated the proposed LTC would be devastating for her ward. With areas being affected by light and air pollution, Orsett Showground and Baker Street being lost. Councillor Little questioned where the construction site would be located and where would the spoils from evacuating go.

Councillor Okunade stated at Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee last week a report had been presented on a Free School Site currently earmarked for Orsett Heath Academy. Councillor Okunade stated the concern was the potential poor air quality and the high levels of pollution so close to the school. Councillor Okunade stated that this should be strongly highlighted to Highways England.

Councillor Redsell agreed that all 49 Members were in agreement that the proposed LTC would increase pollution in the borough. That the red line continued to be moved which had caused stress on residents not knowing how they would be affected. Councillor Redsell stated it was clear that Thurrock did not want the LTC and that Thurrock did not want the pollution that came with that crossing.

Councillor Johnson stated that as Portfolio Holder for Housing the housing allocation had been based on need and there was a need for housing. That the borough would become a toxic triangle with fumes from the increased traffic and that no matrix studies had taken place. Councillor Johnson stated his fight against LTC would continue and encouraged all residents to complete the consultation response.

Councillor Worrall agreed that it was the wrong crossing in the wrong place and questioned the effects to residents if the construction was to go ahead. Councillor Worrall stated on behalf of the 12,000 Tilbury residents they do not want the Tilbury Link Road reinstated.

Councillor Allen stated his full opposition to the LTC with the PEER report not covering the impact to human health. Highways England should be looking at Value for Health not Value for Money.

Councillor Collins stated he was totally opposed to the LTC.

Councillor Lawrence stated the proposed plans for LTC were a bad design for the Belhus Ward and would make the area into a toxic triangle. Councillor Lawrence agreed that a new cross was needed but this should be built further up the river in Canvey. That the Council would continue to stay united, fight and continue to scrutinise to get the best for Thurrock residents.

Councillor Watkins stated the important of everyone completing the consultation and for Thurrock to continue to fight. Councillor Watkins stated how poor the Highways England consultation had been and the proposed LTC would not improve traffic but worsen with further congestion and pollution for Thurrock residents.

Councillor Hebb stated the approach that Highways England had taken was pure contempt against each person living the borough and thanked the author of the consultation response and the technical report. Councillor Hebb stated that the Council should be assertive in its response going forward with the Council pulling together to do the right thing. That the scheme had no benefits to Thurrock residents at all and would divide Thurrock into two communities. Councillor Hebb stated there appeared to be no regard for the history and heritage of Thurrock with the red line changing continually.

Councillor Smith thanked all Officers and the LTC task force team for the very detailed report. That those comments made by residents should form part of the consultation response and agreed that it was the wrong crossing in the wrong place. Councillor Smith stated that if the time was right with the appropriate legal advice a judicial review should be undertaken.

Councillor Gledhill echoed Members comments by thanking Members of the Public, Officers, LTC Task Force and Thurrock Businesses. That Thurrock would stand united and continue to fight and had not disagreed with any Members comments made this evening. That Highways England had ignored the potential increase in pollution and Councillor Gledhill agreed it was the wrong crossing in the wrong place. That the fight would not stop on the 20 December but would continue and hoped that all Members would vote in favour of the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Council maintained its opposition to the Lower Thames Crossing in Thurrock and pursuant to Section 42 (1)(b) of the Planning Act 2008 objects in principle to the proposed scheme;**

2. **That the Council agreed the consultation responses set out in Appendix A (Local Authority response) and B (Interests in Land) and submits these to Highways England by 20 December 2018;**
3. **That the Council agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive and Corporate Director Place, in consultation with Group Leaders, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Chair of the LTC Task Force to make any final, minor changes to the consultation response which may arise during the consideration of the consultation response by Council on the night.**

86. Political Balance and Allocation of Seats on Committees

Councillor Gledhill introduced the report that confirmed the calculations relating to the allocation of seats on committees following a change to political balance in November 2018 with the Administration gaining seats in Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Licensing Committee.

Councillor Gledhill moved the report to the vote.

RESOLVED:

That the allocation of seats including manual adjustment, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.

87. 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 previous made by 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 changes:

For Councillor Hague to be appointed as a member to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Jefferies to be appointed as a member to the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Anderson to be appointed as a member to the Licensing Committee.

Councillor J Kent, Leader of the Labour Group, informed the chamber that he wished to make the following change:

For Councillor J Kent to replace Councillor Gerrish on the General Services Committee.

Councillor Spillman, Leader of the Thurrock Independent Group, informed the chamber he wished to make the following changes:

For Councillor Gamester to be removed from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Baker to be removed from the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Cherry to be removed from the Licensing Committee.

The meeting finished at 8.25 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**