

Thurrock - An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future

## General Services Committee

The meeting will be held at **6.00 pm** on **24 September 2020**

Due to current government guidance on social-distancing and the COVID-19 virus, this meeting will not be open for members of the public to attend. Arrangements have been made for the press and public to watch the meeting live via the Council's online webcast channel: [www.youtube.com/user/thurrockcouncil](http://www.youtube.com/user/thurrockcouncil)

**Council Chamber, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex RM17 6SL**

### Membership:

Councillors Rob Gledhill (Chair), John Kent (Vice Chair), Mark Coxshall, Shane Hebb, Fraser Massey, Bukky Okunade and Gary Byrne

### Substitutes:

Councillors Jack Duffin, Tony Fish, Oliver Gerrish, James Halden, Andrew Jefferies and Barry Johnson

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### Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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| <b>1. Apologies for Absence</b>   |               |
| <b>2. Minutes</b>   | <b>5 - 10</b> |
| To approve as a correct record the minutes of General Services Committee meeting held on 3 August 2020.                                   |               |
| <b>3. Items of Urgent Business</b>  |               |
| 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. Long-list for Appointment of Assistant Directors for Planning and Growth, Economic Development and High House Production Park & Children's Social Care and Early Help**

##### **Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:**

Please contact Matthew Boulter, Democratic & Governance Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer by sending an email to [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

Agenda published on: **16 September 2020**

## **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.

Members of the public not wishing any speech or address to be recorded for publication to the Internet should contact Democratic Services to discuss any concerns.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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.**

## Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
  - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
  - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
  - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together
  
2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
  - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
  - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
  - Fewer public buildings with better services
  
3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
  - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
  - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
  - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

## Minutes of the Meeting of the General Services Committee held on 3 August 2020 at 6.00 pm

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**Present:** Councillors Robert Gledhill (Chair), Mark Coxshall, Fraser Massey, Bukky Okunade, James Halden (Substitute) (substitute for Shane Hebb), John Kent and Gary Byrne

**Apologies:** Councillor Shane Hebb

**In attendance:** Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive  
Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director of Lower Thames Crossing and Transport Infrastructure Projects  
Ian Hunt, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer  
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager

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Before the start of the meeting all present were advised that the meeting was being filmed and recorded.

### **40. Minutes**

The Minutes of the General Services Committee held on 16 March 2020 were approved as a correct record.

### **41. Items of Urgent Business**

There were not items of urgent business.

### **42. Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **43. Lower Thames Crossing Supplementary Consultation Response**

The Chair opened the item by giving a general summary of the proposals:

- Presence of raised noise barriers (which went against the Council's previously raised concerns about the level of the road on the landscape),
- Landscaping and ecological issues (the Chair noted there were some improvements but they did not go far enough)
- There was a proposal to move the existing traveller site.

- Changes to footpaths removing a connection between Stifford Clays Road and Long Lane which reduces connectivity.
- There are significant utilities diversions and a large working area for the development which still cause concern.

Cllr Coxshall felt that significant alterations had been made to the LTC proposal and this had in effect taken the project back to an earlier stage of development. The Council's response was right to point out that the changes were significant and previous Council input on issues had been ignored. Cllr Coxshall also felt Highways England's (HE) approach to the moving of the traveller site had been poor and they had not engaged with the community and he congratulated council officers for their work in resolving this issue.

Cllr Kent stated that the crossing would damage communities and would not improve the local road network but cause potentially further congestion. He believed the Council response was thorough and well worked.

Cllr Okunade raised the issue that many residents in her ward had received letters from HE and was causing anxiety within the community. Likewise, she felt that the health and equality impact assessments had not been properly shared by HE. The Assistant Director for the LTC replied that the health assessment would be delivered too late by HE and she further noted that the Council was concerned about the adequacy of the consultation given that HE's consultation was only virtual with residents. With regards to the letters residents had received, the Assistant Director explained that many households were historically part of larger title deeds on land and this was the reason they were being contacted. Approximately 27 properties would be compulsory purchased and compensation would be available for other affected households.

Cllr Massey felt the moving of the traveller site was a positive outcome but not much else and transport modelling had not been resolved and this was disappointing as the Council had clearly recommended this as a useful exercise.

**Resolved That:**

- 1. The Committee maintains its objection in principle to the Lower Thames Crossing in Thurrock.**
- 2. The Committee agrees the consultation response set out in appendix A (Local Authority Response) for submission to Highways England by 12 August 2020.**
- 3. The Committee agrees to delegate authority to the Chief Executive and Director of 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 in Appendix A which may arise during the consideration of the consultation response by General Services Committee and the LTC Task Force.**

**4. The Committee agrees to delegate authority to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Governance and Property, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Regeneration to finalise the consultation response in relation to the Council's land holdings affected by the LTC scheme.**

#### **44. Lower Thames Crossing Task Force**

Cllr Coxshall, as Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, introduced the report stating that as of September there would be little opportunity for the public to influence the course of the LTC scheme and it would be important for the Council to speak as one voice and it seemed appropriate that the General Services Committee (GSC), as the senior cross party executive committee, would be best placed to do this. He added that rigorous and probing meetings would be needed with HE and GSC was the committee to do this. He further explained that GSC could also create ad hoc working groups to look at specific issues and report back to the committee on its findings.

Cllr Byrne wondered whether the Task Force and GSC could work in tandem but Cllr Coxshall felt that there was a requirement to hold high level negotiations with HE after September and it was crucial there was one representative body from the Council. Cllr Coxshall stated he was happy to amend the recommendations to reflect that the Task Force would not disband until the submission had been made, which allowed the Task Force to continue at present.

Cllr Halden felt the amendment was a good one but stressed the Council must speak with one strong voice and felt GSC could put into effect decisions immediately in response to the LTC scheme whereas the Task Force had no such power.

Cllr Massey felt it important that the public had a voice in this issue and if the Task Force was to be disbanded there had to be a mechanism by which the public were kept informed.

Cllr Kent did not feel the report gave enough justification for the disbanding of the Task Force and pointed out a number of the roles of it from the Terms of Reference which could still legitimately continue after September including receiving updates on the progress of the scheme and reporting to other executive committees any findings it has made during its work. Cllr Kent continued to state that public involvement had been vital in bringing residents along with the Council and the unannounced nature of this report was discourteous to the public and the Task Force. He felt that both the GSC and Task Force could exist alongside each other and pointed out there was no detail on further working groups that GSC could establish in the report.

Cllr Halden responded by highlighting that GSC was more politically and geographically balanced than any other council committee and for the forthcoming discussions the Council needed a powerful and high level

committee to speak with one voice. He added that the public could be invited to the meetings to make comment.

Cllr Coxshall welcomed this debate and highlighted this was an open and democratic way to put the proposal to disband the Task Force forward. He reiterated that he was happy for the Task Force to continue until submission was made.

Cllr Okunade queried whether he co-opted members on the Task Force could be asked their opinion and also whether officer time would be retained after the submission had been made. Cllr Coxshall responded that officer time would be kept but the expenditure on this and on possible legal counsel could only be made at GSC and therefore it was important GSC took the lead on the project from now on. He added that the Task Force had done a great job but it was elected Members who had been elected to spend public money and it was right and proper they were responsible for those decisions and not co-opted members.

The Chair clarified amendments to the recommendations which were accepted by Cllr Coxshall as the mover of the report. Recommendation 1.1 would be amended to read:

“that the General Services Committee agrees in accordance with the terms of reference of the LTC Task Force that it be disbanded upon the submission of the Highways England Development Consent Order”

The Committee voted 3 in favour to 4 against this recommendation with Cllr Kent’s vote recorded against.

A further recommendation relating to the intent to establish working groups to support the work of the GSC subsequently was not moved due to the loss of recommendation 1.1.

**Resolved:**

**That the Committee notes and thanks the members of the LTC Task Force for their work past and present for their contribution to shaping the proposals and consultation responses.**

**The meeting finished at 7.06 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](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

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