

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 31 October 2018 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Barbara Rice (Mayor), Terry Piccolo (Deputy Mayor), Qaisar Abbas, Abbie Akinbohun, John Allen, Alex Anderson, James Baker, Clare Baldwin, Russell Cherry, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Mike Fletcher, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Robert Gledhill, James Halden, Graham Hamilton, Shane Hebb, Victoria Holloway, Deborah Huelin, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Angela Lawrence, Steve Liddiard, Susan Little, Sue MacPherson, Ben Maney, Bukky Okunade, David Potter, Joycelyn Redsell, Gerard Rice, Elizabeth Rigby, Sue Shinnick, Peter Smith, Luke Spillman, Pauline Tolson, Aaron Watkins and Lynn Worrall

Apologies: Councillors Tim Aker, Tony Fish, Garry Hague, Tom Kelly, Jane Potheary and Sue Sammons

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Sharon Bayliss, Director of Commercial Services
Steve Cox, Corporate Director 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, 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

The Mayor invited Reverend Canon Darren Barlow to lead those present in prayer.

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.

50. Minutes

The minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 25 July 2018 were approved as a correct record.

Councillor Redsell commented on Page 11 of the Agenda the words should have read "when the Mayor's seat was passed to Diane Revell from Councillor Redsell."

51. Items of Urgent Business

No items of urgent business were received.

52. Declaration of Interests

No declaration of interests were received

53. 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 announced it had been a great pleasure and heartening to see all the World War One commemorations taking place throughout the borough for the 100 year anniversary of the end of the First World War and what a splendid job residents had done. The Mayor thanked Thurrock Council for the large poppies being displayed on lampposts throughout the borough. On the 11 November, Thurrock church bells will ring out in unison with the whole nation in honour of those that lost their lives during the First World War.

The Mayor invited Councillor Redsell to update Members on the recent trip made by the Royal British Legion Standard Bearers to Ypres in Belgium.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Gledhill to make any announcements he wished to make as Leader of the Council.

The Leader announced that Highways England was currently running its consultation on the Lower Thames Crossing proposals. The proposed crossing was now a 3 lane motorway which would tear through the borough and had no obvious benefits for local businesses or residents and had failed Highways England's own scheme objective which was to support sustainable local development and regional economic growth in the medium to long term. Highways England had removed the Tilbury link road, instead, putting a motorway rest area in East Tilbury. That lorries coming in from the north on the Lower Thames Crossing would not be able to travel west on the A13 to get to the Port of Tilbury so they would have to go on to the A13 junction and double back. This was going to do nothing but add more pressure on the Manorway roundabout. The Leader encouraged everyone that lived and worked in the borough to get involved in the consultation by attending one of the public information events and complete and return the consultation form by Thursday 20 December. These can be found online or paper versions can be found in the Grays Library or the Tilbury Hub.

The Leader referenced the east facing slip road on the A13 and that it was great to see the Government had put aside £50 million to make that happen. This would hugely improve the exiting at Lakeside.

The Leader referred to the recent media coverage on whistleblowing allegations and confirmed that the allegations had been made under the whistleblowing policy and procedure with the matter now being independently reviewed in line with process and was being done via a specialist barrister with expertise in children's social care. The review was still ongoing and the findings would be released once known. In addition, Ofsted, the Government's responsible agent for child protection issues have been kept informed of the review. The Leader stated that in regards to media reports of hush money being paid to an individual, this had been properly processed and signed off as a compensation payment to a complaint in line with finance procedure rules and agreed by the relevant officers and political leadership at the time. The Leader stated that all whistleblowing allegations would be robustly investigated.

The Leader then referred Members to the C17 gang injunction and dispersal order and asked for all Members to join him in commending the excellent work which had taken place with Essex Police and Thurrock Council in securing the injunction against this criminal gang. The C17 injunction had now stopped a tenth person from going to certain parts of the borough, from associating with certain gang members, from wearing hoodies and from riding bikes in certain areas. This injunction tackled the issue of gang violence. The Leader urged the community to get behind this and report if they see any of the ten gang members breaching the injunction. Essex Police had also secured a dispersal order covering much of Chafford Hundred, Lakeside and parts of West Thurrock and Grays. The order will help them to prevent any Halloween related anti-social behaviour that residents experienced last year in and around the marked areas. The order came into force at 4.00pm on the 31 October and will last until 4.00pm on the 1 November. This would give our local Police Officers the power to remove people that are causing anti-social behaviour in the area.

The Leader mentioned a series of events which would be taking place in the coming weeks for the 100 year anniversary of the end of the First World War and the Council ensured that celebrations took place at every single war memorial this year. 834 poppies, one for each of the brave servicemen who lost their lives in the war will be displayed in Thurrock. All the war memorials had undergone specialist cleaning and maintenance. Special commemorative planters had been installed at war memorials. Silent soldier silhouettes will be on display at war memorials and cemeteries. The Council had also helped the communities help restore the beacons at Coalhouse Fort and Purfleet for the lighting, something that's a big national event. The Leader was pleased all the effort in preparations made this anniversary an important occasion that everyone would get behind and said a well done to the people of North Stifford for all their hard work in making North Stifford come alive for this event. The Leader stated that the Council will be remembering those that paid the ultimate price for our freedom in wars after the First World War.

The Leader provided a Clean It, Cut It, Fill It update:

- 1784 potholes had been filled in our roads with 99% of those done within target time.
- 798ft of grass had been cut.
- Street Cleaning teams had collected 1641 tonnes of litter.
- 908 fly-tips had been cleared;
- 2127 penalty notices had been issued for offences such as littering, dropping cigarette butts and various anti-social behaviours such as spitting; and
- 52 £400 fixed penalty notices issued for people fly-tipping in the borough.

The Leader spoke of the budget announced this week with an extra £650 million for social care, £45 million for disabled facilities grant and £84 million for children's services over the next 5 years.

A £28.8 billion national road fund would support roads and infrastructure with local Authorities receiving an extra £420 million to deal with potholes and other traffic maintenance issues. £150 million would be available to tackle traffic hotspots such as making improvement to traffic junctions and £500 million for housing infrastructure funding, something that Thurrock had a history of successfully bidding for.

And finally, the Leader congratulated Councillor Tom Kelly and his wife on the birth of their new baby. Councillor Kelly had sent his apologies and pointed out that this was the first Full Council he had missed in a significant amount of time.

54. 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.

55. 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 three Members who wished to present a petition at the meeting.

Councillor Smith presented a petition on the behalf of Aveley residents calling for the pedestrian crossings in Ship Lane and High Street to be upgraded to Pelican crossings with an additional Pelican added to Stifford Road, creating a three way controlled scheme.

Councillor Allen presented a petition calling for Thurrock Council to review its Permit Parking Area in Hobart Road which had left inadequate parking for all residents of Freemantle House, Brisbane House and Tasmania House. This had left residents of the high rise blocks with just 50 spaces which were short of the number required for the occupants.

Councillor C Kent presented a petition in respect of the parking restrictions in Lodge Lane to allow residents to be able to park on their crossovers.

56. Petitions Update Report

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

57. 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 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 changes:

For Councillor Rigby to be appointed as a member of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Hague to be appointed as a member of the Standard and Audit Committee.

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

For Councillors Jefferies and Halden to be appointed as substitute members of the General Services Committee.

For Councillor Watkins to be removed from the Coalhouse Fort Project and to open this appointment to other groups.

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

For Councillor Akinhobun to be appointed as a member of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Okunade to be appointed as Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Spillman, Leader of the Thurrock Independent Group, informed the Chamber he had no further changes to make.

58. Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing

Councillor Johnson, Portfolio Holder for Housing, presented his first Portfolio Holder report and outlined some of the services:

- The department would continue working with the homeless in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and providing temporary accommodation for people. To continue to secure homelessness accommodation in Thurrock and continue with the work on purpose builds.
- The Council dealt with 5 homelessness cases daily.
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) new build programme will deliver new Council homes for rent.
- The 88 unit scheme consisting of a mix of bungalows, houses and low rise flats will be built with the tenders for Claudia Way already commenced.
- The Thurrock Regeneration Limited's aim would be to develop 1000 units over a five-year period.
- The allocation of properties in line with the Allocations Policy would be addressed for ease of understanding with a report being presented at overview and scrutiny for Cabinet decision.
- The review and management of garages in the borough had been requested by the Portfolio Holder.
- The Portfolio Holder stated that the fire in George Tilbury House in June 2018 had resulted in no casualties with minimum damage caused.

Councillor G Rice thanked the Portfolio Holder for the report and welcomed the news of the new builds and affordable homes. The Portfolio Holder stated that everything was being done to provide these 1000 homes over a five-year period.

Councillor J Kent welcomed the report and welcomed back Councillor Johnson into the Chamber. Councillor J Kent referenced the 5 homelessness cases being dealt with daily and the availability of temporary accommodation and asked for reassurance that Thurrock homeless residents would be found accommodation in Thurrock and not in other areas. Councillor Johnson stated it was not always possible to house homeless residents in Thurrock and everything was being done to ensure that the best place which was safe and suitable was found.

Councillor Spillman thanked the Portfolio Holder for the report but asked whether the portfolio holder was happy that the recommendation to install sprinklers in highways blocks had been avoided. Councillor Johnson stated the recommendation had not been ignored but had relied on the professional advice given by the experts.

Councillor Cherry questioned whether the Allocation Policy removed universal and eligibility rights of those residents who become homeless. Councillor Johnson stated that the Allocation Policy was Thurrock tailored and was fit for purpose.

Councillor Duffin stated that suitable accommodation in the borough for homelessness residents should be found first before moving them outside of the borough.

59. Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Adult Social Care

Councillor Little, Portfolio Holder for Children and Adult Social Care, presented her Portfolio Holder report and stated that since her last report the following successful developments had taken place:

- The Shared Lives scheme had 5 care arrangements in place and a further 3 were in the pipeline.
- There were now 52 Micro Enterprises established.
- The Micro Enterprises will be meeting in Committee Rooms 2 and 3 on the 7 November 2018 from 9.30am to 3.30pm and encouraged Members to come and visit.
- The Chichester Close for people with learning disabilities was now complete.
- The Independent Alliance had been reviewed and was now free for all service users.
- The new residential care home in Whiteacre/Dilkes Wood site in South Ockendon had been agreed.
- The ground works had commenced on the 6 units for the new scheme launched to support young people with autism.
- The number of children in care and the number of children on protected plans had been reduced.
- The Ofsted report had stated performance had improved.
- The adoption service had been brought back in house.

Councillor Okunade thanked the Portfolio Holder for the report and the highlighted achievements but questioned the process taken to ensure that there would be no risk to those children on protection plans as part of these reductions. Councillor Little stated that every child was safe and this was not a cost cutting exercise as children were more important than money. Councillor Little assured Members that the process had been seen by Ofsted and would be a positive move forward and that work would continue with early intervention at schools and working with families.

Councillor Holloway thanked the Portfolio Holder for the report and stated that workforce was key to ensuring that the best were recruited into Thurrock to guarantee that excellent adult social services be provided. Councillor Little stated a positive recruitment drive had taken place that reached out to communities and work was underway on how to promote this profession.

Councillor J Kent referred the Portfolio Holder to the fragile domiciliary care services and questioned why Thurrock only paid £16.25 instead of the £18.01 care allowance. Councillor Little stated that the care allowance had been uplifted by the Administration following this allowance being set at £13.50 by Labour. Councillor Little stated that the domiciliary care packages had been accepted and used by other providers.

Councillor Spillman thanked the Portfolio Holder for the report and asked whether the portfolio holder knew of any child that had come to any serious

harm under the care of the Thurrock Children's Services department. Councillor Little said there were none.

Councillor Cherry asked the Portfolio Holder whether she was concerned that the Thurrock Children's service believed they were above democratic scrutiny. Councillor Little stated the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee look at what was being undertaken and that perhaps the Thurrock Independents should have nominated a chair to that committee when the opportunity arose earlier in the meeting.

Councillor Worrall questioned what was being done to ensure young people leaving care would have access to accommodation of their own rather than shared. Councillor Worrall also asked what assurances are given to those university care leavers that they can return to the borough following graduation. Councillor Little stated that this was a question for Councillor Halden.

Councillor Little thanked Officers, Directors and Foster Carers in Thurrock and stated that all Members were Corporate Parents who should be aware and support all the events taking place.

Councillor Little referred Members to the "Give a Gift" tree at Lakeside where Members were encouraged to offer their time and encouraged to take a star.

60. Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that 3 questions to the Leader had been received and 6 questions to Cabinet Members. Those not heard would either receive a written response or have the option to withdraw and resubmit.

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

At 8.36pm the Mayor called time on this time.

Councillor Anderson withdrew his question and would resubmit.

Councillor Rigby withdrew her question and would resubmit.

Councillor Okunade withdrew her question and would resubmit.

Councillor J Kent withdrew his question.

61. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies

Councillor G Rice attended an Anglian (Eastern) Regional Flood Defence Committee where it had been announced that floodgates across Grays and Purfleet had been completed, with discussions taking place on the new Thames Barrier in Purfleet.

Councillor Redsell attended a Police, Fire and Crime Panel where it had been announced the committee was in its early stages but was working well. It was reported that Essex now had the largest number of police officers since 2014, rising from 360 to 427 officers with a further 150 officers being recruited. It was recognised that the emergency 101 number needed to be better and work was ongoing. The visibility and strengthening the number of the police into the wider community would continue. Councillor Redsell also stated that the number of fire incidents had decreased.

62. Minutes of Committees

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

63. Update on motions resolved at Council

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

64. Motion 1 submitted by Councillor Halden

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

The Chamber congratulates our schools for the summer exam results and resolves to continue to work closely with them to deliver the new school places we need.

Councillor Halden introduced the Motion by stating that Thurrock was serving children at every stage of life with 100% of the Early Years setting being rated by Ofsted. Those primary school aged children, at the end of key stage 2, the disadvantage attainment gap had reduced again which was a three year downward trend from 22% down to 16% which was the gap from children on free school meals compared to children not on free school meals. For those secondary school children, 89% of Thurrock children go to a school that was good or outstanding. For Thurrock A Level students, 100% of students in Thurrock schools achieved at least one A Level pass this year. Councillor Halden stated there were too many brilliant achievements to name them all but he praised Grays Convent, Harris Academy Chafford Hundred and St Cleres, who all achieved significantly higher results.

Councillor Halden concluded that this was a remarkable picture and the Council should congratulate schools, teachers, governors, parents and of course, the students sitting these exams.

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

The Chamber congratulates our schools for the summer exam results and the Council should continue to work closely with them to deliver the new school

places we need. The Institute for Fiscal Studies reports that since 2010 we have seen an 8% cut per pupil and Council calls on the Government to reverse this worrying trend in their review of the national funding formula and properly support the young people in our borough.

Councillor Duffin introduced his amendment and stated that he was in agreement with the Motion and congratulated those on a fantastic job. The amendment had been brought to make the motion more balanced and to actively fight back the 8% cut per pupil since 2010 and for the national funding formula to be readdressed.

Councillor Spillman referred to the Budget announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and put into the context the monies for “little extras” for schools.

Councillor Coxshall stated that this was a record spend and by far the largest spend nationally made by the Government.

Councillor Hebb thanked teachers, parents and pupils for the hard work undertaken and stated that schools were better equipped today and that some Members should perhaps visit these schools to see what actually was happening.

Councillor J Kent stated the Motion was positive and showed the fantastic work being undertaken by schools and the pupil engagement with a marked increase in the last decade. Councillor J Kent stated that investments were going into schools as more children were going to school. With schools being let down by the national Budget for “little extras” where schools need more teachers and more equipment.

Councillor Gledhill stated that this should have been a wonderful motion but instead shocking political statements were being made. Teachers and pupils should be applauded for the hard work undertaken.

Councillor Redsell stated that teachers should be applauded for the work that they do with the children in the borough.

Councillor Huelin stated that it was a shame that some members had used this opportunity to turn this motion round into a political argument. This was the time to congratulate all those that had taken exams and achieved good results. The results proved this was a job very well done.

Councillor Duffin stated that the Administration gave great praise for the good work but happy for the Government to cut teacher’s wages.

Councillor Halden stated that funding levels had gone up due to resources and facilities being better. That it was remarkable that exam results were up with more children attending a good school or nursery. Councillor Halden stated some Members should not attack the national formula without fully knowing and understanding the formula.

The Mayor called a vote on the Amended Motion.

Upon being put to the vote, 25 Members voted in favour of the Amendment with 18 Members voted against, whereupon the Mayor declared the Amendment carried.

The Mayor called a vote on the Substantive Motion.

Upon being put to the vote, 25 Members voted in favour of the Substantive Motion with 18 Members abstaining their vote, whereupon the Mayor declared the Motion carried.

65. Motion 2 submitted by Councillor Gledhill

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

We call on the elected members of Thurrock Council to support any judicial review, or other legal action, that may be possible against Highways England proposals for the Lower Thames Crossing.

Councillor Gledhill presented his motion stating the Council was unanimously against the proposed Lower Thames Crossing with the scheme failing to bring any obvious benefits to Thurrock residents, with Highways England delaying the process and misleading residents and businesses. Councillor Gledhill stated that every effort will be made by the Council to leave no stone unturned and to get the best for the borough. Councillor Gledhill encouraged members to support this motion so that the judicial review can commence with the evidence gathering process and be ready to challenge with the support of Councillors, Essex Councils and Thurrock Business Board.

Councillor Smith stated his support for the Motion that it was now time for the Council to move forward with the judicial review and present the evidence. That Highways England had failed to respond to requests made by the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force which had delayed the opportunity for the Council to challenge. Councillor Smith encouraged all to get involved in the consultation.

Councillor J Kent stated his support to the Motion and his opposition to the Lower Thames Crossing and that there was a need for a crossing but at the right place. The plans offered would deliver no benefits for local businesses or residents but increase congestion on the roads. Councillor J Kent supported the judicial review but consideration had to be taken into account if this option failed. Every resident had a reason to reject this plan and should be encouraged to respond to the consultation and be given the information and evidence required to do so.

Councillor G Rice stated his support for the motion and called on the Government to review and look again at the plans.

Councillor Little stated her support for the motion with residents having the threat of a Lower Thames Crossing over the last 10 years. There appeared to be no logical to the plans with the consultation teams out of their depth advising residents incorrectly of road designs. Councillor Little encouraged all Members and residents to join the “Lower Thames Crossing Action Group”.

Councillor Huelin stated that the proposed Lower Thames Crossing would affect everyone in Thurrock and should engage with the consultation process.

Councillor Redsell stated her support for the motion and it was good that all 49 Councillors were working together. Councillor Redsell stated that the Council were not being informed sufficiently and the consultations were not working.

Councillor Spillman stated his support for this motion and noted his initial concerns over how the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force was set up and what evidence was presented at that time. Councillor Spillman stated that for the right evidence to be presented this time the Council would have the full backing from the Thurrock Independent Members.

Councillor Gledhill summed up by encouraging all residents, businesses and workers to get involved in the consultation process. Councillor Gledhill thanked Members for the comments and to take the motion forward.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion.

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

At 9.30pm the Mayor stated that it was the close of the meeting and that Members with Motions still to be heard could either speak on the Motion for no more than three minutes before the Motion will be put to the vote without debate or they may withdraw the Motion and resubmit for the next available meeting.

Councillor Tolson left the Chamber at 9.30pm.

66. Motion 3 submitted by Councillor Spillman

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

Full Council asks for the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee under its cross cutting remit on overall performance and monitoring and steering the overview and scrutiny function to look into:

- the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny processes at Thurrock Council*
- the effectiveness of Motions agreed at the Full Council.*

Councillor Spillman stated the Council had been working dysfunctionally as a democratic institution with poor reports being presented, recommendations being ignored and motions being lost in the process. This had resulted in a chair resigning from an overview and scrutiny committee. Councillor Spillman stated that the Council lacked in business and should be more of a decision making body and urged Members to support the Motion.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion.

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

67. Motion 4 submitted by Councillor J Kent

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

Thurrock Council notes that since decriminalisation of parking in 2005 residents of Lodge Lane have been able to park on their crossovers - as they had been able to for decades before. The decision to enforce against residents parking in this way has caused significant anger and concern against those affected. Council calls on cabinet to revisit this decision and find a way of allowing residents to park in the way they have for many, many years without any problem.

Councillor J Kent stated that the decision made by the Council to change the rules of how residents of Lodge Lane could park on their crossovers lacked common sense and that further options should be explored on how best to deal with this now and in the future.

Councillor J Kent stated that a Petition had been already been presented this evening and that voting for the Motion would be the right result for residents and requested a requisition vote.

The Mayor called a requisition vote on the Motion.

A requisition vote took place, the result of which was:

For: Councillors Abbas, Akinbohun, Allen, Baker, Baldwin, Cherry, Duffin, Fletcher, Gamester, Gerrish, Hamilton, Holloway, C Kent, J Kent, Kerin, Lawrence, Liddiard, Okunade, Potter, B Rice, G Rice, Shinnick, Smith, Spillman and Worrall (25)

Against: Councillors Anderson, Churchman, Collins, Coxshall, Gledhill, Halden, Hebb, Huelin, Jefferies, Johnson, Little, MacPherson, Maney, Piccolo, Redsell, Rigby and Watkins (17)

Abstain: (0)

Whereupon the Mayor declared the Motion carried.

The meeting finished at 9.39 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**