

Minutes of the Meeting of the Annual Council held on 24 May 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors James Halden (Mayor), Susan Little (Deputy Mayor), Qaisar Abbas, John Allen, Alex Anderson, Deborah Arnold, Paul Arnold, Gary Byrne, Adam Carter, John Cecil, Daniel Chukwu, Gary Collins, George Coxshall, Tony Fish, Robert Gledhill, Aaron Green, Vikki Hartstean, Mark Hooper, Mark Hurrell, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Ben Maney, Jacqui Maney, Cici Manwa, Fraser Massey, Valerie Morris-Cook, Sara Muldowney, Augustine Ononaji, Srikanth Panjala, Maureen Pearce, Terry Piccolo, Georgette Polley, Kairen Raper, Joycelyn Redsell, Elizabeth Rigby, Sue Sammons, Sue Shinnick, Graham Snell, Neil Speight, Luke Spillman, James Thandi, Lee Watson and Lynn Worrall

Apologies: Councillor Duffin (*arrived at 7.30pm*)

In attendance: Mark Bradbury, Interim Director of Place
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation
Asmat Hussain, Director of Law and Governance
Alix MacFarlane, Communications Advisor
Patrick McDermott, Chief of Staff to the Thurrock Commissioners
Steven Mair, Interim Chief Financial Officer
Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Kerry Thomas, Chief Executive Business Manager
Luke Tyson, Chief Intervention Officer
Ian Wake, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Jonathan Wilson, Interim Director Finance & S151 Officer
Nicole Wood, ECC Best Value Commissioner
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 was being filmed and recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

A minute's silence was held in honour of former Councillor Gordon Barton who had sadly passed.

Councillor Halden thanked members for giving him the privilege of a life-time opportunity to have served as Mayor which had been a remarkable period. He had undertaken over 320 engagements, raised £24,000 for his charities, and had welcomed over 400 guests into the mayor's parlour to receive the mayor's role of

honour. Thanks were given to Councillor Sue Little as deputy Mayor who had undertaken her responsibilities with tremendous grace, thanks were given to member services, his drivers, Reverend Darren Barlow, and thanks were also given to the out-going leader, Mark Coxshall. As a parting thought he stated that half of the borough schools had visited the chamber as part of a debate competition, to encourage younger people into democratic engagement and to demonstrate the diversity of the mayor's office, he thanked Councillor Johnson for his part in that. He welcomed all new and re-elected members from all parties to the chambers this evening and wished his successor all the luck in the world.

1. Minutes

Councillor Redsell referred to a paragraph in the minutes that was incorrect and asked for this to be readdressed. Following the amendment, members approved the minutes as a correct record.

2. To elect the Mayor for the municipal year 2023-2024

Nominations were invited for the election of Mayor for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

It was proposed by Councillor Jefferies, and seconded by Councillor J Kent, that Councillor Little be elected Mayor of the Borough and Chair of the Council for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

It was declared that Councillor Little had been duly elected as Mayor of the Borough and Chair of the Council for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

Councillor Little signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The new elected Mayor made a speech by thanking Councillor James Halden for being such an exemplary Mayor and a great ambassador for Thurrock. She thanked all her fellow councillors who had put their trust in her as being the 49th Mayor of Thurrock and looked forward to serving the borough well.

Councillor Little's mayoral charities during her Mayoral year would be Adult's and Children's charities within the borough.

Councillor Little confirmed her husband, Brian Little, would be her Mayoral consort.

Councillor Little appointed Reverend Canon Darren Barlow as her Mayoral Chaplain.

Councillor Coxshall paid thanks to Councillor Halden for the work he had undertaken as Mayor, it had been unbelievable what he had undertaken over this period.

Councillor Johnson stated it had been a pleasure and an honour to have accompanied Councillor Halden on some of his visits and made thanks for

inviting half of the borough schools into the parlour and chamber. Councillor Halden had raised the profile of the mayoral role and had set the bar for his predecessor.

Councillor Redsell echoed comments made on the school visits and the introducing the role of honour and hoped this would be continued and thanked Councillor Halden for all the great work he had undertaken.

Councillor Byrne thanked Councillor Halden for all the work he had undertaken.

Councillor Speight congratulated Councillor Little on her appointment and paid tribute to Councillor Halden for all the work he had undertaken in his mayoral year, bringing in a sense of community and engagement.

Councillor D Arnold made personal thanks to Councillor Halden for his passion and dedication to any engagement that he was asked to undertake. He had raised the bar and it was wonderful to see him engaged and enjoying his mayoral duties.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Little was duly elected as Mayor of the Borough and Chair of the Council for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

3. Items of Urgent Business

The Mayor informed the Council that one item of urgent business had been requested but following consideration it had been declined as this item was scheduled for discussion at June Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4. To elect the deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2023-2024

Nominations were invited for the election of Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

It was proposed by Councillor Carter and seconded by Councillor Coxshall that Councillor Abbas be appointed Deputy Mayor of Thurrock for 2023/24.

It was proposed by Councillor J Kent and seconded by Councillor Worrall that Councillor Liddiard be appointed Deputy Mayor of Thurrock for 2023/24.

A vote was undertaken on both nominations with 25 votes for Councillor Abbas and 23 votes to Councillor Liddiard the Mayor declared that Councillor Abbas be duly elected as Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2023/24.

Councillor Abbas confirmed his consort would be his wife, Mrs Noshaba Akthar.

Councillor Abbas thanked Councillor Halden and Councillor Little for their exemplary services as a Mayor and deputy Mayor and grateful to his group for the nomination for this prestigious honour. He paid thanks to his parents, family members, friends, and residents of Thurrock for their continued support, trust, and guidance. He referred to Mrs Almedina Kahrimanovic, a Bosnian genocide survivor & volunteer, Ms Lynn Mansfield, my ward resident and lifelong volunteer, and Mrs Jothy Hettiarachchige, founder of local Tamil language school who had set practical examples that whatever the circumstances were, with commitment and willingness to do good, could overcome difficulties and challenges and made positive differences to people's lives. Councillor Abbas concluded that he would assist and support the Mayor by serving Thurrock residents and represent Thurrock with best of his abilities.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Abbas was appointed deputy Mayor of the Borough and Vice-Chair of the Council for the municipal year 2023/24.

5. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

6. To elect the Leader of the Council for a four-year term of office

Nominations were invited for the election of the Leader of the Council.

It was proposed by Councillor D Arnold, and seconded by Councillor Spillman, that Councillor Jefferies be elected as Leader of the Council.

Members voted 29 in favour and 18 against, therefore Councillor Jefferies was elected as Leader of the Council.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Jefferies for any announcements he wished to make as Leader of the Council. Councillor Jefferies thanked members and colleagues for his election to the leader of the council, it had been a great honour and privilege to be given this position. He made thanks to his family and his partner for all their support, to his predecessor Mark Coxshall who had taken on the leadership just eight months ago during the council's bleakest time. He welcomed all newly elected and returning councillors and personally thanked Councillor Halden for his superb year as Mayor and wished the new incoming Mayor, Councillor Little, well in her mayoral year. He concluded by stating this was an opportunity to put Thurrock Council back into a sound financial footing, providing the services that Thurrock residents need and deserved. This would require all 49 councillors working together and was pleased that the leader of the opposition had accepted the invite to take three of the overview and scrutiny chairs.

Councillor J Kent congratulated and welcomed Councillor Little to her new role of Mayor, congratulated Councillor Jefferies on taking up his new role as leader and thanked Councillor Halden for his year of mayoral service.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Jefferies was duly elected as Leader of the Council for a four-year term of office.

At 7.30pm, Councillor Fish left the chamber and Councillor Duffin arrived.

7. Announcements on behalf of the Mayor and the Leader of the Council

The Leader started his announcements by announcing Councillor D Arnold as his Deputy Leader and his new cabinet would be as follows:

Portfolio	Portfolio Holder
Environment, Economic Development & Directional Leadership	Councillor Jefferies
Children's Services & Housing	Councillor Johnson
Finance, HR & Payroll	Councillor Snell
Regeneration & Highways	Councillor B Maney
Transformational Change, Communications & Governance	Councillor D Arnold
Health, Adults Health, Community & Public Protection	Councillor Coxshall
Education	Councillor Carter

8. Update from Best Value Commissioners on the appointment of Head of Paid Service - report to follow

The report provided the background and details of the decision taken by Commissioners to appoint Dr Dave Smith as Head of Paid Service in line with the powers given to them by the Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities. As set out in the letter to the Leader of the Council advising of this decision, this report had been brought at the earliest opportunity for Members to endorse this decision. In accordance with the roles he will be fulfilling, Dr Dave Smith will use the title Chief Executive & Managing Director Commissioner.

Councillor J Kent stated the Labour group would note report but could not endorse it as the appointment had been made by Essex County Council with the decision who should be appointed being taken out of Thurrock's hand.

Councillor Speight raised his concern also that the appointment had been made by Essex County Council with Thurrock being unaware of what the other choices were.

Councillor Byrne raised his concerns that councillors were still not being given the opportunity to have their say.

Councillor Allan had noted Dr Dave Smith's apology this evening and stated he could not vote in favour of this as was not here to represent himself.

Councillor Jefferies stated there was a need to have a Head of Paid Service and recommended this item went to the vote. The Mayor called a vote which resulted in 25 votes in favour and 22 votes against.

RESOLVED

That Full Council noted and endorsed the decision of the Best Value Commissioners to appoint Dr Dave Smith as Head of Paid Service.

9. Appointment of Statutory Scrutiny Officer, Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer

The Leader of the Council recommended the appointments of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer, Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer and the Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.

RESOLVED

- 1. Noted the appointment of Matthew Boulter (Democratic Services Manager) as the authority's Statutory Scrutiny Officer.**
- 2. That Dr Dave Smith (Chief Executive) be appointed Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.**
- 3. That Asmat Hussain (Interim) Director of Law, Governance and Monitoring Officer be appointed as the Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.**

10. Establishment and Composition of the Council's Committees, Panels and Boards - appendices 3 and 4 to be tabled

The Mayor informed Members the nominations of Group Leaders to the places allocated on committees, and the nominations for Chairs and Vice Chairs of committees had been received. The nominations made to Committees for the municipal year 2023/24, together with the nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair, were set out in a booklet tabled for Members.

Councillor Jefferies made the following amendments:

Removed Councillor Anderson as substitute on the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Add Councillors Duffin, Abbas and P Arnold as substitutes to the Licensing Committee.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Boards as referred to in this report and the accompanying appendices are established for the 2023/2024 municipal year.**
- 2. That the terms of reference for the new Strategic Investment Advisory Panel outlined in paragraph 3.6 and in Appendix 1 are endorsed.**
- 3. That the allocation of seats, as set out in Appendix 2, are approved.**
- 4. That the nominations of the political groups to seats on committees are approved, as set out in Appendix 3.**
- 5. That the non-voting co-opted members of the Planning Committee, the Standards and Audit Committee, the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Parenting Committee are appointed, as set out in Appendix 3.**
- 6. That the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of committees are appointed, as set out in Appendix 4.**

Committee	Chair	Vice Chair
Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Elizabeth Rigby	Cllr Sara Muldowney
Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Val Morris-Cook	Cllr Joy Redsell
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Martin Kerin	Cllr Jack Duffin
Extreme and Hidden Harms Prevention Committee	Cllr Gary Collins	Cllr Daniel Chukwu
Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Mark Hooper	Cllr Georgette Polley
Housing Overview and	Cllr James Halden	Cllr Sue Shinnick

Scrutiny Committee		
Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Luke Spillman	Cllr Alex Anderson
Corporate Parenting	Cllr Paul Arnold	Cllr Vikki Hartstean
General Services Committee	Cllr Andrew Jefferies	Cllr John Kent
Health and Wellbeing Board	Cllr Barry Johnson	-
Licensing Committee	Cllr Gary Collins	Cllr Cathy Kent
Planning Committee	Cllr Tom Kelly	Cllr Georgette Polley
Standards and Audit Committee	Cllr Fraser Massey	Cllr Steve Liddiard

11. **Appointments to Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels**

The nominations of the political groups to Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels were detailed in the booklet tabled for Members.

Councillor Jefferies made the following changes:

Add Councillor Duffin as a substitute to the Strategic Investment Advisory Panel.

Add Councillor Sammons to the West Tilbury Commons Conservators.

Add Councillor Thandi to Impulse Leisure.

Removes Councillor Piccolo from the East Thurrock Community Association.

In regard to the contested appointment of the East Thurrock Community Association a vote was undertaken between Councillor Cecil and Councillor Speight. With 28 votes in favour of Councillor Speight and 18 votes in favour of Councillor Cecil, the mayor announced the appointment would fall to Councillor Speight.

Councillor Massey appointed himself to the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force.

RESOLVED

That the nominations to Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels be approved.

12. Schedule of Meetings 2023-24

The Leader of the Council introduced the report to which Members agreed the recommendation.

Councillor J Kent moved an amendment, seconded by Councillor Kerin, to add a full council meeting to the calendar for the last Wednesday of March 2024. Members agreed to this amendment and a date would be confirmed.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24 was approved.**
- 2. That a full council meeting would be added to the calendar for March 2024.**

13. Schedule of Elections and Order of Retirement of Councillors

The Leader of the Council recommended the report be moved as written. Members agreed to note the recommendation.

Councillor J Kent agreed to note the recommendation but hoped that next year's calendar would be superseded by an all-out election.

RESOLVED

That the Schedule of Elections from 2024 to 2027 and Order of Retirement of Councillors was noted.

At 8.05pm, Councillor Speight called a Point of Order to acknowledge the Roll of Honour names on page 7 of the agenda.

The meeting finished at 8.05 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**