

Minutes of the Meeting of the Annual Council held on 22 May 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Qaisar Abbas (Deputy Mayor), Ngozi Alike, John Allen, Alex Anderson, Deborah Arnold, Paul Arnold, Gary Byrne, Ross Byrne, John Cecil, Daniel Chukwu, George Coxshall, David Day, Tony Fish, Michael Fletcher, John Fox, Robert Gledhill, Aaron Green, James Halden, Vikki Hartstean, Lynda Heath, Clifford Holloway, Victoria Holloway, Mark Hooper, Mark Hurrell, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Roy Jones, Tom Kelly, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Ben Maney, Jacqui Maney, Cici Manwa, Fraser Massey, Valerie Morris-Cook, Sara Muldowney, Srikanth Panjala (*arrived 7.21pm*), Ryan Polston, Kairen Raper, Elizabeth Rigby, Sue Shinnick, Cathy Sisterson, Neil Speight, Gary Watson, Lee Watson and Lynn Worrall

Madam Mayor – Sue Little

Apologies: Councillor Sue Sammons

In attendance: Dr Dave Smith, Chief Executive and Managing Director
Commissioner
Dawn Calvert, Chief Financial Officer S151
Claire Demmel, Executive Director Place
Daniel Fenwick, Executive Director Corporate Services/
Monitoring Officer
Cristina Hall, Chief of Staff to the Commissioners – Thurrock
Council
Gavin Jones, Lead Commissioner
Sheila Murphy, Executive Director Children's Services
Alex Powell, Assistant Chief Executive
Kerry Thomas, Chief of Staff
Ian Wake, Executive Director Adults and Health
Nicole Wood, ECC Best Value Commissioner
Matthew Boulter, Head of Democratic, Scrutiny and Member
Services
Jenny Shade, Principal 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.

1. Minutes

Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 20 March 2024 were approved as a correct record.

2. To elect the Mayor for the municipal year 2024-25

Sue Little announced it had been an honour to serve as Mayor of the borough, had raised £30,000 for her charities, undertaken 280 events, thanked the Deputy Mayor, the three group leaders, officers, member services support team and thanked her husband, Brian Little and Reverend Canon Daren Barlow. She concluded by wishing the new Mayor every success for her coming year.

Nominations were invited for the election of Mayor for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

It was proposed by Councillor J Kent, and seconded by Councillor Worrall, that Councillor Raper be elected Mayor of the Borough and Chair of the Council for the municipal year 2024/25.

It was proposed by Councillor Jefferies, and seconded by Councillor Coxshall, that Councillor Abbas be elected Mayor of the Borough and Chair of the Council for the municipal year 2024/25.

Following a vote, with 35 votes to Councillor Raper and 12 votes to Councillor Abbas, it was declared that Councillor Raper be duly elected as Mayor of the Borough and Chair of the Council for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

Councillor Raper signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The new elected Mayor made a speech by thanking all members for giving her this opportunity and was a fantastic honour to represent Thurrock as Mayor. She thanked Sue Little for all her hard work during her year as Mayor, recognised the importance of the Roll of Honour and would continue with this tradition. Her commitment would be to improve the lives of children and young people in Thurrock. The Mayor concluded by promising to work for the benefit of all residents and would endeavour to show people how good Thurrock was.

The Mayor confirmed that her mayoral charities during her Mayoral year would be Thurrock Food Bank and her Mayoral consort would be Councillor Liddiard.

Members paid tribute and congratulated the new Mayor on her appointment and thanked Sue Little for the tremendous work she had undertaken in the community and as an advocate for Thurrock.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Raper was duly elected as Mayor of the Borough and Chair of the Council for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

3. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

4. To elect the Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2024-25

It was proposed by Councillor J Kent and seconded by Councillor Worrall that Councillor Shinnick be appointed Deputy Mayor of Thurrock for 2024/25.

It was declared that Councillor Shinnick be duly elected as Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2024/25.

Councillor Shinnick signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Councillor Shinnick stated she was deeply honoured and humbled by the support and committed to serve in the community with dedication and integrity. Councillor Shinnick thanked her predecessor for their service to Madam Mayor and looked forward to making Thurrock a better place to live and stay.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Shinnick was appointed Deputy Mayor of the Borough and Vice-Chair of the Council for the municipal year 2024/25.

5. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

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

It was proposed by Councillor Worrall, and seconded by Councillor Shinnick, that Councillor J Kent be elected as Leader of the Council.

It was declared that Councillor J Kent had been duly elected as Leader of the Council for a four-year term of office.

The Mayor invited Councillor J Kent to make any announcements as Leader of the Council.

Councillor J Kent thanked Members for putting their trust and confidence in him for the year ahead, this would be an honour and accepted with a great deal of pride. He thanked Councillor Jefferies and Councillor Arnold for their service over the last year and welcomed new and returning members. Referenced the best value inspection report and how the culture of the Council had to change from top to bottom to ensure the council had a chance of getting back to being a sustainable local authority. This would mean being fully open, transparent, honest, determined to be different and be better by putting Thurrock and the communities first at every stage and to take responsibility for the decisions made and say what they mean. He stated the

portfolio holders would play no part in the election of scrutiny chairs and vice chairs this evening and would leave the chambers whilst those votes were undertaken. Councillor J Kent concluded by stating the administration would be determined to be better, to do the right thing for Thurrock, to be the fresh start needed and to own back the trust of those who were elected to serve.

RESOLVED

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

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

The Leader announced Councillor Worrall as his Deputy Leader and his new cabinet would be as follows:

Portfolio	Cabinet Member
Strategic Relationships, Reputation, and Influence	Councillor John Kent
Change and Improvement	Councillor Lynn Worrall
Financial, Infrastructure and Human Resources	Councillor Sara Muldowney
Health and Well-being	Councillor Mark Hooper
Community Partnerships	Councillor Valerie Morris-Cook
Good Growth	Councillor Lee Watson
Place and the Environment	Councillor Victoria Holloway
Children's Services and Education	Councillor Vikki Hartstean

8. Committee Structure 2024/25

The Leader presented and moved the report to formally establish those committees it considered necessary to fulfil its functions in the ensuing municipal year, in accordance with the requirements of both legislation and the Council's Constitution. The report also set out changes to the committee structure following intervention and improvement activity.

RESOLVED

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Structure listed in paragraph 3.2 of the report be established for the 2024/25 municipal year following the prior agreement at Full Council in March 2024.
2. That the Committees listed in paragraph 3.5 of the report be established for the 2024/25 municipal year.
3. That i) the Standards Committee and ii) the Audit Committee are established alongside their new terms of reference attached at Appendix 1.
4. That the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force remained as a group until such time the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee decide how to establish suitable oversight of the issue within its remit.
5. That the Monitoring Officer make the necessary amendments to the Constitution to incorporate the changes to the committee structure as approved by Council.

9. Allocation of Committee Seats and Appointments

The Leader presented and moved the report that requested Council to confirm the calculations relating to the allocation of seats on committees and to appoint the nominations of political groups to committees. The report also requested the Council to appoint the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of certain committees.

The Leader referred to page 37 of the agenda, paragraph E, that Overview and Scrutiny Committees would be a 10-member committee based on seat allocations and negotiations between groups. An agreement had been made that the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees would now consist of 11 members.

Councillor Speight stated he would be voting against the decision to increase the size of the overview and scrutiny committees.

The Mayor called for a separate vote to be undertaken in respect of each of the contested nominations. The results of each vote are set out below:

Planning Committee

Members were asked to vote on the contested seat on the Planning Committee. With 40 votes to Councillor P Arnold and 8 votes to Councillor Jones, Councillor P Arnold was nominated a member of the Planning Committee.

Councillor Anderson nominated himself on two of the unclaimed seats and would now be a member on the Licensing Committee and Audit Committee.

At 7.58pm, Cabinet Members left the chamber.

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair

With 34 votes to Councillor G Byrne and 14 votes to Councillor Kelly, Councillor G Byrne was nominated chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair

With 35 votes to Councillor Speight and 13 votes to Councillor Johnson, Councillor Speight was nominated chair of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair

With 40 votes to Councillor B Maney and 8 votes to Councillor Jones, Councillor B Maney was nominated chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Jefferies removed all vice chair nominations for the three overview and scrutiny committees.

At 8.09pm, Cabinet Members returned to the chamber.

Licensing Committee Chair

Two votes were undertaken. The first vote - with 8 votes to Councillor Jones, 27 votes to Councillor Green and 13 votes to Councillor Abbas. Therefore Councillor Jones was removed from the second vote. The second vote – with 34 votes to Councillor Green and 14 votes to Councillor Abbas, Councillor Green was nominated chair of the Licensing Committee.

Licensing Committee Vice Chair

Two votes were undertaken. The first vote – with 8 votes to Councillor Jones, 13 votes to Councillor P Arnold and 27 votes to Councillor Fish. Therefore Councillor Jones was removed from the second vote. The second vote – with 13 votes to Councillor P Arnold and 35 votes to Councillor Fish, Councillor Fish was nominated vice chair of the Licensing Committee.

Standards Committee Vice Chair

With 40 votes to Councillor Johnson and 8 votes to Councillor Allen, Councillor Johnson was nominated vice chair of the Standards Committee.

Audit Committee Vice Chair

With 27 votes to Councillor Panjala and 21 votes to Councillor Halden, Councillor Panjala was nominated vice chair of the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED

1. That the allocation of seats, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.
2. That the nominations of the political groups to seats on committees be approved, as set out in Appendix 2.
3. That the non-voting co-opted members of the Planning Committee, the Standards Committee, the Audit Committee, the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Parenting Committee be appointed, as set out in Appendix 2.
4. That the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of committees be appointed, as set out in Appendix 3.

Committee	Chair	Vice Chair
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor B Maney	Councillor Fox
Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor G Byrne	VACANT
People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Speight	Councillor Jones
Corporate Parenting Committee	Councillor Hurrell	Councillor Rigby
General Services Committee	Councillor J Kent	Councillor Jefferies
Licensing Committee	Councillor Green	Councillor Fish
Planning Committee	Councillor Fletcher	Councillor Liddiard
Audit Committee	Councillor Massey	Councillor Panjala
Standards Committee	Councillor C Kent	Councillor Johnson
Health and Wellbeing Board	Councillor Hooper	Councillor D Arnold

10. 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.

The Mayor called for a separate vote to be undertaken in respect of the contested nomination for the appointment to the Essex Police Fire and Crime Panel Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels. With 30 votes to

Councillor V Holloway and 18 votes to Councillor Halden, Councillor V Holloway was appointed the outside representative of the Council on the Essex Police Fire and Crime Panel.

The Leader replaced Councillor Alike and Councillor Muldowney with himself and Councillor Worrall on the Local Government Association General Assembly outside body.

RESOLVED

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

11. Schedule of Meetings 2024-25

The Leader presented and moved the report that requested the agreement of the Council to the schedule of ordinary meetings of the Council, Cabinet and those committees that had been established at Agenda Item 9 for the 2024/25 municipal year.

The Leader requested that September Council be moved as this date clashed with the Labour Party Annual Conference.

Action

Look at possibly dates to move September Council – Democratic Services.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Calendar of Meetings for 2024/25 be approved.**
- 2. That Members note there may be a need to convene additional meetings of committees as and when to comply with Government Directions and improvement activities.**
- 3. Look at possible dates to move September Council due to the clash with Labour Party Annual Conference.**

12. Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) Report

The Leader presented the report that outlined the recent recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in regard to revised special responsibility allowances (SRAs) for the chairs and vice chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, the Standards Committee and the Audit Committee. The Council was required to “have regard” to the report and recommendations of the Panel, which were attached at Appendix 1, when considering the setting of Member Allowances. The Leader requested that recommendation 1.10 be referred back to the Independent Remuneration Panel for further consideration. Members voted in favour of Councillor J Kent’s request with 35 votes for, 13 votes against and 0 abstentions.

Members agreed in favour of recommendations 1 to 9.

Action

Recommendation 10 to be referred back to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

RESOLVED

Full Council are asked to consider the following recommendations of the IRP as set out in Appendix 1:

1. **The Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the three new Overview and Scrutiny Chairs be increased to 100% of the Basic Allowance to be £9,595 per annum with effect from May 2024.**
2. **The SRA for the three new Overview and Scrutiny Vice-Chairs be increased to 25% of the Basic Allowance to be £2,399 per annum with effect from May 2024.**
3. **The SRA for the new Audit Committee Chair be introduced at 75% of the Basic Allowance to be £7,196 per annum with effect from May 2024.**
4. **The SRA for the new Audit Committee Vice-Chair be introduced at 15% of the Basic Allowance to be £1,440 per annum with effect from May 2024.**
5. **The SRA for the new Standards Committee Chair be introduced at 50% of the Basic Allowance to be £4,798 per annum with effect from May 2024.**
6. **The SRA for the new Standards Committee Vice-Chair be introduced at 10% of the Basic Allowance to be £960 per annum with effect from May 2024.**
7. **Co-opted members sitting on both the Standards Committee and Audit Committee receive an increased allowance of 20% of the Basic Allowance (£1,919 pa) with effect from May 2024, to reflect their increased attendance at more meetings per year.**
8. **The Monitoring Officer be delegated authority to make the necessary changes to the Members' Scheme of Allowances to reflect the decisions made by Council.**
9. **The Panel reconvene no later than February 2025 to re-evaluate the roles and the recommendations using an evidence base created from the implementation of the roles.**

Council to consider the following recommendation outside the recommendations of the IRP:

10. **The requirement for the main opposition group to have a minimum of 17 Members in order to qualify the Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group to receive an SRA be removed as qualified in section 3.3. This recommendation will be referred back to the IRP for further consideration.**

A full recording of the meeting can be viewed from the following link:

[Council - Wednesday 22 May 2024, 7:00pm - Thurrock Council committee meeting webcasts \(public-i.tv\)](#)

The meeting finished at 8.30 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**