

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 27 November 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Kairen Raper (Mayor), Qaisar Abbas, Ngozi Alike, Alex Anderson, Deborah Arnold, Paul Arnold, Gary Byrne, Ross Byrne, John Cecil, Daniel Chukwu, George Coxshall, David Day, Tony Fish, *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, Ryan Polston, Sue Sammons, Cathy Sisterson, Neil Speight, Gary Watson, Lee Watson and Lynn Worrall

Apologies: Councillors Sue Shinnick (Deputy Mayor), John Allen, Michael Fletcher and Elizabeth Rigby

In attendance: Dr Dave Smith, Chief Executive and Managing Director
Commissioner
Dawn Calvert, Chief Financial Officer S151
Daniel Fenwick, Executive Director Corporate Services/Monitoring Officer
Helen Nicol, Assistant Director Legal and Governance
Robert Persey, Interim Executive Director- Adults and Health
Alex Powell, Assistant Chief Executive
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 recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

64. Minutes

The minutes of Council held on the 30 October 2024 were approved as a correct record.

65. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

66. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

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

The Leader paid tribute to the hard work undertaken by the Council's environment team during the recent Storm Bert, staff were out in very difficult circumstances not only doing their day-to-day job but clearing up after road traffic collisions, oil spills and having dealt with 23 fallen trees across the borough. The Mayor agreed to write to the Executive Director of Place to congratulate the team for all their hard work on the behalf of all members.

Councillor V Holloway spoke on a matter of clarification regarding her response to a question at October's full council meeting. An Animal Welfare Policy had been approved in 2021 and had a section designated to animals for prizes. This quoted the council would prohibit the use of animals as prizes at circuses, fairs and at any other activity of a similar nature.

68. Questions from Members of the Public

The Mayor informed the chamber of the questions received to the leader and cabinet members:

From	To	Question	Overview
Mr Perrin	Cllr Hartstean	Despite financial restrictions will the Council ensure that every child in the Council's care is given a very happy and safe Christmas, especially children fleeing from the horrors of war and/or surviving perilous boat journeys across the English Channel?	Children's services make sure that all children who are looked after, feel and are safe in their communities throughout the year. This includes Christmas and/or other times of the year where there might be other significant traditional celebrations. This is done through ensuring each child is in a safe and appropriate placement where their needs are met and includes being given gifts and being part of traditional celebrations. Each placement is funded so that they are able to make sure that each child's experience is positive, and they are able to create happy memories.
Ms Redsell	Cllr L Watson	Following your advice to the chamber at the last meeting of full council.	A range of public engagements and consultation with residents

		<p>What future engagements will the council hold in respect of its plans to redevelop the Blackshots towers?</p>	<p>will take place as the plans to redevelop the Blackshots tower blocks are further developed. Continued engagement by Councillor officers with individual occupants, alongside the dedicated Independent Tenants and Leasehold Advisor. In early 2025 the main contractor will undertake a programme of resident engagement and consultation and residents will be consulted on the design and facilities to be included in the replacement Fields in Trust land. Work would continue with ward member and residents.</p>
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69. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors

No notices of petition had been received.

70. Petitions Update Report

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

71. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels

The following changes were agreed:

- Removed Councillor D Arnold and replaced with Councillor Rigby on the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Removed Councillor Alike from the Thurrock Play Network outside body.
- Removed Councillor D Arnold as substitute on the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

72. Revised Political Balance

The Leader presented the report that confirmed the revised political balance calculations relating to the allocation of seats on Committees following the resignation of Councillor Allen from the Non-Political Alliance of Independent Councillors (NPAIC) Group and becoming a non-aligned independent Member.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the political balance and allocation of seats, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted.**
- 2. That O & S committees remain at 11 seats for the duration of 2024-25 municipal year.**
- 3. That the appointment changes of the NPAIC group as outlined in point 2.4 is noted.**

73. Local Government Boundary Commission for England Review and progress on Polling District arrangements for Thurrock 2024/2025

The report presented outlined the progress to date by the LGBCE and the steps taken by the Council to divide the proposed wards into polling districts and designate polling places for each new polling district based on the draft LGBCE recommendations. The report also set out the timetable, actions and proposed consultation, and decisions required to meet the timeframe for the 1 May 2025 elections.

The following members spoke on this item – Councillors Jefferies, Coxshall, Jones, L Watson, Johnson and Hurrell. The following comments were made:

- Having no maps made it slightly difficult to comment.
- Hoped that maps would be included as part of the consultation.
- Little Thurrock Rectory – concerns that adding more voters to Thurrock Park, made more sense to keep in the LTRB – review please.
- Little Thurrock Blackshots – two parliamentary constituencies being put into one polling distance which could cause an issue at a general election.
- Ockendon - Disappointed that two polling stations going into one building. Should be two separate buildings and could exclude large numbers of people travelling from one end of the ward to the other.
- Concern on timings of the polling station reviews and the boundary changes.
- Access to information had been hard to obtain.
- Helpful for members to have seen the polling district boundaries and where the new ones would be.
- Noted in the new Ockendon South and North Stifford ward polling stations would be lost but consideration needed to be given to the elderly population who may not be able to travel quite so far.
- Concerns on the timetable, how it was being condensed and questioned whether the council was ready for the changes.
- Noted concern on the loss of Homesteads name.
- Reassurance given that the working group put Homesteads as one of the recommendations going forward.
- North Ockendon did not work it should be Ockendon.

- Have a consideration for the Renovo Estate who were at full capacity and isolated in lakeside, with their polling station some 15-20 minute walk away.
- Orsett – questioned why the ward had lost 180 people out of Horndon and gained 170 in Bulphan.
- Belhus – questioned why one of the polling stations was not even in Belhus but in Ockendon, which had made no sense.
- Questioned the name change Ockendon South and North Stifford.

RESOLVED

1. That members noted the draft polling districts and polling places outlined in Appendix 2.
2. That Council delegated the decision of the final arrangements for polling districts and polling places to General Services Committee following public consultation and final proposals from the LGBCE.

74. Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the chamber of the questions received to the leader and cabinet members:

From	To	Question	Overview
Cllr G Byrne	Leader	Does the Leader support the Secretary of State's decision to allow considerable harm to our greenbelt in Linford?	Question withdrawn.
Cllr Johnson	Cllr L Watson	Now that the portfolio holder has had two months since the September full council, to speak with officers, can the portfolio holder confirm whether Thurrock Council agrees with the proposal to construct pylons across Thurrock?	On 18 July the Council submitted a response to National Grid's pre statutory consultation. Response identified a number of matters for National Grid to consider as they start to develop the next stages of their Development Consent Order. Proposals from National Grid are still at the early stages of the process and there is ample opportunity for the Council to engage,

			and where appropriate will raise concerns. The next step for National Grid to formally submit the Development Consent Order to the Planning Inspectorate, which will trigger formal engagement with the Council.
Cllr J Maney	Cllr Morris Cook	Next year marks the 300th anniversary of the birth of former Aveley resident, John Newton. Can the Portfolio Holder update me on what the council is doing to work with local and international partners to celebrate this and mark Aveley's chapter in his life?	Contact had been made with the Heritage Centre to hear if anything they would like to do, and councillors wished contact could be made with Wapping where he was actually born to find out what they are doing. This is something that we try to come as driven by the community rather than driven by the Council. Interested to hear views and comments.
Cllr Day	Cllr Muldowney	Can the Portfolio Holder give an update on the council's funding of the Thameside Theatre?	Currently preparing an options paper on the future of the Thameside complex for consideration by Cabinet before the end of the financial year. In the meantime, we have committed to undertaking essential building maintenance this financial year.
Cllr C Kent	Cllr Muldowney	Will the Portfolio Holder confirm whether the Thameside Complex is still being offered for sale?	The Thameside Complex is not currently being marketed for sale. Currently preparing an options paper on the future of the Thameside complex for consideration by Cabinet before the end of the financial year.

75. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies

No reports were presented.

76. Minutes of Committees

The minutes of committees as set out in the agenda were received.

77. Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year

Members received an update on outstanding motions.

78. Motions submitted to November Council

The Motion, as printed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Day and seconded by Councillor J Maney. The Motion read as follows:

The Council should follow in the footsteps of Kent and Norfolk County Councils, and partner with a region of Ukraine to mutual strengthen bonds and co-operation between Thurrock and Ukraine and instructs officers to work on an official partnership between Thurrock and a Ukrainian region.

Councillor Day presented his motion by referring to the work undertaken by government in recent years to help the Ukrainians in the fight for freedom against the Russians and demonstrated that the UK had a firm commitment. The motion would strengthen ties between Thurrock and Ukraine, and all must play their part. A partnership with Ukraine would see the establishment of a memorandum of understanding between Thurrock and the Ukraine region, strengthen bonds with Ukraine, aid in the support of recovery and cement the spirit of friendship and cooperation.

Councillors J Maney, J Kent and Coxshall spoke on this motion. The following comments were made:

- Accepted the full spirit of the motion.
- Symbolic sign of unity.
- Motion may serve to remind us that the issues faced here in Thurrock were trivial compared to those faced by the civil authorities in Ukraine and the people they served.
- Much work, further dialogue and investigation would need to be undertaken before we know whether we could move forward.
- As a first step urged the council to commence dialogue with the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain.
- Approach those councils in the UK that had already gone through the process.
- Noted it was not the role of the council to instruct officers.
- Recommended an options report be presented to Cabinet.

- Consider the partnering and signing a memorandum of understanding with the Ukrainian region.
- The motion demonstrated the true spirit of Thurrock.
- Important that Thurrock followed in the footsteps of what other councils had done.

Councillor Day summed up by thanking Members for their comments and support.

The Mayor called a vote on the motion, to which members voted unanimously in favour. The Mayor announced the motion carried.

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

[Thurrock Council - Full Council, 27/11/2024](#)

The meeting finished at 7.54 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**