

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 27 January 2016 at 7.00 pm

---

**Present:** Councillors Sue Gray (Mayor), Cathy Kent (Deputy Mayor), Tim Aker, Chris Baker, Russell Cherry, Mark Coxshall, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Robert Gledhill, Yash Gupta (MBE), Graham Hamilton, James Halden, Shane Hebb, Terence Hipse, Clifford Holloway, Victoria Holloway, Barry Johnson, Roy Jones, Tom Kelly, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Charlie Key, Steve Liddiard, Brian Little, Susan Little, Sue MacPherson, Ben Maney, Tunde Ojetola, Bukky Okunade, Barry Palmer, Robert Ray, Joycelyn Redsell, Andrew Roast, Peter Smith, Graham Snell, Deborah Stewart, Michael Stone, Pauline Tolson, Kevin Wheeler and Lynn Worrall

**Apologies:** Councillors James Baker, Jan Baker, Clare Baldwin, Colin Churchman, Garry Hague, Jane Potheary, Barbara Rice, Gerard Rice and Richard Speight

**In attendance:** Nick Alston, Police and Crime Commissioner  
Stephen Kavanagh, Chief Constable, Essex Police  
Leigh Norris, Chief Inspector Essex Police  
Matt Cornish, Inspector, Essex Police  
Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive  
Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive  
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health  
Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT  
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation  
Fiona Taylor, Director of Legal and Democratic Services  
Karen Wheeler, Head of Strategy & Communications  
David Lawson, Deputy Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer  
Matthew Boulter, Principal Democratic Services Officer  
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

---

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.

Before the start of the meeting, the Mayor invited Reverend Canon Darren Barlow to lead those present in prayer.

### **120. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of Council, held on 25 November 2015, were approved as a correct record.

## **121. Items of Urgent Business**

The Mayor informed the Council that she had not agreed to the consideration of any items of urgent business.

## **122. Declaration of Interests**

There were no interests declared.

## **123. Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council**

Firstly the Mayor invited all those present to reflect and remember Thurrock's fallen during World War One.

The Mayor wished everyone a late Healthy Happy New Year.

The Mayor stated that she had the honour of marking International Holocaust Memorial Day today through a special memorial service where white pebbles were laid on the newly refurbished memorial. This allowed time for those present to pause and remember the millions of people whose lives were lost or changed forever during the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

The Mayor sent a congratulation message to Councillor Gledhill on the birth of his son.

Finally, the Mayor took the opportunity to thank Carmel Littleton for her contributions and hard work to the Council and wished her well in her new role.

The Leader of the Council commented on the announcement made by Highways England on the Lower Thames Crossing. Councillor J. Kent confirmed that there were now three variants to Option C north of the Thames and two to the south with the proposal of a tunnel being built instead of a bridge.

Councillor J. Kent reminded Members that this decision was made by Highways England and not Thurrock Council. He also stated that a public consultation had commenced and asked Members to stand together and fight this for the residents of Thurrock. He encouraged Members to raise the awareness and promote the events that were currently being organised.

The Leader went on to express his irritation with the 8 week consultation process and what appeared to be only 1 consultation day arranged for Thurrock with that being only 7 days after the announcement of the consultation. Councillor J. Kent stated this was not good enough and he would be writing to Highways England and the Minister to ask that further sessions be arranged towards the end of the 8 week consultation process, which would then give residents the time to digest and understand all the information being suggested.

Councillor J. Kent stated that Thurrock had to be prepared to continue to fight to get the best possible deal for Thurrock residents and for the borough itself. He had spoken to the Director of Finance for a provision to support residents who may be affected, with monies being put aside from budgets. This would be an item on the February Budget meeting. At this juncture the Leader asked Members to stand to show their support for opposing the current options and the chamber all stood at his request.

#### **124. Presentation from Essex Police**

The Mayor introduced Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh, the Police and Crime Commissioner Nick Alston, Chief Inspector Leigh Norris and Inspector Matt Cornish to the meeting of Council and asked that they deliver their presentation which would then be followed by questions by Members.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh thanked Members for the privilege of being invited to the meeting of Council.

Chief Inspector Leigh Norris outlined to Members the key local issues the Police faced:

- The District Profile – 62 square miles around 70% rural, population of 165,000, 62,000 households, examples of strategically significant sites in Thurrock is that in December 2015, 2.5 million visitors to Lakeside and a million vehicles a week use the Dartford Crossing.
- Community Safety Hub – A new concept to Essex Police, Thurrock being one of the four pilot areas which started 1 year ago. Feedback from pilot was healthy with some areas to be concentrated on. Highlighted the volume of partnership operations and activities.
- Dwelling Burglary – Burglary of residents' homes was a very important area of business. Thurrock is geographically vulnerable having borders with Kent and Newham and the Dartford Crossing with a large number of vehicle movement across the borough. Prediction of offences made via Operation In-Sight and being heavily involved in social media.
- Street Racing and Vehicle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) – Issue for the western area of the district for the last 20-25 years. Main concern around this is to prevent serious injury or fatalities for spectators. The current PSPO is working, with Thurrock being the second place in the county to have this. There have been no reported incidents this week of any reports of racing. This will be continued to be enforced with on the spot fines.
- Fly Tipping – Thurrock Council and Essex Police have worked together and come up with Fly Tipping Protocol. Activity targeting vehicles carrying waste.
- Hate Crime – Identify that the need to step up and help victims. Using the multi-agency approach and educating parents and families.
- Unauthorised Encampments – Thurrock had its fair share of encampments, which tend to be seasonal. Now is the time to re-group

and look what needs to be done to make the process as rigid and robust as possible.

Chief Inspector Leigh Norris offered to speak to Members further after the committee if required.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh provided Members with a broader prospective of activities going on across the County. Essex Police continue to change and adopt at a pace but one thing that was not immediately apparent to those outside of policing was the level of neglect of key infrastructures and buildings with a £30 million backlog in maintenance and £2.5 million increase each year.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh also acknowledged and apologised to Members for the departure of the last district commander. With the appointment of Chief Inspector Leigh Norris he hoped that the Council feel pleased with this and that it was evident that he cared deeply for the authority and residents.

The Chief Constable continued by stating that the savings identified in the Autumn Statement had changed significantly.

To better understand what the demand across the borough looked like Officers had shift patterns changed to make sure they were on duty when the public needed them and poor sickness levels in Essex Police were being addressed.

Introduction of a new computer system meant that Essex Police were the first force to change the way in which crime was recorded.

The Chief Constable finished his presentation by highlighting that missing children were being placed in Thurrock without the proper protection plans. Other London councils were also putting families into Thurrock. Essex Police were trying to understand the issues and pressures of these vulnerable individuals. It was confirmed that at this time the Chief Constable was investing officers into public protection, into domestic abuse and into digital investigations and that the organisation was changing to make sure that they remain relevant as things changed.

Members raised the following questions:

Councillor Roast: For you to have your ideal premier A Team for Essex, how much would you be realistically asking for per household?

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh stated that in reality Officers needed better technology to provide the best and most efficient service to the community, so there was a need to invest in the right technology and equipment. The challenge would be for Members to engage with communities on how the changes to policing affected them.

It was stated that Essex Police had the lowest cost levels in the country and Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh did not want Essex Police to have low investment put into it.

Councillor Stewart: What were the plans for protecting small businesses against theft, fraud and shoplifting?

Chief Inspector Norris stated that there was a Crime Unit at Lakeside Shopping Centre and a small unit in Grays town centre. PCSOs undertook foot patrols which take in the local shopping areas. The visibility of the PCSOs could be more but they were faced with different challenges and were stretched across all areas.

Councillor Ojetola: Under the new government funding will you keep all the PCSOs?

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh confirmed that not all PCSOs would be kept as £13.5 million still needed to be found as part of the budget cuts.

Chief Inspector Leigh Norris confirmed that the number of incidents of boy racers in West Thurrock had reduced and that on-line activity had virtually ceased.

Councillor Redsell: How often do the traffic department visit crime hotspots?

Chief Inspector Norris stated that he had no figures to hand but re-assured Members that every effort to support these hotspot areas is given.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh confirmed that recognition vehicles were now being deployed in these areas and on training courses, officers were briefed on the presence of patrol cars using blue lights in these high crime hotspots areas could prevent burglaries from happening.

Councillor Hipsey: Asked the Crime Commissioner to tell the chambers, the public and residents that he would change his mind and keep our police stations open.

Nick Alston reconfirmed that for every police station kept open it meant fewer police able to respond to community concerns out on patrol. A simple equation was either to spend money to keep police stations open or spend money on officers with the right technology and on patrol. As Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh had already told the chamber he did not need all current police stations open as officers were on the road dealing with issues. Communication between local communities would need to be improved. Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh stated that money had to be freed up to pay for modern officers with modern technology.

Councillor Halden: What ambitions do you have with the Fire Authority and Essex Police services working together?

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh stated they had a good relationship with the chief Fire Team who met once a month. The ambition was to work more effectively together whilst protecting the autonomy and specialities of each service. The Chief Constable observed that public safety in terms of police could be managed more effectively whilst working with the fire service.

Nick Alston stated that it was his role to keep the Chief Constable to account and that the best police service was provided.

Councillor Jones made a statement to the effect that Essex Police should look at Thurrock as a special case as it is the industrial hub of Essex.

Councillor Worrall: Thanked Chief Inspector Leigh Norris for his continued work in the borough. You propose to close buildings and talk to the communities. How do you intend to engage with communities, how were you going to make those residents feel safe and how many officers were we going to lose in Thurrock?

The Chief Constable confirmed that the intention was to maintain the Officer number at 2800 with a reduction in sickness levels. The Community Hubs needed to be in the right location where services could be accessed and that were staffed at the right times.

Councillor S. Little: How were responses to 101 calls managed in rural communities?

Councillor S. Little thanked Essex Police for the Community Speed Training and for their support.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh confirmed that 101 calls were monitored but had concerns on the consistency of the number of calls answered. The map training element of the question would be taken away and explored.

Councillor Hamilton: With the introduction of ATHENA do you think there will be any radical reappraisal of bureaucracy involved in policing? Could evidence be used in court?

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh commented that ATHENA would be used to populate all details and had reduced bureaucracy to a degree. When the mobile technology was available for statements to be immediately loaded onto the system at the scene of crime the Chief Constable was confident that ATHENA would improve the efficiency of processes over the next 12 months.

Councillor J. Kent: On rationalisation of the estate, in negotiations with owners of building and land that you do not currently own how confident were you to exit these leases in sufficient time to make the savings that were predicted? How many extra PCSOs do you intend to keep in Thurrock?

Nick Alston confirmed that very few properties were leased. The majority of the buildings around the county were freehold. It is planned that 8 of the

freehold properties will be sold in the next few months, with the savings plan running over 5 years.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh did not have this figure of how many extra PCSOs intended to keep in Thurrock to hand and would report back to Members.

Councillor Kerin: You say the service is stretched finely. How stretched is it? And how far away were you from the elastic snapping?

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh stated that modern Police Officers were under much more strain compared to previous generations and that productivity was monitored and constantly under scrutiny. The change in shift patterns had helped but ATHENA had not helped as much as would have liked. There were over 1200 calls received a day but only 600 can be dealt with.

Councillor Victoria Holloway: If the reduction in budgets had not been made by the current Government would we not be in this position of making cuts and closing police stations?

Nick Alston replied that it was the government that maintained the budget and an extra £500,000 had been given to spend.

The Mayor thanked the Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh, the Police and Crime Commissioner Nick Alston, Chief Inspector Leigh Norris and Inspector Matt Cornish for their time this evening.

*At 8.12 pm, Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh, the Police and Crime Commissioner Nick Alston and Inspector Matt Cornish left the council chambers.*

## **125. 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 were attached at Appendix A to these minutes

## **126. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors**

The Mayor informed Members that she had been made aware that Councillor Redsell was due to present a petition to Council regarding “Blackshots – Impulse Leisure Parking Charges”. Although this issue had now been resolved with discussions between the Council and Impulse Leisure, due to the large number of signatures and the work undertaken by Councillor Redsell, the Mayor invited Councillor Redsell to speak on this issue.

Councillor Redsell stated that a petition with over 2000 signatures had been submitted and questioned why residents were being asked to pay again for

parking permits and that the Council should be encouraging residents to use these facilities to keep fit and healthy.

Councillor Redsell stated that her petition had taken too long to verify and suggested that the process be changed to speed up the verification of petitions and hoped that lessons could be learnt.

Councillor Redsell confirmed that a letter from the Chief Executive, Lyn Carpenter, had been received on Monday, 24 January 2016, stating no charges would be imposed at Blackshots. Councillor Redsell took this opportunity to thank the residents and would provide an update to them once all the signatures had been verified.

#### **127. Petitions Update Report**

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

#### **128. 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 previously made to Committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels.

The Leader of the Council informed the Chamber there were no changes to declare.

The Leader of the Conservative Group informed the Chamber there were no changes to declare.

The Leader of the UKIP group confirmed that he wished to make the following changes in according with the new Political Balance calculations:

- For Councillor C. Baker to be appointed as a substitute Member of the General Services Committee.
- For Councillor Smith to be appointed as a substitute Member of the General Services Committee.

Councillors Ray and Palmer also informed the Chamber there were no changes to declare.

Members voted unanimously in favour of the changes to appointments to committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1. That Councillor C. Baker be appointed as a substitute Member of the General Services Committee.**



2. **That Councillor Smith be appointed as a substitute Member of the General Services Committee.**

**129. To Note the Appointment of the Interim Corporate Director of Children's Services Service**

Councillor J. Kent, Leader of the Council, briefly introduced the report highlighting that the General Services Committee on the 6 January 2016 agreed the appointment of David Archibald as the Interim Corporate Director of Children's Services.

Councillor J. Kent informed Members that David Archibald was the director of Children Services at Ealing Council for 10 years and was a credible candidate who would cover until the appointment of the substantive successor. The advert closed on 29 January for the substantive post and General Services should soon be able to fill the vacancy.

Councillor Gledhill, Leader of the Opposition, agreed with the report and stated that he was sorry to see Carmel Littleton depart.

Councillor Snell, Leader of the UKIP Group, also commented his support of the new appointment.

Councillor Ojetola requested background information on the career history of David Archibald.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendation, whereupon the Mayor declared this to be carried.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Council note the appointment of David Archibald as Interim Corporate Director of Children's Services with effect from 25 January 2016.**

**130. Annual Pay Policy Statement 2016/17**

Councillor J. Kent, Leader of the Council, briefly introduced the report which sought the approval of the Council's annual Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17. It included the requirement, under the Localism Act 2011, to publish its policy relating to pay of Chief Officers.

Councillor J. Kent stated that the report varied little from last year and that the pay award for senior manager remained the same.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations, whereupon the Mayor declared these to be carried.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the cost of living award for single status staff for 2016/17 should continue to reflect any award agreed by the NJC.**
- 2. That senior management should receive no cost of living pay award for 2016/17.**
- 3. That the Council should continue to pay the UK Living Wage as a supplement to its lowest-paid employees, and that this rate should rise on 1 April 2016 in line with the Living Wage Foundation's recommended rate of £8.25ph.**

**131. The Local Council Tax Scheme 2016-17; setting of the Council Tax Base for 2016-17 and Determination of The Collection Fund Balance 2015-16**

Councillor J. Kent, Leader of the Council, introduced the report that required Council to publish an annual Pay Policy Statement for chief officers that must be approved by Council by 31 March each year.

Councillor J. Kent provided Members with information required for approval; the estimated balance of the council tax collection fund that would be apportioned between the Council and the major precepting authorities (the Police and Fire Authorities) and the estimated balance of the business rate collection fund that is apportioned between the Council, Central Government and the Fire Authorities.

Councillor Gledhill agreed with the report and stated that it was good to see the increase of properties within the borough and the reduction of numbers on the council tax support scheme.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations, whereupon the Mayor declared these to be carried.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the LCTS scheme for Thurrock Council is maintained with the inclusion of a reduction in the period an award can be backdated to four weeks. This reduction is in line with welfare reform legislation changes to housing benefit from 1 April 2016. The 2016/17 Scheme will now contain the following elements:**
  - The first £25 per week of earned income will be disregarded when calculating levels of council tax support.**
  - The maximum capital limit is to be set at £6,000. This means anyone who has savings over £6,000 may not receive support with their council tax.**

- For working age claimants, the maximum support that will be allowed will be 75% of their full council tax bill.
  - Child benefit and child maintenance received will not be included as income in the calculation of council tax support.
  - The maximum period a claim for LCTS can be backdated when a customer provides good cause for not claiming earlier is four weeks.
  - There is a full disregard of military compensation payments, including War Disablement Pensions, War Widow's Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments.
2. To recommend that Council set the Council Tax Base for 2016/17 by approving the following resolutions:
- (a) That the report of the Head of Corporate Finance for the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the year 2016/17 be approved; and
  - (b) That pursuant to the Head of Corporate Finance report and in accordance with the relevant regulations, the amount calculated by Thurrock Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2016/17 shall be 48,856.
3. To recommend that the Council:
- (a) Determines the estimated 31 March 2016 balance of the Council Tax Collection Fund to be a surplus of £1,199,312 (before distribution to major precepting authorities).
  - (b) Allocates the surplus to the three main precepting bodies in proportion to their precepts for 2015/16 as follows:
    - (i) Thurrock Council £1,007,909;
    - (ii) Essex Police Authority £131,877; and
    - (iii) Essex Fire Authority £59,526.
4. To recommend that the Council:
- (a) Determines the estimated 31 March 2016 balance of the Business Rate Collection Fund to be a deficit of £5,761,084 (before distribution to Central Government and Essex Fire Authority).
  - (b) Allocates the deficit to the three main precepting bodies in the proportion set out in legislation:

- (i) **Thurrock Council £2,822,931;**
- (ii) **Central Government £2,880,542; and**
- (iii) **Essex Fire Authority £57,611.**

**132. Questions from Members**

The Mayor informed the Chamber that one question to the Leader of the Council had been received and four questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Members appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

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

**133. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies**

A report from Councillor Cathy Kent regarding Essex Fire Authority was tabled at the meeting.

**134. Minutes of Committees**

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

**135. Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year**

Members received an information report updating them on progress in respect of Motions resolved at Council over the past year.

Councillor Gledhill pointed that on Motion 'we call on Thurrock Council to investigate similar action to Essex and Harrow Council' the status should read Update - January 2016 and not 2015.

**136. Motion submitted by Councillor Hebb**

The first Motion, as printed in the agenda, was proposed by Councillor Hebb and seconded by Councillor B. Little. The motion read as follows:

*"That Thurrock Council looks to encourage the extension of the current Oyster Card Railcard/Contactless Payment Scheme and/or its replacement from Grays C2C station to all zones across the borough as they would both be helpful and a support to residents and growth.*

*Council resolves to work with external agencies to realise this request."*

Councillor Hebb introduced the motion, and in doing so, explained that this Motion had gone to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny last month to identify a definition of fares.

Councillor Hebb confirmed that this scheme had not been extended into other areas of the borough and that it should be consistent throughout the borough, for all to reap the benefits.

Councillor Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, agreed his support for this motion to encourage an easier and faster way of travelling and that Smart Card would be available in all boroughs.

Councillor B. Little stated that this scheme would benefit residents of the borough with the ticket transaction process being made more quickly, which in turn would make journey transitions easier.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the Motion, whereupon the Mayor declared the motion to be carried.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Council looks to encourage the extension of the current Oyster Card Railcard/Contactless Payment Scheme and/or its replacement from Grays C2C station to all zones across the borough as they would both be helpful and a support to residents and growth.**

**That the Council resolves to work with external agencies to realise this request.**

**137. Motion submitted by Councillor Halden**

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

*“The chamber resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health with regards to poor communication/engagement from representatives of National Health Service (NHS) England and NHS Commissioning, particularly with reference to the consultation on the Positron Emission Tomography – Computed Tomography (PET CT) Scanner (cancer services) which we view as an unsound consultation.”*

Councillor Halden introduced the Motion, and in doing so, explained that the PET CT scanner was used mainly for detecting lung cancer which was the second highest cancer recorded in Thurrock.

Councillor Halden stated that the NHS England Consultation was to move the PET CT scanner from Basildon to Southend and confirmed that this decision was being made solely by NHS England.

Councillor Halden explained that NHS England had attended the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) on the 13 October 2015 after submitting a very late paper which contained inaccuracies and with no clinical consultation being undertaken. This paper was rejected by the HOSC Chair and Members.

Councillor Halden also stated that NHS England were in the process of undertaking a public consultation at Lakeside Shopping Centre, using the same paper which was rejected at HOSC. This had only come to light after HealthWatch had contacted the Council to ask what part we were playing in this consultation.

Councillor Halden stated that this was not the way public services should be run and that better communication from NHS England was required.

Councillor J. Kent stated that he was in agreement with the Motion and emphasised that when the PET CT contract was awarded to Basildon Hospital, this meant that the scanner remained at Basildon and not be moved.

Councillor Snell, Chair of HOSC, observed that he would be supporting the motion.

Councillor Halden welcomed the cross party support and stated that there was no clinical reason for the PET CT scanner to be moved.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the Motion, whereupon the Mayor declared the motion to be carried.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health with regards to the poor communication/engagement from representatives of NHS England and NHS commissioning, particularly with reference to the consultation on the PET CT Scanner (cancer services) which we view as an unsound consultation.**

**138. Motion submitted by Councillor Stone**

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

*“Further to the proposed cuts to the fire service across the borough of between one third and one half. This council resolves to express its concerns by:*

- a. Objecting to these proposals through the Essex Fire and Rescue service (EFRS) public consultation - and urges residents to do the same.*
- b. Raising these concerns with the two Members of parliament to enlist their support.*
- c. Urge the EFRS to consider expanding the level of fire cover in Thurrock due to the rapid increase in jobs, industry and homes.”*

Councillor Stone introduced the motion, and in doing so, expressed concern over the proposed cuts being put forward as part of the Fire Authority

Consultation. Councillor Stone also made Members aware that the Acting Chief Fire Officer, Adam Eckley, would be attending the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Committee on the 17 March 2016 and the need to liaise with Fire Authority to express the concerns of Members about proposed changes to services.

Councillor Coxshall stated that he did not support this motion as dramatic changes had taken place over the last 30 years, with the increase in emergency calls and the number of firefighters decreased. It was time for change and to look how tax money was being spent and he highlighted the work the Police were having to undertake to modernise their service. His only suggestion on cuts would be to cut the Fire Authority.

Councillor Cherry was concerned that the proposals would leave his ward, which had three large tower blocks, with no fire service cover and this would need to be made clear as part of the consultation.

Councillor Halden stated he did not support the motion because options needed to be based on the local needs. As a Member representing the Homesteads ward he would be attending the Cleaner, Greener and Safer committee in March to question the fire service and urged all Members to abstain from a vote tonight.

Councillor J. Kent asked that a requisition vote be undertaken.

Councillor J. Kent stated that Councillor Coxshall, who was a Member of the Fire Authority, had only attended one meeting of the Authority out of the seven so far held.

Councillor Hipsey commented that after listening to the Conservative party at a meeting last week he blamed the Conservative party and its membership for letting this happen and the need was to protect the people of the expanding borough and not save money. He stated that the Council should be looking after public services as once they had gone they would not come back.

Councillor C. Holloway stated the uniqueness of Thurrock and how the Council should support the motion. The Council had a duty of care to its residents.

*At 9.25 pm, the Mayor moved a motion to suspend Council Procedure Rule 11.1 to allow the meeting to continue beyond the 2.5 hour time limit until 9.40 pm. Members indicated their agreement to the proposal.*

Councillor Kerin stated he would be supporting this motion as chances could not be taken on the fire service, as you could not predict when incidents would happen.

Councillor Kelly requested more explanation on how this would be funded so would not be supporting this motion.

Councillor Gledhill agreed that this motion required more information. It was stated that Councillor Jones would be holding the Fire Authority to account at the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Committee and that Members be invited by the Chair. At this time he would not want to second guess the outcome and findings of that meeting. He agreed that change was required and if it proved that Thurrock was at substantial risk from these cuts this Motion should be brought back to Council.

Councillor Snell echoed Councillor Gledhill comments but also took on board all Members comments. He was not happy to vote on a motion that the chamber did not have sufficient information on.

Councillor Gerrish thanked Councillor Stone for bringing the Motion this evening but after reviewing the 3 proposals it did cause concern and he worried about the effect these cuts would have on the community.

Councillor Jones stated it was letting the Essex Fire Service know how the Council felt now. Councillor Jones seconded the motion and would not be supporting the cuts as Thurrock was the industrial hub of Essex and Thurrock should be treated as a special case.

Councillor Stone summed up the Motion with stating that Orsett were called to 1003 incidents last year an increase of 72 the previous year.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 20.7, Members indicated that the vote on the motion be recorded. Democratic Services conducted the recorded vote, the result of which was as follows:

Votes in favour of the motion:

Councillors Tim Aker, Chris Baker, Russell Cherry, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Yash Gupta (MBE), Graham Hamilton, Terry Hipsey, Cliff Holloway, Victoria Holloway, Roy Jones, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Bukky Okunade, Barry Palmer, Peter Smith, Michael Stone, Kevin Wheeler, Lynn Worrall, Cathy Kent, Sue Gray **(22)**

Votes against the motion:

Councillors Mark Coxshall, Robert Gledhill, James Halden, Shane Hebb, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, Charlie Key, Brian Little, Susan Little, Sue MacPherson, Ben Maney, Tunde Ojetola, Robert Ray, Joy Redsell, Andrew Roast, Deborah Stewart, Pauline Tolson **(17)**

Abstentions:

Councillor Graham Snell **(1)**

The Mayor declared the motion to be carried.



**RESOLVED:**

**That the Council will express its concerns by objecting to these proposals through the Essex Fire and Rescue Service (EFRS) public consultation and urges residents to do the same.**

**That the Council will raise these concerns with the two Members of parliament to enlist their support.**

**Urge the EFRS to consider expanding the level of fire cover in Thurrock due to the rapid increase in jobs, industry and homes.**

**The meeting finished at 9.41 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)**