

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 23 March 2016 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Sue Gray (Mayor), Cathy Kent (Deputy Mayor), Tim Aker, Chris Baker, Mark Coxshall (arrived 9.11), Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Robert Gledhill, Yash Gupta (MBE), Graham Hamilton, Garry Hague, James Halden, Shane Hebb, Terence Hipsey, 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, Jane Potheary, Robert Ray, Joycelyn Redsell, Barbara Rice, Gerard Rice (arrived 7.42), Peter Smith, Graham Snell, Richard Speight, Deborah Stewart, Michael Stone, Kevin Wheeler and Lynn Worrall

Apologies: Councillors James Baker, Jan Baker, Clare Baldwin, Russell Cherry, Colin Churchman, Barry Palmer, Andrew Roast and Pauline Tolson

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Environment and Place
Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation
David Lawson, Deputy Head of Legal and Governance
Karen Wheeler, Head of Strategy, Communications and Customer Service
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.

161. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 24 February 2016 were approved as a correct record.

162. Items of Urgent Business

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

163. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Aker declared a non-pecuniary interest on Item 22, Motion 3, as he was a member of the European Parliament.

164. 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.

It was reported that the Mayor had written a letter of condolence to the Mayor of Brussels and the people of France in respect of the recent atrocities in Brussels. The Mayor announced that a book of condolence would be available for all Members and Members of the Public to sign, which would be located in the Civic Office reception area.

The Mayor stated that an event would be hosted by the Purfleet Heritage Centre on the 3 April 2016 to mark the first shooting down of a Zeppelin over England.

Finally the Mayor thanked all Councillors for their hard work this past municipal year.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J Kent, stated that Councillor Key and Councillor Speight would be standing down after one term in office and thanked them for what had been achieved in the time they were in office and wished them well.

Councillor J Kent stated that Councillor Gupta would be retiring after 20 years in office having served in this time as Mayor and Member on Overview and Scrutiny Committees. He stated that Councillor Gupta was a steadfast and reliable member with a huge track record of volunteering. Councillor J Kent wished Councillor Gupta and his family well.

Councillor J Kent wished all those Members that were standing down a good rest and wished them well.

The Mayor invited Councillor Gupta to speak. Councillor Gupta thanked Councillor J Kent for his kind words and referenced some highlights of his career as an elected member. Councillor Gupta went on to thank Members and Officers for their support and hard work and the acceptance of himself and his family into Thurrock.

165. 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.

166. 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 one Member of the Public who wished to present a petition at the meeting.

George Abbott presented a petition on behalf of residents of Thurrock to say No to any new Thames Crossing proposals in Thurrock.

167. 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.

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

There were no changes to appointments to Committees, Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels declared.

169. Lower Thames Crossing - Council Consultation Response

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J Kent, presented the report which set out the Council's responses to Highways England's consultation on route options for a proposed Lower Thames Crossing and stated that Thurrock Council continues to be unanimously opposed to any Lower Thames Crossing at the proposed locations.

Councillor J Kent thanked Mr Abbott for presenting the petition "Say No to Any Crossings in Thurrock" to Council tonight and thanked all campaigners for their continued support and stated that they should be proud in the way that there were demonstrating themselves and the work undertaken so far.

Councillor J Kent stated the Thurrock Council's policy towards another Lower Thames Crossing had been opposed to government plans for a further river crossing in Thurrock and committed to continue campaigning.

Two public meetings had been held on 25 January and 25 February 2016 with the Planning Transportation and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny holding an extended meeting on the 9 February 2016 to hold a Lower Thames Crossing Witness Session.

Councillor J Kent had written two letters to the Secretary of State for Transport on the 11 February and 29 February 2016 but to date had not received a reply. A further letter was also sent on the 15 March 2016 to the Chancellor of the Exchequer but still no reply had been received.

Councillor J Kent proposed that a further letter will be sent from all Group Leaders, which he encouraged them to sign tonight after Council and

reminded members to make their own representation before the deadline date.

Councillor Gledhill stated that Thurrock Council would continue to say no to any crossings in Thurrock not just for the residents of Thurrock but for the boroughs that join Thurrock. He stated that Highways England should listen to the residents of Thurrock to ensure the right decisions were made.

Councillor Gledhill shared his frustrations on the lack of documentation available on the consultation process and that roadshows should have been undertaken in more areas.

Councillor Snell stated that Government expect and encourage people to vote in the general election and that making the right decision on the proposed Lower Thames Crossing would give residents of Thurrock that good reason to vote.

Councillor Aker gave credit to all the campaigners of the Lower Thames Crossing and that with the progress made so far we may well win.

Councillor B Little thanked all those that attended the Overview and Scrutiny Witness Gathering Event and for the work undertaken by the campaigners. Councillor B Little confirmed that he had now received a reply from Andrew Jones but the letter and the process contained flaws that were putting undue stress on Thurrock residents.

Councillor G Rice apologised for his lateness into the Council Chambers and stated that he had attended a Road Summit in London on the 22 March 2016 where he and Officers from Medway Council grilled the Chief of Highway's England on the proposed options.

Councillor G Rice stated that the Member of Parliament should be a shamed of comments made.

The Mayor invited the Chamber to vote on the recommendations.

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

RESOLVED

That the Council:

- 1. Endorsed the Council's opposition to Highways England's proposed options for a Lower Thames Crossing, based the points set out in Section 3 of the report.**
- 2. Endorsed the total response package, consisting of the points agreed in recommendation 1, together with the Evidence**

**Gathering Report and technical Report, for submission to
Highways England by the consultation deadline of 24 March 2016.**

170. Thurrock Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2021

Councillor B Rice, Portfolio Holder for Audit Social Care and Health, presented the report to ask the Council to approve the Thurrock's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2021.

The Strategy focused on the prevention and early intervention to ensure that Thurrock people can "add years to life to life to years". The Strategy was goal-focused and contained outcomes that would make the most difference to the health and wellbeing of the population. Through consultation and engagement the following clear and concise goals were identified:

- Opportunity for all
- Healthier environments
- Better emotional health and wellbeing
- Quality care centred around the person
- Healthier for longer

The success of the Strategy would be measured through an Outcomes Framework, which would enable the Board, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the public to identify whether the Strategy were being delivered.

Councillor B Rice specifically thanked HealthWatch and Ceri Armstrong, Strategy Officer, for their hard work.

Councillor Gledhill thanked Councillor B Rice for an excellent report and stated that the report highlighted that the Council do listen to residents of Thurrock on health matters.

The Mayor invited the Chamber to vote on the recommendations.

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

RESOLVED

That the Council agreed to the Thurrock's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2021 and the Outcomes Framework.

171. Statement of Policy and Guidelines - Taxi Licensing

Councillor Stone, Chair of the Licensing Committee, presented the report to request that the Council agreed the recommendation made by the Licensing Committee on the 28 January 2016 to adopt the revised policy relating to the relevance of Convictions, Formal/Simple Cautions, Complaints and/or other matters to that it requires holders and applicants for Hackney Carriage and

Private Hire Drivers to meet. It was proposed that all changes to the licence fee would come into effect on the 1 April 2016.

Councillor Jones as vice chair to the Licensing Committee stated his agreement with the recommendations as set out in the report.

The Mayor invited the Chamber to vote on the recommendation.

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

RESOLVED

That the Council adopts the revised Statement of Policy and Guidelines relating to the relevant of Convictions, Formal/Simple Cautions, Complaints and/or other matters, as attached as Appendix A, as recommended by the Licensing Committee and the policy shall have effect from the 1 April 2016.

172. Setting of Licensing Fees for 2016/17

Councillor Stone, Chair of Licensing Committee, presented the report to request that the Council agreed the recommendation made by the Licensing Committee on the 28 January 2016 for the setting of licence fees associated with licence applications under the remit of the Licensing Committee. It was proposed that all changes to the licence fee would come into effect on the 1 April 2016.

Councillor Jones as vice chair to the Licensing Committee stated his agreement with the recommendations as set out in the report.

The Mayor invited the Chamber to vote on the recommendation.

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

RESOLVED

That the Council adopts the licence fees as attached in Appendix A as recommended by the Licensing Committee.

173. Proposed Amendments to Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Board Membership

Councillor Barbara Rice, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health, presented the report to ask Council to agree to amend the Health and Wellbeing Board's membership to include the senior council officer, the Corporate Director of Environment and Place, responsible for the Borough's regeneration agenda. This would ensure that links between the people and place agendas were recognised and cemented and that the Board could

influence the regeneration agenda to positively impact on the Health and Wellbeing of Thurrock's population.

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 Council agreed to amend the Health and Wellbeing Board's membership to include the Corporate Director of Environment and Place.**
- 2. That the Council agreed subject to recommendation 1 above, the Monitoring Officer be requested to update the Terms of Reference of the Health and Wellbeing Board as set out in Chapter 5, Part 5 of the Council's Constitution.**

174. To Approve the Appointment of the Corporate Director of Children's Services

Councillor J Kent, Leader of the Council, briefly presented the report highlighting that the General Services Committee met on the 2 March 2016 and agreed the appointment of Rory Patterson as the Corporate Director of Children's Services.

Councillor J Kent thanked all Members of the interview panel.

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

RESOLVED

That the approval in accordance with the Council's Constitution the appointment of Rory Patterson as Corporate Director of Children's Services.

175. Report of the Cabinet Member of Highways and Transportation

Councillor Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, introduced the report and stated that 2015 saw the start of a new operating structure for the Transportation and Highways Service Team, therefore the Highways and Transportation Portfolio had been divided into the following areas:

- Major Projects
- Highways Infrastructure Management
- Highways and Transportation Services
- Transport Development Management

Councillor Gerrish highlighted some of the key achievements of the Portfolio which included:

Lower Thames Crossing Consultation – Following Highways England publishing options for a Lower Thames Crossing the consultations were due to end tomorrow. Throughout the process of these consultations, Thurrock Council's policy towards another Lower Thames Crossing had been opposed to Governments plans for a further river crossing in Thurrock. Public Meetings have been held, Planning Transportation and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committees have been held and correspondence had been sent to the Secretary of State for Transport.

Street Lighting – The second phase would start in May 2016 on major routes in the borough.

A13 Widening Scheme – Following the result of a number of tender processes the Council had acquired the specialists, surveyors and design contracts required to deliver the £90 million A13 widening scheme with funds from DP World and London Gateway Port Limited.

Stanford Le Hope Integrated Transport – Had now progressed to the preliminary design stage following engagement over the past year with Network Rail, C2C and bus operators.

Local Sustainable Transport Fund – To include measures to address the unsatisfactory one-way system in Grays' Town Centre.

Highways Infrastructure Management included improvements to the Treacle Mine Roundabout to resolve the following issues and road resurfacing of roads and the improvement of footpaths.

Transport Development Management - Air Quality and Lower Emission Zone Pilot – Cabinet gave their approval to consult on a pilot project to provide more effective management of HGV movements in sensitive areas to improve the air quality and reducing conflict caused by freight vehicles in residential areas.

Councillor S Little asked the Portfolio Holder for reassurance that rural bus services would continue.

Councillor Stewart requested an update from the Portfolio Holder on the repairs to roads and cycle paths within the Frost Estate.

Councillor Gerrish stated that a meeting with C2C had taken place and that negotiations were still taking place on the current timetable and the increase in the fleet numbers. An announcement was due shortly and that Councillor Gerrish would continue to push the urgency of this.

Councillor Redsell requested an update on the future of Tilbury Ferry. Councillor Gerrish confirmed that negotiations were taking place with the Port

of Tilbury around the funding of the service and further developments along the river front.

Councillor B Little stated his concern with the number of gridlocks occurring at the Treacle Mine roundabout. Councillor Gerrish stated that Officers were aware of the situation and that further roadwork on the A13 may have altered the timings of the traffic lights.

Councillor Johnson asked the Portfolio Holder what plans were in place for the traffic slowing system for South Road in South Ockendon. Councillor Gerrish stated that information was not to hand but would share once available.

Councillor Hebb asked if the Stanford Le Hope Integrated Scheme could be pushed along any quicker as the project had been going on for quite some time now.

Councillor Ray thanked the Portfolio Holder for an excellent report and that the issue of restrictions of Heavy Good Vehicles in Aveley had been addressed.

Councillor Gerrish thanked the Transport Team and David Bull, Director of Transport, for their hard work and support.

176. Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing

Councillor Lynn Worrall, Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report and in doing so highlighted some of the key achievements of the Portfolio, which included:

- An increase in rating service provided by Contractor by year repairs completed.
- Private Sector Housing – 244 homes visited with a further 150 household offered informal advice and mediation.
- In 2015-16 the Housing Team inspected 30 HMOs and received 32 HMO related service requested.
- Homelessness - 2,186 households approached the service for housing help and advice, with 283 making homeless assistance applications; 372 potential cases of homelessness were prevented; Housing waiting list increasing - over 7,000 households, including transfers, now on the register; the service was nationally recognised by achieving the National Practitioners Support Service Gold standard; 630 properties void this year.
- Transforming Homes - Now over 5,000 properties completed to the Transforming Homes standard; 342 homes across Grays, Tilbury and Chadwell benefitted from external wall insulation to increase thermal efficiency; 1,300 highly efficient boilers now installed due to the

Transforming Homes Programme.

- Development – The Echoes : 53 properties; The Bruyns : 25 properties; Bracelet Close : 12 properties and St Chads : 128 properties. Further developments planned through HRA and Gloriana.

Councillor Gledhill commented that a wider solution was required for the monitoring and inspection of HMOs.

Councillor Worrall took on board the issue of private landlords being unable to contact the relevant officers in the Council through the telephony system.

Councillor Ray highlighted the issues relating to the concierge service from the recent staff appeal hearing.

Councillor Ojetola stated that more focus should be given to the VOID targets. Councillor Worrall confirmed that the average time for a VOID was 33 days and that the Housing Team was undertaking an amazing job to turn the VOIDS round.

Councillor Redsell asked for confirmation on how many liaison officers there were for the Council Traveller sites in Thurrock.

Councillor Worrell shared briefly some of the recommendations that the Working Group had agreed on. These included identification card for trade personnel, inviting Mears to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, before and after photos of properties, the numbers of fares and rents and provide information and training to members.

Councillor Aker asked the Portfolio Holder that consideration be given to the level of communication when dealing with vulnerable residents.

Councillor Liddiard asked for an update on the impending homelessness crisis within the borough. Councillor Worrall stated that with the increase of 160 per cent rise in homelessness demonstrates the vast volume that the Council have to deal with. It was also stated that The Right Size Policy had been to Cabinet this month with one person already showing an interest, Rents Arising and working with local private landlords.

Councillor G Rice asked the Portfolio Holder what affect the one per cent cut in rents would have on the refurbishment programme. Councillor Worrall stated that a year extension on internal projects with a three year extension on all external projects.

Councillor Worrall confirmed that no plans were in place to demolish the Flowers Estate.

Councillor Worrall stated that it had been a pleasure undertaking the role of Portfolio Holder for Housing and having the opportunity to work with such a good team in Housing.

177. Questions from Members

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

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

At 9.22pm 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 completion of business. Members indicated their agreement to the proposal.

Councillor Gupta left the Council Chambers at 9.31pm

178. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies

Councillor Ojetola updated Members on the report on Impulse Leisure.

179. Minutes of Committees

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

180. Update on Motions resolved at Council during the previous year

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

Councillor Stone left the Council Chambers at 9.35pm

181. Motion submitted by Councillor G Rice

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

We call upon Thurrock Council to write to the Home Secretary calling for Royal Commission on the Police Structure in England and Wales to reduce Police management costs and put the savings made back into Front Line Policing to protect the local communities.

Councillor G Rice stressed the seriousness of this Motion in asking the Home Secretary to have a royal commission on the police structure to reduce the management costs and move to a national police force so that the scale of buildings across the country could be reduced.

A proposed amendment to Motion 1 had been submitted by Councillor Halden and seconded by Councillor Gledhill. The Amended Motion read as follows:

Thurrock Council calls on the Home Office to expedite work to release money from police management costs in order to provide more funding to the front line, such as the ongoing work to bring the blue light services together.

Councillor Halden stated that fundamentally both parties want the same thing in releasing money from management to put on the front line to ensure the safety of residents and urged members to back the proposal to bring together the joint emergency services in the borough to benefit Thurrock. In the 21st century there should not be fire, police and ambulance services located separately, these emergency services should now be based together, locally and be more responsive. An example given by Councillor Halden was that there would be a great opportunity for Police presence in the Corringham fire building.

Councillor J Kent expressed his surprise that the Monitoring Officer accepted this amendment and stated that he did not support this amendment. The Leader stated that the police structure needed to be looked at for the 21st century and experts should look at all the proposals.

Councillor Gledhill stated that legislation was in the process of being amended and gave members time scales on the commissioning timings and stated that it was the wrong time to start this process.

Councillor Halden summed up by suggested going to vote.

The Mayor called a vote on Councillor Halden's amendment.

For : 25

Against : 14

The Mayor declared the amendment was carried.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion:

For : 26

The declared the Amended Motion be carried.

Councillor Hipsey left the Council Chambers at 9.55pm

182. Motion submitted by Councillor Gledhill

Motion 2 was withdrawn prior to the start of Council.

183. Motion submitted by Councillor Snell

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

This Chamber agrees that excessive bureaucracy and costs emanating from the EU have a detrimental effect on the efficiency and cost of Thurrock Council meaning that Thurrock Council would be better off if Britain was to vote to leave the European Union.

Councillor Snell stated that the EU was highly bureaucratic, highly expensive and it costs money. Councillor Snell continued to quote how the public procurement exercises should be carried out, which were complex and expensive and failure for the Council to adhere to these directives could result in court action or enforcement by the EU resulting in costs being passed onto tax payers.

Councillor Gledhill stated his support to this Motion following discussions with Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT, on the amount of money Thurrock received from the EU compared to what the EU pay Thurrock.

Councillor Ray commented on what this Motion had to do with Thurrock and that further information should be supplied to residents to aid in the understanding of the EU referendum.

Councillor Jones stated that the Council had no option but to deal with larger multi corporations due to the small number of UK Company's trading with the EU but all UK Companies have to comply with the high expensive regulations, which made it impossible for local tradesman and companies to tender for work at the Council.

Councillor Speight stated his disagreement with the Motion.

Councillor Johnson stated that Motion may have been submitted to identify the existence of the UKIP Party and felt the Motion was not suitable for discussion within the Council Chambers.

Councillor Kerin stated that the timing of the Motion was unfortunate.

Councillor Smith stated his agreement to the Motion.

Councillor Aker stated that following the attacks in Brussels this week the safety of British people must be a priority in making the right decision.

Councillor Snell summed up and in accordance with Procedure Rule 20.7, 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, James Baker, Mark Coxshall, Leslie Gamester, Robert Gledhill, Graham Hamilton, Shane Hebb, Roy Jones, Tom Kelly, Charlie Key, Brian Little, Susan Little, Sue MacPherson, Robert Ray, Barbara Rice, Gerald Rice, Peter Smith, Graham Snell, Deborah Stewart, Kevin Wheeler, Lynn Worrall **(22)**

Votes against the Motion:

Councillors Oliver Gerrish, James Halden, Cliff Holloway, Victoria Holloway, Barry Johnson, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Ben Maney, Bukky Ojetola, Jane Potheary, Richard Speight, Cathy Kent **(13)**

Abstentions:

Councillors Garry Hague, Tunde Ojetola, Joy Redsell, Sue Gray **(4)**

The Mayor declared the Motion to be carried.

The Mayor thanked all Members and wished them well in the elections.

The meeting finished at 10.25 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**