

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 28 January 2015 at 7.00 pm

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**Present:** Councillors Steve Liddiard (Mayor), Tim Aker, Chris Baker, Jan Baker, Clare Baldwin, Mark Coxshall, Charles Curtis, Tony Fish, Oliver Gerrish, Robert Gledhill, Yash Gupta (MBE), Garry Hague, James Halden, Shane Hebb, Terence Hipsey, Victoria Holloway, Roy Jones, Tom Kelly, John Kent, Martin Kerin (from 7.21pm), Charlie Key, Brian Little, Susan Little, Sue MacPherson, Ben Maney, Tunde Ojetola, Bukky Okunade, Barry Palmer, Maureen Pearce, John Purkiss, Robert Ray, Joycelyn Redsell, Andrew Roast, Susan Shinnick, Philip Smith, Graham Snell, Richard Speight, Michael Stone, Pauline Tolson and Lynn Worrall

**Apologies:** Councillors Sue Gray (Deputy Mayor), Terry Brookes, Barry Johnson, Cathy Kent, Val Morris-Cook, Barbara Rice, Gerard Rice and Simon Wootton

**In attendance:** Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive  
Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing - Thurrock Council  
David Bull, Director of Planning and Transportation  
Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services  
Roger Harris, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning  
Sean Clark, Head of Corporate Finance  
Jackie Hinchliffe, Head of HR, OD and Customer Strategy  
Matthew Boulter, Principal Democratic Services Officer  
Stephanie Cox, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Tim Aker to the Chamber, following his victory in the Aveley and Uplands by-election on 4 December 2014.

The Mayor then informed all present that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

### **68. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Council meeting, held on 22 October 2014, were approved as a correct record.

**69. Items of Urgent Business**

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

**70. Declaration of Interests**

There were no interests declared.

**71. Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council**

The Mayor informed the Chamber that since the last meeting of Council he had the pleasure of attending an open evening event of Thurrock Marching Brass. He explained that Thurrock Marching Brass provided the youngsters of Thurrock and the surrounding areas with access to the marching and performing arts, giving them world class tuition in music, dance, marching, choreography, discipline, teamwork and fun.

He further reported that their Chairman, Paul Morgan, organised a World Record Attempt for the Longest Line of Fanfare Trumpeters in History, which included participants from all over the UK, including members of Thurrock Marching Brass, some of whom were as young as 10 years of age. The attempt was held at the Aveley Football Club ground on Sunday 7 September 2014 at a show for elite marching bands to compete against one another, which was also hosted by Thurrock Marching Brass. Members were advised that the attempt was successful and subsequently ratified by Guinness World Records.

The Mayor presented the official Guinness World Record Certificate to Paul Morgan, Chairman of Thurrock Marching Brass, and congratulated him and everyone at Thurrock Marching Brass for their exceptional achievement.

Mr Paul Morgan, Chairman of Thurrock Marching Brass, thanked the Mayor for his kindness and generosity, for taking the time to attend the open evening event and in presenting the official certificate. He praised the musical talent of young people in the Borough and added that he was keen to raise the profile of such achievements as not all news stories about young people in the Borough were bad.

Mr Morgan invited the Mayor to accept the position of Honorary President of Thurrock Marching Brass on behalf of the Mayor's Office, and added that he welcomed not only Councillor Liddiard but future Mayor's of Thurrock to accept this position. Mr Morgan also paid particular thanks to his colleague Ken Mansfield, who was Corps Director at Thurrock Marching Brass for all his hard work.

The Mayor thanked both Mr Morgan and Mr Mansfield and accepted the position of Honorary President of Thurrock Marching Brass.

The Leader informed the Chamber of a particular incident in the build up to Holocaust Memorial Day in which acid was used to etch a swastika on the Holocaust Memorial. He condemned this despicable act and said that it was not often that he agreed with the words of Teresa May, who had recently reported that she thought she would never see the day where Jewish people were fearful of remaining here in the UK.

The Leader was saddened that such extreme intolerance still existed today but was pleased that so many colleagues stood together against this intolerance at the Holocaust Memorial Day service. He reported that it was the 70 year anniversary of the crimes of the Holocaust and also the 20 year anniversary of genocide in Bosnia.

The Leader further reflected on the recent senseless killings in and around Paris and stated that the events of the Holocaust should not be forgotten, and that difference should be embraced not vilified.

Members across the Chamber unanimously indicated their agreement and support to the sentiments raised by the Leader.

## **72. Questions from Members of the Public**

A copy of the transcript of questions and answers can be viewed at <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock>.

*Councillor Kerin arrived at the meeting at 7.21pm.*

## **73. 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 Councillor Hebb who wished to present a petition at the meeting.

Councillor Hebb firstly echoed the sentiments that were raised by the Leader regarding the Holocaust Memorial.

Councillor Hebb presented a petition on behalf of residents of Hardie Road and Bevin Walk of Stanford-le-Hope, which called on the Council to propose and consult on a painted yellow line plan for Hardie Road/Bevin Walk, with a view of implementing on confirmation that residents were content with the council's proposals to address the matter.

## **74. Update in respect of petitions presented at Full Council and council offices during the previous 6 months**

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

Councillor Redsell stated that a petition she had presented was not included on the list, following which it was agreed this would be investigated by Democratic Services outside of the meeting.

**75. Result of the Aveley and Uplands By-Election and Review of the Allocation of Seats on Committees**

The Mayor advised Members that the report detailed the result of the by-election held in Aveley and Uplands on 4 December 2014, together with the changes that were required to committees and outside bodies.

Councillor Halden congratulated Councillor Aker on his recent win in the Aveley By-Election and reiterated a comment made after Councillor Brookes victory, in that although politically he could not wish him luck he wished him well.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the result of the Aveley & Uplands by-election, held on 4 December 2014, be noted.**
- 2. That the allocation of seats on committees, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.**

**76. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels**

The Mayor advised the Chamber that there was one Council appointed vacancy on the Citizens Advice Bureau Management Committee following Councillor Wootton's resignation on 30 December 2014.

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 that he wished to make the following changes:

- for Councillor Brookes to be appointed as a substitute to the Essex Police and Crime Panel.
- for Councillor Brookes to be appointed as a member of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Gerrish.
- for Councillor Shinnick to be appointed as a substitute member of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Gerrish.

- for Councillor Brookes to be appointed as a substitute member of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Gerrish.
- for Councillor Baldwin to be appointed as a member of the Planning Committee to replace Councillor Speight.
- for Councillor Brookes to be appointed as a substitute member of the Planning Committee.

The Leader of the Conservative Group informed the Chamber that his Group wished to make the following changes:

- for Councillor Gledhill to be appointed to the vacancy on the Citizens Advice Bureau Management Committee following Councillor Wootton's resignation on 30 December 2014.

The Leader of the UKIP group informed the Chamber that he wished to make the following changes:

- for Councillor Snell to be appointed to the UKIP member vacancy on the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- for Councillor Snell to be appointed as a member of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- for Councillor J. Baker to be appointed as a substitute member of the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- for Councillor J. Baker to be appointed as a substitute member of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The leader of the Independent Group confirmed that he did not wish to make any changes to appointments that had previously been made.

Members voted unanimously in favour of the changes to Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That Councillor Brookes be appointed as a substitute to the Essex Police and Crime Panel.**
- 2. That Councillor Brookes be appointed as a member of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Gerrish.**
- 3. That Councillor Shinnick be appointed as a substitute member of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Gerrish.**
- 4. That Councillor Brookes be appointed as a substitute member of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Gerrish.**

5. **That Councillor Baldwin be appointed as a member of the Planning Committee to replace Councillor Speight.**
6. **That Councillor Brookes be appointed as a substitute member of the Planning Committee.**
7. **That Councillor Gledhill be appointed to the vacancy on the Citizens Advice Bureau Management Committee.**
8. **That Councillor Snell be appointed as a member of the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
9. **That Councillor Snell be appointed as a member of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
10. **That Councillor J. Baker to be appointed as a substitute member of the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
11. **That Councillor J. Baker be appointed as a substitute member of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

**77. Council Tax Base 2015-16**

Councillor J. Kent, the Leader of the Council, introduced the report which set out the Council Tax base for 2015/16 and detailed the total number of properties in each band and the total of all properties in the Borough.

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That the discount for empty unfurnished properties be reduced to 100% for one month; and**
2. **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 2015/16 shall be 47,889.**

**78. Determination of The Collection Fund Balance 2014-15**

Councillor J. Kent, the Leader of the Council, introduced the report which estimated the balance on the Council Tax Collection fund, in doing so he raised the following key points:

- That the Council Tax Collection Fund had a surplus of £1.164 million, which was a healthy surplus and that Council Tax owed from previous years continued to be collected.

- That business rates were not in a healthy state and were £9 million less than expected. He remarked that this was entirely due to appeals against business ratings which the Council had no jurisdiction or decision making over. He added some of these appeals went as far back to 2005.

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 it be determined the estimated 31 March 2015 balance of Thurrock Council's Council Tax Collection Fund to be a surplus of £1,164,181 (before distribution to major precepting authorities).**
2. **That the surplus to the three main precepting bodies in proportion to their precepts for 2014/15 be allocated as follows:**
  - (i) **Thurrock Council £980,495**
  - (ii) **Essex Police Authority £125,779; and**
  - (iii) **Essex Fire Authority £57,907.**
3. **That it be determined the estimated 31 March 2015 balance of Thurrock Council's Business Rate Collection Fund to be a deficit of £8,896,308 (before distribution to Central Government and Essex Fire Authority).**
4. **That the deficit to the three main precepting bodies in the proportion set out in legislation be allocated as follows:**
  - (i) **Thurrock Council £4,359,191;**
  - (ii) **Central Government £4,448,154; and**
  - (iii) **Essex Fire Authority £88,963.**

**79. Local Council Tax Support Scheme**

Councillor Holloway, Cabinet Member for Central Services, introduced the report which highlighted the outcomes of the consultation and considered the design of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. In introducing the report the Cabinet Member made the following key points:

- The money that had been provided by Central Government had reduced by 10%.
- That the response to the public consultation had been poor at just 54 responses.
- That the Council was clear it wanted to protect low earning families with children.
- That a court ruling had meant that it was illegal to invoke a local residency clause with the local scheme.

The Cabinet Member recommended that Thurrock continue with the scheme for a further year to minimise the impact on the local community.

Councillor Gledhill was pleased to see that benefits to those injured in active service had been included and stated that residents should be made more aware of the consultation so that next year when the scheme was reviewed again, a greater response rate could be achieved.

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That the 2015/16 LCTS for Thurrock Council remains the same as it is for this current year thereby containing 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.**
  - **Second adult rebate will no longer be awarded for working age claimants.**
  - **For working age claimants, the maximum support that will be allowed will be 75% of the full Council Tax bill for the Banding of the property.**
  - **Child Benefit and Child Maintenance received will not be included as income in the calculation of Council Tax Support.**
  - **There will be a 100% disregard of military compensation payments, including War Disablement Pensions, War Widow's Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments.**

**80. Constitution Working Group - Governance Review**

The Mayor briefly introduced the report which sought the agreement of the Council to the composition and membership of the Constitution Working Group, and, the allocation of a small budget to the Group, in order that it can then proceed with the Governance Review it has been tasked to undertake.

The Mayor advised that the nominations made by Group Leaders had been received and paper copies circulated to Members on the desks in the Council Chamber prior to the meeting.



Councillor Gledhill welcomed a regular refresh of the Council Constitution and wanted to make recommendations back to Council as fast as possible. He added that he hoped much of the £5,000 budget allocated to the Governance Review could remain unused and put back into the Council Budget.

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 Constitution Working Group comprise of 8 Members, to be drawn from each of the political groups represented on the Council, as set out below:
  - 3 members of the Labour Group
  - 3 members of the Conservative Group
  - 1 member of the UKIP Group
  - 1 member of the Independent Group
  
2. That the nominations of each of the political groups to the available seats on the Constitution Working Group, be approved as set out below.

Constitution Working Group	
<b>Labour Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Gupta</li> <li>• Councillor Speight</li> <li>• Councillor Fish</li> </ul>
<b>Conservative Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Gledhill</li> <li>• Councillor Halden</li> <li>• Councillor Ojetola</li> </ul>
<b>UKIP Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Ray</li> </ul>
<b>Independent Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Palmer</li> </ul>

3. That a budget of £5,000 be allocated to the Constitution Working Group to enable it to properly investigate the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of governance amongst similar sized authorities.

## **81. Amendment to Polling Places and Polling Stations**

The Mayor briefly introduced the report of the Returning Officer in relation to the Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations.

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 members note the existing arrangements for Belhus Ward, polling district F can be confirmed for the elections on 7 May 2015 with a requirement to source a new polling place thereafter.**
- 2. That the polling place for polling district P, Corringham and Fobbing be confirmed as the Pegasus Club, Herd Lane.**
- 3. That members note there are existing arrangements in place within the Constitution and the Terms of Reference of the General Services Committee which will enable the Chief Executive to make changes to a polling place if required, in an emergency.**

## **82. Refresh of Community Priorities**

Councillor J. Kent, the Leader of the Council, introduced the report which detailed the change to the community priorities and objectives which had been reviewed and refreshed. He reported that this was an appropriate time to change the community priorities that had been agreed in 2012 given the economic and budget challenges faced. Members were advised that the community and voluntary sector had been consulted on the changes, which had also been endorsed by Cabinet.

Councillor Gledhill welcomed the update especially in light of the current budget challenges but questioned why the priority of 'raise levels of aspiration and attainment so that residents can take advantage of local job opportunities' focused on local opportunities only. He felt that it should not only look inwardly.

In response the Leader of the Council emphasised the importance of building links between businesses and schools to equip young people in Thurrock with the skills needed to access employment in general, but specifically to take up the job opportunities in the Borough too. He added that the current priority also contained a local element and felt that it was important this remained.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the new community priorities and objectives as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed.**

**83. Proposed Amendments to Thurrock's Health and Wellbeing Board Membership**

The Mayor advised Members that the report sought approval to expand the Membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board to include:

- The Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, David Peplow.
- The Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board, Graham Carey.
- Councillor Okunade in her capacity as Portfolio Holder for Children's Social Care.

Councillor Halden felt that it was right that the membership of the board be expanded to include the representatives referred to above. He advised Members that he would be formally writing to Councillors J. Kent, G. Snell and B. Palmer, in light of a safeguarding issue that he had become aware of, to ensure the correct scrutiny of Thurrock's safeguarding functions.

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 Council agrees that the Chair of the Local Children's Safeguarding Board, Chair of the Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board, and Portfolio Holder for Children's Social Care become members of the Health and Wellbeing Board.**
- 2. That 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.**

**84. Adoption of Thurrock Core Strategy and Policies for Management**

Councillor Speight, Cabinet Member for Communities and Regeneration, introduced the report which recommended that the Focused Review be adopted. He explained that the report had been a while in the making and that in October 2012 Cabinet had agreed a review of the Council's Core Strategy and Policies in response to publication of the National Planning Policy Framework. He further reported that the document was not a holistic review and focussed only on minor changes.

Councillor Gledhill welcomed the review which was in line with the national framework and hoped that a larger review would take place in the not too

distant future. He felt that a particular issue surrounding parking on new build housing estates should be examined, as there was significant demand on limited spaces, especially as some residents required the use of company vehicles.

In response Councillor Speight recognised that this was an issue and stated that the importance of the core strategy could not be underestimated. He was keen to engage with Members and the public to develop this further.

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 it be agreed with immediate effect the adoption of the Thurrock Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development Focused Review: Consistency with National Planning Policy Framework, as modified in accordance with the examination Inspector's report.**
- 2. That it be agreed the Council make available in accordance with regulation 35 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012:- (i) the adopted Focused Review; (ii) an adoption statement; (iii) the sustainability appraisal report, and (iv) details of the places and times when these documents can be inspected.**
- 3. That it be agreed a copy of the adoption statement be sent to persons who have asked to be notified of the adoption of the Focused Review, and to the Secretary of State.**

#### **85. Adoption of legislation to allow for improved regulation**

Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Public Protection, introduced the report which recommended the adoption of legislation and the creation of a bylaw to ensure that residents and visitors using premises carrying out skin piercing and related activities were meeting a standard to ensure health and safety.

Councillor Worrall was keen that when setting fees the Council should seek full cost recovery in order to not place an additional burden on budgets. In response the Cabinet Member explained that the service would be looking to obtain full cost recovery but added that legally they would not be able to profit from the charges, just cover the actual cost.

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 it be agreed to adopt Sections 14-17 inclusive of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 as amended by the Local Government Act 2003 Section 120, which deals with the regulation of Acupuncture, tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing and electrolysis.
2. That following the implementation period for the adoption of the resolution in relation to Sections 14-17 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 as amended by The Local Government Act 2003 Section 120, the Council adopt the model bylaw detailed in Appendix 2.

**86. Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Specification and Licence Condition amendment**

Councillor Stone, Chair of the Licensing Committee, introduced the report which proposed a correction of a typographical error to Thurrock Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle specifications and Licence Conditions. Members were advised that the changes related to the loading of wheelchairs and where animals should be carried in vehicles.

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 vehicle specification and licence conditions for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicles (detailed in appendix A) be adopted.

**87. Report of the Cabinet Member for the Environment**

Councillor Fish, Cabinet Member for the Environment, introduced the report and in doing so provided an overview of the services provided, including the civic amenity site, 2 country parks, 3 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Thurrock in Bloom, fleet management, street waste and the winter gritting service.

In introducing the report the Cabinet Member raised the following key points:

- That recycling rates had reduced over the past 2 years but were in line with national averages.
- That for the fifth consecutive year the Directorate had come in on budget.
- That the streets of Thurrock were the cleanest ever.
- That the waste team had emptied 97% of bins on schedule.

- That money had been saved on vehicle repairs as a new in-house workshop at St. Clements was now a Taxi safety check centre and licensed to undertake MOTS for all Council Vehicles.
- That in 2012-13 the service had a cohort of 14 Street Services apprentices, 6 of whom completed their qualification and work experience and 1 of whom was now permanently employed in the service.]
- In 2013-14 the service operated a programme for apprentices that provided a qualification as well as work experience across most front line services.
- That whilst services were being restructured the apprentice programme had been put on hold but it was hoped that further programmes to support local youth would be initiated during the course of summer 2015.
- That the level of street cleanliness in the Borough was a real success for the team and the level of street cleanliness achieved in Thurrock was better than the National figures available from Keep Britain Tidy.

That Cabinet Member further outlined a number of positive actions that were planned to ensure that the impact of the budget savings facing the Directorate were minimised, which included:

- The consolidation of two depots into a single site to realise savings and a more efficient allocation of resources.
- A move from a service focus to area based working which would enable staff to move from scheduled rounds to become more reactive – responding to issues as they arise.
- To increase external income by selling services to external parties, for example, trade waste, winter gritting, grounds maintenance for schools.

Members questioned the Portfolio Holder on the following matters and the Mayor advised that responses would be provided at the end of receipt of all questions:

- Councillor Tolson asked if the Portfolio Holder would agree that if gates had been placed at the Greenacres flyover (A13) when originally requested three years ago this would have been more cost efficient. She reported that the last fly tip had cost £30,000 to remove from the site and remarked it would have been more cost efficient to put gates on 3 years ago. She further questioned what was being done to tackle issues at Rainbow Lane, Stanford-le-Hope to prevent fly tips but still allow for pedestrian, cycleway and bridleway access.
- Councillor Gledhill observed that in Rectory Road, Little Thurrock, there had been a marked increase in dog fouling. He questioned what the Portfolio Holder was doing to resolve the problem, whether

this was by introducing more dog bins, or increasing patrols or enforcement officers to fine irresponsible dog owners.

- Councillor Ojetola acknowledged that the service worked hard and thanked the team for their work. However he felt that the report should have included details regarding the complaints related to the service. He explained that the last report received by Members detailed the service had received over 600 complaints, and questioned the Portfolio Holder on how many complaints had been received this year, of those how many were progressed to stage 3 and what actions had been taken following the ombudsman recommendations.
- Councillor Ray highlighted issues that the Aveley Community Forum had continued to experience regarding broken glass, cigarette butts and other litter at their recreation ground. He questioned what the Portfolio Holder was doing to tackle these problems.
- Councillor Aker asked what was done when fly tipping was reported, specifically how cleaning was actioned and how those responsible were caught. He advised that he had reported a fly tipping incident in Aveley along with Councillor Ray who had witnessed the incident.
- Councillor Purkiss called for the Portfolio Holder to establish a regular cleaning regime outside the Linford Civic Amenity Site and was also concerned that road signs between East Tilbury and Grays were dirty and not easily visible.
- Councillor Palmer questioned what steps were being taken to clean the A13, which he felt was in a disgusting state and a failing on the whole Borough.
- Councillor Halden highlighted that the report explained money was being saved through multi skilled area teams, which was a suggestion both himself and Councillor Liddiard proposed in 2011. He reported that at the time he was told it was impractical to move to this way of working and questioned what had changed to now make this possible.
- Councillor Coxshall questioned what progress was being made to bring those responsible for the Cory's Wharf fly tip to justice and what the final cost of clearing the site would be. He stated that he had heard the clean up was estimated to cost £700,000.

The Cabinet Member advised that questions regarding fly tipping should be directed to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection as this fell under the remit of his portfolio. In response to Councillor Halden's question regarding

why the service was now moving to multi skilled area teams, he added that the budget challenges faced necessitated new ways of working.

The Mayor advised the Chamber that they had run out of time to receive all responses on this report and requested that the relevant Directors provide responses to the questions to the relevant Members outside of the meeting.

## **88. Report of the Cabinet Member for Communities**

Councillor Speight, Cabinet Member for the Communities, introduced the report and, in doing so, highlighted some of the key achievements and challenges of the Portfolio, which included:

- That it was a difficult year for the Community and Voluntary Sector in light of the challenges to voluntary sector grants and a special meeting of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committee's and the Community and Voluntary Sector had been held.
- That through working with the Community and Voluntary Sector the Council's first social values framework had been developed.
- That it was crucial the council and voluntary sector were allies and worked together in order to achieve collective aspirations.
- That £550,000 in grant funding had been allocated to support the development of community hubs.
- Over 250 volunteers had worked on a range of projects.
- That a number of events had been organised to bring the community together, which included; the Big Lunch event that brought over 1,000 visitors together in July 2014 and the World War One Commemorative event held at Tilbury Fort.
- The Holocaust Memorial Day event included a moving multi-faith ceremony which served as a reminder that equality and diversity was a very real and important issue.
- That the Thurrock Fairness Commission had been launched.
- That the under spend of the Essential Living Fund was due to be rolled over to next year to continue to help those most vulnerable residents with the provision of white goods and furniture.
- That the Council had worked with partners to prepare for the introduction of Universal Credit.

Members questioned the Portfolio Holder and received responses on the following matters:

- Councillor Gledhill echoed the sentiments raised by Councillor J. Kent regarding the disgraceful damage to the Holocaust Memorial. He remarked that a year ago the Veterans Charter had been refreshed and questioned what had been done other than the Charter refresh, as he understood other ideas had been put forward.



The Cabinet Member advised that the Veterans Charter was a good piece of work which had been developed in conjunction with the community and explained that it was a living document that was constantly evolving. He remarked that he was happy to liaise with Members outside of the meeting to continue to evolve and make changes as necessary.

- Councillor Roast acknowledged the good work of residents who were not part of the volunteer programme but who nonetheless did volunteer their time in other ways through community clubs not connected to the Council. He asked the Portfolio Holder to keep these people in mind and engaged.

The Cabinet Member observed that he was proud that Thurrock had so many volunteers, clubs and organisations who gave up their free time for the benefit of the community. He agreed that this work should be highlighted in future reports.

- Councillor S. Little asked the Portfolio Holder to outline what was being done to put assets back into the hands of the community, for example to establish community shops.

The Cabinet Member advised that there was not a one size fits all policy but asked Councillor Little to liaise with the asset management team regarding anyone who wished to establish a community asset.

- Councillor Worrall stated that she had worked with local schools for some years to support educational visits to Poland and Germany for young people in Thurrock. She explained that this was the first year such trips had not taken place due to budget constraints, however in the light of the mindless vandalism to the Holocaust Memorial she felt that this was something that could be re-examined so that young people could have the opportunity to learn about the atrocities of the Holocaust.

The Cabinet Member advised that he was happy to re-examine this further.

- Councillor Redsell applauded the work of TRUP, the recycling charity. She explained that a local resident had contacted her as they had difficulty in donating furniture because they could not carry the furniture down flights of stairs. She questioned whether there was a service which could help with this.

The Cabinet Member advised that Essential Living Fund was delivered in partnership with TRUP and agreed that they did very good work.

Councillor Palmer advised that TRUP did offer a collection service for residents.

## **89. Report of the Cabinet Member for Education**

Councillor J. Kent, Cabinet Member for Finance and Education, explained that as there were three Cabinet Member reports on the agenda (due to the pre-election period, by-election and cancellation of the meeting in November) and that time was limited he would not introduce his report but welcomed questions.

Members questioned the Portfolio Holder and received responses on the following matters:

- Councillor Halden observed that there were elements to be praised within the report, particularly in relation to Thurrock Education Alliance and Thurrock Education Awards. He reported that at the Council meeting in October he had asked about how many parents had been given incorrect advice regarding permission for home schooling their children and as of yet had not received a response.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Director of Children's Services would contact Councillor Halden with the information.

- Councillor Gledhill asked the Portfolio Holder what was being done to recruit more school governors and how this worked with academies.

The Cabinet Member appealed to everyone present to give up their time to be a school governor which he felt was a rewarding role. He explained that applicants were always welcome and that school governors received comprehensive training, regular briefings and the opportunity to attend conferences.

- Councillor Kerin congratulated the service in their achievement of ensuring that young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) were tracked properly and offered support. He questioned the Portfolio Holder on what else could be done to support the 5.4% of young people who were NEET.

The Cabinet Member advised that he was particularly passionate about this subject and that it was built into contracts, (such as those in Housing) that the winning contractor had to employ local people to deliver the scheme which helped reduce the figures of young people who were NEET.

- Councillor Ojetola congratulated the service on their successes and called upon the Portfolio Holder and other Cabinet Members to go further to ensure that Thurrock was not a training ground for London teachers. He also asked whether the Portfolio Holder could work

with colleagues in Public Protection to improve parking outside schools so that the impact on local residents could be mitigated.

The Cabinet Member advised that the retention of teachers was a priority and responsibility of the Thurrock Education Alliance who were working hard to ensure the brightest and best teachers were retained in Thurrock.

In relation to parking outside schools the Cabinet Member reported that considerable progress had been made with the use of the PIPPA car before this had to be withdrawn because of the ban introduced by the Communities Secretary, Eric Pickles. He further reported that it was the responsibility of schools to engage with parents and children to discourage the use of cars on the school run and praised the work of a local school in introducing a reporting system with children which had success at raising awareness of this issue.

In summing up the report the Cabinet Member advised that it was too early to declare success and that he would continue to strive for every school in Thurrock to be a 'good' or 'outstanding' school.

#### **90. Questions from Members**

The Mayor informed the Chamber that three questions had been submitted to the Leader and a further seven questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

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

Due to time limitations it was agreed that 3 Members questions be withdrawn and included on the agenda for the next meeting, which included those submitted by Councillor S. Little and Councillor C. Baker.

#### **91. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies**

The Mayor advised that an update report had been received from Councillor C. Kent in relation to the Coalhouse Fort Project and that paper copies had been circulated to Members on the desks in the Council Chamber prior to the meeting.

#### **92. Minutes of Committees**

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

#### **93. 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.

#### **94. Motion submitted by Councillor Pearce**

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

*“Along with the residents of Aveley and Uplands this council welcomes the decision by the Secretary of State to reject plans for 500 houses on the former firemans club site in Aveley. Further, this council extends its gratitude to Thurrock’s Member of Parliament Jackie Doyle-Price for her role in persuading the Secretary of State to review the application.”*

Councillor Pearce introduced the motion, and in doing so explained that there had been two years of opposition to the development and thanked Teresa Webster on her part for helping common sense prevail. She felt that the Planning Committee should have rejected the application and believed that the Section 106 agreement was not fit for purpose.

The Mayor advised Members that the Monitoring Officer had received and accepted a proposed amendment to motion 1, details of which were provided on the desks in the Chamber. The Mayor asked Councillor Ray to move his proposed amendment.

Councillor Ray proposed his amendment to the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Aker, which read as follows:

*“Along with the residents of Aveley and Uplands this council welcomes the decision by the Secretary of State to reject plans for 500 houses on the former firemans club site in Aveley on greenbelt land.”*

In introducing his proposed amendment, Councillor Ray, felt that the wording of the last part of the substantive motion was inappropriate and incorrect. He felt that it was inappropriate to say that an MP could have persuaded a Secretary of State, and remarked that two Conservative Members of the Planning Committee had approved the application. He further reported that three MEP’s from the Eastern Region had submitted information to the Secretary of State for consideration and observed that two submissions had been received too late to be considered in the findings, which included the submissions from Sport England and MP Jackie Doyle-Price.

Councillor Aker felt that a local referendum should be triggered on contentious issues such as this and that residents in Aveley were left in an indeterminate state on this application for too long, which was why he supported Councillor Ray’s proposed amendment.

Councillor Gledhill expressed that that he would not be supporting the proposed amendment but wholeheartedly supported the idea of a local referendum. He felt that it was inappropriate to speak about the decision of individual members of the Planning Committee and emphasised that no pressure or outside influence should be placed on Planning Committee Members.

Councillor J. Kent informed Members that he had read the inspectors report and observed that it did not mention the work of the MP Jackie Doyle-Price and as the submission was too late to be considered it would be problematic to extend gratitude to the MP.

Councillor Coxshall stated that the MP Jackie Doyle-Price had submitted four submissions and that only the last submission had not been received on time. As a result he thought that the comments made were disingenuous.

Upon being put to the vote, 22 Members voted in favour of the amendment to the Motion, 16 Members voted against and 1 abstained, whereupon the Mayor declared the amendment to the motion was carried.

Following some clarification regarding the point of order for procedure of motions the Mayor conducted a vote in respect of the substantive motion, as amended.

Upon being put to the vote, 29 Members voted in favour of the Motion, 4 Members voted against and 4 abstained, whereupon the Mayor declared the motion to be carried.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**Along with the residents of Aveley and Uplands this council welcomes the decision by the Secretary of State to reject plans for 500 houses on the former firemans club site in Aveley on greenbelt land.**

At 9.25pm the Mayor proposed that Council Procedure Rule 11.1 be suspended to allow the meeting to continue beyond the 2 ½ hour time limit and enable the business on the Agenda to be completed.

#### **95. Motion submitted by Councillor Aker**

The Mayor advised that the Monitoring Officer had accepted an amendment to motion 2 from Councillor Aker and that the revised wording had been placed on the desks in the Chamber.

The Motion, as printed on the paper that had been circulated separate to the agenda, was proposed by Councillor Aker and seconded by Councillor Ray. The Motion read as follows:

*"Thurrock Council calls on the Cabinet to reject fortnightly bin collections."*

Councillor Aker introduced the motion and in doing so observed that a move to fortnightly bin collections could increase the number of fly tipping incidents.

Councillor J. Kent observed that he would be supporting the motion and welcomed Councillor Aker's amendment, as in the scale of local government cuts it could not be guaranteed a move to fortnightly collections would not

need to be considered in future. He informed Members that for the following year the grant to the Council had been cut by a quarter, and he was proud that Thurrock had been able to retain a weekly collection of three bins whilst other councils had reduced the number of bins or moved to a fortnightly or even a three week collection cycle for household waste.

Councillor J. Kent also remarked that he was pleased Thurrock adhered to the proper process and that this issue had been scrutinised by Members of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Gledhill supported the motion and echoed the sentiments raised by Councillor Aker; in that he was concerned fly tipping would increase if fortnightly collections were introduced. He further added that a weekly bin collection was something that every resident had come to expect and that Thurrock should continue to strive for this where possible. He stated that he was happy to work alongside Cabinet Members to identify any alternatives.

Councillor Pearce acknowledged that she would support the motion which appeared to be a common sense approach.

Councillor Ray was pleased that the motion had been welcomed by the Leader and the Leader of the Conservative Group and remarked that any proposal to change the collection of household waste should be consulted upon with residents, including through the community forums, hubs and libraries.

Councillor Aker further welcomed the cross-party support to the motion.

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

**RESOLVED:**

**Thurrock Council calls on the Cabinet to reject fortnightly bin collections.**

**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)