

Minutes of the Meeting of Annual Council held on 27 May 2015 at 7.00 pm

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

Apologies: Councillor James Baker

In attendance: Reverend Darren Barlow, Mayor's Chaplain
Graham Farrant, Chief Executive
Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive
Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing
David Bull, Interim Chief Executive & 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
Mike Heath, Head of Environment
Jackie Hinchliffe, Head of HR, OD & Transformation
Karen Wheeler, Head of Strategy & Communications
Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal and Democratic Services
David Lawson, Deputy Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Matthew Boulter, Principal Democratic Services Officer
Stephanie Cox, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

The Mayor then advised 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.

Councillor Liddiard, as the Mayor of Thurrock, took the Chair for Minute Nos. 1 and 2. Following the election of the Mayor of Thurrock, Councillor Gray took the Chair for the remainder of the business.

1. Minutes

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

2. To elect and install the Mayor for the municipal year 2015-16

Nominations were invited for the election of Mayor for the Municipal Year 2015-16.

It was proposed by Councillor J. Kent, and seconded by Councillor Gledhill, that Councillor Gray be elected Mayor of the Borough and Chair of the Council for the Municipal Year 2015-16.

The Leader of the Opposition observed that Councillor Gray had served Thurrock well during her Deputy Mayor year and felt that it was fit and proper that the Deputy Mayor should be appointed Mayor.

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

The Mayor declared that Councillor Gray had been duly elected as Mayor of the Borough and Chair of the Council for the Municipal Year 2015- 2016.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Gray be duly elected as Mayor of the Borough and Chair of the Council for the Municipal Year 2015-16.

Councillor Gray signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and also received the chains of office.

The Mayor presented Councillor Liddiard and his Mayoress, Mrs Patricia Forrester, with their past mayor's badge and past consort's badge.

The Mayor then made a short speech thanking the Council for the honour of being elected as the Mayor of Thurrock.

The Leader of the Council congratulated Councillor Gray for taking office and felt that she would be an outstanding Mayor for Thurrock, which had been affirmed by the support of all Members.

The Leader of the Council then paid tribute to the out-going Mayor, Councillor Liddiard, who had been an officer, Elected Member and Mayor for Thurrock. The Leader observed that Councillor Liddiard and his Mayoress, Mrs Patricia Forrester, had undertaken much positive work during the Mayoral year and that Councillor Liddiard was a great advocate and ambassador for Thurrock.

These sentiments were echoed by the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) Group and Councillors Palmer and Ray,

who all paid tribute to the positive work of Councillor Liddiard throughout his Mayoral year.

Councillor Liddiard spoke to give thanks to those who had assisted him in his Mayoral year, paying particular tribute to all the people who had helped raise over £15,000 for Thurrock Community Chest, and to all Members of the Council for giving him the honour and privilege of being elected as the Mayor of Thurrock.

Councillor Liddiard further thanked his Mayoress, Mrs Patricia Forrester, and Councillor Gray and her Consort, Mr Tony Lane, and wished them both every success in the forthcoming Mayoral year.

3. Items of Urgent Business

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

4. To elect and install the Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2015-16

Nominations were invited for the election of Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2015-16.

It was proposed by Councillor Gledhill, and seconded by Councillor Halden, that Councillor Ojetola be appointed Deputy Mayor of Thurrock for 2015-16.

It was then proposed by Councillor B. Rice, and seconded by Councillor G. Rice, that Councillor C. Kent be appointed Deputy Mayor of Thurrock for 2015-16.

The Leader of the Opposition asked that a requisition vote be conducted for this item, and in accordance with Procedure Rule 20.7, five Members stood (Councillors Hebb, Coxshall, Stewart, Johnson and Roast) and requested that the vote to the appointment of Deputy Mayor be recorded.

Councillor Coxshall called a Point of Order. The Mayor referenced Council Procedure Rule 19.30 which stated that a Point of Order may only relate to an alleged breach of the Council Procedure Rules or the law. The Mayor asked Councillor Coxshall to indicate the Rule or law and the way in which he considered it had been broken, following which Councillor Coxshall retracted the Point of Order.

The result of the recorded vote in respect of the Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2015-16 was as follows:

Votes in favour of Councillor Ojetola:

Councillors Mark Coxshall, Robert Gledhill, Garry Hague, James Halden, Shane Hebb, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, Charlie Key, Brian Little, Susan Little, Sue MacPherson, Ben Maney, Tunde Ojetola, Barry Palmer, Robert

Ray, Joycelyn Redsell, Andrew Roast, Deborah Stewart and Pauline Tolson **(19)**.

Votes in favour of Councillor C. Kent:

Councillors Chris Baker, Jan Baker, Clare Baldwin, Terry Brookes, Russell Cherry, Colin Churchman, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Yash Gupta (MBE), Graham Hamilton, Terrence Hipsey, Victoria Holloway, Roy Jones, John Kent, Cathy Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Bukky Okunade, Jane Potheary, Barbara Rice, Gerard Rice, Peter Smith, Graham Snell, Richard Speight, Michael Stone, Kevin Wheeler, Lynn Worrall and Sue Gray **(28)**.

Abstentions:

Councillor Tim Aker **(1)**.

The Mayor declared that Councillor C. Kent had been duly elected as Mayor of the Borough and Vice-Chair of the Council for the Municipal Year 2015-2016.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor C. Kent be appointed Deputy Mayor of the Borough and Vice-Chair of the Council for the Municipal Year 2015-16.

Councillor C. Kent signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and also received the chains of office.

Councillor C. Kent then made a short speech to accept the honour of being appointed as Deputy Mayor and advised that she wished to announce her Consort at the next meeting of Council.

5. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

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

Nominations were invited for the election of Leader of the Council.

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

The Leader of the Opposition advised that due to the tight political balance of the Council he would not be contesting the position of Leader of the Council.

Upon being put to the vote, Councillor J. Kent was elected unopposed as Leader of the Council, whereupon the Mayor announced that Councillor J. Kent had been duly elected as Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED:

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

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

The Leader of the Council firstly provided an update on the sinkhole that had occurred in Hogg Lane that day and explained that the road remained closed, the 66 bus route had been changed and a traffic diversion was in place. He advised that the 66 bus route would be terminated at Grays but tickets to Lakeside would be valid and that bus users could connect to Lakeside via the 33, 73 or 83 bus routes.

The Leader of the Council further advised that geotechnical engineers were on site to identify the causes of the sinkhole in order that the damage could be repaired and the road reopened as soon as possible, but as there was no one constant solution to such sinkhole problems he remarked that investigations may take some time. He assured those present that he would keep everyone fully informed of developments as and when further information became available.

The Leader then made a speech to Council and welcomed the new Members to the Chamber regardless of the political parties they represented, and observed that it was at times a challenging role but also a very rewarding one as all Members wanted the best for the Borough.

The Leader remarked that the financial realities of Local Government would be challenging for Members as the government grant settlement for Thurrock had been reduced by over 50% since 2011 to deliver like-for-like services, the Council had faced a further 25% cut to its grant in 2014-15 compared to that it had received the previous year and an additional reduction in government grant of £10 million was expected in 2016-17.

The Leader of the Council paid tribute to the positive work of Graham Farrant, the departing Chief Executive, whose support and advice had been invaluable to Thurrock Council. He observed that Mr Farrant had created a model in Thurrock to follow and not to avoid, a voice of regeneration and a proactive and effective communicator with the community, partners and stakeholders. The Leader explained that it was imperative that the recruitment of the Chief Executive be agreed cross-party, and that both he and the other Group Leaders took this responsibility seriously.

The Leader of the Council then informed Members that he had circulated a written statement which set out the appointments he had made to the Cabinet, together with the details of their respective portfolios, and that Councillor Barbara Rice would be the Deputy Leader of the Council. The written statement was included in the supplementary information booklet that was circulated immediately prior to the meeting and read as follows:

Position	Portfolio Holder	Portfolio
Leader	Councillor John Kent	Finance and Education
Deputy Leader	Councillor Barbara Rice	Adult Social Care & Health
	Councillor Lynn Worrall	Housing
	Councillor Richard Speight	Regeneration
	Councillor Victoria Holloway	Central Services
	Councillor Bukky Okunade	Children's Social Care
	Councillor Oliver Gerrish	Highways & Transportation
	Councillor Gerard Rice	Environment
	Councillor Terry Brookes	Communities and Public Protection

The Leader of the Council thanked Councillor B. Rice for all her continued work as Deputy Leader, and also paid tribute to Councillor Gledhill as Leader of the Opposition and Councillor Snell as Leader of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) as the evening's uncontested Chair and Vice-Chair appointments were a sign of the positive developments which had been made.

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

The Mayor was pleased to announce that Mr Tony Lane had agreed to be her Consort. Mr Lane was asked to step forward and receive the Consort's Chain.

The Mayor reaffirmed that the Deputy Mayor intended to announce who her Consort would be at the next meeting of Council.

The Mayor announced that her main charity for the Mayoral year would be Thurrock Community Chest, which had offered a brilliant service to local groups, organisations and people since it had been created by a past Mayor 15 years ago.

Furthermore, the Mayor announced that her Mayoral Chaplain would be Reverend Darren Barlow.

8. To Appoint the Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

The Mayor advised that the report had been published as a supplementary agenda item online, circulated by email to Members and hard copies tabled at the meeting. She further informed the Chamber that the Council was required to appoint a Head of Paid Service under Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and that Thurrock Council had been designated this function under Article 4 of the Constitution.

Councillor J. Kent, the Leader of the Council, introduced the report which recommended that David Bull be appointed as Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, which was seconded by Councillor Gledhill. He thanked the Members of the General Services Committee for their time as the meeting had been convened at relatively short notice.

In introducing the report Councillor J. Kent observed that David Bull had an impressive employment history and extraordinary contacts, and the Committee were in agreement that Mr Bull was the right candidate for the job until a permanent replacement could be appointed. He added that he had every confidence in Mr Bull to ensure an uninterrupted transition.

Councillor Gledhill, the Leader of the Opposition, paid tribute to the work of the departing Chief Executive, Mr Farrant, who he felt had made many positive developments for Thurrock and secured millions of pounds of additional government funding. He echoed the sentiments raised by Councillor J. Kent regarding the interim appointment of Mr Bull, who he felt had the passion to start the process and observed that the co-operation and agreement cross-party should make it easier to recruit a permanent candidate.

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

RESOLVED:

That David Bull be appointed as Interim Chief Executive (and Head of Paid Service) of Thurrock Council with effect from 1 June 2015.

9. Appointment of Monitoring Officer

The Mayor advised that the report had been published as a supplementary agenda item online, circulated by email to Members and hard copies tabled at the meeting.

The Leader of the Council briefly introduced the report which sought to make arrangements for the General Services Committee to consider the

replacement of the Monitoring Officer before it formally made a recommendation back to Council.

The Leader of the Council informed Members that the current Monitoring Officer was the Head of Legal Services across Thurrock Council, the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and Brentwood Borough Council and that it was now being proposed that each Borough to have its own dedicated Monitoring Officer.

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 General Services Committee to consider and make arrangements for the replacement of the Monitoring Officer.

10. Committees and their Terms of Reference

The Leader of the Council proposed the recommendations as printed in the report.

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 Overview and Scrutiny Committees listed in paragraph 3.2 of the report be established for the 2015-16 municipal year, with their terms of reference being those set out in Chapter 4 of the Constitution.**
- 2. That the Committees listed in paragraph 3.4 of the report be established for the 2015-16 municipal year, with their terms of reference being those set out in Chapter 5 of the Constitution.**

11. Allocation of committee seats and committee appointments

The Mayor informed Members that the nominations of Group Leaders to the places allocated on committees, and, the nominations for Chairs and Vice Chairs of committees had been received.

The nominations made to Committees for the municipal year 2015-16, together with the nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair, were set out in a booklet circulated to Members immediately prior to the meeting.

The Mayor advised the Chamber that the political balance calculations as printed in the original report and Appendix 1 had changed due to membership of political groups. As a result the Mayor advised that a revised report and Appendix 1, with the amended political balance calculations for approval, had

been published online, circulated to Members by email and tabled at the meeting.

The Leader of the Council briefly introduced the report, which requested the Council to confirm the calculations relating to the allocation of seats on committees and also to appoint the nominations made by political groups to committees. In addition, the report also requested the Council to appoint the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of certain committees which were all uncontested appointments and detailed in the tabled supplementary booklet.

The Leader of the Opposition informed the Chamber that he still had difficulty in the proposal of the Labour Group to retain one of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair appointments but that he hoped this year was a sign of new things to come.

The Mayor informed the Chamber that as the appointments were uncontested she wished to take a single vote on recommendations 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5.

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

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the allocation of seats, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.**
- 2. That the nominations of the political groups to seats on committees be approved, as set out in Appendix 2.**
- 3. That, further to recommendation 1.2 above, those Members appointed to the following committees be required to undertake a DBS check prior to taking their seats:**
 - Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
 - Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
 - Standards and Audit Committee**
 - Corporate Parenting Committee**
- 4. That the non-voting co-opted members of the Planning Committee, the Standards and Audit Committee, the Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Parenting Committee be appointed, as set out in Appendix 2.**
- 5. That the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees be appointed as set out below:**

Committee	Chair	Vice-Chair
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Halden	Councillor Gupta
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Jones	Councillor Baldwin
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Hebb	Councillor Snell
Corporate Parenting Committee	Councillor S. Little	Councillor Okunade
General Services Committee	Councillor J. Kent	Councillor Gledhill
Health and Wellbeing Board* *The Chair will be the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health and shall be appointed by the Council	Councillor B. Rice	No Vice-Chair
Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Snell	Councillor Potheary
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor C. Kent	Councillor Chris Baker
Licensing Committee	Councillor Stone	Councillor Jones
Planning Committee	Councillor Hipsey	Councillor Kelly
Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Councillor B. Little	Councillor Kerin

Standards and Audit Committee	Councillor Coxshall	Councillor Hamilton
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12. Appointments to Outside Bodies, Statutory and other Panels

The nominations of the political groups to Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels were detailed in the supplementary booklet circulated to Members immediately prior to the meeting.

The Mayor informed the Chamber that appointments to the following outside bodies, statutory and other panels were contested:

- Coalhouse Fort Project
- East Thurrock Community Association
- Impulse Leisure
- Local Government Association General Assembly
- South Ockendon Community Forum

The Mayor called for a vote in respect of the nominations to Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels that had not been contested. Members voted unanimously in favour of the nominations made, whereupon the Mayor declared these to be carried.

Councillor Snell informed the Mayor that he wished to withdraw the nomination of Councillor James Baker made by the UKIP Group to the Coalhouse Fort Project so that that the appointment of Councillor C. Kent would be uncontested.

Councillor Snell further informed the Mayor that he wished to withdraw the nomination of Councillor Jones made by the UKIP Group to the East Thurrock Community Association so that that the appointment of Councillor Hebb would be uncontested.

Councillor J. Kent proposed that as the number of places available on the Local Government General Assembly was funded by the local authority, that an additional place be funded by the Council to enable all four of the proposed appointments to be made, thereby resulting in uncontested appointments. Members unanimously indicated their agreement to this proposal.

Councillor J. Kent also informed the Mayor that he wished to withdraw the nomination of Councillor Brookes made by the Labour Group to the South Ockendon Community Forum so that that the appointment of Councillors Wheeler and Chris Baker would be uncontested.

Councillor Ojetola questioned the contention of the Impulse Leisure appointment as he believed he had been appointed to Impulse Leisure for a period of 4 years and therefore the appointment could not be contested.

In response Councillor Snell advised that he wished to withdraw the UKIP nomination of Councillor Hamilton to this appointment, so the position would not be contested.

The Mayor advised that following the changes detailed above there were no longer any contested appointments to the nominations to Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels. Members voted unanimously in favour of the nominations made, whereupon the Mayor declared these to be carried.

RESOLVED:

1. **That the uncontested nominations to Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels, as circulated during the meeting, be approved.**
 2. **That Councillor Cathy Kent be appointed as the representative of the Council on the Coalhouse Fort Project.**
 3. **That Councillor Hebb be appointed as the representative of the Council on the East Thurrock Community Association.**
 4. **That Councillor Ojetola remain as the representative of the Council on Impulse Leisure for the remainder of his term of office.**
 5. **That an additional place on the Local Government Association General Assembly be funded by the authority and the following four members be appointed as representatives of the Council:**
 - **Councillor J. Kent**
 - **Councillor Liddiard**
 - **Councillor Coxshall**
 - **Councillor Smith**
 6. **That Councillor Chris Baker and Councillor Wheeler be appointed as the representatives of the Council on the South Ockendon Community Forum.**
 7. **That, further to recommendation 1.1 above, those Members appointed to the following Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels be required to undertake a DBS check prior to taking up their role:**
 - **Adoption Panel**
 - **Fostering Panel**
- 13. Schedule of meetings 2015-16**

The Leader of the Council briefly introduced the report. A copy of the schedule of meetings for 2015-16 was included in the Agenda at Appendix 1 to the report.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendation to approve the calendar of meetings for 2015-16, whereupon the Mayor declared this to be carried.

RESOLVED:

That the Calendar of Meetings for 2015-16 be approved.

14. Schedule of elections and order of retirement of Councillors

The Leader of the Council briefly introduced the report.

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

RESOLVED:

That the schedule of elections from 2016 to 2019 and order of retirement of Councillors be noted.

The meeting finished at 8.09 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**