

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 29 January 2020 at 7.00 pm

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**Present:** Councillors Terry Piccolo (Mayor), Sue Shinnick (Deputy Mayor), Qaisar Abbas, Abbie Akinbohun, John Allen, Chris Baker, Gary Byrne, Daniel Chukwu, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Tony Fish (*arrived 7.47pm*), Oliver Gerrish, Robert Gledhill, James Halden, Shane Hebb, Victoria Holloway, Deborah Huelin, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Angela Lawrence, Steve Liddiard, Susan Little, Ben Maney, Fraser Massey, Allen Mayes, Sara Muldowney, Bukky Okunade, David Potter, Shane Ralph, Joycelyn Redsell, Elizabeth Rigby, Sue Sammons, Jennifer Smith, Luke Spillman, David Van Day, Aaron Watkins and Lynn Worrall

**Apologies:** Councillors Alex Anderson, Jack Duffin, Mike Fletcher, Garry Hague, Sue MacPherson, Jane Pothecary and Gerard Rice

**In attendance:** Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive  
Roger Hirst, Police Fire and Crime Commissioner  
Justin Benson-Ryal, Fire Service  
Darren Horseman, Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner  
Chief Inspector Richard Melton  
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health/Interim Director of Children's Services  
Sean Clark, Director of Finance, Governance and Property  
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation  
Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways  
Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Service  
Tim Hallam, Acting Head of Legal, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer  
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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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.

### 80. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 23 October 2019 were approved as a correct record.

Councillor Okunade raised a point of accuracy regarding the transcript of Members questions in Appendix A.

The minutes of the meeting of Extraordinary Council held on the 27 November 2019 were approved as a correct record.

#### **81. Items of Urgent Business**

The Mayor had agreed to an urgent item of business on the revised Political Balance of the Council. This item would be covered before the Public Questions item.

#### **82. Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

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

The Mayor welcomed Members back into the Chamber after the New Year and announced he had held a fund raising event for his charity, Giving for Thurrock (GiFT), on the 12 January where 10 other mayors had visited Thurrock and had raised £780. The Mayor thanked all those that attended and reminded Members that donations to this charity could be made through member services.

The Leader also welcomed Members back into the Chamber following the Christmas break and welcomed the new Councillors to the Conservative Group. The Leader thanked the Mayor for agreeing to the late urgent item of business and thanked Roger Hirst, the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner for attending this evening.

The Leader was delighted to report that two very positive inspections had been undertaken that highlighted the importance of what the Council carried out to look after the most vulnerable members in the community. The Leader announced the Ofsted inspection carried out on Children's Services had been rated as "good" alongside a Care Quality Commission inspection of the Thurrock Care at Home Service had also been rated as "good". The Leader agreed that this demonstrated the hard work the Council were doing to support vulnerable children and adults in Thurrock.

The Leader stated that it had been another incredible year for the award winning Give a Gift scheme with more than 2,200 young people getting a gift at Christmas thanks to the generosity of residents, Lakeside shoppers and local businesses. The Leader gave special thanks to intu Lakeside, Tesco Extra Lakeside, Linton Hoarding Solutions, Amazing Solutions and all the other businesses who gave their support. Council staff who volunteered their time to staff the shop, wrap and hand deliver the presents were also thanked by the Leader.

The Leader stated that the 14th Thurrock Civic Awards would be held at the end of February 2020. An event to celebrate the tremendous contributions for those that made a positive difference in the community and to recognise the talents of some of the highest achieving individuals, teams and businesses in the borough.

The Leader stated on Monday 27 January 2020, he had joined Cabinet Members, Councillors, pupils from local schools and religious leaders at the Palmer Memorial Gardens in Grays who had come together to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day. The event had been more poignant as it marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. A memorial flame had been unveiled for the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust's 75 flames project which would now be displayed at an exhibition in London.

The Leader provided a Clean It, Cut It, Fill It update that since April 2019:

- 1,568 potholes filled, more than 99% within agreed timeframes
- 987 fly-tips cleared
- 2,996 tonnes of waste cleared from streets
- 3,487 fixed penalties had been issued for offences such as litter, dropping cigarette butts and various forms of anti-social behaviour
- 208 £400 fly-tipping fines issued
- 268 people prosecuted at court for not paying their on the spot fines
- 3 traveller encampments moved under the Council's new interim injunction powers granted last September

The Leader congratulated Councillor Potheary and Councillor Gerrish on the birth of their baby boy.

The Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Okunade, congratulated Councillors Potheary and Gerrish on the birth of their baby boy George with Councillor Potheary expected to be back in the Chambers for February Council.

#### **84. 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.co.uk/thurrock> and are attached at Appendix A at these minutes.

#### **85. Political Balance of the Council**

Councillor Gledhill presented the report that requested Council to confirm the calculations relating to the allocation of seats on committees following Cllr Akinbohun, Mayes, Potter and Ralph moving to the Conservative Party.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the political balance and allocation of seats, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.**

- 2. Council noted the manual adjustment requirements outlined in 2.8 and agreed those adjustments proposed by group leaders at the meeting.**

**86. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors**

Mayor informed Members that in accordance with the Council's petition scheme, no requisition of notice had been given to present a petition at the meeting.

**87. Petitions Update Report**

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

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

The Mayor enquired whether Group Leaders wished for any changes to be made to the appointments previously made by Committees and Outside Bodies, statutory and other panels.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Gledhill, informed the chamber he had the following changes to make:

For Councillors Mayes and Jefferies to be removed from their seats on Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

For Councillor Akinbohun to remain as a Member and for Councillor Hague to be moved as a substitute on the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Halden to be added on the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Rigby to be nominated for the Vice Chair position on the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Ralph to replace Councillor Jefferies on the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Ralph to remain as a Member and Councillor Kelly to be moved as a substitute on the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Halden to replace Councillor Jefferies on the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Potter to replace Councillor Jefferies on the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Akinbohun to be added as a substitute on the Licensing Committee.

For Councillor Akinbohun to be added as a substitute on the Planning Committee.

For Councillor Akinbohun to remain as a Member on the Corporate Parenting Committee.

For Councillor Potter to remain as a Member and Councillor Akinbohun to be added as a substitute on the Standards and Audit Committee.

For Councillor Halden to be removed and replaced with Councillor Mayes on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

For Councillor Mayes to remain as a Member and Councillor Kelly to be moved as a substitute on the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force.

For Councillor Ralph to remain as a Member and Councillor Rigby to be moved as a substitute on the Orsett Hospital Task and Finish Group.

For Councillor Collins to be removed as a Member on the Waste Management Working Group.

For Councillor Massey to be offered a seat on the General Services Committee to which Councillor Massey accepted.

Councillor Okunade, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, informed the chamber she had the following changes to make:

For Councillor Muldowney to be added to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Shinnick to be added to the Corporate Parenting Committee.

For Councillor Muldowney to be added to the Waste Management Working Group.

For Councillor Fish to be added as a substitute on the General Services Committee.

For Councillor Abbas to be added as a substitute on the Planning Committee.

For Councillor Worrall to be added as a substitute on the Standards and Audit Committee.

For a seat on Licensing Committee to be given up, which was Cllr Akinbohun former Labour seat.

For Councillor Muldowney to be removed from Standard and Audit as part of the manual adjustment.

For Councillor Liddiard to be put forward for the nomination of Vice Chair on the Corporate Parenting Committee.

Councillor Spillman, Leader of the Thurrock Independent Group, informed the chamber he had the following changes to make:

For Councillor Allen to be added to the Licensing Committee.

For Councillor Smith to be added to the Waste Management Working Group.

For Councillor Spillman to be added to the Standards and Audit Committee.

For Councillor Byrne to be nominated for the Vice Chair position on the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Mayor called for a vote to be undertaken in respect of the contested nominations for the Vice Chair of the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The majority of the chamber voted in favour of Councillor Rigby over Councillor Byrne to be Vice Chair.

Therefore Councillor Rigby was appointed Vice Chair of the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Mayor called for a vote to be undertaken in respect of the one nomination for the Vice Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee. Members voted unanimously for Councillor Liddiard to be appointed as Vice Chair on the Corporate Parenting Committee.

## **89. Police Fire & Crime Commissioner (Presentation and Q&A Only)**

The Mayor introduced the Roger Hirst the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, Chief Inspector Richard Melton, Justin Benson-Ryal from the Fire Service and Darren Horseman from the Office of the Police Fire and Crime to the meeting and asked they delivered their presentation which would then be followed by questions by Members. Roger Hirst updated Members on the following:

- Uplift Police funding had been received from central funding.
- Work would continue to build on previous good work.
- There were now 368 extra Police Officers currently being recruited.
- Following extra funding in 2018/19 and planning additional funding in 2019/20 there would be an extra 31 Police Officers in Thurrock.

- A further 135 extra Police Officers to be recruited as part of the first wave of the Government's 20,000 officer programme.
- Budget would be funded from Central Government and Local Taxation.
- In March 2021 there would be over 3350 Police Officers.
- Essex had the fastest growing number of Special Constabulary.
- Essex Police was the second largest force after the Metropolitan Police.
- Partnership Working - Thurrock Council supported activities such as Operation Adaminaby, Operation Caesar and Operation Raptor.
- Violence and Vulnerability – Working with Thurrock schools, voluntary sectors, sports club and hospitals.
- Addressing Anti-Social Behaviour looking at additional activity across the borough, localised operations in Chadwell and Tilbury and the reduction in reported incidents.
- Essex Police was the envy of many services across the country.
- Additional funded Police Officers in Tilbury and Purfleet.

Roger Hirst stated he would be happy to answer any questions on the Fire Service and policies.

Members raised the following questions:

Councillor Allen: Would Roger Hirst wish to make any changes to a statement made in January 2019 with regards to lawless areas in the borough and was anti-social behaviour in Tilbury being tackled effectively? Roger Hirst stated there was absolutely no lawless or no-go areas in Thurrock. Chief Inspector Richard Melton confirmed no no-go areas had been reported and how essential it was for the Police to be made aware of incidents and questioned what areas were being referred to.

Councillor Lawrence: Following an incident by a rude member of reception staff at a Police station, how often are Police Station reception staff trained? Roger Hirst stated training was undertaken and he was disappointed to hear of the incident. Chief Inspector Richard Melton responded by agreeing it was unacceptable for residents to not receive a professional service and asked for details so he could respond outside the meeting.

Councillor Kerin: What was being undertaken to boost visible Police patrols on Grays High Street so residents could feel safe? Roger Hirst stated the new Town Centre Policing had come into effect in the summer 2019 to which more Police presence would be visible on the streets to reassure residents and with the introduction of step up patrols and stop and search. This number of Police Officers had increased from four to eight and work continued with the Council to address aggressive begging.

Councillor Little: What commitment could be given to improving the 101 non-emergency police service? Roger Hirst stated lots of work had been undertaken on the 101 service with improvements on waiting times down to the maximum wait time of under one hour and the average wait time down from half an hour to 11 minutes. Although big improvements had been made

the service was not where it should be. Roger Hirst confirmed more investment, more lines and more co-ordination would be put into the 101 service but appealed to residents to continue to use the 101 service for non-emergency incidents or to use the on-line service which would then take the burden off the telephone lines.

Councillor Halden: With regard to county lines, what was in place to protect social services and housing from those drug dealers leaving London for other authorities? Roger Hirst stated at a board meeting held yesterday he had given feedback on the successes of partners working together. With an Essex initiative in place this would be driven forward with a three year programme in place to protect those county lines.

Councillor Holloway: Did Roger Hirst acknowledge that less Police Officers meant more crime? Roger Hirst stated that criminals caused crime not the Police. That policies were working, investments were being made and good services were being maintained compared to 10 years ago.

Councillor Collins: What changes had been put in place so that the human tragedy of the Essex lorry deaths did not occur again? Roger Hirst stated this was a tragic event which unfortunately was not just a crime that happened in Essex but nationally. It was important can to be done so it did not occur again. Roger Hirst commended Essex Police and the Fire Service who were first on the scene with over 500 officers being involved. What was already being done differently was closer collaboration with other forces; border control; review of IT; tracking of vehicles; heat monitors and sensors were now being used and refrigerator door seals were being monitored more.

Roger Hirst thanked Members for the opportunity to represent this evening and agreed to come back to Council.

The Mayor thanked, on behalf of the Chamber, Roger Hirst, Justin Benson-Ryal, Chief Inspector Richard Melton and Darren Horseman for their time this evening.

*At 8.07pm, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Roger Hirst, Justin Benson-Ryal, Chief Inspector Richard Melton and Darren Horseman left the Council Chamber.*

*At 8.08pm, Councillor Lawrence left the Council Chamber.*

## **90. Local Council Tax Scheme**

Councillor Hebb provided Members with details of Thurrock's scheme which was currently considered to be fit for purpose and there were no proposals to amend the scheme for 2020/21. Councillor Hebb stated it had been proposed that a full review was undertaken within 2020/21 and on receipt of clarity regarding the future of Universal Credit.

Councillor Gerrish stated although there was still lots to be done he would support the existing scheme and welcomed the upcoming review of the Universal Credit.

Councillor Okunade stated her support for the scheme.

Councillor Spillman stated his support for the scheme.

Councillor Gledhill welcomed the report and commented on how the Council would continue to assist veterans of the Armed Forces.

Councillor Hebb welcomed the support of the Chamber and would continue to support those policies as set out in the report.

## **RESOLVED**

**That Council agreed to maintain the existing scheme for 2020/21.**

### **91. Review of Members' Allowances - Report of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel**

Councillor Gledhill presented the report and the recommendations made by the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel following its review of the Scheme of Members Allowances. Members were referred to the full report in Appendix 1 and the Revised Scheme of Allowances 2019-2023 in Appendix 2.

Councillor Gledhill thanked the Independent Remuneration Panel for their recommendations and had taken the findings into consideration and noted that other local authorities had special allowances above these but each authority had different ways to calculate the level of allowances.

Councillor Gledhill proposed to reject the recommendation to reduce the special responsibility allowance for Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Committees. That this allowance should remain at the current level. Councillor Gledhill agreed with the subsidies, babysitting and mileage allowances but had been perplexed by the cut in the special responsibility allowance for Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Committees. That Vice Chairs attended pre-briefs, training and would be confident to lead the committee in the absence of the Chair.

Councillor Gledhill stated the Council should consider alternative arrangements to undertake their own Independent Remuneration Panel away from Southend.

Councillor Okunade agreed with the sentiments raised by Councillor Gledhill and agreed to reject the Vice Chair recommendation. Councillor Okunade went on to thank the Independent Remuneration Panel for the work undertaken on the review.

Councillor Spillman thanked the work undertaken by the Remuneration Panel, Councillor Gledhill and Councillor Potheary for their contribution to the review and was in favour to reject the Vice Chair recommendation.

Councillor Gledhill thanked Councillors Okunade and Spillman for their comments, thanked the Independent Remuneration Panel for the work undertaken and allowing him to extend the time allocated for his interview.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That Council agreed recommendations presented in the Independent Remuneration Panel's report at Appendix 1 and the subsequent Scheme of Allowances at Appendix 2.**
- 2. The recommendation to reduce the special responsibility allowance for Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee be recommend to remain at the current level.**
- 3. That Council implements its recommendations from 1 August 2019.**
- 4. That Officers should investigate and implement alternative IRP arrangements for future years.**

#### **92. Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations 2019/20**

Councillor Gledhill, presented the report that requested Council to consider and approve the recommendations of the Returning Officer and Chief Executive in relation to the statutory Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations.

Councillors Okunade and Spillman had no objections or comments on the report.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the existing arrangements for Aveley and Uplands be confirmed.**
- 2. That the existing arrangements for Belhus be confirmed.**
- 3. That the existing arrangements for Chadwell St Mary be confirmed.**
- 4. That the existing arrangements for Chafford and North Stifford be confirmed.**
- 5. That the existing arrangements for Corringham and Fobbing, polling districts O and Q, be confirmed**

6. That Corringham Evangelical Church, Fobbing Road be confirmed as the polling place for Corringham and Fobbing, polling district P.
7. That the existing arrangements for East Tilbury be confirmed.
8. That the existing arrangements for Grays Riverside be confirmed.
9. That the existing arrangements for Grays Thurrock be confirmed.
10. That Civic Hall, Blackshots Lane be confirmed as the polling place for Little Thurrock Blackshots, polling district AA.
11. That the existing arrangements for Little Thurrock Blackshots, polling district AB, be confirmed.
12. That the existing arrangements for Little Thurrock Rectory be confirmed.
13. That the existing arrangements for Ockendon be confirmed.
14. That the existing arrangements for Orsett be confirmed.
15. That the existing arrangements for South Chafford be confirmed.
16. That the existing arrangements for Stanford East and Corringham Town be confirmed.
17. That the existing arrangements for Stanford-le-Hope West be confirmed.
18. That the existing arrangements for Stifford Clays be confirmed.
19. That the existing arrangements for The Homesteads be confirmed.
20. That the existing arrangements for Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park be confirmed.
21. That the existing arrangements for Tilbury St Chads, polling district BC, be confirmed.
22. That the Fruitful Land Church (The Anchor Pub), Tilbury be confirmed as the polling place for Tilbury St Chads, polling district BD, subject to monitoring feedback from electors and further review if required.
23. That the existing arrangements for West Thurrock and South Stifford be confirmed.

Councillor Redsell stated this was the first Corporate Parenting Annual Report to be presented to the Chamber following the committee being established some eight years ago. The report outlined the positive work that had been undertaken during 2018/19 by the Corporate Parenting Committee in relation to Looked After Children and Care Leavers to ensure members were fully involved and engaged in their Corporate Parenting responsibilities. Councillor Redsell thanked the Vice Chair for her contribution and support. Members were reminded of the importance of attending the Corporate Parenting training and all Members were corporate parents and all Members should be involved.

Councillor Okunade commended the Corporate Parenting Committee on the work undertaken.

Councillor Gledhill reiterated that Corporate Parenting Training was vital for all Members to attend and would show the Council's commitment to helping Looked After Children.

Councillor Redsell summed up by thanking the members on the Corporate Parenting Committee for their contributions and reminded Members they were all Corporate Parents.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the contents of the Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2018/2019 be noted.**

### **94. Purfleet: Changing name to Purfleet-on-Thames**

Councillor Gledhill, stated on 30 January 2019 a petition had been presented to Council requesting the current name of the town of Purfleet be changed to Purfleet-on-Thames. A public consultation had ran for 12 weeks from Monday 22 July to Sunday 13 October 2019 which had offered everyone an opportunity to give their views about the proposed name change to Purfleet-on-Thames. From this consultation, 84% of respondents thought the name should be changed to Purfleet-on-Thames. There had been a total of 185 responses received. The process for the change would be to seek agreement from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Ordnance Survey to which the decision would be made available on the Council's web site.

Councillor Gledhill paid special recognition to the Purfleet Forums, John Rowles and Trevor Batchelor for their continued commitment.

Councillor Gerrish, as Ward Councillor, was pleased with the proposal and would be supporting the decision to change the name to Purfleet-on-Thames. Councillor Gerrish then made a tribute to the residents of the Purfleet Regeneration Community and the Purfleet Community Forum for their huge dedication on such a major project and were commended on the engagement

undertaken. Councillor Gerrish stated this was an important part in history for Purfleet and hoped this would bring new momentum into the area.

Councillor Abbas stated his support for the recommendation and hope this would now raise the profile of Purfleet.

Councillor Holloway echoed the comments made and stated this proposal had been driven by residents and welcomed by Ward Councillors and welcomed the item into the Chamber. Councillor Holloway stated the Purfleet Riverside location would go hand in hand with the regeneration of Purfleet where residents would find Purfleet-on-Thames a desirable place to live and work.

Councillor Coxshall thanked residents, John Rowles and Trevor Batchelor for the work undertaken and stated this was a big asset that would put Purfleet back on the map.

Councillor Hebb stated residents should be proud of how they had continued to address this name change and they had changed something significant in the borough and suggested the Council report be framed and presented as recognition for the work undertaken.

Councillor Gledhill summed up by stating that even though this had been the longest ever community engagement it had been the best in the borough and agreed with Councillor Hebb that some form of presentation or ceremony should be undertaken.

## **RESOLVED**

**That Council agreed to change the name of the town of Purfleet to Purfleet-on-Thames.**

### **95. Report of the Cabinet Member for Central Services and Communities**

Councillor Huelin, Portfolio Holder for Central Services and Communities, stated how proud she was of her portfolio and had pleasure in presenting her portfolio holder report and updated Members on the following:

- Performance continued to improve from 68% in 2018/19 to 74% in 2019/20.
- Performance had been recognised externally with accreditation of the Customer Contact Association.
- Reductions had been made on last year's spend on agency staff.
- A Pay Review had been undertaken.
- The number of procurement exercises and contracts processed across the Council had continued to rise.
- Review on the Self Service had been undertaken.
- The Information Governance team won two gold performance awards in the Replace Exemplar Awards for management of street and address data.

- Legal Services had addressed the introduction of client aligned team structures and now employed safeguarding lawyers.
- Natalie Smith, Thurrock Council's Community Development and Equalities Manager, was congratulated on being awarded a Medallist of the Order of the British Empire (British Empire Medal - BEM) for services to the community in Thurrock.
- Councillor Huelin briefly mentioned Staff Awards, Lottery funding for the museum collections, Thameside, Tilbury shop fronts, Creative People and Places and the Library Strategy.

Councillor Gerrish questioned how many of the 300 staff recruitments mentioned in the report were new staff and what was the cost impact on this. Councillor Huelin did not have the numbers to hand and offered to send this information to Councillor Gerrish.

Councillor J Kent questioned the rumours that Thameside would close and when conversations would start for those tenants in Thameside about renewing their leases. Councillor Huelin stated the Thameside was not closing. There were currently engineers present in the building and once their work had been completed decisions would be made from their recommendations. Councillor Huelin stated the Portfolio for Regeneration and Officers would be talking to those tenants regarding their lease.

Councillor Spillman congratulated Natalie Smith on her achievement which was well deserved. Councillor Spillman asked for cross party involvement be undertaken in addressing the funding for the arts and culture budget.

Councillor Abbas thanked the Portfolio Holder for the report and questioned what plans were in place for the Culture Strategy. Councillor Huelin stated the Council had worked with local artists, community groups and other stakeholders to support the development of a bid for Creative People and Places funding which would provide a multi-million pound cash injection to support the arts in the borough. It was vital to learn more from those stakeholders and make available what residents what to see.

Councillor Huelin summed up by stating what a privilege it had been working on the Portfolio and working with officers, directors and the community.

## **96. Report of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Adult Social Care**

Councillor Little Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Adult Social Care, stated it was a delight to be presenting her fourth portfolio holder report and updated Members on the following Adult Social Care items:

- For residents to live a healthy life and have good experiences for as long as possible and not feel unsafe or vulnerable. The Council offered a safe and supportive environment with aspirations and goals and to also ensure carers would not feel isolated. The Council's Adult Social

Care offered a large number of services which had been admired across the country.

- In January 2016 Cabinet approved for a new residential care facility to be built on the Whiteacre/Dilkes Wood site in South Ockendon with facilities providing social care and nursing care in a specialised setting. There would be 45 self-contained dwellings for single people and couples with additionally 30 ensuite bedrooms for intermediate care.
- Focused on the strengths and assets held by communities in helping to transform Health and Social Care as part of the Better Care Together programme.
- The roll-out of Community Led Support Social Work Teams to all areas of the Borough and recently launched a second team to cover South Ockendon, Aveley and Purfleet.
- A pilot project using an app call Brain in Hand had made a significant impact on young people's lives. Helping young people between 17-25 years old to gain confidence in navigating day to day activities.
- That Fran Leddra, principal social worker for Adult Social Care, had been asked to chair the National Principal Social Worker Forum and had now become Chief Social Worker for England.
- Ofsted Inspections was "good" across the board with some services bordering on excellent.
- Praise was given to Directors and Officers and to Rory Patterson who had retired early this year.
- Thanks were given to all those that helped with the evacuation of Collins House in December following an electrical incident.

Councillor Okunade thanked the Portfolio Holder for her report and congratulated the Council, Social Care Teams on the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection. Councillor Okunade stated she hoped the Council could continue to be ambitious corporate parents to ensure the best outcomes for Thurrock children were achieved as the council were collectively responsible for them. Councillor Okunade asked the portfolio holder what where the three areas to be improved following the Ofsted inspection and asked for a brief update and how priority would be given on those areas for improvement. Councillor Little stated the area had been recognised as improvement needed was the transition between childhood and adulthood. Although recognised by Ofsted it was agreed more time was required for this to be embedded. That Ofsted had recognised that Thurrock heard the "Voice of the Child" which was the most important focus which had been worked on.

Councillor Spillman questioned whether Thurrock had the full complement of social workers and raised concerns on how the Government Strategy would

invest in social worker training. Councillor Little stated that outside investments had been made with the Ofsted rating good in the recent inspection. That social workers want to come to work for Thurrock but she would not be complacent and would keep striving until excellent across the board had been achieved. Ofsted staff reported social workers in Thurrock were positive, supported, happy and enjoyed working for Thurrock.

Councillor Holloway questioned the half a million pound overspend on the adult social care budget. Councillor Little stated that the £16 million budget was less than 1% overspent. That there was an aging population and would not stand by and see any resident suffer so with the agreement from Cabinet the money was spent. There was also an increased spend on some complex cases.

Councillor Redsell questioned what was being undertaken to achieve best standards of social care in Thurrock. Councillor Little stated it was basically listening to children, the voice of the child. To undertake robust training and encourage staff to attend. The Development Board had been created as well as monthly meetings. To identify amongst the different directorates what had gone wrong and scrutinise to ensure children in Thurrock were safe.

Councillor Collins congratulated Councillor Little and the Adult and Children's Social Care teams for achieving the continued and improved service as rated by Ofsted. That Councillor Little had made the portfolio her own and worked well and above her duty as portfolio holder.

Councillor Little asked whether Councillor J Kent had reconsidered his action in resigning from the position of Chair on the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor J Kent responded by stating he had resigned as Chair as two reports requested for committee had not been delivered as requested, with no apology as to the reasons why. Councillor J Kent felt he had no option but to resign as Chair.

Councillor Little summed by thanking the Adult and Children Social Care Services, Foster Carers, Directors, Assistant Directors and past Director Rory Patterson.

## **97. Questions from Members**

The Mayor informed the Chamber that two questions to the Leader had been received and nine questions to Cabinet Members.

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

*At 9.30pm the Mayor called time on this item.*

The Mayor requested that Democratic Services contact those Members whose questions were not heard as to whether they requested to resubmit or receive a written response to their question.

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

This item fell due to time limit of meeting being met.

**99. Minutes of Committees**

This item fell due to time limit of meeting being met.

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

This item fell due to time limit of meeting being met.

**101. Motion submitted by Councillor Huelin**

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

*The Motion calls on Council to adopt the below definition of antisemitism as set out by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and its guidelines giving working examples of antisemitism.*

*“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”*

Councillor Huelin presented her motion by stating the theme of the motion was for all to stand together against hate crime. Although hate crime was low in Thurrock there had been a significant rise nationally and had welcomed the Government’s announcement that it would adopt the internationally recognised International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition and guidelines of antisemitism. For those who had visited Auschwitz would always have the horror of what they saw and there would be no denying what had taken place. Councillor Huelin summed up by stating the focus on diversity was important in Thurrock.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion.

Members voted unanimously in favour of this Motion to which the Mayor announced the Motion carried.

**102. Motion submitted by Councillor J Kent**

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

*This year’s Holocaust Memorial Day marked the 75th anniversary of the end of the Holocaust. Thurrock Council understands the importance of*

*remembering the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust and the genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.*

*The Council calls upon Cabinet to explore the opportunity to work with schools to facilitate visits to former Nazi death camps, including Auschwitz-Birkenau, to help learn first-hand the consequences of hate. A future programme should seek to work across schools in Thurrock.*

Councillor J Kent stated research had shown that one in 20 British adults did not believe the Holocaust happened with 8% saying the scale of the genocide had been exaggerated. That work was required to build on the notion of those Holocaust deniers that this did happen and how dangerous that this could happen again. Councillor J Kent stated for those who had visited Auschwitz would see the evil and brutality of the death camps and would have no doubt what had happened.

Councillor J Kent stated to help young people to fully understand the horrors of the Holocaust the Council should reinstate the Diversity Champions scheme.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion.

Members voted unanimously in favour of this Motion to which the Mayor announced the Motion carried.

The Mayor asked Members to consider the nature of questions being submitted to meetings with a lot of the questions on this evening's agenda could have been sent through the Member Enquiries route or asked directly of the Portfolio Holder. Questions should be reserved for strategic matters and issues that may have an impact on the borough.

**The meeting finished at 9.38 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)**