

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 23 February 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors Sue Shinnick (Mayor), James Halden (Deputy Mayor), Qaisar Abbas, Abbie Akinbohun, Alex Anderson, Gary Byrne, Adam Carter, Daniel Chukwu, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Tony Fish (<i>arrived 7.35pm</i>), Mike Fletcher, Robert Gledhill, Shane Hebb, Victoria Holloway, Deborah Huelin, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Susan Little, Ben Maney, Fraser Massey, Allen Mayes, Sara Muldowney, Bukky Okunade, Augustine Ononaji, Maureen Pearce, Terry Piccolo, Georgette Polley, Jane Potheary, Shane Ralph, Kairen Raper, Joycelyn Redsell, Sue Sammons, Jennifer Smith, Graham Snell, Lee Watson and Lynn Worrall
Apologies:	Councillors Chris Baker, Elizabeth Rigby, Luke Spillman and James Thandi Reverend Canon Darren Barlow
In attendance:	Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive Sean Clark, Corporate Director Resources and Place Delivery Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation Matthew Boulter, Interim Monitoring Officer Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised the meeting was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

105. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 26 January 2022 were approved as a correct record.

106. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

107. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

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

The Mayor requested a one minute silence was held in respect of the former Councillor June Brown who had sadly passed.

The Mayor stated this month instead of providing refreshments she had made donations to Cancer Research.

The Mayor also stated she had planted a tree with Councillor Jefferies in Ockendon in honour of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and urged members to let officers know what area in their ward they would like their tree planted.

Councillor Gledhill, Leader of the Council, made the following announcements:

Council Chamber - Disappointed we were not in the new chamber this evening as hoped, this had been due to a combination of Covid outbreaks and supply difficulties that had gone on longer than expected with the finishing touches inside being not up to the standard we would expect and were being rectified by Keir. The Leader assured Members this had not come at any extra expense to the project or more importantly to the taxpayer.

Covid Update - From tomorrow, the rules and restrictions around Covid were to be lifted. Instead, there would be guidance and each of us would have to make our own decisions about how best to manage the risk of Covid, much as we had done for many years with seasonal flu and other illnesses. Thurrock had seen significant reductions in the number of people testing positive for Covid in the past few weeks with Thurrock going from being amongst the Upper Tier Local Authorities with the highest rate of infections to now being among some of the lowest. The Leader stated we should all be proud of what had been achieved so far. This was thanks to everyone doing all they could to keep one another safe. However, it needed to be said that Covid had not disappeared and was still important that as many people sought the protection of the vaccines. Thanks to £485,000 in Government funding, the Council were able to do more out-reach work to encourage as many people as possible to take up the offer of a vaccine. Over the past few days, the Government's National Surge Rapid Response Team had dropped leaflets through letterboxes in West Thurrock, South Stifford, South Chafford and some parts of Grays Riverside, making residents aware of the vaccination opportunities local to them. This week, a pop-up vaccine centre had been in operation at Ikea Lakeside and next week there will be one at South Essex college campus with other pop-ups opening in the future. The Council had repeatedly asked partners in the NHS to make sure they were spread across the whole of Thurrock and shared details of where these were and when. The best advice the Leader could give to residents was to make sure they were keeping up to date with guidance and travel rules by visiting the gov.uk website. This was especially important if they were planning to travel where the rules and requirements were likely to be different.

Storm Damage – Took the opportunity to thank officers and residents that worked so hard last Friday and over the weekend to make sure residents were safe and the borough could keep moving following the high winds and rain. The Highways teams dealt with a number of issues including fallen or damaged lampposts and incidents including collapsed walls and other structures, bricks and roof tiles being blown onto the road and damaged road

signs. The Council's trees team were called to a number of emergencies and were able to do some excellent work clearing trees that were blocking the road, pavement or were in a precarious position. The Leader also highlighted the Council's waste collection crews who started early on Friday to make sure they could complete as much of their rounds and worked on Saturday to get any bins they missed as a result of the treacherous conditions on Friday. The Leader also thanked all those residents who helped their neighbours, whether it was farmers using heavy machinery to clear roads or residents collecting bins to put back in neighbour's gardens where they had blown away.

Clean It, Cut It, Fill It - Since April 2021:

- Had filled 3,175 potholes on our borough's roads. More than 99% within agreed timeframes.
- Had cleared 1,586 fly-tips.
- Had issued 255 Fixed Penalty Notices for fly-tipping and seized eight vehicles in relation to this crime.
- Had issued 3,965 fixed penalty notices for offences including littering, spitting and dropping cigarette ends.
- 518 people had been prosecuted in court for failing to pay an FPN.
- During the Covid period we had worked with every person who had contacted us to say they faced difficulties paying these fixed penalty notices to make sure we could help those who were willing to pay but could not meet the deadlines.
- Had also removed 2,112 tonnes of waste from our streets and other public areas.

Finally, the Leader paid tribute to former Councillor June Brown who had sadly passed and stated there were many here this evening who would remember June and the fantastic contribution she made to Tilbury both in her role as a councillor and had been a real pillar of the community. June had not only been a Tilbury Riverside councillor but had been a stalwart protector and ambassador for the whole of Tilbury and knowing June personally she was a good person to turn to for such advice. Also, June continued to help Tilbury be a better place and had put her heart and soul into the Tilbury Festival. One of the co-founders of the Riverside Project had helped promote Tilbury both past and present also being the chief reporter for About Tilbury, one of the many community projects supported by Tilbury Port and equally one of many she took an active role in. Tilbury had lost a great one of their own with her passing and I am sure Members would join me in ensuring our thoughts were with her family and friends at this sad time.

Councillor J Kent also paid tribute and stated June would be remembered as an honest and straight forward person and was Tilbury to her core. The good work was still being carried on in Tilbury and would sadly be missed and thoughts were with her family at this sad time.

109. Questions from Members of the Public

Mr Perrin's question was resubmitted to June 2022 Council prior to the meeting.

110. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors

Mr Lamb presented a petition asking the Council to reconsider a previous rejection of applying Residents Parking to Richmond Road.

111. Petitions Update Report

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

112. 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, stated he had no changes to make.

Councillor J Kent, Leader of the Labour Group, stated he had no changes to make.

Councillor Byrne, Leader of the Thurrock Independent Group stated he had no changes to make.

Councillor Massey stated he had one change to remove himself from the Essex Partnership University Trust Outside Body.

113. Assistant Director Appointment

Councillor Gledhill introduced the report and sought the approval from Council to appoint the permanent Assistant Director Property and Facilities Management. Following a robust search and selection process, General Services Committee interviewed on 10 February 2022 and agreed to recommend Mark Bradbury as Assistant Director Property and Facilities Management.

Councillor Massey thanked the stakeholder panel for their part they played in the recruitment exercise, especially the Youth Cabinet.

Councillor Coxshall stated there had been a fantastic response in this recruitment exercise with over 20 candidates but Mark had stood out unanimously to bring some professionalism to this role.

Councillor Gledhill echoed those comments made by Councillor Massey that the Youth Cabinet always did such a good job and this approach should be pushed out to other local authorities to do this.

RESOLVED

Approved in accordance with the Council's Constitution the appointment of Mark Bradbury as Assistant Director Property and Facilities Management.

114. Annual Pay Policy Statement 2022/23

Councillor Duffin presented the report which sought the approval of the Council's Annual Pay Policy Statement, this Statement included a pay policy for all categories of employees which reflected existing employment terms and conditions.

Councillor J Kent stated the Labour Group would not be voting to endorse the pay policy statement as this had come at a time of crisis when residents were already being hit hard by the increase to the cost of living, fuel prices and the pending increase on national insurance tax and low wage growth. It was not right that Thurrock's frontline workers were only being offered a 2.5% pay increase. These were the people that looked after Thurrock's wonderful elderly residents and youngest children, emptied bins, swept streets, cut grass and so much more. Not only was this fundamental unfair other organisation may become more attractive to these people who may be able to offer pay rises to enable workers to pay their bills. There was also the threat of cutting 100s of jobs in the Council which were hanging over many of the Council's staff and stated there must be risks that the Council may lose very valuable members of staff. Councillor J Kent asked what assessments the portfolio holder had made to the risk of low pay and job insecurity on employee retention rates. Councillor J Kent referred to senior officer pay increases and stated he did not have any problem with any officer receiving a fair annual increase but had a problem with flat rate increases. The Council's pay policy should be fair that offered all members of the work force the same to help with the cost of living crisis.

Councillor Byrne stated if the Council were to retain the best people we had to give them no reason to leave as if the Council failed to look after staff, they would leave and the Council would be left with a very weak work force. The Council could not afford to carry any bad performers or sickness and questioned whether casual or agency staff would be receiving an increase in salary.

Councillor Worrall echoed the comments made by Councillor J Kent and referred to previous years when members were called not to increase senior officer post salaries and agreed they also had a cost of living increase but stated those senior managers shoulders were a lot broader than someone who would swept our streets or emptied our bins. It was not unreasonable to look again at this as this would not change the budget envelope and unions

had not yet agreed to these pay increase so was a bit presumptuous to be discussing. This offer should be looked at again as it was not fair that it was a flat rate and agreed lower paid workers should be paid more.

Councillor Hebb stated there was an element that needed to ensure we had an organisation that could run and operate but was as generous as possible whilst reflecting the current pressures. Around equability and loss of resource migrating out from the Council, the private sector were experiencing the same pressures especially through the Covid pandemic and possibly there were not vacancies available. Councillor Hebb summed up by stating to fund the increase would have meant increasing council tax even further.

Councillor Jefferies echoed Councillor Hebb's comments and stated there were budget restraints and would be interested to see how Labour voted on the council tax increase later this evening as this increase would hit residents just as hard.

Councillor Coxshall referred to Councillor Worrall comment about looking at this again and keeping within the budget envelope but stated for a substantial pay increase to be given would mean going over that envelope and have a referendum. That moving the smallest amount of money in regard to the small number of senior officers with the number of employees at lower levels would not give the Council enough to make a substantial change in the envelope. That a fair decision had been made this evening to be equal across all employees of the Council and be treated fairly and the same.

Councillor Gledhill stated to get salaries up to the level of inflation there would have to be an 3% extra which would cost 4.3% extra over and above the 2.99% being proposed this evening on council tax. The pay of the Council was competitive when compared to other local authorities for similar jobs and the council were paying well with Thurrock attracting and keeping employees. Councillor Gledhill stated he would not burden our taxpayer with something above the 2.99% that had been ring-fenced to help those most vulnerable in Thurrock to help support those carers and changes being made in the Council to afford these pay increases.

Councillor Duffin stated the opposition were quick to say no to the recommendations which was disappointing and had not come forward with any new ideas or alternative recommendations or plans, it was just a no.

The majority of Members voted in favour of the recommendation.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 was endorsed in line with the Council's obligations under the Localism Act 2011.

115. Capital Strategy 2022/23

Councillor Hebb presented the Capital Strategy report which set out the strategic framework underpinning capital expenditure and the associated financing at the Council. In accordance with the above Codes, this report set out the Capital strategy for 2022/23, confirmed the proposed Prudential Indicators and set the Capital and Treasury Management projections for 2022/23.

Members were made aware of some sub-amendments to the report.

Treasury Management Strategy, Annex 1, Table 2.3

- Under 31/3/2023 (a) Total borrowing equated to 16,353 and not 16,343 as stated in the report.
- Under 31/3/2024 (a) total borrowing was 1,584,084 and not 1,584,984 as stated in the report.
- Under 31/3/2024 (b) less external borrowing was 31,947 and not 38,847 as stated in the report.

Treasury Management Strategy, Annex 1, Table 2.32

- Under 2021/22 (a) total payment was 19,606 and not 19,706 as stated in the report and therefore the net interest credit was 25,898.

Councillor J Kent thanked Councillor Hebb for the introduction and how the report had been split to show the strategy for borrowing under capital projects and secondly to look at the money borrowed to invest. That Labour continued to support an invested approach which had started as far back as 2014 when £20m had been invested into the CCLA, this approach had been refreshed and accelerated in 2017 with a clear accountability and that any investments over £10m, for longer than a year would be presented to all group leaders and deputy leaders before any commitments were made. Councillor J Kent stated he, nor his predecessor, had ever received a presentation on any proposed investment. The borrowing limit had been increased in February 2018 for the year 2018/19 but by the end of the year that limit had exceeded and had risen to over £1b without any reference to Full Council as was required when there was a material change to the Council treasury strategy and was far from the open approach that had been promised. There was a lack of transparency and openness in continuing to answer any freedom of information requests and spoke about the judge led tribunal. That some of the risks were now known associated with some of those investments and questioned how confident the portfolio holder was in the security of the investment with Pure Well Energy. Also questioned the portfolio holder what assessments he had made on the security of the investment of £145m to Toucan Energy Holdings. Councillor J Kent also asked the portfolio holder whether the person who had arranged that investment had taken a £5m payment from the Council as a way of commission and asked for confirmation that if this was the case were the portfolio holder and the leader aware of that payment. The portfolio holder was also asked how confident he was that those initial investments would be

repaid in full. Councillor J Kent believed the administration had borrowed too much and shown where those investments had been made and failed to demonstrate the openness as promised. Councillor J Kent moved to the strategy to deliver capital projects in Thurrock and agreed there was much that the Labour group agreed on. They agreed on the proposal of replacement vehicles for the environment team and those vehicles should be zero omission had been considered and asked the portfolio holder to report back to Council before those vehicles were procured so members could judge the process made in finding those zero omission alternatives. Agreed with the plans to replace the Orchard Road foot bridge in South Ockendon but remained unconvinced that cabinet could deliver capital schemes on time or in budget. Councillor J Kent asked the portfolio holder for the current estimated costs for the A13 widening and the completion date. Some three years ago the work started on the Stanford station to be completed in September 2022 at a cost of £11m, the station had still not been rebuilt and the costs had risen to £30m. The new Civic Offices still remained unopened and questioned the portfolio holder what steps he going to take in future to ensure that capital projects would be delivered on time and in budget.

Councillor Byrne referred to the delayed projects in Thurrock, A13, Stanford Station, Integrated Medical Centres and the new Civic Offices and questioned how out of control had the spending been on these poorly managed projects. There needed to be due diligence, high management skills and on-time budgets every time. The Council had continued to fail on projects every time and as previously stated the Council needed to get their house in order first.

Councillor Duffin stated he never heard before two opposition leaders detesting the £115m investments being made into the borough and stated they made it sound like the Council was in £115m debt, instead thanks should be given to Sean Clark and the finance team on the work that had been undertaken.

Councillor Hebb welcomed the support but around the question of uncertainty the portfolio holder did not know of any Council or Government that had just gone through this health crisis, which had put extra pressures on to adult and children's social care services, had continued to earn £115m and had survived 24 months of that pandemic. This was therefore a significant assurance that the decisions made were the right decisions. Councillor Hebb made reference to previous discussions with members and officers and how the Council spending review approach changed and how this was discussed and agreed between those present at the meetings. Councillor Hebb referred to the judge led tribunal and the matter would now be reheard by a freshly constituted tribunal where the Council would have the opportunity to provide evidence and arguments about the commercial sensitivity preventing this disclosure and all the exemptions around this legislation. In regard to increased oversight it was agreed that a more purpose driven mechanism to monitor the oversight of interests would be undertaken and a meeting had been held a few months ago but although a lot of information on the investment committee had been provided it was decided instead to add an addendum to the General Services Committee. Referred to the zero omission

vehicles and Orchard Road which the relevant portfolio holders would pick up on. In regard to capital projects there were things that needed to be improved on as a Council, but updated reports had been presented to the General Services Committee, Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Standards and Audit Committee. As part of the solution was to get the right talent and the right capability into the organisation to ensure that those projects were delivered as residents and councillors would expect and also what officers would want.

RESOLVED

That Full Council:

- 1. Approved the Capital Strategy for 2022/23 including approval of the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement for 2022/23;**
- 2. Approved the adoption of the prudential indicators as set out in Appendix 1; and**
- 3. Noted the revised 2021/22 and 2022/23 Treasury Management projections as set out in Annex 1 paragraph 2.32.**

116. General Fund Budget Proposals

Mayor invited the Leader of the Council. Councillor Gledhill, to introduce the budget and advised he had 20 minutes to do so.

Councillor Gledhill

We cannot deny the past few years have been challenging for residents, businesses and councils across the whole Country, Thurrock was, on the whole, no different. All top tier councils have seen an increase in both adults and children needing care, residents needing additional support, extra running costs for equipment/pay or fuel, children's placement cost skyrocketing, increased pressure from covid isolation impacting on performance or project delivery, additional support mechanisms having to be created off spec by local government officers to allocate the millions and millions of pounds of support for residents on low income that this government supplied throughout the covid crisis and to be honest that list could go on and on. I cannot remember probably the first three or four months of there not being at least two to three hours of myself and the chief executive on the phone dealing with the next problem that was coming down the line. I am sure some in this chamber may think the support didn't go far enough and I am sure there are that think it went too far. But the long and the short of it Thurrock Council stepped up to the plate and it delivered. Indeed, not only did we deliver but, because of our investment strategy as Councillor Hebb had just gone through, which everyone supported, bringing in tens of millions of pounds each year we had a much healthier set of reserves to draw down on and the flexibility to stop extra discretionary funding or projects to make sure we could put residents first

during the pandemic. As we know the Conservative government had invested significant amounts of funding across Thurrock through the pandemic and before in various schemes of support which either directly or indirectly benefited Thurrock residents. This includes ongoing Covid support funding mechanisms to protect all our residents including the most vulnerable. This includes £4.8m to support core services, specific funding to provide continued support for our care homes to manage hospital discharges and maintain high standards of infection control so we don't see anything spike. Further funding had been provided to support the ability of residents to self-isolate and to reduce the spread of the virus during the pandemic as well. The council had received £3.2m of funding under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. This cash boost will ensure households living in the three blocks in Chadwell St Mary have clean efficient heating and hot water through a ground loop heat pump system. I am sure if Councillor Spillman was here tonight he would have spoken a lot about that. The Council was also now a preferred partner organisation with Homes England providing access to additional funding to deliver housing schemes from 2022/23 onwards. Business cases for the schemes agreed at the Tilbury and Grays Towns Fund Boards are progressing for submission in the coming year. This was all thanks again to the government's investment of £42.7m into Thurrock on those schemes alone, with Tilbury receiving £22.8m worth of love and Grays being awarded £19.9m to improve across the board. In the past year we were able to provide support to vulnerable households that needed help with bills and food all thanks to £1.4m allocated to us largely through the household support fund. Grays High Street had benefitted from a number of safety initiatives thanks to £432,000 government funding secured by a joint bid we made along with the Essex Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, and this had been bolstered by him by an additional £193,000 in match funding, bringing that up to a whopping £625,000 to secure our high street security. On top of this as mentioned before the Thames Freeport was expected to be approved by DLUHC and Treasury imminently with the designated tax sites already agreed. This will bring over 20,000 new jobs and generate more than £4.5b in new public and private investment of this will be in jobs, in skills, in communities and indeed in much needed infrastructure not just in Thurrock but all along the Thames Estuary. This just shows that the current Conservative government was investing in Thurrock to help improve the infrastructure deficit over the years and that those on low incomes will be still supported as we move to the recovery stage of the pandemic and will indeed receive extra support to get better paid jobs and be more self-efficient and indeed to improve their lives. However, there was still the requirement for the council to set a balanced budget against a background of ever-increasing demand and cost for children's and adult's social care, both of these are the focus and purpose of this years proposed council tax increase. There was also the matter of rising staffing costs as we discussed earlier, contract inflation, building inflation costs for the future projects, fuel costs and general inflation which we cannot ignore. These inflation costs have not hit our residents, they hit us a local authority and indeed the suppliers to us. Members will see from paragraph 2.6 that due to pressures, predominately in children's social care that we are still working towards nearly three quarters of a million pound of in year pressure to balance the budget for this financial

year. I will mention now, and I know my cabinet member Councillor Johnson will expand during debate the pressures on children's social care since the pandemic. Over the past two years we have seen an unprecedented increase in the children needing support from this council. Much of this had been managed in budget but with extra looked after children coming into or through the service the cost of this service overall had increased. However, it was not just the number of children needing support adding to financial pressures, it was also the cost of certain placements. I am sure members will be shocked to hear the annual cost of the top 10 most complex cases was over £4m a year, two high-cost unregulated placements that came into the borough this financial year added a cost implication of nearly £1.5m. Now our officers are in fantastic partnerships with other agencies and indeed work very closely with parents to try and keep this cost down but to be honest it was not always possible. But and I am going to make this clear finance aside we cannot escape that this was a statute service, and our most vulnerable children will come first but this comes at a cost.

Moving on to our second largest spending area adult social care. Again, we have seen a significant increase in cost and the numbers of adults who need our support. Yet again we have risen to the challenge to help mitigate the cost increase in this vital statute service. We have seen some great work from Councillor Huelin and the teams they have done to supply a much better day care facilities for instance by removing it from an old shop in Ockendon and from Kynoch Court and merging it in the centre of the borough as it goes forward onto the project. This will be supplying better services for less and much more and not, as some members here would have you believe, shutting down a care home it was far from that. As members will no doubt recall this government introduced the ability for top tier councils, like Thurrock, to be able to set a precept on their council tax to directly fund increased social care costs. This was what we will be doing again this year. This was not just a randomly burden more tax on our residents who are seeing costs of living rises as we've already discussed, but specifically to fund helping to support our most vulnerable adults. As said this service had seen a massive increase in pressure of both volume and cost since the pandemic and we cannot either legally or indeed conscience not support those over 18 who need higher levels of support. But again, that comes at a cost. I know that everybody and I hoped that it would be everybody in this chamber would have hoped that more of the increases in National Insurance would be coming towards councils to help support those in need through the adult social care precept. However, we all know that prevention was better than cure, so having earlier medical intervention could help to stop residents needing support in later life for much much longer therefore cutting down that cost. So, whilst we may see some of this funding coming to us in the future, we are going to have to do our bit now and we are going to have to ask our residents to dig a little bit deeper to make ensure our most vulnerable adults are not let down. This year, services for adults and children social care accounted for over 60% of the spend from the council tax collected with additional Covid funding from government to support social care pressures had it not been again from this conservative government intervening we would have wiped out the fantastic increase in the reserves that we got from our investment strategy and good

financial management. Next year's growth in demand was expected to develop even further which will result in a budgetary gap. This can only be funded by core council tax funding being allocated to children's social care and with the adult social care precept addressing expected pressures in the adult sector. The adult social care precept increasing by 1% will provide some of this required financial resource but we will need to do things smarter and much more efficiently. Let's put that 1% into perspective, this equates to a rise of no more than 27 pence per week in Council Tax for over 80% of the households in the borough but with those in the highest bands paying an extra 54 pence per week. The 1.99% general council tax rise, which will be ring-fenced solely for children's social care, will mean a rise of no more than 54 pence per week for 80% of the households in the borough and no more than £1.07 per week for those in the higher bands. This was, of course, the maximum increase that will be paid. Those on pension credits and in receipt of full local council tax scheme will see no increase at all, those working age claimants receiving the highest level of local council tax scheme will only see a rise of around 7 pence per week and that's on a Band D property. Anyone below that will see a much smaller increase. This was only possible by us not proposing any decrease to the local council tax support scheme allocated from the general fund to make sure there was money to help those who need support. And of course, this was without the generous up to £150 reduction for those in Bands A to D announced by the Chancellor for this year and the discretionary support for those in higher bands should they need it this was mainly for those who are asset rich but cash poor madam mayor. Now I am sure my deputy leader will remind everyone that we do have the third lowest council tax of unitary authorities in the country. Equally we are still have the lowest council tax in Essex. Paragraph 2.8 makes clear the much higher amounts of council tax raised by our nearest unitary neighbour Southend and the highest set council tax in unitary was Nottingham City and of course the pressures they see there are poor investments. Paragraph 2.8 also goes onto show that of the £121.31m in Business Rates we collect from businesses across the borough we have to relinquish all but £38.37m of it. It does not take a maths genius to work out that if we could retain all of our business rates we would not need to raise a single penny in Council Tax, not a rise this year madam mayor but not a single penny on any property and would still end up with more than £10m more to spend on services locally. Now I am sure we would all like to see this being the case as it really was us and our residents who have to put up with such concentrated area of business and the problems that can bring. However, this had never been the case nor probably never be the case, but I'll tell you what it does do, it demonstrates the vital role that Thurrock plays for this great nation which was being recognised by the government as outlined in my earlier opening madam mayor. The investments we have coming into Thurrock was so significant and that was to make Thurrock work better. But whilst the grants to improve the borough are welcome, as cost pressures increase and the income from investments reduce, we will see a clear gap between cost and spending power. This was no different to any household or business budget and means we either have to reduce year on year outgoings or increase the amount coming in. At Thurrock will need to do a combination of both. Paragraph 6.5 to paragraph 6.23 outlines how we will not only invest in services but also how to achieve or

look for savings in each directorate. You will see references to things like ambitious targets or being able to fully realise digital efficiency all these terms that mean that the services are all stepping up and doing what they can to make a difference to the services more efficient, at decreased cost for residents whilst making them a much better service. As examples, our parking service team are going electronic so no longer will residents have to wait for a physical parking permit to arrive in the post. This cuts down both administration cost and postage costs, was more efficient in processing and our enforcement team will have live up to date data so they won't issue tickets onerously. We're increasing and have improved the jet patching processes meaning that we can fill more potholes cheaper and more efficiently than ever before improving our roads. I have already mentioned the good work done by Councillor Huelin to improve day care provision. We are looking to improve flood risk management on our road which in turn will reduce the need for clearing the drains as often, repairing potholes as often and reduces the impact on all those using our busy roads whether they be businesses or residents. To be honest madam mayor, there are many more examples of this in each portfolio, I am sure my portfolio holders will speak on that as we go through this evening. Briefly members will see that we increased the delegated school allocation for this year of nearly £8m but we may have a £4.3 m coming later in the year. Part of that £8m was to support the increases in costs for the Health and Social care Levy which I explained earlier in my brief. Additionally, the school's forum had kindly agreed to a further £700,000 to put into high needs block to support specialist placements. All of this was great news for children with SEND or for those requiring additional support. Additional funding had also meant we can increase the hourly rate for early years support but again I am sure Councillor Johnson will refer to this in his speech. It was good to hear some of the agreement on some of the capital programme going forward as we know the allocation to individual highways improvements are agreed at cabinet after going through overview and scrutiny and are based on need. We know, as we move forward as a local authority many more if not all our equipment and vehicles will need to be electric powered. The cost of this program was being worked on and will take a number of years to be delivered as there will need to be significant amount of costly infrastructure installed to support all these vehicles and yes I can assure Councillor Kent that reports will go to him from cabinet and indeed from the cabinet member for environment. In the interim we will also need to replace some of our vehicle with fossil fuelled ones and yes we did look at that and yes you will get a report on what the impact was in relation to using those instead of going straight to electric. But equally we cannot forget, we must never forget, when the Conservatives took administration of this council there was a massive deficit of equipment in the environmental team, indeed there was none. So as the years have gone by, we are at the point where we are going to have to replace that which will allow our parks to remain open, our open spaces will be usable and will not be returned to their semi jungle like state with grass so high it covered park benches and again madam mayor unfortunately at this moment this will be fossil fuelled.

So in conclusion madam mayor due to a number of reasons as outlined we have had to move from a budget and MTFs that was in surplus to one that

needs to be balanced moving forward. No longer can members be asking for more and more in their wards or not put viable alternatives towards savings or indeed the budget in flag waving attempts to curry favour with the electorate. We must come together and ensure we have the funding to support our most vulnerable, not just for this year but for future years. And as such I would ask that the chamber agrees to the budget was put forward with below inflation increase of 2.99% consisting of 1.99% for children's social care and 1% for adult social care.

The Mayor then invited the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor J Kent, to respond and advised he had 15 minutes to do so.

Councillor J Kent

Thank you madam mayor and I will endeavour to take 15 minutes as a ceiling, not a floor. We call this meeting the Budget Council meeting, but actually it's long since to be the budget-setting Council meeting. The task for Members this evening was to agree the level of council tax for the coming year and subsequent to that decision, to agree the overall budget envelope that Cabinet will have to work with for the year ahead, and as we do that we need to consider a number of things. For me, the first thing we have to look at was the impact that decisions we take have on our residents. After it all, it was them who will pay any council tax increase, it was them who rely on the services that we provide. We need to carefully consider the Section 151 Officer's Section 25 report and to look at whether the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and the savings that have been agreed by Cabinet, are actually deliverable. We need to consider the question that Councillor Coxshall posed at last months' Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 'can Thurrock Council actually survive?' I really don't think that we can keep on increasing council tax year on year at a time when our residents are facing a cost of living crisis. So, Thurrock Labour will be opposing a rise in council tax. An increase of 2.99% doesn't sound like much, but added to gas and electricity prices rising by 54%; the 10% National Insurance tax hike; petrol prices at record levels; inflation at a 30 year high; and stagnating wages, then it's clear that this increase maybe too much for some of our residents to bear. And I am disappointed that Cabinet didn't look to use the unexpected £2.5million funding that council received via the local government settlement in December last year. We would have used that windfall to deliver a one year council tax freeze. As it was, this latest increase comes on top of years' of hikes from this Conservative council. If this new rise goes through, as I'm sure it will, the increase in council tax since the Conservatives gained power will be 25%. By contrast the last Labour council froze bills almost every year. We're told that the whole increase will be ring-fenced for social care, and we all know that we have to fix the social care crisis, and that we need to pay for that. But we were told last year, that last years' 3% increase in the social care precept would solve the problem. Then we were told that the 10% national Tory National Insurance tax hike would solve the problem. And now we're told that tonight's further 3% tax hike will help the problem. We all of us know that in reality, whilst this extra funding will help, the only sustainable solution was radical reform to the way that social care was delivered and radical reform to

the way that social care was funded. The pressures in social care are well recognised and are documented in the Section 25 report, where the Section 151 Officer considers the budget to be robust, but recognises what he describes as “the ongoing and increasing pressures within both Adults and Children’s Social Care”.

Madam mayor, I want to turn to the savings that Cabinet as agreed in order to present a balanced budget, and I think it’s important that we all understand what a balanced budget was. What we’re in effect being presented with here this evening was a spreadsheet that adds up. A balanced budget had not been delivered until the savings listed have actually been achieved, and I will give just one example. Cabinet had agreed to a cut of £150,000 in the Home to School Transport budget. The last Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee was told that this year’s Home to School Transport budget was overspent by £800,000. That’s an £800,000 overspend on a budget of £1million. If you add the agreed saving to the overspend, you’re looking to save £950,000 on this year’s spend to make that budget. That leaves just £50,000 left to deliver all Home to School Transport. We all of us know that that was just not feasible. There are other budget lines that look to be aspirational: a saving of £400,000 by reviewing high cost supported living placements; raising another £500,000 by counter-fraud commercial income; and saving £1million on the cost of child social workers. I really do hope that those savings can be safely realised and will be watching these areas very carefully over the coming year. There are a number of savings that we simply don’t agree with. Some are hidden, such as the threatened closure of the Thameside and Grangewaters, both being declared surplus to requirement by Cabinet back in July. We don’t agree with the move to fortnightly bin collections; the imposition of parking charges at our parks and open spaces; and we don’t agree with the decision to continue to keep the public away from the Council. There are areas of spending that appear to have escaped. For instance, the continued proliferation of highly paid council officers. So in 2017/18 there were five officers at this authority earning over £100,000; last year that had gone up to fifteen. Interestingly the average number of employees in a local authority receiving over £100,000 per annum was seven. In the same time the number of officers paid over £50,000 had risen from 119 to 226 – that’s a 90% increase. And whilst there’s been a recruitment freeze of sorts, there’s been no such freeze on agency staff, with a spend there of over £10million last year, neither had there been any freeze on the cost of consultants with almost £3.5million being paid out there last year, and that doesn’t include the cost of private contractors or project work or other different names for contractors. These are areas that really do need to be carefully examined before any established staff lose their jobs. Then beyond next year the Section 151 Officer warns us that “there was far less certainty over the following years. The deferment of pressures in the budget through the use of reserves and capital receipts along with other demand-led and inflationary increases result in a forecast deficit for the following two years of £14.3million and that history shows us that the required growth in Council’s budget always exceeds the ability to raise finance through council tax, thus leading to pressures every year.” Madam mayor that means that no sooner have we concluded this evening’s meeting, Cabinet and officers will be looking at

where they can find the resources to deliver balanced budgets over the medium term. And madam mayor I want to finish on a positive note – we all of us, Members anyway, live in Thurrock, we all have a stake in Thurrock and we all want Thurrock to be the best that it can be.

And this leads me to Councillor Coxshall's question on whether Thurrock Council can survive, indeed whether it can thrive without fundamental change, and he had quite reasonably suggested working more closely with neighbouring authorities in a way that would help to add capacity in delivering our huge regeneration agenda; help with strategic planning; help to drive up skills; help to improve cross-authority transport links. Such an arrangement, and I think a while ago it would have been called a combined authority, would be well positioned to be for and to gain extra freedoms, ability, and funding from government, and I really do encourage the administration to explore all possibilities in this area. But I ask that they do so in an open and transparent way that involves all Members from an early stage. And madam mayor, whether or not there was mileage in such an approach, and I really do think there was, if we are to thrive as a local authority we have to embrace the dynamism and entrepreneurial spirit that exists across the communities of Thurrock. And I just want to give a couple of examples. We need to look at places like Hardie Park, a park where fifteen years ago was virtually a no-go zone. It was residents that got behind that park, it was residents that turned it round to such a degree that it's now one of the best-loved and well-used parks in Essex and they've done that with virtually no Council funding. Or if we look at Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions, and I declare my interest as an employee of TLS, a community interest company that was originally spun-out of the Council. They help people with disabilities, particularly learning disabilities, to live happy, healthy, independent lives. All directors of the business are service users and they deliver first-class services that are actually really good value. And there are many, many other small social enterprises delivering all kinds of services across Thurrock. They often deliver a very carefully tailored service at a very local level, in a way that local authorities just aren't able to do, and at a cost that local authorities just can't match. We would do well to engage more closely with them to see where we could work together, and we should look to create a fund to help some of them grow and to foster a huge expansion in a number of successful social entrepreneurs and social enterprises across the borough to help deliver services that are truly local. Madam mayor if we can do those things, I for one believe that Thurrock has a very bright future indeed.

The Mayor invited Councillor Gledhill to respond to Councillor J Kent and advised he had 10 minutes to do so.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you madam mayor, I don't intend to take anywhere near the ten minutes, indeed I still feel that the Constitution was very poorly written. I get ten minutes to respond to the Leader of the Opposition, or indeed whoever sits or stands in this position gets ten minutes to respond to their response, yet only gets three minutes to respond to all other Councillors. However, it

was what it was and I fully understand that whilst I would have normally asked that this evening, that would have been rejected by other Members. I can live with that. I'm not going to rehash the arguments that we've had about pay; I'm not going to rehash about the um, to pay the – was going to cost us an extra four point whatever it was on the council tax, we've had that discussion. We've had the discussion about the capital funding and everything else. I'm actually going to focus on the positives that Councillor Kent also picked up from this. Can we survive as a Council? Absolutely right, we do need to look at something bigger than Thurrock. As Councillor Kent quite rightly said, the work on combined authorities at the moment, my excellent colleague Councillor Coxshall sits on ASELA as part of the regeneration portfolio that he had and that will also include that aspect. They've recently gone, at last, to public meetings where everyone can see the decisions being made, and yes number one it's a requirement for us in law to be open with elected Members as we go down the route, but equally we need to know what that routes going to be rather than saying oh we could do this, could do that, could do something else, and it being a whole mishmash and we end up with another two hours of argument as to which one have and get into nowhere, you know wherever the administration wishes to go. It would be the right thing to look at that. It's not just a conversation that we can have. We cannot just say that we would like to park our tanks on insert name of another local authority – it's not how it works. There needs to be collaborative agreement between Essex County Council and all of our direct neighbours, or indeed, well it doesn't apply so much to London because the old regulations prevented that. It would only be until we get to Southend that it could be one council making the decisions, at the moment it would have to be Essex County Council and indeed the districts. And I really hope, that I know that Councillor Coxshall had a meeting today with the Leader of Essex and discussed exactly that, and it does seem to be a bit of an appetite to actually think what was best, not just for Thurrock, not just for Essex as the county of, but also all of the districts within. So, hopefully as we move forward on that we can bring much better updates to the Chamber.

And also I support him hugely on the use of third sector and indeed local enterprises. These are the lifeblood, and were the lifeblood, of the Covid response. They could get to people much quicker than we could even get our gears into action at the local authority. We've praised them enough and we will continue to work with and praise them. Some the services they provide would cost us a huge amount. I know before I became a Councillor, and indeed shortly after, there was a discussion that actually local authorities shouldn't be service providers, but should be those that just initiate other services that we provided for residents. And that really was still a model that I think would work better than some of the things we do. We are very cumbersome sometimes as a local authority, not just Thurrock but I mean the whole of local authorities and the way we provide services. So, we do really need to think different. Does that require a pot of money, you know that's actually a really good idea. Where we get that money from was a different question. I know Councillor Huelin has already working with the third sector on a regular basis to see what can be provided, indeed the food delivery service that was had, and has now been expanded out, I'm sure she'll speak on that

as she goes through this evening. So, this does work, but when we've got things like temporary staff, and I've forgotten how many times I've had to stand up and say this, too many temporary staff, irrespective of whether or not I was Portfolio Holder, Leader, Leader of the Opposition, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, too many. Yes, and do you know what, if we can put all of those temporary staff, social workers for instance, if we could start achieving that saving of £1million on social workers, because a lot of that was for temporary staff at extra costs. Now I'm not going to say – I'm not going to sit here and say – or stand here and just keep going backwards and forwards, but now wherever there was this we need more services, we need to provide more, we need to do more, we need to do this, we need to do that, it comes at a cost. If they're not coming forward with any viable alternatives, the only other place that this can go was in the residents' pocket. And I'm sorry, even at 2.99% it's difficult. That was going solely towards Adult and Children's Social Care, our most vulnerable. We will not put votes before the vulnerable and what I hope was that no one in this Chamber will. However, it would appear that some in the Chamber tonight will vote against this budget. So, with that madam mayor I will allow everybody else to have their say, and I'm sure everybody will love to have their say. Thank you.

The Mayor asked Members for any questions.

Councillor Byrne stated he would struggle to vote in favour of this budget as he felt it had been very unfair on SS17 to ask residents to pay more for adult social care when they would be receiving less of a service by shutting down their adult care centre.

Councillor Coxshall referred to the 12 major projects and the eight Towns Fund projects that the regeneration team were working on in Thurrock. With the private sector making huge investments into the borough, Thurrock was a small authority but was now the largest regeneration zone in the UK and in Europe. It had been recognised there had been some issues and difficulties but had expanded the regeneration team with the recruitment of a new Assistant Director to deliver those projects on time and residents would see the benefits of those.

Councillor Huelin stated that adult social care could not be micro-budgeted, this service met the needs of the most vulnerable. During the Covid pandemic adult social care money had been targeted for those services and thanked officers and front-line staff for their work. How the effects of Covid had on adult social care and to look for efficiencies, to attract quality staff into the wellbeing teams, continue to help the NHS with care, continued to work with NHS community partners, the better care fund, with the volunteer sector and to continue to work on transformation.

Councillor Ralph welcomed the budget that was dramatically needed by the adult and children's social care services. Councillor Ralph stated he was against Hardy Park being used as a flag waving exercise.

Councillor Johnson stated the budget had been ring-fenced for those most vulnerable in Thurrock to ensure that services were delivered in the most important areas. The increase in budget into the children's social care would enable those best services and care to be provided. Councillor Johnson gave thanks to the finance team, Councillor Hebb and the Leader.

Councillor Pothecary left the meeting at 8.52pm.

Councillor Mayes stated the Labour group were choosing votes over the most vulnerable, but the Council must put residents first and urged all Labour members to reconsider and vote in favour of the budget.

Councillor Snell stated the budget had been ring-fenced for those adult and children's social care services that needed that money now. There was a huge problem which was likely to get worse before it got better which was having an impact on children in schools and residents need that help now.

Councillor Jefferies stated the budget had been ring-fenced for adult and children's social care and as portfolio holder for environment he stated it was thanks to this Administration the right equipment had been purchased, trees had been planted, new fleet vehicles had been purchased and an increase in recycling had been seen. Councillor Jefferies stated his support for the budget as those most vulnerable deserved it.

Councillor Redsell stated the pandemic was not over yet and that the work of officers and members needed to be recognised and to look after the elderly and those who had suffered through the pandemic. Councillor Redsell stated her support for the budget especially for the adult and children's social care.

Councillor Holloway rebuffed the constant accusation that when Labour were in administration they had sold off all the environment equipment so sought some data from a freedom of information request. This data was that in 2014, five machines were sold, at least one had expired in 2015, none had been sold in 2016 and when the Conservative party got into power in 2017 they had sold 10.

Councillor Little corrected Councillor Holloway's comment that the equipment had never been serviced nor had it worked. Councillor Little stated she would be supporting the work being undertaken with the adult social care and children's social care as those services were needed. That children were the future and needed to be looked after.

Councillor Hebb referred to the local Government settlement and stated this had been used and had reduced the pressure of the budget this year. Referred to the Section 25 statement and the question had been asked whether Thurrock Council could survive which had been a genuine question around how an authority like Thurrock could continue to operate and the truth was there needed to be changes and the pressures on the Council were real. This was a social care budget and there was a choice to be made, a question of conscious to either provide an injection of funding into social care or not

too. The proposals were 2% under inflation and ring-fenced for adult and children's social care. That support was available for those in need of help through the Local Council Tax Support scheme.

Councillor Maney commented that the silence from across the floor could be seen as rejection, Labour members did not seem to believe in themselves anymore and that nobody had challenged the report. The proposals were fair and would protect the most vulnerable.

Councillor Gledhill stated that as part of the portfolio for housing, Councillor Spillman was doing his bit on savings through his portfolio but also with the impact of the homelessness strategy which had been introduced and had a direct impact on the amount of council tax used to support those who were homeless. Councillor Gledhill stated that all cabinet portfolios were helping to reduce the cost burden across the council tax and to improve service. Councillor Gledhill reminded members that this budget was about adult and children's social care and the local council tax scheme support had not been reduced. Councillor Gledhill moved that the general fund proposals as outlined in the report be put to the chamber.

The Mayor moved to the recommendations.

A non-recorded vote took place on recommendation 1.1. Whereupon the Mayor declared recommendation 1.1 be carried.

A recorded vote took place on recommendation 1.2 the result of which was:

For: Councillors Qaisar Abbas, Abbie Akinbohun, Alex Anderson, Gary Byrne, Adam Carter, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Robert Gledhill, James Halden, Shane Hebb, Deborah Huelin, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, Susan Little, Ben Maney, Fraser Massey, Allen Mayes, Augustine Ononaji, Maureen Pearce, Terry Piccolo, Georgette Polley, Shane Ralph, Joycelyn Redsell, Sue Sammons, Jennifer Smith and Graham Snell (29)

Against: Councillors Daniel Chukwu, Tony Fish, Mike Fletcher, Victoria Holloway, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Sara Muldowney, Bukky Okunade, Kairen Raper, Sue Shinnick, Lee Watson and Lynn Worrall (14)

Abstain: (0)

Whereupon the Mayor declared recommendation 1.2 be carried.

A recorded vote took place on recommendation 1.3 the result of which was:

For: Councillors Qaisar Abbas, Abbie Akinbohun, Alex Anderson, Adam Carter, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Robert Gledhill, James Halden, Shane Hebb, Deborah Huelin, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, Susan Little, Ben Maney,

Fraser Massey, Allen Mayes, Augustine Ononaji, Maureen Pearce, Terry Piccolo, Georgette Polley, Shane Ralph, Joycelyn Redsell, Sue Sammons, Jennifer Smith, and Graham Snell (28)

Against: Councillors Gary Byrne, Daniel Chukwu, Tony Fish, Mike Fletcher, Victoria Holloway, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Sara Muldowney, Bukky Okunade, Kairen Raper, Sue Shinnick, Lee Watson and Lynn Worrall (15)

Abstain: (0)

Whereupon the Mayor declared recommendation 1.3 be carried.

A non-recorded vote took place on recommendations 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6. Whereupon the Mayor declared recommendations 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 be carried.

Finally, a recorded en-bloc vote took place on recommendations 1.7 to 1.12 the result of which was:

For: Councillors Qaisar Abbas, Abbie Akinbohun, Alex Anderson, Adam Carter, Daniel Chukwu, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Tony Fish, Mike Fletcher, Robert Gledhill, James Halden, Shane Hebb, Victoria Holloway, Deborah Huelin, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Susan Little, Ben Maney, Fraser Massey, Allen Mayes, Sara Muldowney, Bukky Okunade, Augustine Ononaji, Maureen Pearce, Terry Piccolo, Georgette Polley, Shane Ralph, Kairen Raper, Joycelyn Redsell, Sue Sammons, Sue Shinnick, Jennifer Smith, Graham Snell, Lee Watson and Lynn Worrall (42)

Against: Councillor Gary Byrne (1)

Abstain: (0)

Whereupon the Mayor declared recommendations 1.7 to 1.12 be carried.

RESOLVED

That the Council:

- 1. Considered and acknowledged the Section 151 Officer's (Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery's) s25 report on the robustness of the proposed budget and the adequacy of the Council's reserves, as set out in Appendix 1, including the conditions upon which the following recommendations are made.**
- 2. Agreed a 1.99% council tax increase; ring-fenced to meet the increasing costs and demands of Children's social care services and to move the council towards greater financial sustainability for the medium to longer term.**

3. **Agreed a 1% council tax increase towards the cost of Adult Social Care.**
4. **Agreed the use of capital receipts for transformational purposes as set out in paragraphs 6.29 to 6.34.**
5. **Approved the new General Fund capital proposals, as set out in section 9 and Appendix 6.**
6. **Delegated to Cabinet the ability to agree schemes (a) where it can be evidenced that there was a spend to save opportunity and (b) that use any unbudgeted contributions from third parties, including those by way of grants or developers' contributions, and these be deemed as part of the capital programme.**

Statutory Council Tax Resolution

(Members should note that these recommendations are a result of the previous recommendations above and can be agreed as written or as amended by any changes agreed to those above).

7. **Calculated that the council tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2022/23 was £74,451,167 as set out in the table at paragraph 6.2 of this report.**
8. **That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2022/23 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:**
 - (a) **£334,475,361 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act. (Note this figure excludes the Academy Recoupment element of the Dedicated Schools Grant).**
 - (b) **£260,024,194 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act. (Note this figure excludes the Academy Recoupment element of the Dedicated Schools Grant).**
 - (c) **£74,451,167 being the amount by which the aggregate at 1.8(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 1.8(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its council tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).**
 - (d) **£1,441.26 being the amount at 1.8(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (Council Tax Base of 51,657), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (including Parish precepts).**

- (e) £0 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- (f) £1,441.26 being the amount at (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (e) above by Item T, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
9. Noted that the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner had issued precepts to the Council in respect of Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the tables below.
10. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of council tax for 2022/23 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

2022/23 COUNCIL TAX FOR THURROCK PURPOSES EXCLUDING ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY AND ESSEX POLICE AUTHORITY

Amounts for the Valuation Bands for 2022/23							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
960.84	1,120.98	1,281.12	1,441.26	1,761.54	2,081.82	2,402.10	2,882.52

11. Noted that for the year 2022/23 Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority had stated the following amounts in precept issued to the Council in respect of Essex Police for each of the categories of dwellings as follows:

Amounts for the Valuation Bands for 2022/23							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
145.68	169.96	194.24	218.52	267.08	315.64	364.20	437.04

12. Noted that for the year 2022/23 Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority had stated the following amounts in precept issued to the Council in respect of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service for each of the categories of dwellings as follows:

Amounts for the Valuation Bands for 2022/23							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
50.22	58.59	66.96	75.33	92.07	108.81	125.55	150.66

2022/23 COUNCIL TAX (INCLUDING FIRE AND POLICE AUTHORITY PRECEPTS)

Amounts for the Valuation Bands for 2022/23							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1,156.74	1,349.53	1,542.32	1,735.11	2,120.69	2,506.27	2,891.85	3,470.22

117. Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that no questions to the Leader had been received and ten questions to Cabinet Members. Those questions not heard would receive a written response.

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

At 9.10pm, Councillor J Kent referred to paragraph 16.1 of the Council procedures and rules to suspend standing orders. The Mayor called a vote to which the clear majority of Members voted against.

118. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies

This item fell.

119. Minutes of Committees

This item fell.

120. Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year

This item fell.

121. Motion submitted by Councillor Redsell

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

Irresponsible riders of motorbikes and other similar vehicles misusing public and private land are putting our resident's lives and wellbeing at risk. I call on the relevant authority to implement a borough wide PSPO to prevent the unlawful use of these vehicles where the residents have lawful access. This will help protect residents across Thurrock and also make it easier for the Police and Council to take action.

Councillor Redsell presented the motion by stating that irresponsible riders of motorbikes and other similar vehicles misusing public and private land were putting the lives and the wellbeing of residents at risk. The motion was to implement a borough wide PSPO to prevent the unlawful use of these

vehicles to protect residents and to make it easier for the Council and the Police to take action.

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

122. Motion submitted by Councillor Muldowney

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

This Council notes that (1) a recent report to Government by the Social Mobility Commission reported that nearly a third of all children now live in poverty, with 500,000 children in England being plunged into poverty since 2012; and (2) the Council's Child Poverty Strategy lapsed in 2020 and needs to be refreshed. Council agrees with the Social Mobility Commission that (1) child poverty was a preventable problem and (2) agrees to undertake a rapid review of child poverty in the borough in order to inform a refresh of its Child Poverty Strategy.

Councillor Muldowney presented the Motion and stated her concerns on the number of children living in poverty in Thurrock, with over 5000 children affected. Child poverty had increased in Thurrock due to the impacts of Covid and had seen increases of over 33% for the use of food banks. Councillor Muldowney proposed that a review of child poverty in the borough be undertaken and for the Council's Child Poverty Strategy to be refreshed.

The majority of Members voted against this motion to which the Mayor announced the motion lost.

123. Motion submitted by Councillor J Kent

Councillor J Kent withdrew his motion and resubmitted to June 2022 Council.

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**