

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 25 November 2015 at 7.00 pm

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

**Apologies:** Councillors Sue Gray (Mayor), Tim Aker and Garry Hague

**In attendance:** Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive  
David Bull, Director of Planning and Transportation  
Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive  
Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services  
Roger Harris, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning  
Sean Clark, Head of Corporate Finance  
Jackie Hinchliffe, Head of HR, OD & Transformation  
Richard Parkin, Head of Housing - Community & Needs  
Karen Wheeler, Head of Strategy & Communications  
David Lawson, Monitoring Officer  
Matthew Boulter, Principal Democratic Services Officer  
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Stephanie Cox, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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The Deputy Mayor advised that she would be Chairing the meeting as the Mayor was unfortunately unwell.

Before the start of the meeting, the Deputy Mayor invited Reverend Barlow to lead those present in prayer and a one minutes silence was held as a mark of respect of the recent atrocities in Paris and other countries.

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

### 100. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of Council, held on 28 October 2015, were approved as a correct record.

### **101. Items of Urgent Business**

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

### **102. Declaration of Interests**

There were no interests declared.

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

Firstly the Deputy Mayor invited all those present to reflect and remember Thurrock's fallen of World War One.

On behalf of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor thanked all Councillors for laying a Mayoral wreath on Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th November 2015 at the Remembrance Services in their constituencies.

The Deputy Mayor informed Members that Thurrock resident, Mr Albert England, had been awarded the Legion d'Honneur for his role in the D-Day Normandy landings.

Members were advised that Mr England had requested that his friend, Mr Neil Speight, read on his behalf an extract from a poem of tribute called 'At Dawning' written by Tony Chapman,, a member of the Landing Craft Association and dedicated to the men of D-Day on June 6th 1944.

Mr Speight read an extract from the poem 'At Dawning' following which Members congratulated Mr England on his achievements.

It was reported that the Mayor had written a letter of condolence to the Mayor of Paris and the people of France in respect of the recent atrocities in Paris.

Finally, the Deputy Mayor thanked all Councillors who had sponsored a Looked After Child to go to the Christmas Pantomime.

The Leader of the Council commented upon the Chancellors recent Autumn Statement and Spending Review; that the main revenue support grant to local authorities was expected to be phased out over the remaining term of Parliament, and that business rates collected locally would not be retained by the local authority but distributed nationally. The Leader also expressed concerns regarding the two per cent adult social care precept, which was presumed in addition to any Council Tax rise ceiling imposed by the government.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the news that the first National College for Creative and Cultural Industries would be established at the Backstage Centre, High House Production Park in Purfleet, which put Thurrock on the map as world class centre for excellence.

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

A copy of the transcript of questions and answers can be viewed under the relevant meeting date at <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock> and are attached at Appendix A to these minutes.

#### **105. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors**

The Deputy Mayor informed Members that, in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, the requisite notice had been given by one Councillor who wished to present a petition at the meeting.

Councillor Hebb presented a petition on behalf of residents of Webster Road, Stanford-le-Hope, which called on the Council to commence a review in aid of securing additional parking arrangements and facilities in the immediate vicinity.

#### **106. Petitions Update Report**

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

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

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

#### **108. Members' led body on Prevent duties and review of existing Prevent provision**

Councillor J. Kent, Leader of the Council, briefly introduced the report which set out the outcomes of deliberations between the Constitution Working Group and the Monitoring Officer in response to a motion passed by Full Council in July 2015.

Councillor J. Kent observed that it would be appropriate if Councillor Ojetola, as proposer of the original motion, introduced the report.

Councillor Ojetola firstly observed that he was pleased a letter of condolence had been sent to the French Government in light of the recent atrocities in Paris.

He further thanked Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services, for all her hard work as she was due to be leaving employment at the Council.

Councillor Ojetola thanked all officers and Members involved in the Constitution Working Group and stated that atrocities started with radicalisation; as a result he felt that it was important that Members worked with partners to gather intelligence and set strategy to prevent radicalisation.

Councillor Jones firstly thanked the Leader of the Council for highlighting such a serious issue. He noted that going forward the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be responsible for the policy development of Prevent duties, and as Chair of the Committee, he felt that the membership of the Committee should be expanded to include an additional 1 or 2 Members as attendance had recently been poor by some Members appointed to the Committee.

Councillor Jones felt that with such an important issue aligned to the Committee he would expect all Members appointed to the Committee to attend meetings to engage in the debate.

Councillor Jones further highlighted that the report stated that the matter had been the subject of consultation with the Chair of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Group Leaders, and that as Chair of the Committee he had not been consulted and to his knowledge neither had the Group Leader of the UK Independence Party (UKIP).

Councillor Ray drew Members attention to the section of the report entitled 'enhanced role of Local Councillors' which stated that Councillors could use their authority and legitimacy to challenge the narratives of radicalisers and extremists to put forward positive alternatives. He personally had concerns with such a statement and felt that the term 'radicaliser' was not the correct terminology to use in this situation.

In response to the questions raised, Councillor J. Kent reported that all Group Leaders had been in attendance at a meeting to discuss Prevent duties but apologised to Councillor Jones as Chair of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee if he had not been consulted as this was an oversight.

Councillor J. Kent accepted Councillor Jones suggestion of increasing the Membership of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee but confirmed that this would need to be considered by Full Council at the Annual Council meeting in May 2016.

Councillor J. Kent observed that Councillors, as the eyes and the ears of the community, were well placed to notify the correct people if they had concerns about radicalisation and emphasised that there was not 'one type' of person who could be radicalised, rather that radicalisation knew no boundaries.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the terms of reference of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committees be updated to address the overview, scrutiny and policy development of Prevent duties and that the Committee be recommended to set up standing cross**

**party “Members Prevent Working Group” pursuant to Rules 8 – 9 Chapter 4, Part 1 – Article 6 of the Constitution**

- 2. That such a Members Prevent Working Group to address the terms of reference found at paragraph 3.5 in this report.**
- 3. That the terms of reference of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee be likewise updated to address Prevent duties in the context of their remit for child protection.**

**109. Thurrock Local Plan, Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

Councillor Speight, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, introduced the report which set out a revised Statement of Community Involvement to reflect recent changes in Government legislation and the national Planning system. He explained that to just produce a statement was not enough and it was important to engage effectively with local communities.

Councillor Ray commended what he felt was a thorough report and questioned what the Council determined as a ‘major development.’

In response the Cabinet Member explained that he was not aware of any changes but he would confirm the exact number that constituted as a major development outside of the meeting.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That Council adopt the Thurrock Local Plan: Statement of Community Involvement.**
- 2. That the Report of Consultation be approved by the Council alongside the Statement of Community Involvement.**

**110. Recruitment of Corporate Director of Environment & Place (New), Corporate Director of Children's Services (Existing) and Director of Commercial Services & Commissioning (New)**

Councillor J. Kent, Leader of the Council, introduced the report which sought agreement to recruit three new Director positions, the Director of Environment and Place, the Director of Children’s Services and a new Director of Commercial Services and Commissioning.

The Leader of the Council advised that £430,000 per year would be saved from the Senior Management payroll and that the Head of Corporate Finance, HR and Legal would gain the title of Director but without any additional pay.

He further observed that although there would be time to say a proper farewell to the current Director of Children's Services, Carmel Littleton, he wanted to take the opportunity to thank Carmel for all her work in Thurrock.

Councillor Halden felt that Thurrock was in a stronger place educationally because of the work of Carmel Littleton and thanked her for all her work.

Councillor Gledhill, Leader of the Opposition, agreed with the report and felt that it was a positive forward step in the right direction which reduced the excess of pay at the top without losing functions.

Members from all sides of the Chamber commended the work of Carmel Littleton and paid tribute to her achievements in driving forward educational attainment in Thurrock.

Councillor Kent briefly summed up the report and moved the recommendations, which was seconded by Councillor Gledhill.

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

#### **RESOLVED:**

**1. To note and approve in accordance with the Council's Constitution and the Pay Policy Statement:**

**Subject to the outcome of formal consultation, General Services Committee to make arrangements for the recruitment of a Corporate Director of Environment & Place, Corporate Director of Children's Services and a Director of Commercial Services and Commissioning; and**

**2. The recruitment of Senior Officers.**

#### **111. Report of the Cabinet Member of Central Services**

Councillor Holloway, Cabinet Member for Central Services, introduced the report and, in doing so, highlighted some of the key achievements of the Portfolio, which included:

- That strong debt recovery performance continued and totalled £4.7 million compared to £5.7 million for the comparable period the previous year.
- That the service continued to perform strongly in relation to Council Tax collection rates.
- That the Council continued to promote online transactions which were now available for a number of activities, including making payments.
- That the Counter Fraud and Investigation Service had been praised for its professional approach to tackling economic crime following a

recent inspection by the Home Office and Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, due to its unique access to Police data.

- That the Council's Counter Fraud and Investigation Service was the only unit outside of the Police which was accredited to deliver the Professionalising Investigation Programme, which meant that all investigation staff in the department were trained to the same standards as Police Detectives that enabled them to investigate the most serious crimes.
- That Thurrock Shared Legal Services had received Municipal Journal (MJ) achievement and "lawyer of the year" whilst building capacity and creating resilience, which was supported by the service receiving a top performing Legal Service for Lexcel Accreditation by The Law Society.

The Cabinet Member for Central Services also welcomed staff who were transitioning back to employment at the Council from Serco.

Members questioned the Cabinet Member and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Gledhill observed that it was good to see some improvements, particularly in relation to fraud and risk management. He felt that despite successes there were still a number of failures and questioned what steps the Cabinet Member was taking to ensure that poor departmental performance was not rewarded.

The Cabinet Member advised that she would need to examine this in further detail.

- Councillor Hebb recognised that staff were working for the betterment of residents but felt that in order to move forward Thurrock needed to improve accessibility of customer service functions, especially as some residents worked seven days a week which would make it difficult to visit the Civic Offices. He called upon the Cabinet Member to undertake a review of the existing labour resource to ensure that residents who worked long hours, and needed to access front line services, were not hampered due to the Council offering a 9 am to 5 pm service.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that it was important for residents to be able to access services when they needed it at a time convenient for them, and as a result the vast majority of services could be transacted online however there was still a call-centre in operation for those who preferred to speak to someone.

- Councillor S. Little explained that there were still residents who were not able to access public services online and questioned what arrangements were in place to ensure that those without digital services did not become ignored.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that there were still a number of options in place for those residents who could not access services online, which included a call-centre.

- Councillor Redsell expressed frustration and concern at the telephone system, and questioned what level of service the public received if Councillors could not be put through to the service they wanted, as her phone call had been transferred back to the call-centre six times during one phone call.

The Cabinet Member agreed that there were issues with the telephony system which was one of the reasons the Serco contract was being brought back so that the Council could have greater control and improve the service.

- Councillor Johnson highlighted the value of the Sundry Debtors system and asked whether the Cabinet Member could provide assurances that the statistics were a result of good recovery systems and not due to staff writing off debts too early.

The Cabinet Member assured Members that debts were not written off quickly or easily.

- Councillor Stewart reported that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee had recently requested officers to review accreditations the authority could undertake to demonstrate performance and asked if the Cabinet Member could also investigate this matter. Examples that were provided included ISO 9000 certification and Occupational Health and Safety.

The Cabinet Member advised that she would follow this matter up with officers.

- Councillor Ojetola questioned how the request for services were being recorded correctly centrally when enquiries were received from residents.

The Cabinet Member explained that each department had specific monitoring records which categorised and logged enquiries.

- Councillor Ray congratulated the Cabinet Member for the report and savings which were expected to be delivered by the transfer of Serco but asked for clarification regarding the Serco staff pension provision and whether costs had been taken into account.

The Cabinet advised that the details of pension provision were still being identified but they were a consideration.

## 112. Report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration

Councillor Speight, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, introduced the report which outlined the growth programme in Thurrock and included master planning for the vision of the Civic Square in Tilbury, the securing of the preferred developer PCRL (Purfleet Centre Regeneration Limited) for the development in Purfleet and a bus station next to the Chafford Hundred Rail Station footbridge.

Members questioned the Cabinet Member and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Gledhill questioned what was being done to ensure that local residents could take full advantage of job opportunities and the creation of local business supply chains in Thurrock.

The Cabinet Member advised that Thurrock was working with other nearby local authorities to take advantage of pooling of local business rates to provide a communal offer and that the Council was working with major companies, such as the NFT distribution and Travis Perkins to promote

- Councillor Halden felt that night-time economy should be developed, possibly through the development of a super-casino, as he felt that the Borough lost out to other places such as Southend.

The Cabinet Member expressed concerns at the idea of developing a super-casino, and although affirmed that Thurrock performed strongly in logistics and retail due to its location, felt that a night-time economy was being driven forward in other ways, such as through the leisure offer in Lakeside and the JD Weatherspoon's development in Grays Town Centre.

- Councillor B. Little reported that at a recent meeting which he had attended a representative from the Port of Tilbury had stated that they were struggling to fill vacancies. He questioned whether specific roles not being filled could be identified so that assistance and skills training could be offered to residents to enable them to take up employment.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that he would investigate this matter further and report back to a future meeting of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- Councillor Tolson referred back to last meeting as she did not believe she had received a response to a question she had raised regarding Coalhouse and Tilbury Fort. She further asked the Cabinet Member when further details would be made available on the reconfiguration of Stanford-le-Hope station.

The Cabinet Member explained that the reconfiguration of Stanford-le-Hope station fell under the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation who would need to provide a response.

- Councillor Redsell asked how the regeneration department was working local communities to develop sporting facilities, such as the Blackshots Field Hub, as residents believed that they were not being listened to.

The Cabinet Member explained that conversations were happening with local communities but recognised more also needed to be done, and highlighted the Purfleet development as an example of strong community engagement from an early stage to set out the sporting offer.

- Councillor Gupta requested an update regarding the Grays Rail Underpass and when plans would be implemented.

The Cabinet Member advised that officers had been working with Network Rail but that funding was required to develop detailed design work. He explained that Network Rail also faced budget challenges and as a result capital money would need to be identified, but that the work was being prioritised and officers were working with Network Rail in order to move forward with plans.

- Councillor Worrall congratulated the Cabinet Member as she welcomed the regeneration scheme for the Civic Square in Tilbury which she felt was long overdue.

The Cabinet Member thanked the Regeneration and Planning teams for all their hard work.

### **113. Questions from Members**

The Deputy Mayor informed the Chamber that no questions to the Leader of the Council had been received but there were four questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Members appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

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

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

There were no reports from Members representing the Council on outside bodies.

#### **115. Minutes of Committees**

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

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

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

Councillor Redsell explained that in relation to her October motion regarding the nuisance of motorbikes and other vehicles on open spaces, she had not seen any posters on display and called for these to be displayed somewhere more visible.

Councillor Worrall asked officers if a reply from MP's had been received in relation to her motion which had been passed in September, and requested officers to report back.

#### **117. Motion submitted by Councillor J. Kent**

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

*"This Council remains opposed to government plans for a further river crossing in Thurrock and commits to continue campaigning, alongside local residents, on this issue."*

Councillor J. Kent introduced the motion, and in doing so, expressed concern that all of the options for the new Lower Thames Crossing would put increased pressure on the existing road network in the Borough and cause enormous damage to the greenbelt and villages, especially Options A and C, which he understood were the preferred options of Government. He felt that it was time to reassert a unanimous decision to oppose the new Lower Thames Crossing to government and Thurrock MP's as hundreds of responses had been received to the 'none of the above' campaign.

Councillor Jones expressed frustration that the government seemingly continued not to listen to Thurrock residents who did not want a new Lower Thames Crossing in the Borough, which he added would also exacerbate issues around Air Quality that was already recorded as the worst in the Country at certain times.

Councillor G. Rice stated that he would be supporting the motion as one of the proposed routes would come within a distance of 500 yards of homes in Chadwell-St-Mary, decimate the countryside and destroy the historic area of West Tilbury. He reported that what was needed was an outer orbital crossing to decrease levels of traffic congestion on the M25 and called upon colleagues across the Chamber to take a united stand against the proposals.

Councillor Ray explained that he would be supporting the motion but he felt that government's consideration of where the crossing should be would be dictated by funding, which was why he felt that Option A would be approved as it would be of negligible cost to government.

Councillor Gledhill highlighted that the Borough already did not have a good Air Quality record and that Option C would see the bulldozing of greenbelt land and a bridge as tall as The Shard. He reaffirmed his support for the motion as Thurrock already had increased traffic problems, and agreed that an outer ring road such as Option D would be preferred.

Councillor Worrall stated that she did not know of anyone in Thurrock who supported a new crossing which would cut across the countryside and reduce air quality, and therefore expressed her disappointment at a recent press article from a local MP which reported that 90% of residents had been consulted.

Councillors V. Holloway and Gerrish explained that the plans would impact residents of Purfleet and called for cross-party consensus.

Councillor Palmer remarked that the plans would completely destroy the conservation village and historic site of West Thurrock.

Councillor Coxshall observed that the local MP's comments had been misreported and not been presented correctly during the debate.

Councillor C. Holloway felt that the two Thurrock MP's were accountable and called on them to do the right thing and listen to the views of Thurrock residents.

Councillor Snell advised that he would be supporting the motion but felt that there was still a degree of ambiguity around the plans, and called upon the local MP to clarify the position.

Councillor B. Rice highlighted that it was a pleasure to second the motion and felt that every Councillor should stand up and be counted on the matter to work collaboratively against the plans. She reported that Option D had already been ruled out by Government due to the cost and reaffirmed that Thurrock was 100% opposed to any new crossing in the Borough.

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

**RESOLVED:**

**This Council remains opposed to government plans for a further river crossing in Thurrock and commits to continue campaigning, alongside local residents, on this issue.**

## **118. Motion submitted by Councillor Halden**

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

*“Thurrock Council adopts the official position of being pro grammar school and desires that Thurrock children should have access to them.*

*The Authority should actively pursue / explore opportunities for grammar schools to expand into Thurrock via an annex”.*

Councillor Halden introduced the motion, and in doing so, explained that if Grammar Schools were expanded into Thurrock, parents would have greater choice, competition and diversity. He felt that the argument that grammar schools were selective and elitist was purely ideological as schools already streamed children and young people by creating different sets dependent on ability.

Councillor Halden reported that 96 students in Thurrock had grammar school offers and that Thurrock pupils had to compete among thousands of others for Grammar School places, therefore he argued that a Grammar School should be created so as not to deny local choice and leave people out.

Councillor Kerin remarked that he respected Councillor Halden’s commitment to education but felt that local authorities should prioritise two criteria; firstly that schools should be established in areas where they were needed and secondly that the local authority should work to ensure that all schools were ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’. He felt that the motion did not support these principles and had concerns with Members taking on individual pet projects, which could sometimes lead to unintended consequences, and that legislation prevented local authorities from opening schools.

Councillor J. Kent observed that the motion contradicted national Conservative Party policy and felt that it would damage every one of Thurrock’s secondary schools. He argued that Thurrock free schools, maintained schools and academies were improving and working collaboratively with each other.

Members were advised that the Head Teacher of the Harris Academy won the achievement of ‘Head Teacher of the Year’ and Councillor J. Kent felt that the motion would send a message to such people that their work was somehow not good enough and that a Grammar School was needed, which was not the case.

Councillor J. Kent further reported that local authorities were responsible for ensuring that there were sufficient school places in the Borough and to work with partners to develop free schools; he felt that to support the motion would be to put such work on hold and that instead Members should focus on improving current schools so that every Thurrock child had the opportunity to access a ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ education.

*At 9.16 pm, the Deputy Mayor moved a motion to suspend Council Procedure Rule 11.1 to allow the meeting to continue beyond the 2 ½ hour time limit until 10.00 pm. Members indicated their agreement to the proposal.*

Councillor Johnson did not agree with the sentiments made by Councillor J. Kent and argued that the motion would not put a stop to the good work the authority was already undertaking but allow greater choice for Thurrock pupils.

Councillor Snell observed that he would be supporting the motion, which was in line with UKIP party politics, and that it would send a message to Grammar School providers that Thurrock would look favourably on any proposal to develop provision in the Borough.

Councillor Gledhill stated that it was not right to hold back opportunities for Thurrock pupils to access Grammar School places and that the motion encouraged choice; although he agreed with Councillor Kerin that every school in the Borough should be 'good' or 'outstanding.'

Councillor Potheary remarked that she would not be in support of the motion, which would focus on a few gifted children or those who could afford Grammar School places. She argued that there should be a move away from testing children at 10 years of age rather than encouraging it.

Councillor B. Rice argued that she did not want to see the Borough go back to a Grammar School system which disadvantaged those people who did not attend Grammar Schools.

A further detailed debate took place during which a number of Members spoke in favour of Grammar Schools, which they argued offered greater choice, and others who were against as it would disproportionately disadvantage those from lower income backgrounds.

Councillor MacPherson commended the fact that all Members were passionate about education in Thurrock but argued that there was no one size fits all provision, and as a result the possibility of Grammar School expansion into Thurrock should be explored.

Upon being put to the vote, 29 Members voted in favour of the Motion, 16 Members voted against and none abstained, whereupon the Deputy Mayor declared the motion to be carried.

**RESOLVED:**

**Thurrock Council adopts the official position of being pro grammar school and desires that Thurrock children should have access to them.**

**The Authority should actively pursue / explore opportunities for grammar schools to expand into Thurrock via an annex.**

## **119. Motion submitted by Councillor Stewart**

Under Council Procedure Rule 19.17 Councillor Stewart proposed an alteration to her Motion, which read as follows:

*“That we ask Cabinet, at its next meeting, to immediately fund an alteration to the bus route to serve Fobbing over the winter months”.*

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Roast, to which Members signified their consent to the alteration of the motion without discussion.

Councillor Stewart introduced the motion, and in doing so, argued that the time to consider a change had passed and that residents now required action to ensure that Fobbing was not cut off during the winter months. She felt that it was the Council’s duty to safeguard the most vulnerable and that £9,000 was a relatively small amount to ensure that residents could access medical treatment and shop for essentials.

Councillor Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, reported that over the previous months he was pleased to meet with Fobbing residents and could announce that a strong way forward had been identified as the service would be retendered in early 2016. Councillor Gerrish advised that in the interim period he believed money could be redirected from income raised to deliver the service during the winter months, and in light of this progress expressed that he would agree with the motion.

Councillor Jones, as local Ward Councillor, explained that there were a large number of elderly residents who were affected by the bus service alteration and felt that a solution needed to be identified for Fobbing residents.

Councillor B. Little, as Chair of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, expressed his disappointment at the Portfolio Holder’s announcement that a solution had been found only now when the Committee had been working to identify such a solution and its calls to resolve the problem speedily had previously been ignored. He expressed his frustration with the situation, which he felt could have been resolved earlier.

Councillor Gledhill asked for reassurances that the alteration would be enacted before the Christmas period and stated that he would contact MP Stephen Metcalfe regarding a waiver to the 56 day notice.

Councillor Ray remarked that he was pleased the alteration had been amended and that Fobbing residents could be assisted over the winter period; although he was still concerned at the lack of footfall for the service in the long-term.

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

**RESOLVED:**

**That we ask Cabinet, at its next meeting, to immediately fund an alteration to the bus route to serve Fobbing over the winter months.**

**The meeting finished at 9.56 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)**