

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 29 June 2016 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Cathy Kent (Mayor), Tunde Ojetola (Deputy Mayor), Tim Aker, John Allen, Chris Baker, Jan Baker, Russell Cherry, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Robert Gledhill, Garry Hague, James Halden, Graham Hamilton, Shane Hebb (arrived 7.05), Clifford Holloway, Victoria Holloway, Roy Jones, Tom Kelly, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Brian Little, Susan Little, Sue MacPherson, Ben Maney, Bukky Okunade, Terry Piccolo, Jane Potheary, David Potter, Joycelyn Redsell, Sue Sammons, Angela Sheridan, Peter Smith, Graham Snell, Luke Spillman, Michael Stone, Pauline Tolson, Aaron Watkins and Kevin Wheeler

Apologies: Councillors James Baker, Claire Baldwin, Barbara Rice, Gerald Rice and Deborah Stewart

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT
Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Environment and Place
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation
Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Karen Wheeler, Head of Strategy, Communications and Customer Service
David Lawson, Deputy Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer
Matthew Boulter, Principal Democratic Services Officer
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

13. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 25 May 2016 were approved as a correct record.

14. Items of Urgent Business

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

15. Declaration of Interests

No Interests were declared.

16. Announcements on behalf of the Mayor and the Leader of the Council

Firstly the Mayor invited all those present to remember Thurrock's fallen during World War One and to reflect upon past conflicts and tragedies with the 100 year anniversary of the Battle of the Somme on Friday.

The Mayor then reflected on the tragedies that had happened across the world recently, with the Orlando shooting, the murder of MP Jo Cox and the recent bombing in Turkey and that together we will stand in defiance and none acceptance.

The Mayor stated that there was a 73 per cent turn out at the polling stations last week for the EU Referendum and that we will continue to support Thurrock and its residents regardless of any personal views and parties.

Finally the Mayor stated that since her election as mayor she had attended 19 events, 14 were in Thurrock and 5 were out of borough and gave a special mention to the presentation of the Sutherland pipes and drums in volunteers week and the reception attended to bid farewell to the last working Royal Mail Ship, St Helena, before her final voyages this year.

The Mayor reminded Members that it was the Orsett's Fire Station Open Day on Saturday 2 July and encouraged all to attend.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Gledhill, stated that looking to the future he promised to improve the environment across Thurrock and that the administration's commitment to residents was clear, "Clean It, Cut It, Fill It". To ensure that green and open spaces are kept to a standard that we are all proud of and to keep them that way.

Residents need to be able to trust the Council to provide these and more complex services and that the Council had the right people working to get them done.

To also address these problems within the borough a new approach was definitely needed and with this in mind Portfolio Holders will be presenting reports over the next couple weeks to address these. Any changes will not take priority and announcements will be made shortly on the how these will be moved forward.

Councillor Gledhill stated that after the EU Referendum last week, the Council were still waiting to see what happens next. Particularly on funding, infrastructure and procurement and that no statements had been received as yet regarding whether any existing infrastructure projects will be going ahead or if there will be any new ones.

Councillor Gledhill reassured members and residents that as soon as the Council receives any notice of change these will be made available.

17. 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>.

18. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors

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

Mr Perrin presented a petition to allow the continued trading of two premises in Derwent Parade in South Ockendon.

Councillor Collins presented a petition on behalf of residents of Lansbury Gardens, Tilbury on the increased concern for the safety of the complex.

19. 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.

20. 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 to Committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Gledhill, informed the Chamber that he wished to make the following changes:

- For Councillor Piccolo be appointed as member of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Collins.
- For Councillor Kelly be appointed as substitute member of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Piccolo.
- For Councillor Redsell be appointed as member of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Piccolo.

Councillor Snell, Leader of the UKIP Group, informed the Chamber that he wished to make the following changes:

- For Councillor Gamester be appointed as Vice Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Wheeler.
- For Councillor Gamester be appointed as Vice Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee.
- For Councillor Smith be appointed as Vice Chair of the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- For Councillor Hamilton be appointed as Vice Chair of the Standards and Audit Committee.
- For Councillor Hamilton be appointed to the vacancy on Licensing Committee.

Councillor Kent, Leader of the Labour Group, informed the Chamber that he wished to make the following changes:

- For Councillor Gerrish be appointed as substitute on Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- For Councillor Liddiard be appointed as member of the Health and Wellbeing Board to replace Councillor V Holloway.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Councillor Piccolo be appointed as member of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Collins.**
- 2. That Councillor Kelly be appointed as substitute member of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Piccolo.**
- 3. That Councillor Redsell be appointed as member of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Piccolo.**
- 4. That Councillor Gamester be appointed as Vice Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Wheeler.**
- 5. That Councillor Gamester be appointed as Vice Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee.**
- 6. That Councillor Smith be appointed as Vice Chair of the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- 7. That Councillor Hamilton be appointed as Vice Chair of the Standards and Audit Committee to replace Councillor Smith.**
- 8. That Councillor Hamilton be appointed as a member of the Licensing Committee.**
- 9. That Councillor Gerrish be appointed as a substitute member of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- 10. That Councillor Liddiard be appointed as a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board to replace Councillor V Holloway.**

21. Presentation by Essex Police

The Mayor introduced the Chief Superintendent, Sean O'Callaghan, the Assistant Chief Constable, Maurice Mason and Roger Hirst, Police and Crime Commissioner, to the meeting of Council and asked that they deliver their presentation which would then be followed by questions by Members.

The Police and Crime Commissioner thanked the Mayor and Members for inviting Essex Police to Thurrock Council and how important it was to engage with Members on Thurrock matters. A very detailed presentation was given by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Assistant Chief Constable to Members on the key local issues the Police faced:

- Key issues from the Community Safety Partnership and that the priorities of Thurrock will form part of the Police and Crime Plan.
- Sexual Violence – Domestic cases had been addressed in the manifesto in May.
- Road Safety – A serious issue in Essex that was being addressed by the police road unit.
- Gangs Conference – Gang activity was increasing in Essex and had received extra funding for new projects.
- Re-Structure of Community Police – This will be introduced into community hubs.
- Community Police – There are ten Special Police Officers and ten Specials lead by Inspector Lee Argent.
- Anti-Social Behaviour – Slightly down in the last few months but remains the forefront of achievements in partnerships.
- Multi Agency Safeguard Hub – It had excellent information sharing and being one of the best in the country.
- Training – Five thousand staff have been trained to be more aware and how to deal with vulnerability.
- Violence with Injury – Figures were slightly up.
- Safety – Essex was the fifteenth safest place out of forty-three in the country.
- Specials – Recruitment of 162 specials over the next twelve months and with the support of the Police and Crime Commissioner this will double in size. These will be placed into communities and safety teams.
- Community Safety Hubs – Have a good reputation in Thurrock with good information sharing and that the community safety plan will form part of this.
- Active Citizen – Recruiting of neighbours and friends to be more aware of residents around them.
- On-Line Fraud – One million pounds will be invested into digital to combat on-line fraud and to protect those most vulnerable.
- Hate Crime – This has risen in Thurrock by 50 per cent since the EU Referendum and that operations were already in place to address this.

Members raised the following questions:

Councillor Redsell – What was being done about the motorbikes that were causing mayhem across the borough? It was stated that further analysis would be undertaken with the police road unit to identify trends and patterns and that Essex Police have and will continue to be deployed to deal with incidents. The Police and Crime Commissioner would send details of what had already been achieved so far to Members.

Councillor S Little – Why were there delays when residents rang 101? It was confirmed that 92 per cent of 101 calls were answered within seconds and that the delay was with placing the call with the appropriate officer and on average there was a 2 minute wait. An investigation would be undertaken to identify the best way forward, to look at the costs and time of calls being answered against the service that was already in place.

Councillor Jones – What were Essex Police views on sharing premises with other emergency services such as Fire or Ambulance sites? It was stated that more would be done to share accommodation with other services and that advanced work was already in place with the fire service. Essex Police were also visiting schools within the borough to educate children.

Councillor Piccolo – If an off-road facility for motorbikes in the borough could be made available would this be supported by Essex Police? It was stated that if sufficient funding could be made available then yes this could be an option.

Councillor Smith – Agreed with other Members that bikers were a nuisance in the borough and that this should be prevented. It was confirmed that this was obviously a concern felt by more than one member and will be taken away and discussed with the Police Community Team.

Councillor Potheary – Were the police stations in Tilbury and Ockendon still planned to be closed? It was stated that no decisions would be reversed on the closure of police stations and that police officers should be more present in the community. Trends and patterns would be analysed on anti-social behaviour within the borough and would form part of the community safety plan.

Councillor Hague – What assurances can you give to residents of Thurrock that the threat of gangs to areas, such as Lakeside, was in hand? It was stated that significant arrests had taken place, with very good communications in place with the Metropolitan Police. More operations were being undertaken with stop and search proving a success. Monies had also been contributed by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Councillor Cherry – How many police officers were non-operational? It was stated that great strides were being made to address the high proportion of officers on sick leave. It was also stated that although officers were not

necessary available for operational work they would be working in the back office.

Councillor Tolson – With 46 per cent of hate crime been recorded in Essex how did this relate to Thurrock? It was stated that the 46 per cent related to 46 offences in Essex with very few of those offences in Thurrock.

Councillor Okunade – What forward planning and steps are being taken to protect residents of Thurrock? It was stated that the model used revolves around public protection, a serious crime directorate to deal with gangs and the local community police who will deal best with the local community issues.

Councillor Spillman – What assurances can you give residents that crimes were being recorded correctly? It was stated that a very robust approach to recording crimes was in place and Essex were the second best in the country for data accuracy. Essex Police would not become complacent and would continue to maintain high standards.

Councillor Ojetola – What links do the police have with gangs and multiple occupational homes? It was stated that gangs were buying and dealing from these premises and that inter agency action was in place and the community safety hubs were also in place to ensure the community was a safer place.

Councillor Hebb – What work was being done to reach the unreachable? It was stated that these were normally those people who did not feel safe or afraid to speak out and that any damaged reputation of the trust of the police needs would need to be rectified. The use of Crime Stoppers would need to be promoted and used in these situations.

Councillor Watkins – Will there be any future Resident and Police Events in the next year? It was confirmed that yes there will be future events as these events enabled Essex Police to track any trends and patterns in areas, however, police visibility was also important online.

Councillor Gerrish – What was in place to help educate residents to ring 101/999 if they have felt the system has failed them in the past? It was stated that this was a concern that some calls were being missed and that calls were monitored and this would be addressed so that the service improved.

The Police and Crime Commissioner thanked the Mayor and Members for inviting Essex Police to the council meeting and had received some good feedback to take away and asked Members to continue with questions and feedback by emailing himself or the Assistant Chief Constable.

The Mayor thanked the Chief Superintendent, Assistant Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner for attending.

22. Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2015-16

Members received information on the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report that provided them with the main achievements of the overview and scrutiny committees for the municipal year 2015-16. The report was designed to inform residents of the achievements in an accessible and engaging format.

Councillor Hebb stated that lots of great ideas came out of the overview and scrutiny committees last year with some very passionate chair, vice chairs and members with good discussion. Noticeable was Councillor B Little's chairmanship of the cross party board and examination of the Lower Thames Crossing.

Councillor Hebb thanked all Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the work undertaken and thanked all Officers for the reports prepared.

Councillor Hebb stated that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee covered three parts – Democracy, Performance and Finance. For democracy, a cross party discussion on the elections in Thurrock had taken place and it had been agreed to reach out to Thurrock's customers, residents and business to ask them how the model of how politicians are elected in Thurrock in the future and announced that a report on this will be presented at July's Full Council.

Councillor Hebb stated he had one regret about a task that had not been undertaken at Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that was the accountability of Members and how they operated and represented Thurrock. Councillor Hebb stated that through the Legal Team, a report would be presented that would look at the highest accountability that will apply to members who do not abide by code of conduct or good governance.

Councillor Hebb stated that one performance KPI on Environment had not improved so this will now be followed up on the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Hebb stated that the review of the quality of KPI performance measures model which was currently red, amber and green would be changing to only Achieved or Failed.

A great amount of discussion had taken place with Sean Clark, Director of Finance and IT, on the future budget and the reserves amount which had not been revised since 2010/11 and those results would be announced in due course.

Councillor C Holloway stated that with regard to the announcement made by C2C on providing more carriages on trains he asked that Members to ensure that C2C are more specific on what they promise.

Councillor B Little stated that a further Planning Transport and Regeneration Committee was scheduled for next week and further updates would be available following this committee.

Councillor Wheeler asked if there were any details of costings on the employing of staff rather than Agency. Councillor Hebb stated as a new administration these costings will be reviewed and feedback would be available in due time.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015-16 be noted.

23. Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that five questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Members appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee were received.

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

24. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies

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

25. Minutes of Committees

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

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

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

The meeting finished at 8.55pm.

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**