

Council – 21 May 2024

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **21 May 2024** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mr J Lawmon
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs S J Page

Cllr Mrs D L Belton	Cllr R Milne
Cllr N J Booth	Cllr G W Myers
Cllr E L Brewer	Cllr J E Newport
Cllr P Capon	Cllr L J Newport
Cllr M R Carter	Cllr M O’Leary
Cllr R P Constable	Cllr D W Sharp
Cllr J E Cripps	Cllr P Shaw
Cllr A G Cross	Cllr Mrs L Shaw
Cllr D S Efde	Cllr Mrs D P Squires-Coleman
Cllr A H Eves	Cllr C M Stanley
Cllr Mrs J R Gooding	Cllr M J Steptoe
Cllr M Hoy	Cllr M Sutton
Cllr Ms T D Knight	Cllr I H Ward
Cllr R Lambourne	Cllr M J Webb
Cllr R C D Linden	Cllr A L Williams
Cllr Miss A D Marriott	Cllr S A Wilson
Cllr E O K Mason	Cllr I C Wilson
Cllr J R F Mason	Cllr Mrs V A Wilson
Cllr Mrs J E McPherson	Cllr S E Wootton

Please note that the full livestream of this meeting can be viewed at

[Annual Council \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

OFFICERS PRESENT

J Stephenson	- Chief Executive
S Summers	- Strategic Director
F Duhamel	- Strategic Director
P Barnes	- Director Assets & Investments
S Bennett	- Director Customer & Data Insight
G Campbell	- Director Policy & Delivery
M Hotten	- Director Environment
L Stretch	- Director Housing
C Mayhew	- Interim Director of Governance
T Willis	- Interim Director Resources
N Mann	- Interim Director People
M Stickley	- Interim Corporate Manager Democratic Services RDC & BBC

H Boyd - Civic Officer
W Szyszka - Democratic Services Officer
V Meanwell - Democratic Services Officer

202 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 February and 20 February were approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

Members thanked the Chairman, Jack Lawmon for his service.

203 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Good evening,

First, may I welcome everyone to this evening's meeting. Also, I would like to extend a warm welcome and congratulations on the recent election our new members Cllrs Phil Capon, Angelina Marriott, Matt O'Leary, Phil Shaw, Mike Sutton, Mike Webb and Ian Wilson and congratulations to Cllrs Roger Constable, Jim Cripps, Michael Hoy, Bob Milne, Gary Myers and Lisa Newport on their re-election.

I would also like to thank the non-returning Councillors, Lesley Butcher, Ian Foster, Eileen Gadsdon, James Gooding, Christine Mason and Dave Sperring. Thank you for all your work on behalf of the Council and your Wards.

I would like to thank everyone for their support and participation during the past year as Chairman. It has been a privilege to represent the Rochford District Council over the past 12 months. Visiting young people at their schools and events seeing the enthusiasm they have. For the privilege of opening various businesses and attending annual events celebrating their achievements and presenting awards for businesses and individuals who have excelled during this past year. To attending and celebrating the installation of our new High Sheriff and being invited to so many civic events and functions around the Essex County. Becoming a part of the Chain Gang of Mayors and Chairman in and out of Essex.

I have made a number of personal friends along the way and will be following up on these contacts.

Above all I wish to give my thanks to the staff members of Rochford District Council and those who I have engaged with at our partner Brentwood Borough Council for their support and inclusion in many of my official duties, especially the corporate staff who have been my mainstay of direction. Thank you, ladies.

As you will know I did not stand for election this year due to professional advice but hopefully I will or may return next year.

It has been a magnificent journey when I first became a Councillor with Rayleigh Town Council shortly later to then becoming a Rochford District Councillor, then becoming Vice Chairman of Rochford in 2015 and Chairman of Rayleigh Town Council in 2018 and now in 2023/4 I am the Chairman of Rochford District Council.

During this time amazing events such as digging the dirt with Sir David Amess for the foundation of Little Havens Hospice in Southend, Lighting the district beacon at Mill Hall for the celebration of the Queen's anniversary, the poppies at Trinity Church and many many more. Being a part of the team in re writing the Constitution for this Council for the future administration. It's a shame but I would have liked to have worked in the new council to understand the active changes.

Well, I have my photos to reflect on all of my time.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended and supported our charity events in aid of SCAFT (Supporting Carers and Families Together). With your generosity and support, we raised over £5,000, making a significant impact on the lives of carers and families in our community. This achievement is a testament to the compassion and solidarity that defines Rochford District.

I would especially like to thank my Chaplain, Reverend Kim Lepley, for her unwavering support and guidance over this year. Reverend Lepley's wisdom, counsel, and encouragement have been a source of strength and inspiration for me. Her presence and support have been invaluable, and I am deeply grateful for her contributions to our community and to my tenure as Chairman.

As I pass the baton to the incoming Chairman for 2024-2025, I am confident that our district will continue to thrive.

Thank you, and good luck to our new Chairman!

204 TO ELECT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE 2024/25 MUNICIPAL YEAR.

Cllr M Hoy moved a Motion seconded by Cllr J E Newport that Cllr SJ Page be nominated as Chairman of the Council.

Cllr D L Belton moved a Motion seconded by Cllr D S Efde that Cllr S E Wootton be nominated as Chairman of the Council.

(10 members voted in favour of Cllr S E Wootton, 28 voted in favour of Cllr SJ Page)

Cllr D L Belton referred to 17.3 of the constitution, given extenuating circumstances look to an alternative voting method. Some members feel there are extenuating circumstances this year and would like to consider a secret ballot.

The Monitoring Officer, gave advice to the Chairman that a secret ballot is not a valid mechanism for this vote for three reasons:

1. The Council already has an appropriate mechanism for voting on this issue - a show of hands.
2. The extenuating circumstances mentioned in standing order 17.3 are not met. This provision was proposed for the new constitution for circumstances in which a valid ordinary vote cannot be held, such as a public health emergency where a council meeting cannot be properly convened.
3. The council does not have a standing order providing for a secret ballot, which is the practice in authorities which have secret ballots.

Resolved

That Cllr SJ Page be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

Cllr S J Page made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman

205 TO ELECT THE VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE MUNICIPAL 2024/25 YEAR.

Cllr A L Williams moved a Motion seconded by Cllr M Hoy that Cllr J E McPherson be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council.

Resolved

Cllr J E McPherson be elected Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

(38 members voted in favour of the Motion, 0 against and 1 abstained)

Cllr J E McPherson made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Vice-Chairman.

206 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS ON INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

207 DISTRICT AND PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS

Council received the results of the District and Parish Council elections held on 2 May 2024.

208 NOTICE OF GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The Proper Officer had received details of the membership of the political groups. Liberal Democrats, the Non-Aligned Group, The Conservatives and Rochford District Residents.

209 TO ELECT THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE 2024/25 MUNICIPAL YEAR.

Cllr M Hoy moved a Motion seconded by Cllr C M Stanley that Cllr J E Newport be appointed as Leader of the Council.

Resolved

That Cllr J E Newport be appointed as Leader of the Council for the ensuing year.

(29 members voted in favour of the Motion, 0 against and 10 abstained)

Cllr J E Newport moved a Motion seconded by Cllr S A Wilson that Cllr M Hoy be appointed as Deputy Leader of the Council.

Resolved

Cllr M Hoy be appointed as Deputy Leader of the Council for the ensuing year.

(21 voted in favour of the Motion, 2 against and 16 abstained)

210 THE LEADERS STATEMENT.

I would like to thank members for their support in my nomination as leader and I will be truly honoured to represent Rochford District Council taking up this role. I am extremely proud of our District and what we have achieved together during the last year in the Joint administration, and I should make it clear, that I do not dismiss the efforts of the administration that came before, our Council really has benefited from the additional talent that was previously out of reach and has been made available through the partnership with Brentwood.

I would like to take a moment to reflect on my personal journey as a Councillor and I want to publicly acknowledge that I owe a great deal of thanks to Cllr John Mason. Yes, John is in part responsible for where I stand today. I was first elected in 2016 during all out elections and as a 'newbie' I was busy trying my best to navigate politics and all things that were thrown at me. Sadly, within 18 months, our group leader, Chris Black suddenly passed away. Still learning the ropes, John, unquestionably provided me with his support. During the last year, John took up the role of leading the cabinet and continued with his support not just for me, but all the lead members. From today, I hope to continue in the same way and be able to offer my support to our committee

chairs and members, new and old and put the future of Rochford District and its residents before politics – I would like to thank John for his patience and selflessness in his leadership.

From today, the Liberal Democrat Group and the Non-Aligned group will work together in a power sharing arrangement working towards a shared set of priorities. This arrangement will give representation across the District, putting the residents views at the heart of our priorities. The priorities will be shared to all members through the new committee system and of course to residents. As we take to the new committee system, I would urge members to embrace the change, which we believe, will create a more transparent, open and democratic Council. All members now have a greater opportunity for input and to take part in the decision-making process.

As we look to address the challenges that face local government, there may be difficult debates to be had and if I could ask just one thing of the members of this Council, I would ask that we challenge respectfully. Of course, it's important to have challenge but doing it in the right way. Challenge the decision, challenge the process but let's stop making it personal – lets show our residents that we are better than that. Our officers and our fellow members deserve respect for taking up, what are often difficult issues and despite this remain committed.

As I take on this pared back role of leader under the committee system, I look forward to representing our Council on our policy positions, supporting colleagues, working with the head of paid service and pursuing the interests of our Council in the community and at regional, national and international levels. I will work hard to be the best ambassador for our Council that I can be.

Thank you all for indulging me.

211 COMMITTEES AND TERMS OF REFERENCE.

To note that the Council formally approved the committees and their terms of reference at Full Council on 14 December 2023.

212 POLITICAL BALANCES AND ALLOCATION OF COMMITTEE SEATS AND COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS.

The council is required to approve the allocation of seats on committees, receive nominations from political groups to committees and by convention appoint chairs and vice chairs of committees.

Cllr D L Belton moved an amendment, seconded by Cllr D S Efde that an alternative nomination to Cllr Myers for the role of Vice Chairman of Planning Policy Committee be put forward and nominated Cllr M J Steptoe.

(21 members votes for Cllr G W Myers and 16 votes for Cllr M J Steptoe)

Resolved

Cllr G W Myers be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Planning Policy Committee.

Cllr V A Wilson moved an amendment, seconded by Cllr J R F Mason that an alternative nomination to Cllr M J Webb for role of Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny & Performance Committee be put forward and nominated Cllr N J Booth.

(20 members voted for Cllr M J Webb and 19 votes for Cllr N J Booth)

Resolved

Cllr M J Webb be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Performance Committee.

Cllr J E Newport moved a Motion that the three recommendations on page 12.1 of the report be approved, seconded by Cllr J R Gooding.

Resolved

1. That the allocation of seats as set out in Appendix A be approved.
2. That the nominations from the political groups to Committees as set out in Appendix B be approved.
3. That the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees as set out in Appendix B be appointed.

(38 voted for the recommendations, 0 against and 0 abstained)

213 COMMITTEE CALENDAR.

To note that the Council formally approved the committee calendar and their terms of reference at Full Council on 14 December 2023.

214 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES.

To consider the report of Acting Director Governance appoint representatives to Outside Bodies.

Cllr J E Newport moved a Motion that the three recommendations on page 14.1 of the report be approved, seconded by Cllr M Hoy.

Resolved

1. To agree which outside bodies will be appointed to for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A.
2. Confirm the appointment of the representative where it is the Leader/Deputy Leader or Chairman/Vice Chairman for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A.
3. Confirm which committee will make the appointments to the other outside bodies for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A.

(37 members voted for the recommendations, 0 against and 1 abstained)

215 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE MILL HALL ARTS AND EVENTS CENTRE WORKING GROUP.

To consider the report of Director Assets and Investments to agree terms of reference of the Mill Hall Arts and Events Centre working group.

Cllr M Hoy moved a Motion seconded by Cllr M Sutton to approve the two recommendations set out on page 15.1 of the report.

Resolved

1. It is proposed that Council agrees to form a Working Group for the Mill Hall Arts and Events Centre.
2. That the Mill Hall working group (MHWG) refers to the Economic Development, Regeneration and Tourism Committee, and that this committee agrees the terms of reference and membership of this working group.

(38 members voted for the recommendations, 0 against and 0 abstained)

The meeting closed at 20:32 hours.

Chairman

Date

If you would like these minutes in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

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