

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **28 June 2023** when there were present:-

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

Cllr Mrs D L Belton
Cllr N J Booth
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher
Cllr R P Constable
Cllr J E Cripps
Cllr A G Cross
Cllr D S Efde
Cllr A H Eves
Cllr I A Foster
Cllr Mrs E P Gadsdon
Cllr J N Gooding
Cllr Mrs J R Gooding
Cllr M Hoy
Cllr R Lambourne
Cllr R C D Linden
Cllr Mrs C M Mason

Cllr E O K Mason
Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr Mrs J E McPherson
Cllr R Milne
Cllr G W Myers
Cllr J E Newport
Cllr L J Newport
Cllr Mrs L Shaw
Cllr Mrs D P Squires-Coleman
Cllr C M Stanley
Cllr M J Steptoe
Cllr A L Williams
Cllr S A Wilson
Cllr Mrs V A Wilson
Cllr S E Wootton

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs E L Brewer, M R Carter, T D Knight, D W Sharp, D J Sperring and I H Ward.

OFFICERS PRESENT

E Yule	- Strategic Director
M Hotten	- Director of Environment
T Lilley	- Director of Communities & Health
C Mayhew	- Acting Director of People & Governance
S Worthington	- Acting Service Manager, Democratic Services, RDC and BBC
V Meanwell	- Democratic Services Officer
W Szyszka	- Democratic Services Officer

114 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 23 May 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

115 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman provided details of various civic engagements he had attended on behalf of the Council since the Annual Council meeting, including starting and witnessing a fundraising event for 2nd Rayleigh Scouts which featured them pulling a 10-tonne truck along the car park of Holy Trinity Church, Rayleigh; the opening of a beauty business in West Street, Rochford; Trinity Fair in Rayleigh; Reserve Forces Training event at the Army Reserve Centre

in Brentwood; Junior Music Festival at the Cliffs Pavilion and of engagements attended by the Vice-Chairman, including the opening of Bianca's Boutique in Rayleigh, the launch of the Mayor of Southend's Charity; Southend Guide Dogs Flag Day; and Southend Civic Service.

116 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD BETWEEN THE PERIOD 1 FEBRUARY TO 14 JUNE 2023

Council received the Minutes of Executive and Committee meetings held between the period 1 February to 14 June 2023 and these Minutes were noted.

117 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND OTHER FORUMS 2023/24

Council considered the report of the Monitoring Officer that was deferred from Annual Council on 23 May 2023 inviting Council to appoint representatives to service on outside bodies and other forums for the 2023/24 Municipal year.

A revised addendum 2 had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting relating to recommendation 2 of the report.

During debate and voting for this item of business, Cllr R C D Linden withdrew his nomination for one of the 3 available appointments to the London Southend Airport Consultative Committee. Cllr Mrs C M Mason withdrew her nomination for one of the 3 available appointments to the Sanctuary in Rochford Committee.

In response to Member concern about voting on these appointments, the Monitoring Officer drew Members' attention to the advice note that had been circulated to all Members which set out clearly the process to be followed on voting for these appointments, in line with Council Procedure Rule 17.6. She further emphasised that this was currently the only provision within the Council's Constitution, which did not deal with scenarios relating to multiple appointments.

Cllr Mrs C M Mason moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr S E Wootton, that the recommendations set out in the officer report be approved and this was unanimously approved.

Resolved

- (1) That the appointment of an officer and Executive Lead Members, or a Councillor nominated by the Leader, to outside bodies for the 2023/24 Municipal Year be as set out in the appendix to the Minutes.
- (2) That Member representatives (including substitutes) be appointed for the 2023/24 Municipal Year to the outside bodies set out in the

appendix to the Minutes.

- (3) That the attendance of the Leader of the Council (or their nominee) and Executive Lead Members as the Council's representatives at a number of external partnerships be noted.
- (4) That appointments be made to three seats on the Sanctuary in Rochford Committee for the 2023/24 Municipal Year as set out in the appendix to the Minutes.
- (5) That the appointment of the Executive Lead Member for Communities & Health or equivalent Leader nominee to the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel and the nomination by the Leader of a substitute, as detailed in the appendix to the Minutes, be endorsed.
- (6) That the appointment of the Executive Lead Member for Communities & Health or equivalent Leader nominee to the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit and the nomination by the Leader of a substitute, as detailed in the appendix to the Minutes, be endorsed.
- (7) That the Executive Lead Member for Environmental Services or equivalent Leader nominee be appointed to the River Crouch Coastal Community Team Steering Group and the Executive Lead Member for Leisure, Tourism & Wellbeing or equivalent Leader nominee be appointed as their substitute and that one other Member and one other substitute also be appointed to the Steering Group, as detailed in the appendix to the Minutes.
- (8) That appointments be made on a pro rata basis to the 7 seats on the Partnership Panel, as detailed in the appendix to the Minutes. (MO)

118 APPOINTMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP

Council considered the report of the Monitoring Officer inviting Council to appoint Members to the Constitution Working Group and to agree the terms of reference of the Working Group.

Cllr J E Newport moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr Mrs C M Mason that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.

It was noted that the terms of reference were set out in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.6 of the report and that recommendation 2 should be adjusted to reflect that.

In response to a Member concern that the report did not set out the potential financial implications of the proposed work on the Constitution and that a report should be brought to Council providing details of costs over a 5-year period of associated with the move to a committee structure, the Monitoring Officer advised that paragraph 4 of the report indicates that there should only be nominal costs associated with the operation of the Working Group, e.g.,

Councillor mileage claims or potentially the costs of accommodation, should it not be possible to use Council accommodation, although every effort would be made to do so. It was, however, emphasised that a review of the Constitution had already been planned and thus those costs would already have been incurred. In addition, paragraph 6 of the report sets out that the Constitution was already programmed for review and accordingly the process could be absorbed within existing officer time. In respect of any costs associated with the new committee structure, once the Working Group completed this work and makes recommendations, any costs associated with any new structure would be brought forward to Council when consideration was being given to which committee structure to go forward with.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed, in response to a further Member question, that the revised Constitution would be brought to Full Council for ratification.

Cllr S E Wootton moved a Motion to amend recommendation 1, seconded by Cllr Mrs L Shaw, that the Council appoints a Constitution Working Group with one Member from each political group of 5 Members or less and 2 Members from each political group of over 7 Members and this was lost on a show of hands.

(9 Members voted in favour of the Motion, 22 against and 2 abstained.)

Cllr M J Steptoe moved a further amendment to recommendation 1, seconded by Cllr A L Williams, that the non-Group Member, Cllr Mrs J E McPherson, should also be offered a seat on the Working Group. This amendment was, however, withdrawn when Cllr Mrs J E McPherson declined the opportunity of a seat on the Working Group.

Cllr Mrs C M Mason, in supporting the recommendations as set out in the report, emphasised the highly detailed work required; those Members nominated for the Working Group would need to be committed to this work. Larger numbers on the Working Group could cause problems; it was important that the Working Group was politically neutral ensuring a fair and balanced Constitution.

In response to a question raised by a Member as to whether, given the important nature of the work, the 6 Members of the Working Group could nominate substitutes, the Monitoring Officer advised that the Constitution prohibits substitutes for working groups.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council appoints a Constitution Working Group of six Members, one from each political group.
- (2) That the terms of reference for the Constitution Working Group, as set out in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.6, be agreed. (MO)

(25 Members voted in favour of the Motion, 0 against and 8 abstained.)

119 DECLARING A CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

Council considered the report of the Executive Lead Member for Resources, Climate Change & Economy on declaring a climate and ecological emergency.

Cllr M Hoy made the following statement:-

“This report sets out the rationale for the Council to declare a climate and ecological emergency and seeks the Council’s agreement to this declaration. The report also outlines the Council’s response to climate change, including developing its action plan to achieve net zero carbon status for the Council’s own estate by 2030 and for the Rochford District area by 2040. To date, 393 councils in the UK have declared a climate emergency and tonight will make it 394. Some people have asked what purpose declaring a climate emergency achieves. I’m happy to answer that now. The declaration of a climate and ecological emergency acknowledges that our Council needs to act on the courses and impacts of climate change. It shows our commitment to this. It is one of our administration’s top priorities, not just for us, but also for our residents. It allows us to follow our own declared path to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. It also, hopefully, inspires the rest of the district to create their own paths to carbon neutrality. We pledge them our support and will signpost businesses, organisations and residents to relevant help and resources.

There will be a dedicated committee and smart targets to achieve our objectives. This means the targets are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound. The overall target, however, is to be carbon neutral by 2030 and all our agreed targets will be aiming for that. These targets will hopefully be presented to the Council on 18 July, resources dependant. The new committee, which will include at least one Member from all political groups and also the non-aligned Member, will be setting the smart targets and looking at the costs of carbon savings and new initiatives. Some ideas are already being looked at, such as hydro treated vegetable oil, which creates 95% less carbon dioxide and 25% less nitrous dioxide. We will also be looking at a pool cover for Clements Hall, which needs the agreement of Fusion obviously, at this point in time, which will pay back its cost inside a year through the depletion in costs and therefore in carbon usage. There are also opportunities to insulate our buildings, direct our residents to funding to help insulate their homes. These are just initial ideas and I expect the committee to contribute much more than this and to build on the initial work of the previous administration which can be seen in this sustainability strategy which we will look to use, to work with and to develop.

I will be reporting back to each Full Council meeting on progress made, either by written report or verbally and I am formally proposing recommendations 1 to 4 on page 9.1 of the report.”

Cllr Mrs J R Gooding seconded the Motion.

In support of the Motion, Members made the following observations:-

- It was pleasing to see the Council's commitment to biodiversity.
- It was important to emphasise the importance of the risk of flooding within RDC's coastal district.
- It was important to emphasise the importance of seeking grant funding for the insulation of older housing stock and part owned properties.
- It would be useful to involve the Youth Council in this work.
- Work had already been undertaken last year, including the launch of RIBA, the updating of the sustainability strategy, workshops for local stakeholders, calculating the RDC carbon footprint baseline.

The following questions and concerns were raised by Members:-

- How much of the work currently being undertaken by the County Council on climate change would feed into the work that would be undertaken by this Council?
- Would work be undertaken with the Ministry of Defence on climate change, given the large area of coastline within the District?
- What difference would declaring a climate emergency make?
- Declaring a climate emergency implied that something had happened that hadn't been expected; climate change, however, was not unexpected and did not require immediate attention but rather constant attention.
- Why was a recent planning application for a solar farm rejected?
- The report did not contain sufficient detail or substance.
- There should be regular, written progress reports to Council on climate change. These should include a project plan with a list of realistic priorities, objective analysis of both the environmental benefits and the impact on the district's residents, bearing in mind the cost of living pressures, together with details of funding proposals.
- How many Members would be on the Committee?

In response Cllr Hoy stated that declaring a climate emergency would allow for greater influence within the new Local Plan. The previous climate change working group did not have powers to take specific actions. He cited page 9.4 of the report which made reference to the Council measuring progress using Council Climate Scorecards and ensuring that all Council decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions were in line with a shift to net zero carbon emissions by 2030. He emphasised that it was important to listen to the views of all Councillors before imposing any targets, which should be whole Council targets; the committee would set and own the targets. He confirmed that there would be written reports to every Full Council meeting, with written reports to the Executive prior to Council meetings.

Resolved

- (1) To declare a 'Climate and Ecological Emergency' acknowledging that the Council needs to prevent a climate and ecological catastrophe.

On a requisition to Council Procedure Rule 17.4 a recorded vote was taken as follows:-

For (20) Cllrs J E Cripps; A G Cross; D S Efde; J N Gooding; Mrs J R Gooding; M Hoy; R Lambourne; J L Lawmon; R C D Linden; J R F Mason; Mrs J E McPherson; R Milne; G W Myers; J E Newport; L J Newport; Mrs S J Page; Mrs DP Squires-Coleman; C M Stanley; A L Williams; S A Wilson

Against (1) Cllr R P Constable

Abstain (12) Cllrs Mrs D L Belton; N J Booth; Mrs L A Butcher; A H Eves; I A Foster; Mrs E P Gadsdon; Mrs C M Mason; E O K Mason; Mrs L Shaw; M J Steptoe; Mrs V A Wilson; S E Wootton

- (2) To confirm the Council's commitment to achieving net zero carbon status by 2030 for its own estate, and by 2040 for the Rochford District area, and pursue efforts to achieve net zero CO2 emissions even earlier and protect and enhance biodiversity.

(31 Members voted in favour of the Motion, 0 against and 2 abstained.)

- (3) To rename the Climate & Sustainability Committee to the Climate Emergency Committee.

(22 voted in favour of the Motion, 2 against and 9 abstained.)

- (4) That the Council lobby for further funding and policy changes at a national level to support the delivery of the Sustainability Strategy. (DE)

(The Motion was unanimously agreed.)

120 REPORT OF THE LEADER ON THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE

Council received the following report from the Leader on the work of the Executive:-

"Good Evening Members. This is my first opportunity to give feedback and share with Full Council the work of The Executive under the Joint Administration. It is verbal this time but I will ask for the Minutes to include all the main points that I am sharing with you now.

We circulated to All Members on 2 June the roles and responsibilities of each Lead Member. With Lauren Stretch having taken up her appointment as

Director of Housing (Welcome) all Lead Members are engaged with Service Directors.

You have debated and voted tonight on proposals to take forward work on a New Constitution and a Committee System of Governance for the 2024/25 Municipal Year. As a heads up I can tell you that the Working Group will also be asked to consider bringing back the Area Committees but on a new model of direct engagement with residents.

You have also agreed to declare a Climate Emergency and the Climate Emergency Committee will meet in July in order to consider formulating actions and plans both internal and external to the Council and bringing these to Full Council.

The appointment of an RDC duty manager and staff to manage The Mill Hall is underway and there will be a Deed Of Variation to the Leisure Contract approved by RDC to withdraw Fusion from managing leisure operations at Mill Hall.

Direct engagement is being renewed with the potential partners who responded to the EOI very shortly and options for a new operating model will be put forward by Officers to an Executive Workshop on 19 July.

That Executive Workshop will also receive options for consideration leading to a review of the ADP and alongside that we will look at options for Castle Hall. At the same time we will be reviewing funding sources and the Capital Programme to allow for proposals to come forward to Full Council. There will be opportunity for all Members of the Council to be briefed as necessary ahead of any paper and recommendations to Full Council.

The Planning Policy Committee will meet on 27 July and with a programme of regular Committee Meetings, Members will be asked to approve and work to a critical path timeline plan of mini steps and deliverables leading to a recommendation to Council for a Preferred Options Consultation as soon as possible. But do keep your diaries free towards the end of this year. In view of the delay experienced in setting an earlier date for the Committee, the Lead Member will be issuing a Briefing Note to update all Members.

We have reserved the All Member Briefing in September for a presentation and debate on Devolution and Greater Essex. But we are in the hands of the negotiators and the Government to reach an agreement, of course.

CCTV. This project is under review. It is being given priority.

Food Waste. A revised plan has been recommended by the Service Director and delivery by RDC and Norse is expected to be in early Q2 2024.

And finally, and certainly not least, the IT Disaster Recovery Plan and Test Log is being reviewed.

I look forward to my next opportunity to update the Council on the work of The Executive.”

The meeting closed at 9.47 pm.

Chairman

Date

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

Outside Body	Appointees	Substitutes
Bradwell B Community Forum	Cllr A L Williams	Cllr Mrs J E McPherson
Bradwell Local Community Liaison Council	Cllr A L Williams	Cllr Mrs J E McPherson
Essex Countywide Traveller Unit	Cllr L J Newport	
Essex Flood Partnership Board	Cllr C M Stanley	Cllr J E Cripps
Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	Cllr L J Newport	
Hockley Community Centre Association	Cllr A H Eves Cllr Mrs E P Gadsdon	N/A
London Southend Airport Consultative Committee	Cllr J N Gooding Cllr M Hoy Cllr S E Wootton	Cllr Mrs J R Gooding (substitute for Cllr J N Gooding) Cllr S A Wilson (substitute for Cllr M Hoy) Cllr A G Cross (substitute for Cllr S E Wootton)
Rayleigh Grange Community Association Governing Body	Cllr Mrs E L Brewer Cllr L J Newport	N/A
Rayleigh Mount Local Committee	Cllr R C D Linden	Cllr Mrs S J Page
River Crouch Coastal Community Team Steering Group	Cllr M Hoy Cllr Mrs J E McPherson	

Outside Body	Appointees	Substitutes
Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils	Cllr Mrs J R Gooding	Cllr T D Knight
Sanctuary in Rochford Committee	Cllr L J Newport Cllr Mrs L Shaw Cllr S A Wilson	

Organisation	Appointees
Partnership Panel	Cllr J E Cripps Cllr A G Cross Cllr A H Eves Cllr Mrs J R Gooding Cllr M Hoy Cllr D J Sperring Cllr M J Steptoe

Executive Lead Member Appointments	Appointees
Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Steering Group	Cllr L J Newport
Crouch Harbour Authority	Cllr Mrs J R Gooding
Essex Heritage Trust	Cllr Mrs J R Gooding
Essex Waste Partnership Board	Cllr C M Stanley
Local Government Association (LGA) General Assembly	Cllr J R F Mason
Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust (Board of Governors)	Cllr L J Newport

Executive Lead Member Appointments	Appointees
Rayleigh and Rochford Association of Voluntary Services	Cllr Mrs J R Gooding
South Essex Children's Partnership Board	Cllr Mrs J R Gooding
South Essex Parking Partnership	Cllr Mrs V A Wilson

Officer Appointments	Officer Appointee
NACRO N.C.E. Ltd	Jeanette Hurrell, Housing Options Team Leader