

**ANNUAL COUNCIL held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES,
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on TUESDAY, 21 MAY
2024 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor G Driscoll (Chair - outgoing)
Councillors M Ahmed, A Armstrong, H Asker, S Barker,
N Church, M Coletta, A Coote, C Criscione (Vice-Chair),
J Davey, A Dean, B Donald, J Emanuel, J Evans, C Fiddy,
M Foley (Chair), R Freeman, R Gooding, N Gregory,
N Hargreaves, R Haynes, P Lees, M Lemon, J Loughlin,
T Loveday, C Martin, D McBirnie, J Moran, E Oliver, R Pavitt,
A Reeve, N Reeve, B Regan, G Sell, R Silcock and M Sutton

Officers in attendance: P Holt (Chief Executive), B Ferguson (Democratic Services
Manager) and N Katevu (Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal
Services)

Also
present: C Emmett (UCAN), S Fishpool (ACCURO) and K Mendes-Day
(Uttlesford Foodbank).

C1 REMARKS OF THE OUTGOING CHAIR

The outgoing Chair opened the meeting and said he had very much enjoyed the past year and had met many interesting people and new friends. He thanked officers and members for their support, particularly Councillor Reeve as his fellow ward member, who had picked up additional work in the past year. He reserved special thanks to Susan Kempster and Melanie Maguire for their diligence, hard work and assistance in keeping him on track and ensuring he was always in the right place, at the right time. He also thanked his wife and consort, Angie, for all of her support.

He said he had represented the Council at 41 events but would be donating his invitation to Buckingham Palace to a well deserving member of staff who had gone the extra mile in the past year. He had also held 6 fundraising events for his chosen charities ACCURO and UCAN and was delighted to present cheques to Sue Fishpool (ACCURO) and Clive Emmett (UCAN) for a total of £4859.41.

C2 ELECTION OF THE CHAIR

The Chair called for nominations to take the chair.

Councillor Asker nominated Councillor Foley for the position of Chair of Council for 2024/25.

Councillor Emanuel seconded the proposal. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Foley as the Chair of Council.

C3 CHAIR'S STATUTORY DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Chair made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

He thanked Councillor Driscoll for his work as Chair of the Council and invited Councillor Reeve to say a few words.

Councillor Reeve commended Councillor Driscoll for his year in the Chair; he praised his ward colleague and said he had carried out his duties exceptionally well.

C4 ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIR

The Leader of the Council nominated Councillor Criscione to be Vice-Chair of the Council. She said she wanted to lead by example in terms of cross-party working practices and hoped nominating a member from the main opposition party would engender a collegiate environment. She said councillor Criscione deserved the nomination for his fair and diligent work as a member.

Councillor Gregory seconded the nomination; he said Councillor Criscione was an outstanding politician who could politics to one side in the interest of the public good. It had been an honour to serve with him on the Scrutiny Committee and his objective and forensic work was highly commended.

Councillor Sell endorsed the previous remarks and said he was very happy to support Councillor Criscione's nomination.

There were no further nominations for Vice-Chair of Council.

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Criscione as Vice-Chair of the Council.

C5 VICE-CHAIR'S STATUTORY DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Councillor Criscione made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office and took the Vice-Chair.

C6 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair said he looked forward to his year in the chair and spoke on the importance of democracy in an increasingly fragmented world, and that councillors had "far more in common than what divides us." He congratulated Councillor Moran for his election as Conservative Group Leader and for his recent wedding, and thanked Councillor Barker for her service as the previous Group Leader.

The Chair invited his chosen charity for the year ahead, Uttlesford Foodbank, to address Council.

Katy Mendes-Day spoke on the issues facing residents and how the Foodbank was providing support to those in need. A copy of her presentation slides have been appended to these minutes.

The Chair asked members to donate their Ward Initiative monies to Uttlesford Foodbank and forms were handed out.

Councillor Barker asked the Chair to review the schedule of council meetings in respect of full Council in April, as it appeared an additional meeting had been scheduled unnecessarily in a non-local election year.

C7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bagnall, Luck and Tayler.

C8 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 April were approved as a correct record.

C9 POLITICAL BALANCE 2024-2025

The Chair introduced the report regarding Political Balance 2024/25 and called for a proposer and seconder to move the recommendation.

Councillor Hargreaves proposed approval of the political balance calculation set out in the report.

Councillor Coote seconded the proposal.

The political balance calculation was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED to achieve political balance by allocating seats on its committees as detailed in the report.

C10 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL 2024-25

Councillor Barker proposed approval of the committee appointments set out in the report.

Councillor Armstrong seconded the proposal.

The proposal was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED that membership of the Council's Committees be appointed as set out in the report.

C11 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO WORKING GROUPS OF COUNCIL 2024-25

Councillor Alex Reeve proposed approval of the appointments of members to working groups of Council for 2024-25 as set out in the report.

Councillor Coote seconded the proposal.

The proposal was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED that membership of the Council's working groups be appointed as set out in the report.

C12 APPOINTMENT TO THE ESSEX POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

The Leader proposed appointing Councillor Sutton as the substantive appointment, and Councillor Gregory as the substitute, to the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

This was seconded by Councillor Driscoll.

The appointments were approved unanimously.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Sutton to be the substantive representative of the Council on the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel, and to appoint Councillor Gregory to be the substitute representative on the panel.

C13 REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Leader said she had asked the Local Government Association to carry out a peer review in regards to the wide array of strategic issues facing the Council. She said the review would be objective and politically independent. She said this would likely take place towards the end of the year and she would advise dates in due course.

C14 MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

There were no matters to report from the Executive and the Council's committees.

C15 MATTERS RECEIVED ABOUT JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

There were no matters received regarding joint arrangements.

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.40pm.