

**ANNUAL COUNCIL held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES,  
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 22 MAY  
2025 at 7.00 pm**

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

Officers in attendance: Dean Hermitage (Strategic Director of Planning), B Ferguson  
(Democratic Services Manager) and N Katevu (Monitoring  
Officer and Head of Legal Services)

Also  
present: K Mendes-Day (Uttlesford Foodbank)

**C1 MINUTE'S SILENCE**

The Chair opened the meeting and said he was very sad to announce the recent passing of former Councillor Garry LeCount. He said Councillor LeCount was first elected to the Council in February 2017 at a by-election and represented the ward of Elsenham and Henham until May 2023. He held a number of important positions during his time in office, including the Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee from 2019 to 2023 and the Chairman of Standards Committee 2022 to 2023. He also was a member of the Planning Committee from 2019 to 2023.

Councillor Gooding said he had known Councillor LeCount for many years and had worked with him on the Highways Panel. He portrayed a warm and productive working relationship and said he considered him a friend.

The Leader said Councillor LeCount had a unique skill-set and brought his many years of high-level business experience to the Chamber. He was a public servant and a good member for his ward of Elsenham and Henham.

A minute's silence was held.

**C2 REMARKS OF THE OUTGOING CHAIR**

The Chair summarised his year as Chair of the Council and firstly thanked the Executive Support team who had provided amazing support to keep him on track. He also thanked the Vice-Chair, Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services Manager for their assistance at meetings.

He said it had been an interesting year chairing UDC meetings, with the Local Plan and Local Government Reform amongst the critical issues debated. He thanked all members for their support and conduct over the past year.

He spoke positively on the extensive list of events he had attended in the past year, and reserved particular praise for Uttlesford Foodbank, his chosen Chair's charity. He presented a cheque to Katy Mendes-Day, Uttlesford Foodbank Director, for £10,208. She thanked him for his unwavering support and for championing the work of the Foodbank.

Councillors Sell and Gooding thanked Councillor Foley for his year in the Chair.

### **C3 ELECTION OF THE CHAIR**

The outgoing Chair called for nominations to elect a new Chair of Uttlesford District Council.

Councillor Gregory nominated Councillor Criscione as Chair of Council. He said he had demonstrated in his capacity as Vice-Chair that he was a worthy successor.

The Leader seconded the proposal and said Councillor Criscione had commended himself to Council during his time as Vice-Chair. She was delighted to support the nomination for an opposition member who was trusted by all groups in the Chamber, and said his parents and family could be very proud.

Councillor Foley praised Councillor Criscione and provided a summary of his background and achievements.

There were no further nominations. Councillor Criscione was duly elected Chair of Uttlesford District Council.

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Criscione as Chair of Uttlesford District Council.

### **C4 CHAIR'S STATUTORY DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

The Chair made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

He thanked Councillor Foley as the outgoing Chair and said he wanted to help councillors get the best for Uttlesford and improve community partnerships.

### **C5 ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIR**

The Chair called on nominations for the position of Vice-Chair.

Councillor Freeman nominated Councillor Armstrong for Vice-Chair. He praised his character and dependability and commended him to the role.

The Leader seconded the nomination. She commended Councillor Armstrong as a founding member of R4U and highlighted his experience in chairing meetings as Great Dunmow Town Council Mayor.

There were no further nominations.

Councillor Armstrong was duly elected Vice-Chair of Uttlesford District Council.

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Armstrong as Vice-Chair of Uttlesford District Council.

**C6 VICE-CHAIR'S STATUTORY DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

The Vice-Chair made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

**C7 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair said his chosen charities for this year were the local Air Cadets and Army Cadets. He said these youth organisations were important to him growing up and had, in part, inspired him to enter civic life. He said it was vital that people cared about the place they lived and their local community.

**C8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Donald, Luck, Silcock, Moran, Hargreaves and McBirnie.

There were no declarations of interest.

**C9 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 April 2025 were approved as a correct record.

**C10 POLITICAL BALANCE 2025-26**

The Chair invited comment on the Political Balance report for 2025/26.

Councillor Barker proposed approval of the Political Balance recommendation as set-out in the report.

Councillor Coote seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED to approve the political balance and the allocation of seats on its committees as detailed in the report.

**C11 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL 2025-26**

The Chair invited comment on the appointment to Council Committees for 2025/26.

In response to a member question regarding the Vice-Chair vacancy on the Audit and Standards Committee, the Leader said she had offered the position to the Conservative Group, as the main opposition, but was awaiting a nomination. She thanked Councillor Oliver, the outgoing Chair of Audit and Standards Committee, for his years of dedicated service leading the committee. She highlighted the changes to Chair and Vice-Chair appointments and proposed approval of the appointments set-out in the report, subject to a Conservative Group nomination for the Vice-Chair of Audit and Standards Committee.

Councillor Coote seconded the proposal.

In response to a member question, the Leader said there was no long-standing tradition of an opposition member chairing the Audit and Standards Committee, as under previous political administrations a majority group member had been appointed Chair of this committee.

RESOLVED to approve the appointments to Council Committees 2025/26 as set out in the report, subject to a Conservative nomination to the Vice-Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee.

**C12 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO WORKING GROUPS OF COUNCIL 2025-26**

The Chair invited comment on the appointment to Council Working Groups 2025/26.

The Leader proposed approval of the appointments set out in the report.

This was seconded by Councillor Alex Reeve.

RESOLVED to approve the appointments to Council Working Groups for 2025/26 as set out in the report.

**C13 APPOINTMENT TO THE ESSEX POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL**

The Chair invited comment on the appointment of the Council's representatives on the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

The Leader proposed the appointment of Councillor Sutton, as the substantive member, and Councillor Gregory as the substitute member.

This was seconded by Councillor Alex Reeve.

RESOLVED to approve the appointments of Councillor Sutton, as the substantive member, and Councillor Gregory, as the substitute member, to the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel 2025/26.

**C14 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2025-26**

The Calendar of Meetings for 2025/26 was noted.

**C15 REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The Leader said she had no particular announcements but thanked all members for their public service in the past year.

**C16 MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES**

The Chair said the Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff item had been referred to Council by the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee.

**C17 REVIEW OF THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARE TARIFF**

Councillor Armstrong, who was Chair of the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee at the point the report was recommended to Council, spoke to the paper regarding the Review of the Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff. He said the proposal had originated from the trade itself and the report had been considered by committee a second time following an objection during the public consultation, which had focused on the impact of an increase on those living in rural villages. He asked Council to consider the consultation responses received and proposed approval of the increase to the Hackney Carriage fare tariff.

Councillor Driscoll seconded the proposal.

Councillor Alex Reeve said the district was in 52<sup>nd</sup> position in respect of Hackney Carriage fares and he thought this was about right for a rural area. He would be voting against the proposal.

Councillor Barker clarified that two responses were received during the consultation, one in support and one objecting to the proposed increase. Furthermore, she said there had not been a rise in five years, which, in the context of inflationary pressures and the cost of living, made this proposal a fair one. This would only apply to Hackney Carriages, not private hire vehicles.

Councillor Driscoll said only forty-seven drivers in the district were Hackney Carriage drivers and stressed that this increase would not apply to private hire vehicles. He said he was not aware of any Hackney Carriage ranks in any village in Uttlesford, so this would not disproportionately impact those living in rural areas. He reiterated the cost-of-living crisis for drivers in respect of inflationary

pressures during the past five years and noted that the proposed increase would not recover the real earnings lost to inflation. He asked members to support the proposal.

RESOLVED to consider the responses to the public consultation and approve the proposed increases to the Hackey Carriage fare tariff.

C18

**MATTERS RECEIVED ABOUT JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

The Chair said no matters had been referred from external organisations. He thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The meeting was closed at 8.00pm.