

**COUNCIL held at ZOOM - [HTTPS://ZOOM.US/](https://zoom.us/), on TUESDAY, 19 MAY 2020
at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor R Freeman (Chair)
Councillors A Armstrong, H Asker, S Barker, M Caton, A Coote,
C Criscione, C Day, A Dean, G Driscoll, D Eke, J Evans,
P Fairhurst, M Foley, N Gregory, N Hargreaves, V Isham,
R Jones, A Khan, P Lavelle, P Lees, M Lemon, B Light, J Lodge,
J Loughlin, S Luck, S Merifield, E Oliver, R Pavitt, L Pepper,
N Reeve, G Sell, A Storah, M Tayler and J De Vries

Officers in attendance: A Bochel (Democratic Services Officer), B Ferguson
(Democratic Services Manager), D French (Chief Executive),
C Gibson (Democratic Services Officer), R Harborough (Director
- Public Services), S Pugh (Assistant Director - Governance and
Legal) and A Webb (Director - Finance and Corporate Services)

Also present: G Hyams (Support for Sight)

FC1 REMARKS OF THE OUTGOING CHAIR

The Chair said he would be donating the money he had raised throughout the year to Support for Sight. Gary Hyams of Support for Sight was present to accept the donation.

The Chair said it had been an interesting and sometimes challenging year. He had attended 33 events, with a further 17 cancelled due to the covid-19 pandemic. He thanked Melanie Maguire and Sue Kempster for their work managing his diary and organizing events. He had been keen to encourage quality debate throughout the year, and longer debate was not always better debate. Members had either been elected to bring about change or maintain the status quo, and it was their job to convince people that what they wanted was right.

FC2 ELECTION OF THE CHAIR

Councillor Tayler nominated Councillor Foley for the position of Chair of Council. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Foley as the Chair of Council.

FC3 CHAIR'S STATUTORY DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Chair made the declaration of acceptance of office.

The Chair thanked Councillor Freeman for his work as Chair of the Council.

FC4 ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIR

The Leader of the Council nominated Councillor Coote to be Vice Chair of the Council. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Coote to be Vice Chair of the Council.

FC5 VICE-CHAIR'S STATUTORY DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Vice Chair made the declaration of acceptance of office.

FC6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bagnall, LeCount and Sutton.

FC7 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

The minutes of the meetings on 22 and 30 April were approved as correct records of the meetings, and the Chair noted he would sign them at his earliest opportunity.

FC8 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair noted that the next year will look very different, with many meetings taking place remotely. The charity he had chosen to support was the Stroke Association, and he would also be aiming to help the Uttlesford Foodbank.

FC9 COMMITTEES AND POLITICAL BALANCE 2020-21

The Chair introduced the report in the second supplementary pack, which considered the political composition of the Council and recommended how seats on the five main committees be allocated between the six political groups.

RESOLVED to adopt the political balance on its committees as detailed in the report in the second supplementary pack.

FC10 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES 2020-21

Nominations had been submitted for positions on the five committees of the Council in accordance with the approved political balance. These were set out in the report in the second supplementary pack.

RESOLVED that all committees be appointed as proposed in the report in the second supplementary pack.

FC11 **APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS 2020-21**

Nominations had been submitted for positions on the Council's working groups. These were set out in the report .

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

FC12 **APPOINTMENT TO THE ESSEX POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL**

Councillors Day and LeCount had been nominated to be the substantive and substitute representatives respectively of the Council on the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

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

FC13 **REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The Leader thanked Councillor Freeman as outgoing Chair.

He said the following changes were being made to the Cabinet:

- Councillor Asker was to step down as Portfolio Holder for Council and Public Services. Councillor Freeman was to take up this position.
- Councillor Day was to become Portfolio Holder for Communities, Community Safety and Police and Fire Liaison.

The Council was continuing to respond well to the public health emergency and officers were doing an excellent job. There would hopefully be some focus on restoration of business and long-term recovery, working with businesses to get the high street going again, and possibly a role at Stansted Airport with quarantine arrangements. Supporting the homeless and those in need of shielding, and progressing business grants were also key elements of ongoing work.

The planning inspector for the North Essex Authorities Local Plan had found two of their three proposed garden communities to be unsound. The authorities had

options to withdraw the plan or take recommendations from the inspector to make it sound. The withdrawal of the Uttlesford Local Plan had not affected the inspector's decision to declare the proposed West of Braintree garden community unsound.

The peer review group from the East of England Local Government Association (LGA) had been approached for advice on how to proceed with a new local plan and on the Council's planning function, bringing together a number of other current reviews. The EELLGA reviewers would submit proposals in the next few days.

The coronavirus pandemic had necessitated changes to the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan. These proposed changes would be considered by the Cabinet meeting on 27 May and would be circulated to the Scrutiny Committee.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Budget said the government had asked for estimates of the shortfall to the Council's budget caused by the pandemic. The Council predicted this shortfall would be about £5.3 million. This was against an overall external funding requirement of just under £14 million. The government was offering assistance of just under £1 million. It would be necessary to do a recut of the budget, but the unknowns were too great to do this at the moment.

In relation to the Council's investments, the Council did not invest directly into businesses, but bought freehold land and the buildings on the land, and were vulnerable if tenants were unable to pay their rent.

FC14

QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER, MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS (UP TO 15 MINUTES)

In response to a question from Councillor Sell, the Leader said it was an excellent suggestion for the Council to mark the end of the lockdown on some appropriate day.

Councillors Light and Isham said it had been a shame that Councillor Gerard had had to step down as a councillor for family reasons. Councillor Light said he had been a diligent, passionate and committed public servant. She thanked him, and wished him the best.

In response to a question from Councillor Criscione, the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Youth and Health said domestic abuse had seen a rise in Uttlesford since the start of the lockdown, though levels were still below average. A victim of domestic abuse could present themselves to any council for assistance. The Council was following government guidelines and helping people as needed.

In response to Councillor Barker, the Portfolio Holder for Infrastructure, Transport and Stansted Airport said he had written to Essex County Council asking that Uttlesford receive a portion of the funding set aside for pop up cycle lanes. Potential routes included Saffron Walden to Cambridge and the Flichway.

In response to a question from Councillor Caton, the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Youth and Health said the Council was still aiming high with its house building programme. Some houses could not be let at present, but this was hopefully a short term issue.

In response to a question from Councillor Light asking if members of the Executive could make reports at Council so that they were publically available, the Leader said the Cabinet intended to circulate reports in the Members' Bulletin.

The meeting ended at 8.10.