

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on TUESDAY, 17 MAY 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor A Coote (Chair - outgoing)
Councillors A Armstrong, H Asker (Chair), S Barker, M Caton, C Criscione, C Day, G Driscoll, J Emanuel, J Evans, P Fairhurst, M Foley, R Freeman, N Hargreaves, V Isham, R Jones, A Khan, P Lavelle, G LeCount, P Lees, M Lemon, B Light, S Luck, S Merifield, E Oliver, R Pavitt, L Pepper, N Reeve, G Sell, G Smith, M Sutton and J De Vries

Officers in attendance: P Holt (Chief Executive), B Ferguson (Democratic Services Manager), J Reynolds (Monitoring Officer) and A Webb (Director - Finance and Corporate Services)

Also present: E Corke (East Anglia Children's Hospices - EACH)

C1 REMARKS OF THE OUTGOING CHAIR

Councillor Coote, the outgoing Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked Council and said he had enjoyed his time in the chair. He said he had particularly enjoyed visiting schools across the District.

C2 ELECTION OF THE CHAIR

The Chair called on nominations to elect a Chair of Council.

Councillor Sell nominated Councillor Fairhurst; this was seconded by Councillor Caton.

The Leader of the Council nominated Councillor Asker for the position of Chair of Council. Councillor Jones seconded the proposal. There were no further nominations.

The Chair called on the proposer and seconder of each nomination to speak in support of their chosen candidate.

Councillor Sell said he had nominated Councillor Fairhurst as a long standing member who had left his mark on the council. He had a number of qualifications and skills that were highly suited to the role, including being an Advocate of the Courts of South Africa and a professional mediator, and he urged members to support the nomination. Furthermore, he said that the long standing convention of sharing this civic role between political groups had not been adhered to, and he urged the next Chair to act non-politically.

Councillor Caton said he had nominated Councillor Fairhurst as an experienced member who would act impartially in the Chair. He said he believed the Chair

should be politically neutral to ensure all groups worked together in the interests of the Council.

The Leader said she had nominated Councillor Asker for the role of Chair due to her composure, professionalism and confidence. Due to these qualities she felt Councillor Asker would be an excellent, balanced and non-contentious Chair.

Councillor Jones commended the nominations and said all the speeches had been positive. He said he believed Councillor Asker would make an excellent Chair and urged members to support her candidacy.

Councillor Caton called for a vote by ballot; this was superseded by the Leader's call for a recorded vote.

The Chair moved to a recorded vote; the result was as follows:

Voting Councillor:	Nomination for Chair:
Armstrong	Asker
Asker	Asker
Barker	Fairhurst
Caton	Fairhurst
Coote	Asker
Criscione	Abstain
Day	Asker
De Vries	Asker
Driscoll	Asker
Emanuel	Asker
Evans	Asker
Fairhurst	Fairhurst
Foley	Asker
Freeman	Asker
Hargreaves	Asker
Isham	Fairhurst
Jones	Asker
Khan	Fairhurst
Lavelle	Asker
LeCount	Asker
Lees	Asker
Lemon	Abstain
Light	Fairhurst
Luck	Asker
Merifield	Asker
Oliver	Fairhurst
Pavitt	Asker
Pepper	Asker
Reeve	Asker
Sell	Fairhurst

Smith	Abstain
Sutton	Asker

The result was declared with 21 votes for Councillor Asker and 8 votes for Councillor Fairhurst, with 3 abstentions.

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Asker as the Chair of Council.

C3 **CHAIR'S STATUTORY DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Councillor Asker took the Chair and made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

C4 **ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIR**

Councillor Reeve nominated Councillor Driscoll to be Vice-Chair of the Council. This was seconded by Councillor Freeman.

Councillor Caton nominated Councillor Fairhurst to be Vice-Chair of the Council. This was seconded by Councillor Sell.

Councillor Reeve said he was fully supportive of Councillor Driscoll's nomination; he was a hardworking and conscientious colleague who always spoke directly to the matters at hand.

Councillor Freeman supported these comments and said Councillor Driscoll's impeccable integrity made him a very worthy candidate for the position of Vice-Chair.

Councillor Caton and Sell both commended Councillor Fairhurst and urged members to support his candidacy. Councillor Sell said Councillor Driscoll would be the fifth R4U Chairperson if elected to the role at next year's annual meeting.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Driscoll to be Vice-Chair of the Council.

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

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

The Chair thanked Councillor Coote and presented him with a portrait to commemorate his year in the Chair. He was invited to say a few words on his chosen charity.

Councillor Coote said his chosen charity was the East Anglia Children's Hospices (EACH) who carried out vital work across the region. He said they had

worked hard to raise money for EACH but unfortunately had faced difficulties during the pandemic.

Ms Corke, speaking on behalf of EACH, thanked Councillor Coote and his wife for their hardwork and proactive fundraising. She said EACH were very grateful for their contributions.

Councillor Foley, Chair of Council in 2020-21, was also thanked as he had been unable to accept his portrait at the previous Annual Council meeting due to Covid-19 restrictions.

C6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bagnall, Dean, Eke, Gregory, Loughlin, Lodge and Tayler.

There were no declarations of interest.

C7 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting on 20 April 2022 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

Councillor Barker asked whether the letter had been despatched as agreed to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities calling on the Government to change the law to allow councils the flexibility to hold meetings which they deem appropriate within agreed rules and procedures regarding hybrid meetings.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the letter had been despatched.

C8 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair said it was a great honour to represent the district. In their time as a Councillor there had been fifteen Chairs that came before them, some of whom were present in the Chamber today. She noted her respect for councillors and asked that the same respect be reciprocated throughout the Chamber during the forthcoming year. It was acknowledged that there were various viewpoints represented in the Chamber but all Members were working towards the betterment of residents.

The Chair said that the future of the district rested upon the next generation and that she would be focusing all fundraising projects this year to help the young people of Uttlesford. The Chair welcomed input from ward Members who could identify local need.

C9 POLITICAL BALANCE 2022-23

The Leader of the Council proposed approval of the report; she noted that the Standards Committee was not politically proportionate but represented all groups in the Chamber.

Councillor Fairhurst seconded approval of the report.

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

C10 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL 2022-23

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

Councillor Hargreaves proposed approval of the proposed appointments and Councillor Jones seconded the proposal.

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

C11 APPOINTMENTS OF MEMBERS TO WORKING GROUPS OF COUNCIL 2022-23

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

The Leader of the Council proposed approval of the proposed appointments and Councillor Jones seconded the proposal.

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

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

Councillor Foley proposed and Councillor Armstrong seconded the nominations.

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 LeCount to be the substitute representative on the panel.

C13 REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Leader of the Council announced that Councillor Coote had been appointed as the Portfolio Holder for Housing. She said that his passion for affordable and social housing would ensure success with the role.

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

There had been no matters referred.

C15 MATTERS RECEIVED ABOUT JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

There had been no matters received.

The meeting ended at 19:41.