

Medway Council
Annual Meeting of Medway Council

Wednesday, 15 May 2024

7.00pm to 10.32pm

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next Full Council meeting

Present: The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway (Councillor Nestorov)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hamandishe) Councillors Anang, Animashaun, Barrett, Bowen, Brake, Browne, Campbell, Clarke, Cook, Crozer, Curry, Edwards, Fearn, Field, Filmer, Gilbourne, Gulvin, Gurung, Hackwell, Hamilton, Howcroft-Scott, Hubbard, Jackson, Jones, Joy, Khan, Lammas, Lawrence, Mahil, Mandaracas, Maple, Murray, Myton, Osborne, Paterson, Peake, Pearce, Perfect, Louwella Prenter, Mark Prenter, Price, Sands, Shokar, Spring, Stamp, Tejan, Mrs Turpin, Van Dyke, Wildey and Williams

In Attendance: Richard Hicks, Chief Executive
Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services
Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director, Legal and Governance
Jon Pitt, Democratic Services Officer

1 Election of Mayor and Appointment of Deputy Mayor 2024/2025

Background:

Councillor Browne, supported by Councillor Stamp, proposed the nomination of Councillor Nestorov to the Office of Mayor of Medway for the forthcoming municipal year.

On being put to the vote, Councillor Nestorov was duly elected to the Office of the Mayor of Medway.

Councillor Animashaun, supported by Councillor Price, proposed the nomination of Councillor Hamandishe to the Office of the Deputy Mayor of Medway for the forthcoming municipal year. Councillor Hamandishe was duly appointed.

The newly elected Mayor made the declaration required by law and signed the declaration of acceptance of office. The Mayor also accepted the ceremonial sword and silver oar as symbols of her office as Constable of Rochester Castle and Admiral of the water of Medway from Sheerness to Hawkwood respectively.

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The newly appointed Deputy Mayor made the declaration required by law and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

The newly elected Mayor then addressed the Council and announced that his nominated charities would be Halpern Charitable Foundation and Medway Culture Club.

Councillor Paterson, supported by Councillor Animashaun proposed a vote of thanks to Councillor Gurung in her capacity as the outgoing Mayor.

The outgoing Mayor and her Consort, Mr Gurung, were each presented a past Mayoral badge. The outgoing Mayor responded to the vote of thanks.

Flowers were presented to the outgoing Mayor's Consort and the outgoing Deputy Mayoress.

Decision:

- a) The Council elected Councillor Nestorov to the Office of the Mayor of Medway for the 2024/2025 municipal year.
- b) The Council appointed Councillor Hamandishe to the Office of the Deputy Mayor of Medway for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

2 Appointment of Mayor's Chaplain 2024/2025

The Mayor announced to the Council that the Medway Interfaith Action Group would be supporting him during 2024/25 and that Canon Gordon Giles from Rochester Cathedral, was present at the meeting. The Mayor presented him a scroll on behalf of Medway Interfaith and Rochester Cathedral.

The Mayor, accompanied by the Civic Ceremonial Officer, presented the new Mayor's cadets with their insignia.

A musical interlude followed.

3 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Coombs, Doe, Etheridge, Hyne, Kemp, McDonald and Spalding.

4 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

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Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

5 Mayor's announcements

The Worshipful The Mayor of Medway announced that Honorary Alderman, Paul Harriott, had recently passed away. He had been a Councillor in Twydall for over 50 years until retiring in 2015 and had served as Mayor of Gillingham in 1974/75. He had served on Gillingham Borough Council, Kent County Council and Medway Council and had a particular passion for housing.

Honorary Alderman Harriott's partner, Dorte Gilry, was present at the meeting and the Mayor offered the Council's condolences to her and the family.

Councillors Maple, Filmer, Mark Prenter, Crozer, Mandaracas, Price, Khan, Browne, Gulvin and Murray paid tribute to Alderperson Harriott.

A minute's silence was held in memory.

The Mayor announced the recent passing of James Williams, the Council's Director of Public Health. James had joined Medway in 2017 and had transformed the approach to public health delivery. He had played a highly important role in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Mayor highlighted that James had been a remarkable man and an outstanding leader. He had previously served in the armed forces and had represented Britain at three Olympics in the sport of fencing.

The Mayor offered the Council's condolences to James Williams' family.

Councillors Murray, Perfect, Gurung, Crozer, Louwella Prenter (who also gave a tribute provided by Councillor McDonald), Brake, Gulvin and Maple paid tribute to James.

A minute's silence was held in memory.

6 Establishment of Committees, Appointments and Schedule of Meetings 2024/2025

Background:

This report provided details of the establishment of Council Committees and the appointment of Members to serve on Committees and other bodies and the programme of meetings.

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The Council was also asked to make recommendations to the Joint Meeting of Committees to be held immediately following the Annual Meeting of the Council, in respect of the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of committees and the establishment and membership of sub-committees.

An Addendum report set out Appendices A, B and C to the report. These included a review of the allocation of committee seats, a list of committees, sub-committees and task groups and a list of joint committees and outside and other bodies.

Councillor Myton, supported by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, proposed the recommendations set out in report.

Decisions:

- 1) The Council agreed:
 - a) the establishment of Committees, their size and the allocation of seats to political groups as set out in Appendices A and B to the report, together with terms of reference, as set out in the Council's constitution.
 - b) the appointment of members to each Committee as set out in Appendix B to the report, including the appointment of voting and non-voting co-optees on Committees as listed.
 - c) the appointments and nominations to Joint Committees, outside bodies and other bodies, as set out in Appendix C to the report.
 - d) the timetable of meetings for the 2024/2025 municipal year, as set out in Appendix D to the report.
 - e) to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with Group Whips, to vary the schedule of meetings during the 2024/2025 municipal year as required, on the basis set out in paragraph 5.4 of the report.
- 2) The Council recommended to the Joint Meeting of Committees:
 - a) the appointment of Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons of committees (excluding the Health and Wellbeing Board), as set out in Appendix B to this report.
 - b) the establishment of sub committees (with terms of reference as set out in the Council's Constitution) and scrutiny task group, their size, the allocation of seats to political groups and memberships, as set out in Appendix B to this report.
 - c) that the requirement for political balance be waived in respect of Licensing Hearing Panels and Licensing 1982 Act Hearing Panels and that the process for selection of the Chairperson, Vice

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Chairperson and Panel Members for these Panels should be as set out in Appendix B to this report.

7 Executive Responsibilities and Scheme of Delegations (Executive and Non-Executive)

Background:

This report provided details of the Members of the Cabinet for 2024/2025, as appointed by the Leader of the Council and their Portfolios. Details of the Cabinet portfolios were set out in Appendix A to the report.

The report also included details of the delegation of executive functions to officers agreed by the Leader as well as incorporating the scheme of officer delegations for matters which were not the responsibility of the Cabinet and were a matter for Council. These details were set out in Appendix B to the report.

The report also referred to the appointments and nominations by the Leader to executive bodies, as set out in section F of Appendix C to agenda item 7 (Establishment of Committees, Appointments and Schedule of Meetings 2024/2025).

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, supported by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Murray, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decisions:

The Council:

- a) Noted the details of those appointed by the Leader to serve as Deputy Leader and Members of the Cabinet and the extent of their individual portfolios, as set out in Appendix A to the report.
- b) Noted the appointments and nominations to executive bodies, as set out in section F of Appendix C to agenda item 7 (Establishment of Committees, Appointments and Schedule of Meetings 2024/2025).
- c) Noted the delegations to officers agreed by the Leader in relation to executive functions, as set out in Appendix B to the report.
- d) Agreed to the delegation of non-executive functions to officers, as set out in Appendix B to the report.

8 One Medway Council Plan 2024-2028

Background:

This report presented the proposed new One Medway Council Plan 2024-28. This set out the vision, ambitions, priorities and associated Key Performance

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Indicators (KPIs) that would be used to track performance against the Council's priorities and sub-priorities.

Public consultation had been undertaken which had resulted in 318 responses being received, a summary of which was provided at Appendix 2 of the report.

The report stated that under each of the five interconnected priorities that would drive the work of the Council, there would be sub-priorities accompanied by relevant key performance indicators. The One Medway Council Plan would act as the primary framework for setting the direction and vision of the Council over the medium term, supported by several key corporate strategies.

The report had previously been considered by the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 April 2024 and by the Cabinet on 30 April 2024.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, supported by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Murray, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decisions:

- a) The Council noted the comments of the Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in section 8 of the report and the decisions of the Cabinet set out in section 9 of the report.
- b) The Council adopted the new One Medway Council Plan, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.
- c) The Council agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree any final measures/benchmarks in relation to the PIs once data was received, as set out at paragraph 4.4 of the report.
- d) The Council agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree the yearly performance monitoring, including interim targets where appropriate.
- e) The Council agreed that 'Council Strategy and Council Plan', as set out within the Policy Framework in the Council's Constitution be replaced with 'One Medway Council Plan' and also agreed to delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Legal and Governance, to make any further changes to the Constitution, as necessary, in view of this change.

9 Adoption of Arches Chatham Neighbourhood Plan

Background:

This report presented the Arches Chatham Neighbourhood Plan for formal adoption by the Council.

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The report advised that the Council had held a referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan in the designated Arches Chatham Neighbourhood Area on 2 May 2024. The majority of those voting had voted in favour of the plan. The Council was therefore, required to formally adopt or 'make' the plan within 8 weeks of the referendum.

The report explained that the Neighbourhood Plan formed part of the development plan for Medway and would be used to help decide planning applications in Arches Chatham.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, Councillor Curry, supported by the Chairperson of the Planning Committee, Councillor Stamp, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decisions:

The Council approved that the Arches Chatham Neighbourhood Plan, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be 'made', as part of the statutory development plan for Medway Council.

10 Medway Youth Council (MYC) Conference Report

Background:

This report set out that on 26 January 2024, Medway Youth Council (MYC) had delivered its annual conference that addressed issues related to identity, with specific attention to young people's experiences of homophobia and racism and how they were tackled. The report made key recommendations from young people about how this should be dealt with within and outside schools.

The report advised that the recommendations made by MYC had been sent to schools and that the report was also due to be considered by the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 June 2024.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Price, supported by Councillor Joy, proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Decisions:

The Council noted the Medway Youth Council (MYC) Annual Conference Report 2024.

11 Vote of thanks to staff

Discussion:

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Maple, supported by the Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Perfect, proposed a vote of thanks to staff.

The Leader said that the officer team at Medway was outstanding and he reflected on the wide range of issues that had been tackled, such as flooding,

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power outages, Ofsted and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) inspections and dealing with the impact of the Government's withdrawal of £170million of funding for infrastructure in Medway. A new Local Plan was being developed and the issues associated with the discovery of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete at Gun Wharf were being addressed.

Councillor Maple praised the resilience of hard working Council staff and highlighted other Council services and activities, including Family Hubs, Registrars, Elections, the delivery of a Cost of Living Plan and tackling health inequalities through the Public Health Team, working closely with partners. The One Medway approach often saw Council staff leading the way through partnership working to deliver services for the community.

There would be challenges over the coming year, but Councillor Maple was confident that there was resilience to address them. He asked the Chief Executive to pass on heartfelt thanks to Council staff.

Councillor Perfect, Leader of the Conservative Group and Cllr Crozer, Leader of the Independent Group echoed Cllr Maple's praise with their own vote of thanks on behalf of all their Members.

Richard Hicks, the Chief Executive, responded on behalf of staff and thanked Councillors Maple, Gulvin and Crozer for their kind words. He endorsed the comments made and gave his own thanks to Council officers. He thanked Members for the fitting tributes that had been paid, earlier in the meeting, to James Williams and to Paul Harriott.

The Chief Executive highlighted that the One Medway Council Plan, approved during the meeting, set out the Council's values and behaviours, which highlighted the kind of organisation the Council is: Proud to be Medway, Respectful, Ambitious, Trusted, Caring and Collaborative.

The Chief Executive also thanked Council Members for the selfless way in which they undertook their roles, representing their communities and Medway more widely, which they did with dedication, commitment and pride. The Chief Executive said that by working together, Members and officers, each fulfilling their roles, there is great confidence that the Council would deliver its shared ambitions for the people and place of Medway, ensuring it was a great place to live, to work, to learn and to visit.

Decision:

The Council agreed that a vote of thanks be given to staff.

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Mayor

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