

## **COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2024 at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.**

**Present:** ; Councillors Edwards, Owen-Hughes, Albon, Ara, Austin, Bambridge, J Bayford, Boyd, Bright, Bright, Britcher, Crittenden, Currie, Davis, Dawson, Donaldson, Duckworth, Everitt, Farooki, Fellows, Garner, D Green, Huxley, Keen, Kup, Makinson, Manners, Matterface, Pat Moore, Paul Moore, Munns, Nichols, Anne-Marie Nixey, Ovenden, Packman, Pope, Pressland, Pugh, Rattigan, Rogers, Scobie, W Scobie, Scott, Smith, Towning, Whitehead, Wing, Wright and Yates

**In Attendance:**

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Barlow,  
Councillor Braidwood,  
Councillor D'Abbro,  
Councillor Dennis,  
Councillor Driver,  
Councillor Worrow,  
Councillor Rusecki.

### **2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by the Vice-Chair and agreed that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 8 February 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair.

### **3. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair announced that former Councillor Kay Dark had recently passed away. Councillors paused for a minute's silence in respect of Councillor Dark. Councillors made tributes to Councillor Dark.

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **5. PETITIONS**

There were no petitions considered at the meeting.

### **6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

#### **(a) QUESTION NO.1 FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC REGARDING CEASEFIRE IN GAZA**

Ms Gardner asked the Leader the following question:

“Based on the fact that major corporations operating in your neighbourhoods are directly profiting off of the murder of innocent people like my cousins uncle, why have you not done more in your position of power to call for a ceasefire? And why do you continue to allow these clearly unethical companies to operate in your neighbourhoods?”

Councillor Everitt responded:

The district council had no powers to prevent the operation of major corporations in Thanet, either on an ethical basis or generally.

(b) **QUESTION NO.2 FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC REGARDING CEASEFIRE**

Ms Trentham asked the Leader the following question:

“As a resident of Thanet I am very worried about the impact of the present situation in Gaza on Palestinians and Israelis and also those living here and this concern is shared by many according to a recent Ipsos poll. Can you tell me why this council is not speaking out against what many NGOs now state is genocide and in doing so show empathy to these communities, and why this council is not calling for a permanent ceasefire now?”

Councillor Everitt responded:

There was a motion before the council at the meeting of 22/02/24 calling for an immediate ceasefire.

(c) **QUESTION NO.3 FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC REGARDING LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS IN ISRAEL**

Mr Knight asked Councillor Yates the following question:

“As cabinet member for corporate services, can you confirm whether Thanet District Council has no local government investments, either through pension funds or any other applicable routes, that may be linked to holdings connected to Israeli settlements, or companies that are supporting Israel's genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza. And if any exist will you instruct the finance committee to divest from these in the light of the deadly attacks by the Israeli state which have cost the lives of almost 30,000 innocent Palestinians in Gaza, 12,000 of whom were children.”

Councillor Yates responded:

- Thanet District Council's treasury cash had not been used to invest directly in Israel. However, the Council did not hold this information with regards to each of its counterparties.
- With regards Pension funds, these were managed by Kent County Council via the Kent Pension Fund committee which managed £8 billion of local government pensions. Although it had not been confirmed directly whether or not they had invested in Israeli settlements, or companies involved in the current conflict, it was confirmed that they have a Responsible Investment Policy, that looks at Environmental, Social and Governance factors.
- Furthermore, the Head of Pensions and Treasury within the Kent Pension Fund had been emailed and asked the question, this information would be shared with the member of the public once a response was forthcoming.

7. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

(a) **QUESTION NO. 1 FROM A COUNCILLOR REGARDING MARTYN'S LAW**

Councillor Scobie asked Councillor Keen the following question:

"Would the Cabinet member please share what preparations TDC is making about the proposed new Protect Duty, otherwise known as Martyn's law? Specifically, how many venues does TDC believe will be covered by the Enhanced tier?"

Councillor Keen responded:

- The proposed Martyn's Law impacted the local authority in many ways as the Licensing Authority, the responsible authority for public spaces and potentially the enforcing authority, the Council was therefore preparing in various ways.
- The Government had been clear that specific guidance around requirements would be published as part of the bill. Until this is published the Council was unsure as to whether or not they would be the enforcing authority.
- The Council had plotted all of the premises which they believed would be within the enhanced tier including its own. The required assessments would be part of the management of the Council's sites.
- Based on the information available, it was believed that there would be in the region of 90+ enhanced tier premises in the Thanet District.
- There was a consultation regarding the updated standard tier in order to balance public protection and the burden on smaller premises prior to the Bill being presented to Parliament.

Councillor Scobie followed up his question by asking Councillor Keen if it was assumed that if the Theatre Royal and Winter Gardens opened, it would be in the advanced tier?

Councillor Keen responded that these assets, including the Theatre Royal and Winter Gardens, were the sorts of assets that had this clear plan. Training was considered an excellent idea, this had the potential to be brought into a councillors briefing.

(b) **QUESTION NO. 2 FROM A COUNCILLOR REGARDING RENOVATIONS TO THE SPORTS PAVILION AT NORTHDOWN PARK**

Councillor Manners asked Councillor Albon the following question:

"I'm pleased to see that the Council has published ambitious plans for Jacky Bakers. Support for grass roots sport and football is important to the communities we serve. With that in mind could I please have an update on promises made to renovate the Sports Pavilion at Northdown Park? Has a full structural survey including asbestos survey been conducted and what are the findings and recommendations? Have officers prepared a schedule of proposed works and a timetable for delivery? What are the costings and has a budget allocation been made?"

Councillor Albon responded:

- The open spaces and estate teams had been working collaboratively to prepare the site for a long-term tenant who could enhance the facility. A schedule of works had been prepared by the Council's Building Surveyor which outlined the necessary improvements. This schedule

would be a crucial component of the new agreement, ensuring that the renovations align with the long-term goals for the site.

- There was no additional budget allocation beyond the costs required for clearing the site of debris, carrying out the EPC and Asbestos Report, and preparing it for marketing. As the marketing of the flagship property (Northdown House) in the same park was nearing completion, the Pavilion would be the next property to seek a new custodian. This systematic approach allowed the Council to ensure they had the required staffing capacity to carry out accompanied viewings, and to be able to address the incoming levels of offers and requests.

Councillor Manners followed up his question by asking Councillor Albon whether the council was looking in third party interests? If the council was looking for a tenant for the building, would the council be publishing the terms of reference?

Councillor Albon responded that the council would do everything they could.

(c) **QUESTION NO. 3 FROM A COUNCILLOR REGARDING AFFORDABLE HOMES**

Councillor Bayford asked Councillor Whitehead the following question:

“It seems that in order to meet the Council’s plan to purchase more affordable homes, some are being acquired prior to their construction. In these cases, does TDC have influence on the proposed EPC rating for the homes to be purchased, particularly as potential tenants are likely to benefit from the least expensive energy costs possible, as well as the obvious benefit to the environment?”

Councillor Whitehead responded:

- When the Council acquired homes off plan or as a 'turn-key' product, it was not permitted to influence the specification - this is because the Council would be creating a bespoke product that should be procured through a competitive tendering process.
- While the Council was not allowed to influence developers and change their specification, it would work very closely with colleagues in planning and were united in achieving the environmental benefits set out in the corporate statement, in order to set the highest bar possible for the green credentials of the homes that it acquired.
- The Council would actively take part in discussions with the developers about its ambitions. Where sites are not yet being built out, the Council would also share its own detailed specification, and would monitor the quality of the build throughout the construction process to ensure that the quality was there and certification is all in order at the point of handover of homes on the development.
- The units which had already completed and that have been handed over (LAHF and Spitfire Green Phase 1) were all EPC 'B'.

Councillor Bayford followed up her question by asking Councillor Whitehead how the council intended on funding the costs?

Councillor Whitehead responded that with acquisition came business cases. If the development cost was not cost effective, the council would not enter into the agreement. The council was considered in a good position in terms of acquiring properties.

(d) **QUESTION NO. 4 FROM A COUNCILLOR REGARDING POLLUTION**

Councillor Garner asked Councillor Keen the following question:

“The Royal College of Physicians estimate that 40,000 deaths a year in the UK are linked to air pollution, with engine idling contributing to this by increasing the amount of exhaust fumes in the air.

The Highway Code states that ‘if the vehicle is stationary and is likely to remain so for more than a couple of minutes, you should apply the parking brake and switch off the engine to reduce emissions and noise pollution’.

As a first step towards TDC considering the introduction of clean air zones, will Cllr Keen please follow the lead of other progressive councils in the UK and ask enforcement officers to issue fixed penalty notices to the driver when they witness a car idling and issue a fine of £40 if they refuse to turn their engine off?”

Councillor Keen responded:

- It had been proposed that the Climate Change Cabinet Advisory Group explored how the Council could incorporate this enforcement in a meaningful way. It was confirmed that the Chair of the Climate CAG would take this up in a forthcoming meeting.
- Thanet District Council monitors air quality across the district and currently at the time of the meeting had one air quality management area in St Lawrence.
- All of the monitoring data was available at [kentair.org.uk](http://kentair.org.uk).

There were no supplementary questions.

(e) **QUESTION NO. 5 FROM A COUNCILLOR REGARDING COMPOSTABLE WASTE**

Councillor Rogers asked Councillor Albon the following question:

“I am addressing the serious concerns of compostable waste at the Dane Park Depot. 2,180 tonnes of waste, when the permitted amount is a maximum of 60 tonnes. Thankfully we have an efficient Head of Coastal and Public Realm who was concerned and asked relevant questions to the council’s waste consultant. Substantial fines and custodial sentences could have been imposed by the Environment Agency for non-compliance. The cost of removal was £275,000.

Why was this allowed to build up over several years, why did the Operational Services Director not inspect the site, so allowing this to happen? Why, if the director left, did an interim or deputy manager not spot this? Surely someone on site must have recognised that this could incur costs? What has been put in place to ensure this never happens again?”

Councillor Albon responded that:

- The management of the Open Spaces service was in a much more stable place, with the Open Spaces Manager, Head of Service and Director roles filled with permanent staff.
- The supervisors and their teams had been given clear instructions based on the advice and guidance of the Council’s waste consultant and Waste Compliance Manager.
- The Head of Service was undertaking monthly checks of all sites within the Coastal and Public Realm service to ensure compliant working practices were being undertaken.

Councillor Rogers followed up her question by asking Councillor Albon if he agreed that due to the estimated figure of £225,000 being overspent by £50,000, should this had gone out to tender, and changed from an officer to a key decision?

Councillor Albon responded that in order to get the work done in a timely manner the decision was taken to use the contractor. If the council had gone through the process of tendering, this would have taken up valuable time.

(f) **QUESTION NO. 6 FROM A COUNCILLOR REGARDING AN ABANDONED VEHICLE**

Councillor Huxley asked Councillor Keen the following question:

“Local residents have repeatedly contacted me to ask for help in relation to an abandoned vehicle which has been dumped on unadopted land in Camden Square, Ramsgate, and has now been there for over a year without moving. The vehicle is full of rubbish and has four flat tyres. A second similar vehicle has more recently arrived. I understand the owner has claimed the first vehicle but has failed to remove it. Please would the Cabinet Member set out what action the council can take to get these vehicles removed. Thank you.”

Councillor Keen responded:

- The vehicle in question was not abandoned as it had an owner and therefore the Council was unable to use abandoned vehicle legislation to remove this vehicle. The council's Street Scene team would investigate to see what enforcement activity could be undertaken.
- The Council had received a report regarding a second vehicle on 16th February and this was, at the time of the meeting, being processed through the abandoned vehicle processes with the initial notices been issued.

Councillor Huxley followed up her question by asking Councillor Keen whether the council should be able to name and shame the owners of such vehicles?

Councillor Keen responded that she believed that naming and shaming was not the correct thing to do. However, it was noted that all residents had a responsibility to look after the area, and it was disappointing when residents did not do this.

(g) **QUESTION NO. 7 FROM A COUNCILLOR REGARDING MARGATE BECOMING A TOWN COUNCIL**

Councillor Rattigan asked Councillor Everitt the following question:

“The Margate charter trustee want to start the process to become a town council, with a time scale for becoming a town council in April 2026. Will you confirm you will trigger this process and confirm that the scale time can be met.”

Councillor Everitt responded:

- The Council was committed to parishing Margate in order to create a town council. However, the review to create a Parish Council for Margate could not run at the same time as the review reducing the number of TDC Councillors. As a result the start date of a review to create a Margate Town Parish could not be set in stone. It would be started as soon as the review was complete.

- This was scheduled to be at the end of the 2024 calendar year.
- If the review finished sooner, the Council would start the Parishing of Margate sooner. The process to create a Parish had to be completed within a one year period, and so it was hoped to see a shadow Parish Council created around the time suggested with the formal Parish Council coming into effect at the next elections in May 2027.

There were no supplementary questions.

(h) **QUESTION NO. 8 FROM A COUNCILLOR REGARDING FARMLAND**

Councillor Worrow was not present at the meeting, therefore he would receive a written response to his question.

(i) **QUESTION NO.9 FROM A COUNCILLOR REGARDING VETERANS**

Councillor Paul Moore asked Councillor Whitehead the following question:

“Our veterans are an important part of our community. Having served this country, the Armed forces covenant has been created by the government to ensure that veterans receive the support that they rightly deserve.

The covenant legal duty is a legal obligation on certain public bodies including LA's to have due regard to the principles of the AF Covenant when carrying out certain functions in health care, education and housing.

We have no officer presently in post having stepped back as written in an email to all of the group members in the AF covenant and that the council's commitment to the covenant has seemingly stagnated, (these are the feeling by those volunteers and members of the Thanet group).

What is happening with the armed forces covenant presently?

WE have been awarded silver standard and if we are not actively doing anything we should give back those awards/accreditations.”

Councillor Whitehead responded:

- Following the departure of the officer supporting the armed forces covenant, the council's Enforcement and Multi-agency task Force manager had assumed responsibility for the relevant functions and was representing the council at the Thanet Armed Forces/Civilian Partnership Network.
- Prior to the covenant becoming a statutory duty the Multi-agency task force held leadership roles in delivering activities around the covenant as well as undertaking extensive work supporting former armed forces personnel and their families.
- The Multi-agency task force manager had begun meeting individually with representatives of the network, and it was assured that the council's commitment to those who serve and have served remains undiminished.

Councillor Paul. Moore followed up his question by asking Councillor Whitehead whether the council would provide an AFC role and take ownership?

Councillor Whitehead responded that the work had not stopped. The commitment was there from the council. Notably, the council was in belief of turning this into a meaningful partnership.

8. **NOTICE OF MOTION**

The Chair proposed, Councillor Albon seconded and Councillors agreed that the Council considered the Notice of Motion 8B and Notice of Motion 8C before 8A (Abuse of Councillors and Officers Motion) under Council Procedure Rule 3.3.

(a) **Fair Tax Declaration Motion**

It was proposed by Councillor Austin and seconded by Councillor Yates that:

“The Green Group is proposing this motion to highlight the positive role that tax plays in our society. Tax should not be seen as a burden, as it is characterised by some politicians and certain media. If we all pay our fair share, it is a means of funding essential public services and ensuring all our communities are properly supported.

As a responsible public body, we want to lead by example, to stand up for better standards and campaign to change public procurement rules. Between 2014 and 2019, 17.5% of public procurement contracts were won by businesses with a connection to a tax haven. We find this unacceptable - and so do the majority of the public. Polls show over 60% of people believe public bodies should be able to consider company ethics and responsible tax conduct when awarding contracts to suppliers - but at present we are not permitted to do so.

We are therefore asking Council to support the following motion:

This Council resolves to:

Approve the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration.

Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities.

Ensure IR35 is implemented robustly and contract workers pay a fair share of employment taxes.

Not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.

Undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately by suppliers as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates.

Demand clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers UK and overseas and their consolidated profit & loss position, given lack of clarity could be strong indicators of poor financial probity and weak financial standing.

Promote Fair Tax Mark certification especially for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.

Support Fair Tax Week events in the area, and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses are proud to promote responsible tax conduct and pay their fair share of corporation tax.

Support calls for urgent reform of UK procurement law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies.”

In accordance with council procedure rule 3.7, Councillor Everitt provided a response to the motion.

Members voted to debate the motion; due to paragraph 3.8 of the constitution stating ‘The Council should not debate any motion which would give rise to a significant change to income of the Council, to its expenditure or contract terms, unless it has received a report from the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer as appropriate setting out the legal or financial effect of the motion,’ the Council did not debate this motion at the meeting, and deferred it to the next meeting of Council.



A full report on the financial impact of the proposed motion would be written for Members' consideration, so that an informed debate could take place in the March 2024 Council meeting.

(b) **Ceasefire Motion**

It was proposed by Councillor Wing and seconded by Councillor Austin that:

"That this Council:-

(a) notes:-

- i. In response to the Hamas-led attacks on 7th October, that 'by mid-December the Israeli army has dropped 29,000 bombs, munitions and shells on the strip. Nearly 70% of Gaza's 439,000 homes and half of its buildings have been damaged or destroyed'. Gaza is one of the most densely populated places in the world and home to 2.2 million Palestinians (of whom almost half are children).
- ii. As of 21 st January 2024, 25,105 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza and another 62,681 wounded'. Over 1 million Palestinians have been displaced, and many of the killed and injured are children.
- iii. That collective punishment is against international law under the Geneva Conventions.
- iv. This escalation in violence has been felt acutely across the district by residents and in particular among health care workers and clinical staff at QEQM hospital, the main medical centre for Thanet, which has a far higher level of diversity than the general population, some of whom have lost loved ones. That residents in Thanet, as in other communities, have been further affected by the rise in antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents across the UK and elsewhere. Thanet has a significant Jewish community and heritage, and 'more than seven out of ten Jews living in the UK have family in Israel, making the horrific 7 th October attack by Hamas personal'. UK Police have also reported a 'record rise in religious hate crimes, with the Community Safety Trust, a Jewish charity describing the figures as 'shocking' and campaigners against Anti-Muslim abuse stating they are 'deeply worrying'. It further notes that it is affecting communities 'trust in authorities and their sense of identity and belonging'. The lack of criticism by Thanet District Council for the unprecedented attacks on a predominantly Muslim/brown civilian population is having a further impact on this part of our community.
- v. That the Israeli government have cut off water, food, and electricity to Gaza which is a recognised war crime under International Humanitarian Law.
- vi. That on the 30 th October 2023 the World Bank warned that 'oil prices could reach \$150 in 2024 due to the consequences of the war leading to further oil supply disruption' which would 'inevitably mean higher food prices'. 'The IMF estimates that a sustained 10% increase in oil prices shaves 0.15 percentage points off global economic growth and adds 0.4 points to inflation in the following year'. It further adds that 'the cost of a barrel of crude oil is now about 10% higher than it was before the Hamas attack'. Government poverty data continues to rank 'Thanet as the most deprived local authority in Kent', it also 'has the most LSOAs within the most deprived decile with 18' and has seen no change since 2015. Clearly, the impact of increased food and fuel prices now and as predicted into the coming year, will be felt by all Thanet residents but disproportionately felt by the significant number of residents that live in poverty. In addition, higher costs will also negatively affect the Councils finances. With no end in sight and tensions growing 'if the conflict spreads to major oil-producing nations in the region such as Iran, the global economy could face severe repercussions as energy costs for businesses and households spike'.

(b) believes:-

- i. What is happening in Gaza is a humanitarian catastrophe with horrific escalations of violence.
  - ii. Loss of all civilian lives and atrocities committed against civilians in both the Hamas attacks and the continuing bombardment of the Gaza strip by Israel, is horrific and must be condemned and investigated.
  - iii. All forms of racism, including Anti-Palestinian racism, Antisemitism and Islamophobia have no place in Thanet or the wider world and condemns any attacks on these groups
  - iv. Polls show that UK citizens surveyed overwhelmingly support a humanitarian ceasefire, which has been called for by the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, Save the Children, the head of the WHO, as well as Oxfam. While Ipsos found '7 out of 10 UK citizens are concerned about the impact of the conflict on Palestinians and Israeli civilians' and that they 'are more likely to want the UK Government to be a neutral mediator or not be involved at all than support a particular side' .
  - v. All political leaders, at all levels of government, have duties under international law to prevent genocide; and that
  - vi. Thousands of Thanet residents have joined protests, meetings and other events and gatherings, written to MPs, or contacted their councillors backing these calls for a ceasefire
- (c) therefore resolves to:-

(i) call upon the UK Government and Opposition Government to:-

- i. call for an immediate ceasefire,
- ii. open humanitarian corridors into Gaza to allow aid and other vital medical resources to flow unhindered in,
- iii. provide an opportunity to seek the immediate release of all hostages and all Palestinians held in arbitrary military detention,
- iv. call for an arms embargo to be enacted by all involved in the conflict and
- v. call on Israel to resume negotiations with the Palestinians to seek a peaceful solution that ensures justice, safety, fairness and equality for all;

(ii) request that the Leader submits this Motion to the UK Prime Minister and Opposition Leader."

In accordance with council procedure rule 3.7, Councillor Everitt provided a response to the motion.

It was proposed by Councillor Yates, seconded by Councillor Garner and councillors agreed to debate the motion.

Councillor Everitt proposed and Councillor Scobie seconded the following amendment:

"1, Delete at a) iv: "The lack of criticism by Thanet District Council for the unprecedented attacks on a predominantly Muslim/brown civilian population is having a further impact on this part of our community."

2. Following b) delete "believes" and insert "recognises that"

3. At b) v: insert, after the word "genocide", "to the extent it is within their power"

4. At c) delete "opposition government" and insert "all Westminster political parties"

5. At c) i. Insert "humanitarian" before ceasefire

6. At c) ii delete "open" and insert "call for the opening of"

7. At c) iii delete all the existing and insert “call for the immediate unconditional release of the hostages held by Hamas”

8. Delete c) iv in its entirety

At c) v renumber as iv and delete “call on Israel to resume negotiations with the Palestinians” and insert “call for resumed negotiations” instead; then insert “two-state” before “solution”

(ii) delete the remainder after “Prime Minister”.

Councillors debated and agreed the proposed amendments, and so the amended motion was now the motion to be debated.

Councillor Pugh proposed, and Councillor Kup seconded the following alternative amendments to the former motion.

“That this Council:-

(a) notes:-

i. In response to the Hamas-led attacks on 7th October, that ‘by mid-December the Israeli army has dropped 29,000 bombs, munitions and shells on the strip. Nearly 70% of Gaza’s 439,000 homes and half of its buildings have been damaged or destroyed’. Gaza is one of the most densely populated places in the world and home to 2.2 million Palestinians (of whom almost half are children).

ii. As of 21 st January 2024, 25,105 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza and another 62,681 wounded’. Over 1 million Palestinians have been displaced, and many of the killed and injured are children.

iii. That collective punishment is against international law under the Geneva Conventions.

iv. This escalation in violence has been felt acutely across the district by residents and in particular among health care workers and clinical staff at QEQM hospital, the main medical centre for Thanet, which has a far higher level of diversity than the general population, some of whom have lost loved ones. That residents in Thanet, as in other communities, have been further affected by the rise in antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents across the UK and elsewhere. Thanet has a significant Jewish community and heritage, and ‘more than seven out of ten Jews living in the UK have family in Israel, making the horrific 7 th October attack by Hamas personal’. UK Police have also reported a ‘record rise in religious hate crimes, with the Community Safety Trust, a Jewish charity describing the figures as ‘shocking’ and campaigners against Anti-Muslim abuse stating they are ‘deeply worrying’. It further notes that it is affecting communities ‘trust in authorities and their sense of identity and belonging’. The lack of criticism by Thanet District Council for the unprecedented attacks on a predominantly Muslim/brown civilian population is having a further impact on this part of our community.

v. That the Israeli government have cut off water, food, and electricity to Gaza which is a recognised war crime under International Humanitarian Law.

vi. That on the 30 th October 2023 the World Bank warned that ‘oil prices could reach \$150 in 2024 due to the consequences of the war leading to further oil supply disruption’ which would ‘inevitably mean higher food prices’. ‘The IMF estimates that a sustained 10% increase in oil prices shaves 0.15 percentage points off global economic growth and adds 0.4 points to inflation in the following year’. It further adds that ‘the cost of a barrel of crude oil is now about 10% higher than it was before the Hamas attack’. Government poverty data continues to rank ‘Thanet as the most deprived local authority in Kent’, it also ‘has the most LSOAs within the most deprived decile with 18’ and has seen no change since 2015. Clearly, the impact of increased food and fuel

prices now and as predicted into the coming year, will be felt by all Thanet residents but disproportionately felt by the significant number of residents that live in poverty. In addition, higher costs will also negatively affect the Councils finances. With no end in sight and tensions growing 'if the conflict spreads to major oil-producing nations in the region such as Iran, the global economy could face severe repercussions as energy costs for businesses and households spike'.

(b) believes:-

- i. What is happening in Gaza is a humanitarian catastrophe with horrific escalations of violence.
- ii. Loss of all civilian lives and atrocities committed against civilians in both the Hamas attacks and the continuing bombardment of the Gaza strip by Israel, is horrific and must be condemned and investigated.
- iii. All forms of racism, including Anti-Palestinian racism, Antisemitism and Islamophobia have no place in Thanet or the wider world and condemns any attacks on these groups
- iv. Polls show that UK citizens surveyed overwhelmingly support a humanitarian ceasefire, which has been called for by the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, Save the Children, the head of the WHO, as well as Oxfam. While Ipsos found '7 out of 10 UK citizens are concerned about the impact of the conflict on Palestinians and Israeli civilians' and that they 'are more likely to want the UK Government to be a neutral mediator or not be involved at all than support a particular side' .
- v. All political leaders, at all levels of government, have duties under international law to prevent genocide; and that
- vi. Thousands of Thanet residents have joined protests, meetings and other events and gatherings, written to MPs, or contacted their councillors backing these calls for a ceasefire

(c) Supports:

- i. Israel's right to self-defence, in compliance with international humanitarian law, against terror attacks perpetrated by Hamas;
- ii. Condemns the slaughter, abuse and gender-based violence perpetrated on 7th October 2023, further condemns the use of civilian areas by Hamas and others for terrorist operations, urges negotiations to agree an immediate humanitarian pause as the best way to stop the fighting and to get aid in and hostages out;
- iii. Supports moves towards a permanent bilateral and sustainable ceasefire; acknowledges that achieving this will require all hostages to be released, the formation of a new Palestinian Government, Hamas to be unable to launch further attacks and no longer in charge in Gaza, and a credible pathway to a two-state solution which delivers peace, security and justice for both Israelis and Palestinians;
- iv. Expresses concern at the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and at the prospect of a military offensive in Rafah;
- v. Reaffirms the urgent need to significantly scale up the flow of aid into Gaza where too many innocent civilians have died; and calls on all parties to take immediate steps to stop the fighting and ensure unhindered humanitarian access.

(d) therefore resolves to:-

(i) call upon the UK Government and Opposition Government to:-

- i. call for an immediate bilateral ceasefire,
- ii. open humanitarian corridors into Gaza to allow aid and other vital medical resources to flow unhindered in,
- iii. provide an opportunity to seek the immediate release of

all hostages and all Palestinians held in arbitrary military detention,

iv. call for an arms embargo to be enacted by all involved in the conflict and

v. call on both Israel and the Palestinians to resume negotiations to seek a peaceful solution that ensures justice, safety, fairness and equality for all irrespective of religion or ethnicity;

(ii) request that the Leader submits this Motion to the UK Prime Minister and Opposition Leader.”

Councillors debated and voted against the alternative amendments proposed by Councillor Pugh.

Council proceeded to debate the original motion as amended by Councillor Everitt and when the Chair asked Council to vote on the motion, Councillors agreed the following:

“That this Council:-

(a) Notes:-

i. In response to the Hamas-led attacks on 7th October, that ‘by mid-December the Israeli army has dropped 29,000 bombs, munitions and shells on the strip. Nearly 70% of Gaza’s 439,000 homes and half of its buildings have been damaged or destroyed’. Gaza is one of the most densely populated places in the world and home to 2.2 million Palestinians (of whom almost half are children).

iii. As of 21 st January 2024, 25,105 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza and another 62,681 wounded’. Over 1 million Palestinians have been displaced, and many of the killed and injured are children.

iii. That collective punishment is against international law under the Geneva Conventions.

iv. This escalation in violence has been felt acutely across the district by residents and in particular among health care workers and clinical staff at QEQM hospital, the main medical centre for Thanet, which has a far higher level of diversity than the general population, some of whom have lost loved ones. That residents in Thanet, as in other communities, have been further affected by the rise in antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents across the UK and elsewhere.

Thanet has a significant Jewish community and heritage, and ‘more than seven out of ten Jews living in the UK have family in Israel, making the horrific 7 th October attack by Hamas personal’. UK Police have also reported a ‘record rise in religious hate crimes, with the Community Safety Trust, a Jewish charity describing the figures as ‘shocking’ and campaigners against Anti-Muslim abuse stating they are ‘deeply worrying’. It further notes that it is affecting communities ‘trust in authorities and their sense of identity and belonging’.

v. That the Israeli government have cut off water, food, and electricity to Gaza which is a recognised war crime under International Humanitarian Law.

vi. That on the 30 th October 2023 the World Bank warned that 'oil prices could reach \$150 in 2024 due to the consequences of the war leading to further oil supply disruption' which would 'inevitably mean higher food prices'. 'The IMF estimates that a sustained 10% increase in oil prices shaves 0.15 percentage points off global economic growth and adds 0.4 points to inflation in the following year'. It further adds that 'the cost of a barrel of crude oil is now about 10% higher than it was before the Hamas attack'. Government poverty data continues to rank 'Thanet as the most deprived local authority in Kent', it also 'has the most LSOAs within the most deprived decile with 18' and has seen no change since 2015.

Clearly, the impact of increased food and fuel prices now and as predicted into the coming year, will be felt by all Thanet residents but disproportionately felt by the significant number of residents that live in poverty. In addition, higher costs will also negatively affect the Council's finances. With no end in sight and tensions growing 'if the conflict spreads to major oil-producing nations in the region such as Iran, the global economy could face severe repercussions as energy costs for businesses and households spike.'

(b) Recognises that:

i. What is happening in Gaza is a humanitarian catastrophe with horrific escalations of Violence.

ii. Loss of all civilian lives and atrocities committed against civilians in both the Hamas attacks and the continuing bombardment of the Gaza strip by Israel, is horrific and must be condemned and investigated.

iii. All forms of racism, including Anti-Palestinian racism, Antisemitism and Islamophobia have no place in Thanet or the wider world and condemns any attacks on these groups.

iv. Polls show that UK citizens surveyed overwhelmingly support a humanitarian ceasefire, which has been called for by the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, Save the Children, the head of the WHO, as well as Oxfam. While Ipsos found '7 out of 10 UK citizens are concerned about the impact of the conflict on Palestinians and Israeli civilians' and that they 'are more likely to want the UK Government to be a neutral mediator or not be involved at all than support a particular side.'

v. All political leaders, at all levels of government, have duties under international law to prevent genocide to the extent it is within their power; and that

vi. Thousands of Thanet residents have joined protests, meetings and other events and gatherings, written to MPs, or contacted their councillors backing these calls for a ceasefire.

(c) Therefore resolves to:-

(i) Call upon the UK Government and all Westminster political parties to-

i. Call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire,

ii. Call for the opening of humanitarian corridors into Gaza to allow aid and other vital medical resources to flow unhindered in,

iii. Call for the immediate unconditional release of the hostages held by Hamas;

iv. Call for resumed negotiations to seek a peaceful two state solution that ensures justice, safety, fairness and equality for all;

(v) request that the Leader submits this Motion to the UK Prime Minister."

(c) **Abuse of Councillors and Officers Motion**

As a result of timings for the Notice of Motions over-running, the Abuse of Councillors and Officer Motion would be deferred to the full council meeting of 28 March 2024.

**9. LEADERS REPORT**

The Leader, Councillor Everitt, presented his report to Council, covering the following key points:

- There had been a peaceful conclusion to the long running use of the port of Ramsgate by a group of travellers that had extended back to summer 2021.
- There had been an outstanding contribution by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Whitehead, to understand the travellers needs and mutually agreeable solutions for individuals on the port site.
- A cyber incident in February 2024 had caused the council to shut down some of the computer systems as a precaution. This effected both staff and residents. There is no evidence that information had been gained from this disruption.
- There would be a new cabinet advisory group to consider the councils IT security moving forward.
- The equalities cabinet group was soon be set up.
- Work continued on the regeneration projects in Margate and Ramsgate.
- The leader had met with the Thanet Fisherman's Association.
- It was noted that the new owners of Dreamland had not taken on the £4 million allocation of funding from the Town Deal. It was for Dreamland to explain this decision.
- The allocation of money was believed to be used on the Winter Gardens project.
- There was a new corporate plan, and a balanced budget for the councils 2024 year ahead.
- The council would be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of formation in May.

Councillor Pugh, as Leader of the Conservative Group, made the following points:

- The news of a cabinet advisory group for cyber issues was welcomed.
- During the time of the cyber issues in February 2024, the planning portal had also been affected. It would be positive if there was some delays on the planning committee due to the planning portal having disruptions.
- The regeneration projects were welcomes.
- It was positive news that the equalities cabinet advisory group was to be set up soon.
- Would the council use levelling up funds for the port?

- It was agreed that the funding not taken by Dreamland should now be allocated to the Winter Gardens.
- It was disappointing that Dreamland had not taken the funding.
- Congratulations were given to the council for its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The Leader responded to Councillor Pugh's comments with the following points:

- The council shared the position that it could not commit significant levelling up funds without commitments of the port being used.

Councillor Garner, as Leader of the Green Group, made the following points:

- Gratitude was given to the housing team.
- The port had not been a good place to live. The root cause to this issues stood by the council neglecting its duty to provide a permanent site for travellers to use which had resulted in incursions.
- The consultation regarding the potential use of land off Shottendane Road was welcomed.
- The regeneration projects had been welcomed.
- It was positive with the potential work with the Thanet Fisherman Association.
- The port had raised concerns.

The Leader responded to Councillor Garner's comments with the following points:

- Much of Councillors Garners comments were agreed with.
- Scrutiny discussions around regeneration was positive, and had added value to the process.
- The council had expressions of interest of the port, as the port is currently. The council was committed to not spending large amounts of money without understanding what the prospect were in terms of the port.

## **10. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Councillor Fellows, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, circulated the full report prior to the meeting and asked if councillors had any questions on the report. Councillor Fellows stated that all councillors were welcome and encouraged to attend the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and that they had a wide range of topics discussed at meetings.

Councillors noted the report.

## **11. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2024/25**

Councillor Yates proposed, Councillor Albon seconded and Councillors agreed:

"That Council approves this report and annexes, including each of the key elements listed below.

a. The Capital Plans, Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2024/25 to 2026/27, including the Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator;



- b. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy;
- c. The Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 to 2026/27 and the Treasury Indicators;
- d. The Investment Strategy for 2024/25 contained in the Treasury Management Strategy, including the detailed criteria;
- e. The Capital Strategy for 2024/25;
- f. The Non-Treasury Investments Report for 2024/25.”

## **12. 2024-28 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

Councillor Yates proposed, Councillor Albon seconded and Councillors agreed that:

“1. The 2024/28 MTFS be agreed.”

## **13. COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION REPORT**

It was noted that in accordance with council procedure rule 17.6, a recorded vote would be taken on the motion or any amendments and substantive motions.

The Chair proposed, the Vice Chair seconded the recommendations in the report be set out:

“(i) That Members approve the Thanet District Council element of Council Tax charges as set out below for the listed property bands:

(INSERT TABLE)

(ii) That Members approve the determinations at Section 1 of this report.”

The Monitoring Officer conducted a recorded vote on the motion as follows:

34 Councillors voted in favour of the motion.

Councillors; Albon, Ara, Austin, Boyd, J. Bright, K. Bright, Britcher, Crittenden, Currie, Donaldson, Duckworth, Edwards, Everitt, Farooki, Garner, Green, Huxley, Keen, Makinson, Matterface, Pat Moore, Munns, Nixey, Ovenden, Owen-Hughes, Packman, Pope, Pressland, H. Scobie, W. Scobie, Smith, Whitehead, Wing and Yates.

14 Councillors voted against the motion.

Councillors; Bambridge, Bayford, Davis, Dawson, Fellows, Kup, Manners, Paul. Moore, Nichols, Pugh, Rattigan, Rogers, Towing, Wright.

The motion was AGREED.

## **14. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2024/25**

The Chair proposed, the Vice Chair seconded the recommendations in the report be set out:

“To adopt the proposed 2024/25 Members allowances scheme as set out at annex 1 to this report and to refer the scheme to EKJIRP for them to consider.

Any recommendations from the EKJIRP altering the proposed scheme will be reported back to Council for consideration.

If no recommendations are received from the EKJIRP, Council delegates the authority to approve the final scheme to the S.151 Officer.”

Councillors voted against a recorded vote.

Councillors agreed to the recommendation.

## **15. COMMITTEES, PANELS AND BOARDS**

The Chair proposed, the Vice Chair seconded the recommendations in the report be set out:

“That Council approves the proportionality between groups (allocation of seats) for Committees, Panels and Boards for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year.”

Councillor Everitt had no new nomination changes.

Councillor Pugh requested for Councillor Towning to be removed from the Licensing committee.

Councillor Davis would be removed as a reserve on Governance and Audit to full committee member.

Councillor Garner had no new nomination changes.

Councillors agreed.

## **16. REPRESENTATION ON RAMSGATE CHARITIES**

The item on Representation on Ramsgate Charities was deferred to a future meeting of the council.

## **17. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS**

The Chair proposed, the Vice Chair seconded the recommendations in the report be set out:

“That Council agrees the updated calendar of meetings for February 2024 to May 2027 as set out at Annex 1 to the report.”

Additionally it was noted that there were some changes to the calendar of meetings.

The following meetings were added to the calendar of meetings:

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Meeting of Cabinet

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 – Meeting of Joint Transportation Board

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The meeting of Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024, Overview and Scrutiny Panel, was removed from the calendar.

Councillors agreed.

Meeting concluded : 9.50 pm

