**MINUTES of**
**STATUTORY ANNUAL COUNCIL**
**14 MAY 2026**

**PRESENT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Chairperson (presiding) | Councillor K M H Lagan |
| Councillors | M G Bassenger, V J Bell, D O Bown, J R Burrell-Cook, S J Burwood, S Dodsley, J Driver, M F L Durham, A Fittock, A S Fluker, L J Haywood, J C Hughes, K Jennings, A M Lay, W J Laybourn, S J N Morgan, C P Morley, M G Neall, R G Pratt, R H Siddall, U G C Siddall-Norman, N D Spenceley, P L Spenceley, W Stamp, CC, E L Stephens, J C Stilts, N J Swindle, M E Thompson, S White and L L Wiffen |

## 1. CHAIRPERSON'S NOTICES

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through some general housekeeping arrangements for the meeting.

## 2. FORMER COUNCILLOR PETER ELLIOTT

At this point the Chairperson referred to the recent passing of former Councillor Peter Elliott and asked Councillor R G Pratt to say a few words.

Councillor Pratt spoke of Peter Elliott's love of politics, which had also been highlighted by his family at his recent funeral service. He noted that Peter had run his own accountancy business from his home alongside his wife Helen, who was also a former District Councillor.

Peter Elliott served as a Maldon District Councillor from 2003 to 2019. During that time, he had held the position of Chairperson of the Council and had sat on, as well as chaired, a number of Committees and outside bodies. He had also been a Burnham-on-Crouch Town Councillor and served as Mayor for two years.

Councillor Pratt shared that Peter had been his mentor and that both he and community of Burnham-on-Crouch would miss him greatly.

All present then stood in silent memory of Peter Elliott.

## 3. CHAIRPERSONS NOTICES CONTINUED

The Chairperson advised he had attended his final civic engagement earlier in the day, the 120th celebration of the sailing barge *Hydrogen*, at which he had been presented with a flagship pennant.

As outgoing Chairperson, Councillor K M H Lagan reflected on his three years in office, the significant work involved and expressed his appreciation for the support he had received from Members and Officers.

Councillor W Stamp thanked Councillor Lagan, stating that he had been an excellent and fair Chairperson. She also thanked him personally, referring to the hard work he had undertaken in learning the Constitution thoroughly.

## 4. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson called for nominations for Chairperson of the Maldon District Council for the ensuing municipal year to May 2027 and nominated Councillor R G Pratt. This was duly seconded by Councillor S J N Morgan.

There being no other nominations it was:

**RESOLVED** that Councillor R G Pratt be elected as Chairperson of the Maldon District Council for the ensuing municipal year.

IN THE CHAIR : COUNCILLOR R G PRATT

## 5. CHAIRPERSON'S STATUTORY DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Councillor R G Pratt made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of the Office of the Chairperson of the Council.

## 6. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson called for nominations for to the position of Vice-Chairperson of the Maldon District Council. Councillor S J N Morgan nominated Councillor J C Stilts and this was duly seconded by Councillor M E Thompson.

There being no other nominations it was:

**RESOLVED** that Councillor J C Stilts be elected as Vice-Chairperson of the Maldon District Council for the municipal year to May 2027.

## 7. VICE-CHAIRPERSON'S STATUTORY DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Councillor J C Stilts made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of the Office of Vice-Chairperson of the Council.

## 8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

## 9. MINUTES - 26 MARCH 2026

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 26 March 2026 be received and adopted.

## 10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

## 11. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

## 12. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairperson thanked Councillor K M H Lagan, the outgoing Chairperson, for an excellent three years and reiterated the earlier comments of Councillor W Stamp.

## 13. MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council noted the list of Committees that had met before and since the last meeting of the Council, up until Wednesday 6 May 2026 for which Minutes had been published.

## 14. QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 6 (2) OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

There were none.

## 15. LEADERS AND COMPOSITION OF POLITICAL GROUPS

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive, tabled at the meeting. As required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Chief Executive had been notified that the composition of the political Groups on the Council was as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Conservative Group (9) | Leader | Councillor S J N Morgan |
| | Members | Councillors: D O Bown<br>J R Burrell-Cook<br>M F L Durham<br>W J Laybourn<br>C P Morley<br>R G Pratt<br>M E Thompson<br>L L Wiffen |
| Liberal Democrat Group (7) | Leader | Councillor J Driver |
| | Members | Councillors: S J Burwood<br>S Dodsley<br>K Jennings<br>N D Spenceley<br>P L Spenceley<br>N J Swindle |
| The Maldon District Independent | Leader | Councillor R H Siddall |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Group (5) | Members | Councillors: M G Bassenger<br>A Fittock<br>J C Hughes<br>E L Stephens |
| District Support Group (4) | Leader | Councillor J C Stilts |
| | Members | Councillors: L J Haywood<br>K M H Lagan<br>W Stamp, CC |
| Reform UK (2) | Leader | Councillor A S Fluker |
| | Members | Councillor M G Neall |

It was noted that there were a further four Members of the Council not aligned to a political group.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Councillor S J N Morgan was therefore recognised as Leader-designate.

The Chairperson moved recommendation (i) and this was duly seconded.

In accordance with Procedure Rule No. 13 (3) Councillor R H Siddall requested a recorded vote.

The Chairperson put recommendation (i) to the Council, to elect the Leader-designate (Councillor S J N Morgan) and the voting was as follows:

For the recommendation:
Councillors D O Bown, J R Burell-Cook, M F L Durham, A S Fluker, L J Haywood, K M H Lagan, W J Laybourn, S J N Morgan, C P Morley, M G Neall, R G Pratt, W Stamp, J C Stilts, M E Thompson, S White and L L Wiffen.

Against the recommendation:
Councillors M G Bassenger, V J Bell, S J Burwood, S Dodsley, J Driver, A Fittock, J C Hughes, K Jennings, A M Lay, R H Siddall, U G C Siddall-Norman, N D Spenceley, P L Spenceley, E L Stephens and N J Swindle.

Abstention:
There were none.

The Chairperson declared that Councillor Morgan was therefore ratified as Leader of the Maldon District Council for the ensuing municipal year.

At this point, Councillor Morgan paid tribute to his predecessor, Councillor R H Siddall, and the work he had done for the residents of the District.

**RESOLVED**

(i) that the Leader-designate, Councillor S J N Morgan be ratified as Leader of the Council;

The Chairperson then called for nominations to the position Deputy Leader of the Council.

Councillor S J N Morgan nominated Councillor M E Thompson, and this was duly seconded.

There being no other nominations, the Chairperson declared that Councillor Thompson was duly elected as Deputy Leader of the Council.

**RESOLVED**

(ii) that Councillor M E Thompson be elected as Deputy Leader of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor S White left the meeting at this point and did not return.

At this point, Councillor E L Stephens referred to having worked with Councillor Siddall for five years. She noted that she had joined the Council during the difficult Covid period and that under his leadership the situation had been transformed. She expressed her personal thanks to Councillor Siddall and the work he had done for the Council.

## 16. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive, circulated prior to the meeting.

In response to a question the Director of Legal and Governance explained that in accordance with the Constitution, the Opposition Leadership passed to the leader of the largest political group which was the Liberal Democrats.

In response to the draft regulations set to come in on 30 September 2026 restricting the seats on Planning Committees the report sought Members agreement to appoint 13 members to a new District Planning Committee (new DP) which would take effect from 30 September 2026. The report advised that this would also allow for training of those appointed Members to take place. It was clarified that changes to the Constitution, the Committee Terms of Reference etc. would come through the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee prior to September.

Councillor W Stamp advised the Council that she did not support the proposal to establish from September 2026 a new DP, stating that she felt it was premature. She proposed that the Council did not populate the new DP as it was not definite and had not been confirmed at this stage. This proposal was duly seconded.

In the discussion that followed, the importance of training for Members of the new DP was emphasised. In response to questions, the Director of Legal and Governance advised that, should Members decide not to appoint to the new DP, this would not affect the planning or review of the legislation coming forward. The exact nature of the training had not been confirmed at this stage but was likely to be more than one session held either at the Council offices or online.

The Chairperson then put the proposal in the name of Councillor Stamp not to appoint to the new District Planning Committee at this time. Upon a vote being taken this was duly agreed.

**RESOLVED**

(i) That the Council did not appoint Members to the proposed new District Planning Committee which would take effect from 30 September 2026.

The Leader of the Council presented the report, and the Chairperson highlighted a number of Committees to which the Council would need to nominate and appoint non-aligned Councillors. Members were advised that no political group had a majority of 51% and therefore none could request a majority on each Committee. Nominations of non-aligned Members were duly made and considered as follows:

- **Performance, Governance and Audit Committee** *(one member)*
  Councillor W Stamp proposed that Councillor U G C Siddall-Norman be nominated as the non-aligned Councillor on this Committee. This proposal was duly seconded and agreed.

- **Strategy and Resources Committee** *(one member)*
  Councillor R H Siddall proposed that Councillor A M Lay be nominated as the non-aligned Councillor on the Strategy and Resources Committee. This proposal was duly seconded.

  Councillor W Stamp proposed that Councillor U G C Siddall-Norman be nominated as the non-aligned Councillor on this Committee. This proposal was duly seconded.

  There being two nominations the Chairperson advised that a vote would be required.

  In accordance with Procedure Rule No. 13 (3) Councillor R H Siddall requested a recorded vote. This was duly seconded. The voting was as follows:

  <u>For Councillor A M Lay:</u>
  Councillors M G Bassenger, V J Bell, S J Burwood, S Dodsley, J Driver, A Fittock, J C Hughes, K Jennings, A M Lay, R H Siddall, N D Spenceley, P L Spenceley, E L Stephens and N J Swindle.

  <u>For Councillor U G C Siddall-Norman</u>
  Councillors D O Bown, J R Burrell-Cook, M F L Durham, A S Fluker, L J Haywood, K M H Lagan, W J Laybourn, S J N Morgan, C P Morley, M G Neall, R G Pratt, U G C Siddall-Norman, W Stamp, J C Stilts, M E Thompson and L L Wiffen.

  The Chairperson declared that Councillor U G C Siddall-Norman was therefore appointed to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

  In response to a Point of Order raised by Councillor Siddall, the Chairperson confirmed the number of Councillors that had voted for Councillor Lay and Councillor Siddall-Norman.

- **Licensing Committee** *(one member)*
  Councillor S J N Morgan proposed that Councillor A M Lay be nominated as the non-aligned Councillor on the Licensing Committee. This proposal was duly seconded and agreed.

- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee)** *(one member)*
  Councillor R H Siddall proposed that Councillor V J Bell be nominated as the non-aligned Councillor on these Committees. This proposal was duly seconded and agreed.

- **Joint Standards Committee** *(two members)*
  Councillor R H Siddall proposed that Councillor A M Lay be nominated as one of the non-aligned Councillors on the Joint Standards Committee. This proposal was duly seconded.

Councillor S J N Morgan proposed that Councillor V J Bell be nominated as the other non-aligned Councillor on this Committee. This was duly seconded.

It was therefore agreed that Councillors V J Bell and A M Lay were appointed to the Joint Standards Committee.

- **Investigating and Disciplinary Committee** *(two members)*
  Councillor J C Stilts proposed that Councillor A M Lay be nominated as one of the non-aligned Councillors on the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee. This proposal was duly seconded.

  Councillor S J N Morgan proposed that Councillor V J Bell be nominated as the other non-aligned Councillor on this Committee. This was duly seconded.

  It was therefore agreed that Councillors V J Bell and A M Lay were appointed to the ~~Joint Standards~~ Investigating and Disciplinary Committee.[1]

- **Investigating and Disciplinary Panel** *(two members)*
  Councillor J C Stilts proposed that Councillor U G C Siddall-Norman be nominated as one of the non-aligned Councillors on the Investigating and Disciplinary Panel. This proposal was duly seconded.

  Councillor S J N Morgan proposed that Councillor S White be nominated as the other non-aligned Councillor on this Panel. This was duly seconded.

  It was therefore agreed that Councillors ~~V J Bell~~ U G C Siddall-Norman and S White were appointed to the ~~Joint Standards Committee~~ Investigating and Disciplinary Panel.[1]

The Chairperson then moved that Appendix A to the report be agreed, subject to the above nominates and without the proposed new District Planning Committee (from September 2026). He advised that the Appointments Board would be appointed at a later point in the meeting. This was duly agreed by assent.

**RESOLVED**

(ii) that the membership of the Committees of the Council as set out below be agreed:

| Committee | Members |
|---|---|
| Performance, Governance and Audit | Councillors D O Bown<br>S Dodsley<br>J C Hughes<br>M G Neall<br>R G Pratt<br>R H Siddall<br>U G C Siddall-Norman<br>N D Spenceley<br>W Stamp, CC<br>M E Thompson<br><br>Independent Person (non-voting):<br>Mr D Smith |

[1] Council (2 July 2026)

| Committee | Members |
|---|---|
| Strategy and Resources | Councillors M G Bassenger<br>J R Burrell-Cook<br>S Dodsley<br>J Driver<br>M FL Durham<br>A Fittock<br>A S Fluker<br>K M H Lagan<br>S J N Morgan<br>U G C Siddall-Norman<br>P L Spenceley |
| Licensing | Councillors M G Bassenger<br>M F L Durham<br>L J Haywood<br>K Jennings<br>A M Lay<br>S J N Morgan<br>N D Spenceley<br>E L Stephens<br>J C Stilts<br>M E Thompson |
| Overview and Scrutiny<br><br>Overview and Scrutiny (meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee) | Councillors V J Bell<br>J R Burrell-Cook<br>M F L Durham<br>A S Fluker<br>L J Haywood<br>C P Morley<br>R H Siddall<br>N D Spenceley<br>E L Stephens<br>N J Swindle |
| Joint Standards | Councillors M J Bassenger<br>V J Bell<br>S J Burwood<br>A M Lay<br>S J N Morgan<br>P L Spenceley<br>J C Stilts<br>M E Thompson<br><br><u>Parish Councillors (non-voting):</u><br>Parish Councillor M J Hall<br>Town Councillor S C Stratton<br><br><u>Independent Person:</u><br>Mr J Mitchel *(Reserve: Ms K Payne)* |
| Investigating and Disciplinary | Councillors V J Bell<br>A M Lay<br>P L Spenceley<br>W Stamp<br>M E Thompson |

| Committee | Members |
|---|---|
| Investigating and Disciplinary Panel | Councillors M G Bassenger<br>J R Burrell-Cook<br>S Dodsley<br>M F L Durham<br>K M H Lagan<br>S J N Morgan<br>R H Siddall<br>U G C Siddall-Norman<br>N D Spenceley<br>S White<br><br><u>Independent Person:</u><br>Mr J Mitchel *(Reserve: Ms K Payne)* |
| District Planning | All Members of the Council |
| Central Area Planning | Councillors J R Burrell-Cook<br>S R Burwood<br>S Dodsley<br>J Driver<br>K Jennings<br>K M H Lagan<br>A M Lay<br>N D Spenceley<br>P L Spenceley<br>J C Stilts<br>N J Swindle |
| North Western Area Planning | Councillors M F L Durham<br>J C Hughes<br>S J N Morgan<br>C P Morley<br>R H Siddall<br>E L Stephens<br>M E Thompson<br>S White<br>L L Wiffen |
| South Eastern Area Planning | Councillors M G Bassenger<br>V J Bell<br>D O Bown<br>A Fittock<br>A S Fluker<br>L J Haywood<br>W J Laybourn<br>M G Neall<br>R G Pratt<br>U G C Siddall-Norman<br>W Stamp, CC |

## 17. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

**RESOLVED** that the meeting be adjourned at 8:19pm to allow special meetings to be held as follows:

Performance, Governance and Audit Committee, Strategy and Resources Committee, Licensing Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Joint Standards Committee, Investigating and Disciplinary Committee, District Planning Committee, Central Area

Planning Committee, North Western Area Planning Committee and South Eastern Area Planning Committee.

## 18. RESUMPTION OF BUSINESS

**RESOLVED** that the business of the Annual Meeting of the Council be resumed at 8:50pm.

## 19. APPOINTMENT TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL - CONTINUED

Referring back to Agenda Item 14 - Appointment of Membership of Committees of the Council, the Chairperson advised that the Council needed to confirm the membership of the Appointments Board (the Board), now that Committee Chairpersons had been appointed.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised that the Board membership consisted of six Members politically balanced and therefore a nominee from the Conservative Group along with a non-aligned Member was required.

The Chairperson called for nominations and the Leader of the Council then proposed that Councillor M E Thompson be nominated to the Board as a Conservative Group Member. This was duly seconded and agreed.

Councillor W Stamp proposed that Councillor A M Lay be appointed to the Board as the non-aligned Member. This was duly seconded and agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the Membership of the Appointments Board for the ensuing Municipal year be agreed as follows:

- Leader of the Council (Councillor S J N Morgan)
- Leader of the Opposition (Councillor J Driver)
- Chairperson of the Strategy and Resources Committee (Councillor A Fittock)
- Chairperson of the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee (Councillor W Stamp, CC)
- Councillors A M Lay and M E Thompson

## 20. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OUTSIDE BODIES

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive, circulated prior to the meeting, seeking Members' consideration of the appointment of representatives to serve on Local Government and Outside Bodies for the ensuing municipal year to May 2027.

The Chairperson drew Members' attention to Appendix 1 which detailed nominations received from the respective Political Groups and highlighted a number of bodies where further nominations were required. The Council then went through each of these as follows:

- **Essex Coastal Forum**

Councillor K M H Lagan nominated himself as the substitute on this Forum. This was duly seconded and agreed.

- **Livewell Partnership Group**
  The Chairperson advised that two further Councillors were required to sit on this Group. Councillor L J Haywood nominated Councillor E L Stephens and Councillor A M Lay nominated himself These nominations were duly seconded and agreed.

- **Mid Essex Joint Committee**
  It was noted that one further nomination was required. Councillor R H Siddall nominated Councillor J Driver. This was duly seconded.

  The Director of Legal and Governance explained that this appointment was a new Committee related to the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), as detailed in the report. It would be set up as part of the structural changes order and include representatives from Essex County Council, Brentwood District Council and Chelmsford City Council as well as this Authority.

  Councillor L J Haywood nominated Councillor W Stamp to this Committee. This was duly seconded.

  Councillor S J N Morgan nominated Councillor M F L Durham to this Committee. This was duly seconded.

  At this point Councillor Stamp advised that she wished to withdraw herself from the nominations.

  Following a vote being taken, the Chairperson declared that Councillor Driver would be the Council's other representative alongside the Leader of the Council on this Committee.

- **Stow Maries Aerodrome Consultative Committee**
  The Chairperson advised that a further nomination was required to this Committee. Councillor J R Burrell-Cook nominated himself. This was duly seconded.

  Councillor V J Bell nominated Councillor C P Morley.

  Upon a vote being taken the Chairperson declared that Councillor Burrell-Cook was appointed to this Committee.

- **Responsible Authorities Group (RAG)**
  The Chairperson advised that one Members was required on this Group but two had been nominated. In response, Councillor P L Spenceley withdrew her nomination on this Group.

The Chairperson then put recommendation (i) to the Council subject to the above appointments. This was duly agreed. He then moved recommendation (ii) which was also agreed.

**RESOLVED**

(i) That the appointment of representatives to Local Government and Outside Bodies, as detailed in **APPENDIX 1** to these Minutes, nominated by the respective Political Groups, be agreed for the Municipal Year to May 2027;

(ii) That Members appointed as representatives to Local Government and Outside Bodies are responsible for sharing Minutes of meetings attended, to be stored

centrally on the Modern.Gov library as per the details in section 3.3 of the report.

## 21. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO SERVE ON WORKING GROUPS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive, circulated prior to the meeting, seeking Members' agreement to appoint Members to serve on Working Groups of the Council for the municipal year, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report. The report highlighted some changes to Working Groups following an annual housekeeping review.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and proposed that recommendations as set out in report be agreed. This was duly seconded.

Members discussed the report and nominations received specifically in relation to the following:

- **Environmental and Sustainable Working Group**
  Councillor W Stamp advised of an error in the list of Members nominated to this Working Group, Councillor K M H Lagan should be replaced with Councillor U G C Siddall-Norman. This change was duly noted.

- **Strategic Asset Working Group**
  In response to a comment regarding this Working Group and there not being a non-aligned Member nominated, Councillor S Dodsley removed her nominated. She then nominated that Councillor A M Lay be nominated to this Working Group. This was duly agreed.

- **Finance Member Working Group**
  The Director of Legal and Governance advised that following the appointment of the Leader of the Council and Chairperson of Committees there was one vacancy on this Working Group and Appendix 1 detailed two nominations (Councillors N D Spenceley and M E Thompson) had been received. Upon a vote being taken it was agreed that Councillor N D Spenceley was appointed to the Finance Member Working Group.

- **Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution Working Group**
  The Director of Legal and Governance reported that this Working Group consisted of ten Members, however only seven nominations had been received. A further three nominations were therefore required.

  Councillor R H Siddall nominated Councillor A Fittock. Councillor S J N Morgan nominated Councillor M F L Durham and Councillor L L Wiffen nominated Councillor C P Morley. These nominations were duly seconded and agreed.

- **Member Training Working Group**
  Members were advised that following the nominations received a further three Members were required to be nominated to this Working Group.

  Councillor J C Stilts nominated Councillor A M Lay and this was duly seconded. Councillor E L Stephens nominated Councillor R H Siddall, however Councillor Siddall declined the nomination. Councillor P L Spenceley nominated Councillor S Dodsley and this was duly seconded. Councillor Stilts nominated Councillor V J Bell however Councillor Bell declined the nomination. Councillor L L Wiffen nominated Councillor W J Laybourn and this was duly seconded. The nominations of Councillors Dodsley, Lay and Laybourn was agreed.

- **Planning Policy Working Group**

The Director of Legal and Governance reported that this Working Group was made up of eight Members, however nine nominations had been received. Following some discussion, it was agreed that the Membership of the Planning Policy Working Group would be increased to nine Members.

- **Strategic Housing Working Group**
  It was noted that two nominations were required.

  Councillor S J N Morgan nominated himself. Councillor M E Thompson nominated Councillor M F L Durham. Both nominations were duly seconded and agreed.

**RESOLVED** that subject to the above, the appointment to the Working Groups of the Council as set out at **APPENDIX 2** to these Minutes be agreed.

## 22. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Governance presenting an annual update on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (the Committee).

The report provided background information relating to the setting up of the Committee, its responsibility to report annually to the Council and the process for consideration of possible scrutiny items by the Committee.

The annual report for 2025 / 26 had been endorsed by the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Committee and was set out in Appendix 1 to the report. It was noted that the annual reporting arrangements ensured accountability of the Committee to the Council.

Councillor S J N Morgan, as the 2025 / 26 Chairperson of the Committee, presented the report to the Council highlighting that this year there had been eight referrals received by the Committee. At this point he encouraged Members to submit any referrals. Councillor Morgan then proposed that the recommendation as set out in the report be approved. This was duly seconded and agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2025 / 26 be approved by the Council.

## 23. DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION UPDATE

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive providing an update on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

The Director of Legal and Governance introduced the report which provided a brief outline of the announcement in March 2026 that the Government supported the Five Unitary Business Case. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had sought further information from the Council to inform a draft Structural Change Order (Order). The Council's proposed response to the questions raised by the MHCLG Was set out in paragraphs 3.3 – 3.5 of the report. Delegation was also sought to allow the Chief Executive to make any amendments or provide further information to MHCLG if required.

It was noted that Officers had undertaken a review of the ward arrangements in line with the Boundary Commission guidelines and previously approved by Members.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised that there was a typographical error in the Parish Council election harmonisation table (paragraph 3.5 of the report), for the 2026 ordinary year of election the ordinary end of term should read 2030, not 2040. This was noted.

Members noted the progress, ongoing discussions and work with Essex County Council, Chelmsford City Council and Brentwood District Council around implementation delivery planning.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised that there was no update in respect of Devolution.

The Chairperson moved the recommendations set out in the report and this was duly seconded.

In response to the discussion that ensued, the Director of Legal and Governance explained that the information set out in the report was being provided to the MHCLG and would not be presented before parliament at this time. The Chief Executive gave his commitment to Maldon that he would ensure Members were updated as soon as he was aware of information. He acknowledged that at times social media got hold of information quicker than the Council.

The Chairperson then put the recommendations which were duly agreed.

**RESOLVED**

(i) That Members approve the response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) questions as set out below:

**Warding Arrangements** - Officers have undertaken a review of the warding arrangements in line with the Boundary Commission guidelines. The proposed warding arrangement are as follows:

| Existing District Wards | Electorate 06.2025 | New Ward Total | Member / 3000 | No. Cllrs (new) | Name of New Ward |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Althorne | 3,559 | 6,581 | 1.19 | 2 | The Crouch Valley |
| Purleigh | 3,022 | | 1.01 | | |
| Burnham-on-Crouch North | 4,231 | 7,552 | 1.41 | 2 | Burnham-on-Crouch |
| Burnham-on-Crouch South | 3,321 | | 1.11 | | |
| Mayland | 3,400 | 8,106 | 1.13 | 3 | The Dengie Villages |
| Tillingham | 1,132 | | 0.38 | | |
| Southminster | 3,574 | | 1.19 | | |
| Tollesbury | 2,327 | 5,750 | 0.78 | 2 | Tollesbury and Tolleshunts |
| Tolleshunt Darcy | 3,423 | | 1.14 | | |
| Heybridge East | 3,262 | 6,773 | 1.09 | 2 | Heybridge |
| Heybridge West | 3,511 | | 1.17 | | |
| Maldon North | 3,406 | 5,221 | 0.61 | 2 | Maldon North East |
| Maldon East | 1,815 | | 1.02 | | |
| Maldon South | 3,073 | 7,257 | 1.14 | 2 | Maldon South West |
| Maldon West | 4,184 | | 1.39 | | |
| Great Totham | 3,159 | 6,270 | 1.05 | 2 | Maldon Rural North |
| Wickham Bishops & Woodham | 3,111 | | 1.04 | | |

| Existing District Wards | Electorate 06.2025 | New Ward Total | Member / 3000 | No. Cllrs (new) | Name of New Ward |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **53,510** | | **17** | |

**Returning Officer** - The Returning Officer for the Mid Essex will be the Chief Executive of Chelmsford City Council.

**Parish Council Election Harmonisation** - This position has not been agreed by all authorities, but this is the current proposal for Parish Council harmonisation.

**Proposal Parish/Town Council Elections**

| Ordinary year of elections | Ordinary End of term | Other elections we anticipate on election day that year | Proposal |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2026 | 2030 | Current council elections | Parish elections are already going ahead anyway, with a term of 4 years, but term should subsequently be extended to 6 years. |
| 2027 | 2031 | Shadow elections everywhere | Parish elections due to take place should go ahead, but term extended to 5 years. |
| 2028 | 2032 | Mayoral election | Parish elections due to take place should go ahead. No extension necessary |
| 2029 | 2033 | None – though General election is due by July 2029. | Parish elections should go ahead (if any) but with a three year term. |
| 2030 | 2034 | None | Parish elections should be postponed and term of those elected in 2026 extended to six years. |
| 2031 | 2035 | None | Parish elections should be postponed and term of those extended in 2027 extended to five years. |
| 2032 | 2036 | Unitary elections | All parish council elections take place this year |

(ii) That in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Chairperson of the LGR Working Group delegation is given to the Chief Executive to agree any amendments or to provide further information to MHCLG in relation to the information required to draft the Structural Change Order (SCO);

(iii) That Members note the wider update around Devolution and LGR.

There being no other items of business the Chairperson closed the meeting at 9.23 pm.

R PRATT
CHAIRPERSON

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# REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

**Local Government Bodies:**

| BODY | LEAD OFFICER | REPRESENTATIVE |
|---|---|---|
| Local Government East (previously East of England LGA) | Chief Executive | Leader of the Council |
| Local Government Association | Chief Executive | Leader of the Council |
| Local Councils network | Chief Executive | Leader of the Council |

**Outside Bodies (not appointed by Maldon District Council but involve Members of the Council):**

| BODY | LEAD OFFICER | REPRESENTATIVE |
|---|---|---|
| Essex Leaders and Chief Executives Group<br>NB currently where Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) work sits | Chief Executive | Leader of the Council |
| Essex Partnership Board (Mid Essex Representative) | Chief Executive | Leader of the Council |

**Representatives to Outside Bodies made by the Council:**

| BODY | LEAD OFFICER | TO BE APPOINTED | 2026 / 27 Representative |
|---|---|---|---|
| A12 Widening Member Group (Essex County Council (ECC)) | Director Place Planning and Growth | One Ward Councillor from Great Totham and Wickham Bishops | J C Hughes (Great Totham)<br>S J N Morgan (Wickham Bishops) |
| Action for Family Carers Liaison Board | Head of Health Integration and Wellbeing | One Member of Council | P L Spenceley |
| Blackwater Estuary Siltation Steering Group – Annual meeting | Head of Assets, Coast and Countryside | One Member of the Council<br>(Same Member as Maldon Harbour Improvement Commissioners Representative – from June 2026) | A S Fluker<br>(See note in Maldon Harbour Improvement Commissioners) |
| Bradwell Local Community Liaison Council | Director of Strategy and Improvement | One Member of the Council | M G Neall |
| Dementia Friendly Community | Head of Health Integration and Wellbeing | One Member of the Council | P L Spenceley |

**APPENDIX 1**

## REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

| BODY | LEAD OFFICER | TO BE APPOINTED | 2026 / 27 Representative |
|---|---|---|---|
| Digital Essex Steering Group | Director of Strategy and Improvement | Chairperson of the Strategy and Resources Committee | Chairperson of the Strategy and Resources Committee (A Fittock) |
| Drapers Farm Sports Club Committee | Head of Asset, Coast and Countryside | One Member of the Council<br>*Substitute: One Member of the Council* | N D Spenceley<br>*Substitute: P L Spenceley* |
| Essex Civilian and Military Partnership Board | Head of Health Integration and Wellbeing | One Member of the Council | S J N Morgan |
| Essex Coastal Forum | Head of Asset, Coast and Countryside | One Member of the Council<br>*Substitute: One Member of the Council* | A Fittock<br>*Substitute:* K M H Lagan |
| Essex County Council twice yearly Climate Summits) | Head of Environmental Health, Waste and Sustainability Action | Leader of the Council | Leader of the Council (S J N Morgan) |
| Essex Countywide Traveller Unit Joint Committee | Head of Environmental Health, waste Environment and Sustainability / Head of Community Safety & Customer Services and Community Protection Manager | One Member of the Council | M F L Durham |
| Essex Flood Partnership Board | Head of Environmental Health, Waste and Sustainability | One Member of the Council<br>*Substitute: One Member of the Council* | P L Spenceley<br>*Substitute: N D Spenceley* |
| Essex Future of Leisure Board | Head of Health Integration and Wellbeing | One Member of the Council | L J Haywood |
| Essex Planning Portfolio Holders Group | Director of Place Planning and Growth | Chairperson of the Strategy and Resources Committee<br>*Substitute: Vice-Chairperson of the Strategy and Resources Committee* | Chairperson of the Strategy and Resources Committee (A Fittock)<br>*Substitute: Vice-Chairperson Strategy and Resources Committee (M G Bassenger)* |

**APPENDIX 1**

## REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

| BODY | LEAD OFFICER | TO BE APPOINTED | 2026 / 27 Representative |
|---|---|---|---|
| Essex Police Fire and Crime Panel<br>*(The Substitute must be from the same Political Group)* | Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities | One Member of the Council<br>*Substitute: One Member of the Council* | J R Burrell-Cook<br>*Substitute: S J N Morgan* |
| Essex Waste Member Partnership Board | Waste Commissioning and Contracts Manager / Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities | Chairperson of the Strategy and Resources Committee<br>*Substitute: Vice-Chairperson Strategy and Resources Committee* | Chairperson of the Strategy and Resources Committee (A Fittock)<br>*Substitute: Vice-Chairperson Strategy and Resources Committee (M G Bassenger)* |
| Livewell Partnership Group | Head of Health Integration and Wellbeing | Six Members of the Council | M G Bassenger<br>L J Haywood<br>K M H Lagan<br>A M Lay<br>N D Spenceley<br>E L Stephens |
| Maldon Coastal and Flooding Meeting | Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities | Leader of the Council<br>*And One Member of the Council* | Leader of the Council (S J N Morgan)<br>P L Spenceley |
| Maldon District Tourism Group | Head of Economic Development | One Member of the Council<br>*Substitute: One Member of the Council* | L J Haywood<br>*Substitute: K Jennings* |
| Maldon Harbour Improvement Commissioners<br>*This position is an appointment as a Commissioner for a minimum period of three years (appointment will continue even if Member leaves the Council)* | Head of Assets, Coast and Countryside | One Member of Council<br>(same as Blackwater Estuary representative) | A S Fluker (until June 2029) |
| Mid Essex Joint Committee | Chief Executive | Two Members of the Council | Leader of the Council (S J N Morgan)<br>J Driver |

**APPENDIX 1**

## REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

| BODY | LEAD OFFICER | TO BE APPOINTED | 2026 / 27 Representative |
|---|---|---|---|
| NHS Mid Essex Alliance | Director of Strategy and Improvement / Head of Health Integration and Wellbeing | Leader of the Council | Leader of the Council (S J N Morgan) |
| North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) | Director of Strategy and Improvement / Head of Health Integration and Wellbeing | Leader of the Council | Leader of the Council (S J N Morgan) |
| One Maldon District Partnership | Director of Strategy and Improvement / Head of Health Integration and Wellbeing | Leader of the Council<br>One Opposition Leader | Leader of the Council (S J N Morgan)<br>J Driver |
| PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London) Adjudication Joint Committee (annual meeting) | None | One Member of the Council | R G Pratt |
| Plume Educational Trust<br>*(Four yearly appointment)* | None | Two Members of the Council | N D Spenceley (from 15 June 2025)<br>K Jennings (from 15 June 2023 until 14 June 2027) |
| Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) (Community Safety) | Community Protection Manager / Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities | One Member of the Council<br>*Substitute: One Member of the Council* | J C Stilts<br>*Substitute: K M H Lagan* |
| Safer Essex Group | Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities | One Member of the Council | J C Stilts |
| South Essex Parking Partnership – Joint Committee | Community Protection Manager / Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities | One Member of the Council<br>*Substitute: One Member of the Council* | R G Pratt<br>*Substitute: S J N Morgan* |
| Southend Airport Consultative Committee | Head of Economic Development | One Member of the Council | D O Bown |
| Stow Maries Aerodrome Consultative Committee<br>(Appointed 20/12/18) | Director of Finance | Two Members of the Council | J R Burrell-Cook<br>K M H Lagan |

**APPENDIX 1**

## REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

| BODY | LEAD OFFICER | TO BE APPOINTED | 2026 / 27 Representative |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Thomas Plume Library Charitable Incorporated Organisation | None | One Member of Council | N D Spenceley |

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**APPENDIX 2**

## Member Working Groups

**Appointed by the Council**

| Member Working Group | Lead Officer | To appoint | 2026 / 27 Representatives |
|---|---|---|---|
| Environmental and Sustainability Working Group<br>(previously Member and Officer Net Zero Working Group) | Head of Environmental Health, Waste, Environment and Sustainability | Eight Members of the Council | 8 Members:<br>D O Bown<br>S Dodsley<br>L J Haywood<br>R H Siddall<br>U G C Siddall-Norman<br>P L Spenceley<br>E L Stephens<br>J C Stilts |
| Finance Member Group | Director of Finance (Chief Finance Officer) | Ten Members of the Council consisting of:<br>• Political Group Leaders<br>• Chairperson of the Strategy and Resources Committee (S&R)<br>• Vice-Chairperson of the S&R<br>• Chairperson of the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee (PGA)<br>• Vice-Chairperson of the PGA | Political Group Leaders:<br>• Conservative Group (S J N Morgan)<br>• District Support Group (J C Stilts)<br>• Liberal Democrat Group (J Driver)<br>• Reform UK (A S Fluker)<br>• The Maldon District Independent Group (R H Siddall)<br><br>Chairperson of the S&R (A Fittock)<br>Vice-Chairperson of the S&R (M G Bassenger)<br>Chairperson of the PGA (W Stamp)<br>Vice-Chairperson of the PGA (M G Neall)<br><br>One Member:<br>N D Spenceley |

**APPENDIX 2**

| Member Working Group | Lead Officer | To appoint | 2026 / 27 Representatives |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leisure Partnership Board (Working Group) | Head of Health Integration and Wellbeing | Eight Members of the Council (plus Places Leisure representatives) | 8 Members:<br>M F L Durham<br>L J Haywood<br>A S Fluker<br>K M H Lagan<br>A M Lay<br>R H Siddall<br>P L Spenceley<br>E L Stephens |
| Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution Working Group | Chief Executive | Ten Members of the Council, inclusive of:<br>• Leader of the Council<br>• Opposition Leader(s) | 10 Members:<br><u>Leader of the Council</u><br>S J N Morgan<br><br><u>Opposition Leader(s):</u><br>J Driver<br><br><u>Members:</u><br>M F L Durham<br>A Fittock<br>A S Fluker<br>C P Morley<br>R H Siddall<br>P L Spenceley<br>W Stamp CC<br>M E Thompson |
| Member Training and Development Member Working Group | Director of Legal and Governance | Eight Members of the Council | 8 Members:<br>S Dodsley<br>L J Haywood<br>A M Lay<br>W J Laybourn<br>S J N Morgan<br>P L Spenceley<br>E L Stephens<br>M E Thompson |

**APPENDIX 2**

| Member Working Group | Lead Officer | To appoint | 2026 / 27 Representatives |
|---|---|---|---|
| Planning Policy Working Group | Director of Place, Planning and Growth | Nine Members of the Council<br>(Council on 14/05/26 agreed to increase Membership to nine Members) | 9 Members:<br>M G Bassenger<br>J R Burrell-Cook<br>J Driver<br>A Fittock<br>A S Fluker<br>S J N Morgan<br>P L Spenceley<br>W Stamp CC<br>M E Thompson |
| Strategic Asset Working Group<br>(previously Strategic Asset Group) | Director of Neighbourhood Services and Communities | Ten Members of the Council | 10 Members:<br>J Driver<br>A Fittock<br>A S Fluker<br>L J Haywood<br>K M H Lagan<br>A M Lay<br>S J N Morgan<br>R H Siddall<br>P L Spenceley<br>M E Thompson |
| Strategic Housing Working Group<br>(previously Strategic Housing Board) | Head of Housing and Building Control | Nine Members of the Council | 9 Members:<br>S Dodsley<br>M F L Durham<br>K Jennings<br>S J N Morgan<br>R H Siddall<br>P L Spenceley<br>E L Stephens<br>J C Stilts<br>M E Thompson |

**PANEL (not a Working Group)**

| Panel | Lead Officer | Panel Details | 2026/27 Representatives |
|---|---|---|---|
| Where Quality of Life Matters Assurance Panel<br>(Appointed by the Council on 10 July 2025 – Minute No. 148 refers) | Director of Strategy and Improvement | **Role**: To provide final ratification of the applications proposed for support by the Scoring Panel.<br><br>**Rationale**: To offer an additional later of validation, ensuring medium and large grant applications meet the Council's strategic needs and the protection of public funds | Leader of the Council (S J N Morgan)<br><br>Chairperson of the Strategy and Resources Committee (A Fittock)<br><br>R H Siddall<br>L J Haywood<br>P L Spenceley<br>M E Thompson |