

CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
held on 3 September 2025 at 7pm

PRESENT:

The Mayor, J Sosin
The Deputy Mayor, S Rajesh

Councillors C Adutwim, J Armstrong, H Ayres, G Bonnett, N Chambers, D Clark, H Clark, P Clark, A Davidson, C Davidson, S. Dobson, N Dudley, D Eley, K Franks, L Foster, J Frasca, I Fuller, S Goldman, S Hall, J Hawkins, R Hyland, A John, B Knight, R Lee, S Manley, L Mascot, V Pappa, J Potter, J Raven, S Robinson, E Sampson, T Sherlock, A Sosin, M Steel, S Sullivan, M Taylor, A Thompson, A Thorpe-Apps, C Tron, N Walsh, R Whitehead, P Wilson and S Young.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bugbee, Canning, Davey, Deakin, Jeapes, Lardge, Massey, Moore, O'Brien, Scott and Sismey.

Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor reported the recent passing of former Councillor Vicky Gallagher, who represented Patching Hall Ward between 1979 and 1983. Members stood in silence as a mark of respect.

Cllr Robinson then paid tribute, recalling that, although their time on the Council was short, Vicky Gallagher was a longstanding and active member of the community. They were remembered for service as secretary of Tanglewood Nursery School, their commitment to the local Liberal Democrat movement, and their support for the parish and church community at Our Lady Immaculate.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded to declare at the appropriate time, any interests in the business on the meeting's agenda. None were made.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Public Questions

In accordance with Council Rules 10.1 to 10.6 questions could only relate to Item 5 on the agenda. One public question had been submitted in advance of the meeting, [which can be viewed via this link](#).

A response was provided under Item 5.

5. Community Governance Review

The Leader of the Council introduced a report which recommended that the Council commence a Community Governance Review in respect of the unparished central area of Chelmsford and adjoining parish areas. A city-wide review had been undertaken in 2021/22, but the significant changes anticipated through Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) meant that a further review was now considered necessary. The review would be limited to the unparished city centre and the nine adjoining parishes of Broomfield, Chelmer, Chignal, Galleywood, Great Baddow, Margaretting, Springfield, Stock and Writtle. The purpose was to allow residents to consider their options for local representation before the anticipated changes to Chelmsford City Council in April 2028 following LGR.

It was noted that about 62 per cent of the district electorate already lived in parished areas, compared with 38 per cent in the unparished city centre. It was explained that decisions on local amenities such as allotments and play areas should be made locally rather than by a new unitary authority covering a much wider area. It was confirmed that the nine parishes were included in the scope to allow for boundary adjustments where development had crossed parish lines. In response to the public question, it was clarified that city status would not automatically be lost without a parish council but arrangements such as Charter Trustees could be established to preserve the mayoralty and civic traditions and that the precept for any new parish would initially be set by the City Council ahead of elections, in the same way as with recent new councils.

Members expressed concern that the terms of reference were too broad and did not provide sufficient detail about consultation thresholds or whether a new parish would be divided into wards. It was noted that the previous review had attracted a very low level of public response and suggestions were made to establish a minimum participation threshold before any changes could be implemented. It was suggested that key stakeholders such as housing associations, the Civic Society and the Business Improvement District (BID) should be consulted. Some members questioned whether this was the right time to conduct a review, given the risk of confusing residents already facing consultation on LGR. Questions were also asked about the cost of the exercise and the time required from officers.

In response to the concerns and questions raised it was shared that many of the details would be considered by the Working Group. It was estimated that the cost of the review would be around £100,000, including £22,000 for addressed leaflets, and confirmed that an external consultant had been engaged due to limited officer capacity. It was emphasised that parish councils and neighbourhood committees under LGR were different and that parish councils would continue to have an important role.

It was RESOLVED that:

1. the Council authorises the commencement of a CGR of its own volition and approves the draft Terms of Reference, as recommended by the Connectivity and Local Democracy Working Group.
2. the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council and the Connectivity and Local Democracy Working Group, be authorised to approve the Consultation Questions and to take any necessary action to progress the review. Any decision related to the approval of draft or final recommendations, or other key decisions, would be taken to Governance Committee and Full Council for approval.

The meeting closed at 7.39pm

Mayor