



Democratic Services

# Housing and Community Committee

---

**Thursday, 09 March 2017**

**19:00**

**Room 2 (Civic Offices)**

---

Williams (Chair) Ganatra (Vice-Chair) Wallis (Vice-Chair)  
Burke Ferrans Geaney Geary Hosking Khan McCall Webb

If you have any enquires about this agenda please contact:

Clerk Name: Elizabeth Richardson

Clerk Telephone: 01908 252629

Clerk Email: [elizabeth.richardson@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.richardson@milton-keynes.gov.uk)



## **Health and Safety**

Please take a few moments to familiarise yourself with the nearest available fire exit, indicated by the fire evacuation signs. In the event of an alarm sounding during the meeting you must evacuate the building immediately and follow all instructions provided by the fire evacuation officer who will identify him/herself should the alarm sound. You will be assisted to the nearest designated assembly point until it is safe to return to the building.

## **Mobile Phones**

Please ensure that your mobile phone is switched to silent or is switched off completely during the meeting.

## **Agenda**

Agendas and reports for the majority of the Council's public meetings can be accessed via the Internet at: <http://milton-keynes.cmis.uk.com/milton-keynes/> Wi Fi access is available in the Council's meeting rooms.

Users of Windows 7 and above can simply click the link to any documents you wish to see. Users of Windows XP will need to right click on the link and select 'open in browser'.

## **Recording of Meetings**

The proceedings at this meeting may be recorded for the purpose of preparing the minutes of the meeting.

In accordance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, you can film, photograph, record or use social media at any Council meetings that are open to the public. If you are reporting the proceedings, please respect other members of the public at the meeting who do not want to be filmed. You should also not conduct the reporting so that it disrupts the good order and conduct of the meeting. While you do not need permission, you can contact the Council's staff in advance of the meeting to discuss facilities for reporting the proceedings and a contact is included on the front of the agenda, or you can liaise with staff at the meeting.

Guidance from the Department for Communities and local government can be viewed at the following link:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/343182/140812\\_Openness\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/343182/140812_Openness_Guide.pdf)

## **Comments, Complaints and Compliments**

Milton Keynes Council welcomes comments, complaints and compliments from members of the public in order to make its services as efficient and effective as possible. We would appreciate any suggestions regarding the usefulness of the paperwork for this meeting, or the conduct of the meeting you have attended.

Please e-mail your comments to [meetings@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:meetings@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

If you require a response please leave contact details, ideally including an e-mail address. A formal complaints / compliments form is available online at <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/complaints/>

## **A G E N D A**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair to welcome councillors, officers of the Council, witnesses and the public to the meeting and introduce councillors, officers and witnesses who are present.

**2. Apologies**

To receive any apologies of absence.

**3. Disclosures of Interest**

Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, or personal interests (including other pecuniary interests) they may have in the business to be transacted, and officers to disclose any interests they may have in any contract to be considered.

**4. Minutes**

7 - 14

To approve, and the Chair to sign as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Housing and Community Committee held on 17 January 2017 (**Item 4**).

**5. YourMK – Managing the Council’s Responsive Repairs Service and Planned Works Programme**

At its meeting on 21 December 2015 the Cabinet agreed to form a long-term partnership with the Mears Group plc to deliver the repairs and maintenance service to all council owned properties in Milton Keynes and to develop and deliver a regeneration programme. This Partnership is called YourMK.

YourMK is a 50-50 partnership between Milton Keynes Council and Mears Group plc, providing a repairs and maintenance service for over 11,500 homes across Milton Keynes. As well as its remit to manage the Council’s responsive repairs and planned maintenance programme, YourMK also aims to improve neighbourhoods by providing better access to jobs and training and giving genuine power and influence to local people.

Since April 2016 YourMK has been delivering the repairs and maintenance service to all Milton Keynes Council owned properties. Between April and November 2016, they completed 16,500 repair jobs, saved c£2,000,000 by implementing operational efficiencies, completed a 6 month review and put a revised service improvement plan in place.

Representatives from YourMK will be attending the meeting to discuss with the Committee how they are managing the Council’s responsive repairs service and planned works programme, how they have achieved the above savings, improvements made to the service, tenant satisfaction ratings and plans for further improvements in the future.

6. **Government White Paper: Fixing Our Broken Housing Market**

15 - 18

On 7 February 2017 the Government published a White Paper, *Fixing Our Broken Housing Market*, which sets out proposals on how it intends to boost housing supply and, over the long term, create a more efficient housing market whose outcomes more closely match the needs and aspirations of all households and which supports wider economic prosperity.

The *Executive Summary* is attached as an outline of the proposals in the White Paper (**Item 6**). The full document is available via the following link:

<https://tinyurl.com/hcggd8r>

Following on from the seminar on the White Paper on 6 March, representatives from the Council's Planning Department will be attending to discuss with the Committee the possible implications for Milton Keynes, how the proposals in the White Paper will assist the Council in unlocking more housing and how can it take advantage of these opportunities.

7. **Implications of the Homelessness Reduction Bill**

On 29 June 2016, Bob Blackburn MP introduced to Parliament a Private Member's Bill aimed at reducing the high level of homelessness being experienced across the United Kingdom. The Bill is based on the recommendations in an earlier report commissioned by the charity Crisis.

The Bill has received cross-party support in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. It received its second reading in the House of Lords on 24 February 2017; the next step is the Committee stage in the House of Lords, although no date for this has been announced yet. It will then be subject to a third reading in the Lords before both Houses agree that it is ready for Royal Assent.

The Bill focuses on advice, information and prevention, setting out more clearly the types of housing advice and information local authorities must provide to people before they become homeless or are threatened with homelessness. This new duty on local authorities would apply to all eligible households, irrespective of any priority need or intentional homelessness and means that, in future, councils would have to demonstrate that they were taking reasonable steps to prevent homelessness.

Under the terms of the 1996 Housing Act, a person is threatened with homelessness if it is likely that he/she will become homeless within 28 days. The Homelessness Reduction Bill seeks to extend this period to 56 days so that local authorities can respond to the threat of homelessness at a much earlier point and provide practical help such as mediation with landlords, payment of a grant or loan, or debt management

support. It will also be incumbent on local authorities to accept a valid notice to quit or equivalent as evidence that the tenant is threatened with homelessness, overturning current rules which state that tenants do not become homeless until physically evicted from their properties.

Other proposals in the Bill introduce a new relief duty for all eligible homeless people who have a local connection, meaning that local authorities must take reasonable steps to secure accommodation, regardless of priority need status. If the local authority is unable to prevent an applicant's homelessness, it should help to secure alternative accommodation, for example, by providing a grant or loan, or advice and advocacy to help secure a tenancy in the private rented sector. This duty would last for a period of 56 days after which, if not accommodated, the applicant would be assessed to see if he/she is eligible for the main homelessness duty.

Another new duty in the Bill is the proposal to provide emergency accommodation for homeless people with nowhere safe to stay, for up to 28 days so that they are not forced to sleep rough. Applicants would only be able to access emergency interim accommodation under this duty for a maximum of 56 days and on no more than one occasion every six months.

However, in return for these obligations on councils, the Bill also places a duty on applicants to cooperate with the local authority's efforts to help them. Local authorities would be permitted to discharge their prevention and relief duties if an applicant unreasonably refuses to cooperate with the course of action that they have agreed to undertake.

A more detailed briefing note, for discussion at the meeting, on the implications of the Bill for Milton Keynes Council is **to follow**.

8a. **Update on the Work of the Milton Keynes Homelessness Partnership** 19 - 20

To receive and note the attached update on the work being done and progress made by the Milton Keynes Homelessness Partnership (**Item 8a**).

8b. **Update on the Use of Temporary Accommodation**

To receive and note the progress being made by Milton Keynes Council to reduce the use of temporary accommodation, particularly the use of room-only hotel accommodation (**to follow**).