

Minutes of the meeting of the MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL held on WEDNESDAY
20 MARCH 2013 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor Morris (Mayor)
Councillors Alexander, Bald, Barney, Bint, Brackenbury, Bradburn, Bramall, Brock, Brunning, M Burke, Coventry, Dransfield, Eastman, Edwards, Exon, A Geary, P Geary, Hawthorn, Hopkins, Hoyle, Jury, Kennedy, Klein, Legg, Marland, D McCall, I McCall, McDonald, McKenzie, McLean, Middleton, Miles, O'Neill, Richards, Small, Tallack, Venn, Wales, Wallis, Webb, Wharton, White and Zealley

Apologies: Councillors S Burke, Ferrans, Long, Maric, Shafiq, C Williams and P Williams and Alderpersons Bristow, Ellis, E Henderson, I Henderson, Howell and Lloyd

Also Present: 30 members of the public

CL94 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20 February 2013, be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

CL95 ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Errol Ray and Helena Hardwick

The Mayor announced the recent deaths of Errol Ray, the Council's first Chief Executive, and Helena Hardwick Past Mayoress and wife of Alderman Bruce Hardwick.

The Council stood in silence as a mark of respect.

(b) Invest MK

The Mayor also announced the release of the new Invest MK Corporate Video, which was shown to the Council.

CL96 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Brock disclosed a personal interest in Item 5(b)(ii) (NHS Privatisation) as a Council representative to the Council of Governors of the Milton Keynes NHS General Hospital.

Councillor Wales disclosed a pecuniary interest in Item 5(b)(ii) (NHS Privatisation) as an employee of Milton Keynes Citizens Newspaper and withdrew to the public gallery during consideration of that Item.

Councillor Morris disclosed a pecuniary interest in Item 4 (Statutory Pay Policy) as her partner was a senior officer of the Council, and left the Council Chamber during consideration of that Item.

Councillor Bradburn disclosed a pecuniary interest in a question to be asked of the Leader of the Council at member Question Time, relating to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs proposal to close its network of enquiry centres.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC - HOUSING ISSUES**(a) 'Spare Room Subsidy'**

The Mayor, on behalf of Mrs J Bobey, asked Councillor P Geary, the Cabinet Member for Communities, if he could indicate how many pensioner households which were exempt from the bedroom tax were considered to be under occupying their Council homes.

Councillor P Geary indicated that the records were not easily available. However, he understood that the Council had at least 1,000 tenants of pensionable age living in 'family' size housing and those households were likely to be under occupying their homes, but these would be exempt from the new social housing size criteria.

(b) 'Spare Room Subsidy'

The Mayor, on behalf of Mr E Bobey, asked Councillor P Geary, the Cabinet Member for Communities, how many new Council homes does the Council intend to build between April 2013 and the year end March 2014.

Councillor P Geary indicated that the Council intended to complete the construction of 12 new Council homes in the period, which was in addition to at least one property coming into the housing portfolio from Barley Hurst School, and possibly others. Also the Council had a budget that would see up to 14 other properties move through the planning stage and into construction during the year, although these were unlikely to be completed and occupied before the end of March 2014.

Councillor P Geary also indicated that, in addition, over the next 10 years, through the regeneration work that was underway, an estimated further 800 Council owned properties would be delivered.

(c) On-Street Car Parking, Wolverton Railway Station

Mr M Galloway, referring to a potential delegated decision to make the one-way working and on-street parking on Haversham Road by Wolverton Rail Station, permanent asked Councillor Bint, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways, to consider withdrawing the proposal to allow meaningful consultation, which should include adjoining Ward Members and parish and town councils, before making fresh proposals.

Mr Galloway, in asking his question, referred specifically to the potential level of charges and available methods of payment.

Councillor Bint indicated that the on-street parking was close to the existing London / Midland's car park which had a range of payment methods, other than cashless. The on-street parking was aimed at supplementing the existing parking and was to be priced so as not to undermine the current parking provision and would be free at weekends.

Councillor Bint also indicated that there would be further consultation as part of the Order making process.

CL98 STATUTORY PAY POLICY

(Deputy Mayor in the Chair.)

Councillor Bald moved the following recommendation from the Employers' Side of the Joint Negotiating Committee held on 4 February 2013, which was seconded by Councillor A Geary:

"That the Pay Policy Statement for the Financial Year 2012/13 be approved."

On being put to the vote the recommendation was declared carried unanimously.

RESOLVED -

That the Pay Policy Statement for the Financial Year 2012/13 be approved.

(Councillor Morris disclosed a pecuniary interest in this Item and left the Council Chamber during consideration of the Item.)

CL99 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- (a) Question from Councillor I McCall to Councillor A Geary (Leader of the Council)

Councillor I McCall asked Councillor A Geary to examine the potential implications for residents of the closure of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs network of enquiry centres, including Milton Keynes, particularly as this potentially impacted on the most vulnerable residents.

Councillor A Geary indicated that he would request officers to consult with appropriate partner organisations with regard to formulating a potential response to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs proposal to close its network of enquiry centres.

- (b) Question from Councillor Dransfield to Councillor Bradburn (Chair of the Children and Young Peoples Select Committee)

Councillor Dransfield asked Councillor Bradburn for advice on how he should advise parents as to what school they should choose, a local comprehensive school, or a fee paying private school, in light of the actions of the Deputy Prime Minister to choose private education.

Councillor Bradburn stated that as private sector schools existed it would be wrong to try and limit the choice available to parents, and he would be surprised if Councillor Dransfield supported limiting the choice available to parents.

Councillor Dransfield asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Bradburn.

- (c) Question from Councillor Wallis to Councillor Hopkins (Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Enterprise)

Councillor Wallis asked Councillor Hopkins, in light of proposals for the Central Milton Keynes Crown Post Office to move to the Theatre District, for his views on the proposed move.

Councillor Hopkins indicated that he was not aware of the background to the proposed move but agreed to look into the proposal to move the Central Milton Keynes Crown Post Office and respond to Councillor Wallis.

Councillor Wallis asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Hopkins.

- (d) Question from Councillor Brackenbury to Councillor Brock (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing)

Councillor Brackenbury, referring to the 'Blue Badge' parking scheme asked Councillor Brock if she was aware of the charge for a badge and how much it cost the Council to administer the scheme.

Councillor Brock indicated that she understood the fee to be in the region of £6.00, which she recognised did not meet the full cost of the Scheme, which was accordingly subsidised by the Council. Councillor Brock undertook to confirm the exact figures.

Councillor Brackenbury asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Brock.

Councillor Brock also undertook to request officers to look at the appropriateness of charging for Blue Badges, bearing in mind the costs of administering the scheme.

- (e) Question from Councillor Marland to Councillor Bint (Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways)

Councillor Marland asked Councillor Bint if he could advise as to the final settlement costs and any overspend for contracts relating to Secklow Gate Bridge and Wolverton Station Refurbishment.

Councillor Bint indicated that he would provide a written response.

Councillor Marland asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Bint.

- (f) Question from Councillor Barney to Councillor Hopkins (Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Enterprise)
Councillor Barney asked Councillor Hopkins for an update on progress in introducing improved Broadband across Milton Keynes, but particularly in Walton Park Ward.
Councillor Hopkins undertook to provide Councillor Barney with details of the plans for the roll out of high speed Broadband across Milton Keynes, and also pointed out that a number of Members briefings were currently being arranged on the issue.
- (g) Question from Councillor Legg to Councillor Bint (Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways)
Councillor Legg asked Councillor Bint to indicate how much had been spent on carriageway resurfacing works and potholes in West Bletchley over the last three years.
Councillor Bint indicated that he would supply Councillor Legg with a written response.
Councillor Legg asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Bint.
- (h) Question from Councillor Tallack to Councillor Bint (Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways)
Councillor Tallack asked Councillor Bint why the scheduled delegated decision regarding the implementation of reductions to bus service subsidies had been cancelled and what would be the next stage in implementing the reductions.
Councillor Bint indicated that he did not believe he had the power, or that it was necessary, to take a decision the Council had already taken.
Councillor Tallack asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Bint.
- (i) Question from Councillor Bramall to Councillor D McCall (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group)
Councillor Bramall, noting that Councillor Shafiq had given his apologies for the meeting, asked Councillor D McCall why Vanessa McPake had not attended in his place.
Councillor D McCall indicated that Vanessa McPake was a member of the public and not a councillor.
Councillor Bramall asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor D McCall.
- (j) Question from Councillor D McCall to Councillor Bint (Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways)
Councillor D McCall, referring to his previous questions about missing road signs in Milton Keynes, noted that officers had informed him that they were aware of 110 missing signs and

hoped that the majority would be replaced by the end of the financial year. Councillor D McCall asked Councillor Bint how many signs had now been replaced bearing in mind the proximity of the end of the financial year.

Councillor Bint indicated that he would provide a written response giving details of the programme of road sign replacement, including road signs replaced over the last year.

- (k) Question from Councillor Coventry to Councillor P Geary (Cabinet Member for Communities)

Councillor Coventry asked Councillor P Geary if the Council had sufficient properties available to allow tenants who were currently on benefits to downsize to a property of an appropriate size and if not how long would it take to enable such tenants to be appropriately housed.

Councillor Coventry also asked what measures would be taken if such tenants fell into rent arrears as a result of reductions in their benefits where the Council was unable to house them in an appropriately sized property.

Councillor P Geary indicated that advice would be made available to tenants who fell into rent arrears as to the best way forward which could involve moving property if possible and desirable to the tenant. He was unable to advise currently on the availability of properties as he was not aware of what properties were vacant, or when properties were likely to become vacant.

However, Councillor P Geary undertook to advise Councillor Coventry as to the number of Council Tenants potentially affected by the 'spare bedroom tax' and whether the Council would be able to accommodate all those tenants in an appropriately sized house if the tenants wished.

Councillor Coventry asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor P Geary.

- (l) Question from Councillor A Geary to Councillor Coventry (Chair of the Housing and Communities Select Committee)

Councillor A Geary asked Councillor Coventry if he would repeat his commendation of the current Administration for building Council homes and indicate how many Council homes had been built under the previous Labour and Liberal Democrat Administrations and the last Labour Government.

Councillor Coventry indicated that he understood that 12 new Council homes were to be built this year, and that the last Labour Government had seen the largest increase in social rented properties the country had ever seen, many of which were in Milton Keynes.

Councillor A Geary asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Coventry.

- (m) Question from Councillor Miles to Councillor A Geary (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Miles asked Councillor A Geary what actions he would be taking to address the situation and any reputational damage to the image of Milton Keynes arising from a failure to meet any of the targets relating to the care of older persons in a recent inspection.

Councillor A Geary pointed out that the reports referred to services which were at that time provided by Milton Keynes hospital and he indicated that he would respond in more detail once he had looked at the findings.

Councillor Geary stated that he believed it unhelpful for an opposition leader to run the city down in such a way and would welcome working in a collaborative manner with the opposition groups to resolve any problems and work to further enhance the city's reputation and promote a positive image.

Councillor Miles asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor A Geary.

CL100

FIRE SERVICE PRIVATISATION

Councillor Edwards moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor O'Neill:

- "1. That this Council:
 - (a) is deeply concerned that the Government is consulting on a proposal to allow Fire and Rescue Authorities 'to contract out their full range of services to a suitable provider';
 - (b) recognises that the essence of privatisation is often reduced working security and poorer pay and conditions for front line staff; and
 - (c) recognises that privatisation invariably leads to fragmented public services driven by profit and not public service.
2. That the Council condemns the Tory/Liberal Democrat Government fixation with privatisation, under-valuing public services and thereby threatening public safety.
3. That the Council agrees to:
 - (a) instruct the Chief Executive to make a submission to the consultation review rejecting privatisation and the inevitable break up of an integrated fire and rescue service;
 - (b) arrange a meeting with the Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority to secure assurances that the Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service will not be privatised;

- (c) request the Mayor, in consultation with Group Leaders, to call a special meeting of the Council to establish an all-party local campaign with the Fire Brigade Union to fight privatisation, if assurances are not secured; and
- (d) commission an independent study of the long term fire and rescue needs of Milton Keynes including the provision of future new fire stations and that the Chief Executive report his findings to Full Council within 4 months.”

Councillor Dransfield moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Hawthorn, on which a recorded vote was requested:

“That all the words after ‘That this Council’ be deleted and replaced with the following:

- ‘1. notes the Labour Party’s policy positions on Mutuels before the last General Election, as referenced in the Guardian article dated 11 November 2009;
2. notes the hysteria that is being created by the Shadow Minister for Communities and Local Government (Chris Williamson MP) and the Fire Brigades Union over the decision by the Labour-controlled Cleveland Combined Fire Authority (13 Labour, 5 Conservative, 3 Independent and 2 Liberal Democrat) to explore options including a public sector employee-led mutual, as set out in a press release dated 20 September 2012 from Cleveland Combined Fire Authority;
3. notes that the Cleveland Chief Fire Officer, Ian Hayton, stated, ‘It would be absolutely wrong to suggest that a public sector, employee-led mutual is privatisation and it is mere scaremongering to suggest so’, adding, ‘the brigade’s purpose was not to make money but to keep communities safe’;
4. notes that the Fire Minister and Minister for the Cabinet Office stated, ‘attempts to characterise employee-led mutualisation as privatisation are wrong’, as set out in their press release dated 14 February 2013;
5. notes that the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority has not received a request by employees to set up a mutual;
6. notes that the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority, which is responsible for the fire service that serves Milton Keynes, will remain statutorily responsible for this public service which is one of the best value in the country and, as long as it’s costs are low and the service provision reliable, is unlikely to risk adverse public reaction by introducing mutualisation of its vital emergency response teams.”

The voting was as follows:

FOR: Councillors, Bald, Barney, Bint, Bramall, Brock, Brunning, Dransfield, A Geary, P Geary, Hawthorn, Hopkins, Hoyle, Jury, Kennedy, Klein, McDonald, McLean, Morris, Small and Wharton (20)

AGAINST: Councillors M Burke, Coventry, Edwards, Legg, Marland, McKenzie, Middleton, Miles, O'Neill, Venn, Wales, Wallis, Webb, White and Zealley (15)

ABSTENTIONS: Councillors Alexander, Brackenbury, Bradburn Eastman, Exon, D McCall, I McCall, Richards and Tallack (9)

The amendment was declared carried.

On being put to the vote the substantive motion was declared carried with 20 Members voting in favour, 14 Members voting against and 10 Members abstaining from voting.

The Council heard from a member of the public during consideration of this item.

RESOLVED -

That this Council:

1. notes the Labour Party's policy positions on Mutuels before the last General Election, as referenced in the Guardian article dated 11 November 2009;
2. notes the hysteria that is being created by the Shadow Minister for Communities and Local Government (Chris Williamson MP) and the Fire Brigades Union over the decision by the Labour-controlled Cleveland Combined Fire Authority (13 Labour, 5 Conservative, 3 Independent and 2 Liberal Democrat) to explore options including a public sector employee-led mutual, as set out in a press release dated 20 September 2012 from Cleveland Combined Fire Authority;
3. notes that the Cleveland Chief Fire Officer, Ian Hayton, stated, 'It would be absolutely wrong to suggest that a public sector, employee-led mutual is privatisation and it is mere scaremongering to suggest so', adding, 'the brigade's purpose was not to make money but to keep communities safe';
4. notes that the Fire Minister and Minister for the Cabinet Office stated, 'attempts to characterise employee-led mutualisation as privatisation are wrong', as set out in their press release dated 14 February 2013;

6. notes that the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority has not received a request by employees to set up a mutual; and
7. notes that the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority, which is responsible for the fire service that serves Milton Keynes, will remain statutorily responsible for this public service which is one of the best value in the country and, as long as its costs are low and the service provision reliable, is unlikely to risk adverse public reaction by introducing mutualisation of its vital emergency response teams.

CL101

MILTON KEYNES HOSPITAL

Councillor Marland moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Venn:

- “1. That this Council notes the launch of a campaign by the Citizen newspaper to highlight the need for a new larger Accident and Emergency Unit at Milton Keynes Hospital.
2. That this Council is concerned about the:
 - (a) staff shortages at Milton Keynes Hospital highlighted by the Care Quality Commission;
 - (b) pressures upon the hospital Accident and Emergency Unit department highlighted in Parliament on 15 January 2013;
 - (c) financial constraints on the Hospital;
 - (d) negative impact of Government reorganisation at a time of growing demand;
 - (e) potential damage to services from the Government’s emphasis on privatisation of the NHS; and
 - (f) findings from the Mid-Staffordshire public inquiry which highlighted that many patients were let down by a culture that put cost-cutting and target-chasing ahead of the quality of care.
3. That this Council:
 - (a) welcomes the excellent work of Milton Keynes Hospital staff against the backdrop of a difficult financial crisis caused by Government austerity measures, costly re-organisation and a failure to increase resources in line with demand;
 - (b) supports the Citizen Newspaper campaign for a larger Accident and Emergency Unit, however it believes this must be linked to extra nurses, other staff and resources to effectively run a new larger Accident and Emergency Unit;

- (c) believes that the quality of care should be paramount and that this is affected by low staff levels and uncertainty and disruption caused by Government driven re-organisation and costly reviews;
- (d) agrees to write to the Secretary of State for Health seeking extra funding for a larger Accident and Emergency Unit and resources to ensure that a new Accident and Emergency Unit is properly staffed; and
- (e) requests the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to agree that the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee receive a report, from the Chief Executive, at its regular meetings, on the resourcing of the Accident and Emergency Unit including nursing numbers, other staff and related resources.”

Councillor Coventry moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Miles and accepted by the mover of the motion:

- “1. That the following additional Sub-Clause be added to Clause 2 of the motion:
 - ‘(g) privatisation of the excellent NHS Direct service in Milton Keynes and its replacement with a new service based on using fewer trained medical staff; and that the new privatised contractor may reduce standards of advice given the evidence from its other contracts covering Wiltshire, Bristol and Gloucestershire, which in turn may put extra pressure on our excellent hard working GPs, Accident and Emergency Unit and Ambulance Service and put patient safety at risk.’
- 2. That the following new Sub-Clause be added to Clause 3 and as Sub-Clause (e) and the original Sub-Clause (e) re-lettered as (f):
 - ‘(e) also agrees to ask both Milton Keynes MPs to write to the Secretary of State for Health expressing concern about the privatisation of NHS Direct and the potential adverse impact this may have on patient safety, GPs, the Accident and Emergency Unit and the Ambulance Service;’
- 3. That the words ‘Milton Keynes Hospital’ be added into the Sub-Clause (f) of Clause 3 in front of the words ‘Chief Executive’.”

Councillor Brock moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Bramall:

- “1. That in Clause 1:
 - (a) in line 1 the word ‘notes’ be deleted and replaced with ‘welcomes’;

- (b) in line 2 the words ‘and local MPs’ be added after the words ‘Citizen Newspaper’;
 - (c) in line 3 the words ‘as supported by the Prime Minister’ be added after the words ‘Emergency Unit’; and
 - (d) in line 3 the words ‘NHS foundation Trust (MKHFT) and the recent appointment of a full time Chief Executive’ be added after the words ‘Milton Keynes Hospital’.
2. That the words ‘and notes that details of additional nursing requirements will be presented to the MKHFT board at its March Meeting’ be added at the end of Clause 2(a).
 3. That the words ‘and notes that the existing provision was originally built in 1984 to care for 20,000 patients per year, but sees now 70,000 (200 patients per day)’ be added at the end of Clause 2(b).
 4. That the words ‘and notes commissioners’ support for the sustainability of the local acute provision for the long term’ be added at the end of Clause 2(c).
 5. That Clause 2(d) be deleted and the remaining Sub-Clauses re-lettered accordingly.
 6. That in new Clause 2(d) (*original Clause 2[e]*) all words after the words ‘potential damage’ be deleted and replaced with the words ‘that misguided scaremongering about privatisation of the NHS has to public confidence and notes that MKHFT is seeking to join with another NHS partner, Bedford Hospital’.
 7. That in Clause 3(a) all words after the word ‘staff’ be deleted and replaced with the words ‘and MKHFT’s commitment to get all clinical pathways working efficiently and to maximum effect, supports the excellent partnership working to achieve that end, in addition to physical improvement in the built environment across emergency care’.
 8. That in Clause 3(b) all words after the words ‘newspaper campaign’ be deleted and replaced with the words ‘for the re-provision of accident and emergency accommodation to manage projected patient volumes and improve quality as part of the Hospital’s Common Front Door project’.
 9. That in Clause 3(c) all words after the word ‘paramount’ be deleted.
 10. That in Clause 3(d) all words after the word ‘Unit’ be deleted and replaced with the words ‘and notes that following a motion to Cabinet in April last year, both the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive wrote to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Health expressing how much Milton Keynes Hospital was valued and that the Council would wish to see these services supported and improved into the future, asking them to work to this aim’.

11. That Clause 3(e) (*new Clause 3(ff)*) be deleted and replaced with:

‘notes that the Chief Executive of Milton Keynes Foundation Trust Hospital, Mr Joe Harrison, has been invited to attend the next meeting of the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee on 23 April 2013’.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried with 29 Members voting in favour, 13 Members voting against and 0 Members abstaining from voting.

The voting on the substantive motion was as follows:

- (a) Clause 1 and 2 (a) to (e)

The clauses were declared carried unanimously.

- (b) Clause 2 (f)

For: 23

Against: 19

Abstentions:0

The clause was declared carried.

- (c) Clauses 3 (a) to (d) and 3(f)

The clauses were declared carried unanimously.

- (d) Clause 3 (e)

For: 23

Against: 19

Abstentions:0

The clause was declared carried.

RESOLVED -

1. That this Council welcomes the launch of a campaign by the Citizen Newspaper and local MPs to highlight the need for a new larger Accident and Emergency Unit, as supported by the Prime Minister, at Milton Keynes Hospital NHS foundation Trust (MKHFT) and the recent appointment of a full time Chief Executive.
2. That this Council is concerned about the:
 - (a) staff shortages at Milton Keynes Hospital highlighted by the Care Quality Commission and notes that details of additional nursing requirements will be presented to the MKHFT board at its March Meeting;
 - (b) pressures upon the Hospital Accident and Emergency Unit highlighted in Parliament on 15 January 2013 and notes that the existing provision was originally built in 1984 to care for 20,000 patients per year, but sees now 70,000 (200 patients per day);

- (c) financial constraints on the Hospital and notes commissioners' support for the sustainability of the local acute provision for the long term;
 - (d) potential damage that misguided scaremongering about privatisation of the NHS has to public confidence and notes that MKHFT is seeking to join with another NHS partner, Bedford Hospital;
 - (e) findings from the Mid-Staffordshire public inquiry which highlighted that many patients were let down by a culture that put cost-cutting and target-chasing ahead of the quality of care; and
 - (f) privatisation of the excellent NHS Direct service in Milton Keynes and its replacement with a new service based on using fewer trained medical staff; and that the new privatised contractor may reduce standards of advice given the evidence from its other contracts covering Wiltshire, Bristol and Gloucestershire, which in turn may put extra pressure on our excellent hard working GPs, Accident and Emergency Unit and Ambulance Service and put patient safety at risk.
3. That this Council:
- (a) welcomes the excellent work of Milton Keynes Hospital staff and MKHFT's commitment to get all clinical pathways working efficiently and to maximum effect, supports the excellent partnership working to achieve that end, in addition to physical improvement in the built environment across emergency care;
 - (b) supports the Citizen newspaper campaign for the re-provision of accident and emergency accommodation to manage projected patient volumes and improve quality as part of the Hospital's Common Front Door project;
 - (c) believes that the quality of care should be paramount;
 - (d) agrees to write to the Secretary of State for Health seeking extra funding for a larger Accident and Emergency Unit and notes that following a motion to Cabinet in April last year, both the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive wrote to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Health expressing how much Milton Keynes Hospital was valued and that the Council would wish to see these services supported and improved into the future, asking them to work to this aim;

- (e) also agrees to ask both Milton Keynes MPs to write to the Secretary of State for Health expressing concern about the privatisation of NHS Direct and the potential adverse impact this may have on patient safety, GPs, the Accident and Emergency Unit and the Ambulance Service; and
- (f) notes that the Chief Executive of Milton Keynes Foundation Trust Hospital, Mr Joe Harrison, has been invited to attend the next meeting of the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee on 23 April 2013.

(Councillor Brock disclosed a personal interest in this Item and Councillor Wales disclosed a pecuniary interest and withdrew to the public gallery during consideration of the Item.)

CL102

'BLACKLISTING'

Councillor Wallis moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Marland:

- “1. That this Council believes ‘Blacklisting’ is an unacceptable practice which cannot be condoned.
2. That this Council:
 - (a) notes the GMB campaign to highlight that 3,213 workers were blacklisted by construction firms and call for all of those affected to be given an unreserved apology and compensation by the firms;
 - (b) notes that in 2009 the Information Commissioners Office seized a database of 3,213 construction workers used by 44 companies to vet new recruits and keep out employment trade union and health and safety activists;
 - (c) notes that of the 3,213 workers identified on the blacklist only 194 have been informed that they appeared on the list of the people identified as featuring on the ‘blacklist’, and 20 of these were based or attempting to find work in Buckinghamshire;
 - (d) notes that some companies have admitted that they did employ a system of ‘blacklisting’ workers and have apologised, but have refused to pay any compensation to those workers affected by this;
 - (e) is of the view that the construction firms which engaged in ‘blacklisting’ should apologise to those who have been affected and denied jobs as a result of the list;
 - (f) is of the view that the Information Commissioner’s Office should inform all those who feature on the blacklist; and

- (g) notes and welcomes the swift action already taken by the Head of Corporate Procurement on this matter, including the amendment of the Council's terms and conditions of contract and other terms used, to reflect our rejection of any bidder who uses an illegal blacklist. Additionally the Council notes that all suppliers registered on the procurement e-tendering system have been sent a statement of the Council's position and all future bidders will be advised of this as they engage with us on contracts.
3. That this Council resolves to:
- (a) support the GMB campaign against the blacklisting of construction workers;
 - (b) ensure that it is made clear to all construction companies bidding for Council contracts that any unlawful 'blacklisting' of workers will not be tolerated; and
 - (c) ask the Council's Assistant Director (Law and Governance) to explore how to enable the Council to not contract with companies which have engaged in 'blacklisting' and have failed to pay compensation to workers."

Councillor Bald moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor A Geary and accepted by the mover of the motion:

"That the following additional Sub-Clause be added to Clause 2 of the motion:

- '(g) notes and welcomes the swift action already taken by the Head of Corporate Procurement on this matter, including the amendment of the Council's terms and conditions of contract and other terms used, to reflect our rejection of any bidder who uses an illegal blacklist. Additionally the Council notes that all suppliers registered on the procurement e-tendering system have been sent a statement of the Council's position and all future bidders will be advised of this as they engage with us on contracts."

On being put to the vote the amended motion was declared carried unanimously.

RESOLVED -

1. That this Council believes 'Blacklisting' is an unacceptable practice which cannot be condoned.

2. That this Council:
 - (a) notes the GMB campaign to highlight that 3,213 workers were blacklisted by construction firms and call for all of those affected to be given an unreserved apology and compensation by the firms;
 - (b) notes that in 2009 the Information Commissioner's Office seized a database of 3,213 construction workers used by 44 companies to vet new recruits and keep out employment trade union and health and safety activists;
 - (c) notes that of the 3,213 workers identified on the blacklist only 194 have been informed that they appeared on the list of the people identified as featuring on the 'blacklist', and 20 of these were based or attempting to find work in Buckinghamshire;
 - (d) notes that some companies have admitted that they did employ a system of 'blacklisting' workers and have apologised, but have refused to pay any compensation to those workers affected by this;
 - (e) is of the view that the construction firms which engaged in 'blacklisting' should apologise to those who have been affected and denied jobs as a result of the list;
 - (f) is of the view that the Information Commissioner's Office should inform all those who feature on the blacklist; and
 - (g) notes and welcomes the swift action already taken by the Head of Corporate Procurement on this matter, including the amendment of the Council's terms and conditions of contract and other terms used, to reflect our rejection of any bidder who uses an illegal blacklist. Additionally the Council notes that all suppliers registered on the procurement e-tendering system have been sent a statement of the Council's position and all future bidders will be advised of this as they engage with us on contracts.
3. That this Council resolves to:
 - (a) support the GMB campaign against the blacklisting of construction workers;
 - (b) ensure that it is made clear to all construction companies bidding for Council contracts that any unlawful 'blacklisting' of workers will not be tolerated; and

- (c) ask the Council's Assistant Director (Law and Governance) to explore how to enable the Council to not contract with companies which have engaged in 'blacklisting' and have failed to pay compensation to workers.

CL103

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee presented the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report, and in doing so, drew attention to the work undertaken by the various select committees and review groups during 2012/13.

The Chair expressed his thanks to the Members and officers who had been involved with and supported the overview and scrutiny process during the year

RESOLVED -

That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report be received.

CL104

QUARTERLY REPORT ON SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS

The Council noted that in accordance with Access to Information Procedure Rule 17.3, that the Provisions for Special Urgency, as set out in Access to Information Procedure Rule 16, were used once during the period 1 December 2012 to 28 February 2013, for the agreement to the Wolverton Station Settlement.

The Council also noted that in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.1, the Chief Executive, when making the decision on 1 March 2013, on the settlement of the Wolverton Station Contract decided, with the consent of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, to waive the call-in process as failure to make the decision would have seriously prejudiced the Council's interests by jeopardising the negotiated settlement.

THE MAYOR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10:55 PM