

Minutes of the meeting of the MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL held on TUESDAY
12 JANUARY 2010 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor E Henderson (Mayor)
Councillors Barry, Bint, Box, Bristow, Brock, Burke, Butler-Ellis,
Carstens, S Clark, U Clarke, Coventry, Crooks, Dransfield, Drewett,
Edwards, Ferrans, Fraser, Galloway, A Geary, P Geary, Gerrella,
I Henderson, Hopkins, Hoyle, Irons, Klein, Lloyd, Mallyon,
D McCall, I McCall, McPake, Miles, A Morris, C Morris, O'Neill, Potts,
Richards, Tallack, Tamagnini-Barbosa, Tunney, Turnbull, Wharton,
White, Williams and Wright.

Apologies: Councillors Campbell, Exon, Jury, Latham and Small and Aldermen
Ellis and Howell

Also Present: 18 members of the public

CL78 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 8 December
2009 be approved and signed as a correct record.

CL79 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Butler-Ellis declared a personal interest in Item 4 (Milton
Keynes Local Development Framework - Core Strategy: Submission
Document) as a Director of the United Sustainable Energy Agency,
which administered the Council's carbon offset fund.

Councillor Potts declared a personal interest in Item 4 (Milton
Keynes Local Development Framework - Core Strategy: Submission
Document) as a founder member of the group NEEM (No Expansion
East of the M1).

Councillor White declared a personal interest in item 4 (Milton
Keynes Local Development Framework - Core Strategy: Submission
Document) as Secretary of the North Bucks Federation of Small
Businesses, Chair of the United Sustainable Energy Agency, which
administered the Council's carbon offset fund, and Chair of the
National Energy Foundation.

CL80 ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Doreen Adcock

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor congratulated Doreen
Adcock who had won the Sports Unsung Hero Award at the
2009 BBC Sports Personality of the Year, having taught over

13,000 people to swim in the town over the last 35 years.

In addition the Mayor announced that Doreen had been involved with the old Milton Keynes Youth Council and more latterly Milton Keynes Council for Voluntary Youth Organisations for many years, being the voice of the voluntary youth sector and supporting a wide array of initiatives for young people and other voluntary groups.

2. Bob Lawrence Award

The Mayor also, on behalf of the Council, congratulated the staff in the Housing Options Department who had won the Bob Lawrence Award for their achievement in cutting the number of families in temporary accommodation.

CL81

REPORTS FROM CABINET AND COMMITTEES

Cabinet – 5 January 2010

Milton Keynes Local Development Framework - Core Strategy: Submission Document

Councillor Galloway moved the following recommendation from the meeting of Cabinet on 5 January 2010, which was seconded by Councillor Ferrans:

- “1. That the Local Development Framework Core Strategy be approved for the purposes of pre-submission publication and consultation and submission to the Secretary of State.
2. That the accountable Cabinet Member be authorised to agree the detailed publication and consultation arrangements for the Core Strategy prior to submission to the Secretary of State.
3. That the Corporate Director - Environment be authorised to agree any updating, clarification or factual corrections to the Core Strategy, either prior to the pre-submission consultation period, prior to submission to the Secretary of State, or in the lead up to the Public Examination.”

Councillor Hopkins moved the following amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Butler-Ellis and accepted by the mover of the motion:

“That the following be added to Appendix A. Glossary and Abbreviations

‘Gridroads are urban clearways with laybys for bus-stops, with no direct building frontages and no at-grade pedestrian crossings. Some are dualled, and the remainder normally have land reserved for future dualling, or other transport purpose (eg mass passenger transit system). They have substantial landscaping for biodiversity, sound screening and CO2/emissions absorption, usually incorporating a Redway. Collectively, they form a resilient, interconnected network with roundabouts at most gridway intersections, serving both public and private transport.’”

Councillor C Morris moved the following amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Butler-Ellis and accepted by the mover of the motion:

“That an additional bullet point be added to Policy CS7 Central Milton Keynes (on page 61) which reads:

Develop as an attractive focus for all the residents of the Borough, whilst recognising its role as a District Centre for most of the surrounding estates.”

Councillor Bint moved the following amendment, which was seconded by Councillor A Morris and accepted by the mover of the motion:

“(a) That the bullet point within Policy CS11 that currently reads as follows:

‘Encouraging greater movement within the Borough by cycling and walking through improvements to the directness of the Redway network, enhanced facilities and signage and extending the Redways network throughout major new development areas.’

be replaced with the following new wording:

‘Encouraging greater movement within the Borough by cycling and walking through improvements to the existing Redway network and other paths including more direct routes, enhanced facilities and signage, better integration with transport interchange hubs, and improved surveillance; and by extending the Redways network throughout major new development areas (including the creation of routes that are shorter than the equivalent road journey).

(b) That the bullet point within Policy CS13 that currently reads as follows:

‘Redways (another unique element of MK) should be built adjoining grid roads in new developments’

be replaced with the following new wording:

‘Redways (another unique element of MK) should be built within the landscape corridor of all new gridroads, as well as elsewhere within new developments.’”

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

“That this Council recognises that the Core Strategy does not cover environmental concerns sufficiently and agrees to amend the Core Strategy as follows:

‘2.9 Add after 2nd sentence:

“The large amount and low cost of parking in Central Milton Keynes

also contributes to low bus usage in Milton Keynes.”

‘2.14 delete “an opinion” and insert “a perception”.’

‘Table 2.1 Threats add:

“- The impacts of Peak oil and measures to reduce CO2 emissions to avoid climate change will cause transport difficulties for residents because of the high dependence on cars.”

‘10.5 be replaced with:

“The levels of car ownership in Milton Keynes are higher than the national level (81% compared to 73% across England; Census 2001). Attractive alternatives to car travel must be provided in order to reduce the carbon footprint of new estates and the city and reduce the unsustainable high level of car ownership. Measures such as car clubs (*), travel planning and better public transport should be introduced to reduce the amount of car parking required. To reduce on-street parking, encourage residents to leave their car at home and to enhance their appearance, new neighbourhoods should provide sufficient parking spaces for the projected car ownership levels for the type of dwellings (plus spaces for visitors).”

‘Add to glossary:

“* Car clubs enable people to continue to drive when appropriate, but each car club vehicle typically reduces the number of privately owned cars by 5-10 vehicles.”

‘11.4: add the words “the current level of ”between the words “which and “public” in the last two lines.’

‘11.5 after 3rd sentence add the words:

“Measures such as car clubs, travel planning and better public transport will be introduced to reduce the high level of car ownership.”.

The voting was as follows:

FOR: Councillors Bristow, Coventry, Irons, Miles, O’Neill, and White (6)

AGAINST: Councillors Barry, Bint, Box, Brock, Burke, Butler-Ellis, Carstens, S Clark, U Clarke, Crooks, Dransfield, Drewett, Edwards, Ferrans, Fraser, Galloway, A Geary, P Geary, Gerrella, E Henderson, I Henderson, Hopkins, Hoyle, Klein, Lloyd, Mallyon, D McCall, I McCall, McPake, A Morris, C Morris, Potts, Richards, Tallack, Tamagnini-Barbosa, Tunney, Turnbull, Wharton, Williams and Wright (40)

ABSTENTIONS: (0)

The amendment was declared lost.

Councillor White moved the following amendment, which was

seconded by Councillor Bristow and accepted by the mover of the motion:

“That the following additional ‘Threat’ be added to Table 2.1:

- The impacts of Peak oil and national measures to reduce CO2 emissions to avoid climate change may not be easily implementable in Milton Keynes.”

Councillor White moved the following amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Bristow and accepted by the mover of the motion:

“That the following additional sentence be added to the end of paragraph 3.5:

‘MK Council will also sign-up to The Sustainable Communities Act 2007’.”

On being put to the vote the recommendation, as amended, was declared carried with 28 Members voting in favour, 0 Members voting against and 18 Members abstaining from voting.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Local Development Framework Core Strategy be approved for the purposes of pre-submission publication and consultation and submission to the Secretary of State, subject to the following changes:

(a) The following being added to Appendix A. Glossary and Abbreviations:

‘Grid roads are urban clearways with laybys for bus-stops, with no direct building frontages and no at-grade pedestrian crossings. Some are dualled, and the remainder normally have land reserved for future dualling, or other transport purpose (eg mass passenger transit system). They have substantial landscaping for biodiversity, sound screening and CO2/emissions absorption, usually incorporating a Redway. Collectively, they form a resilient, interconnected network with roundabouts at most gridway intersections, serving both public and private transport.’”

(b) An additional bullet point being added to Policy CS7 Central Milton Keynes (on page 61) which reads:

‘Develop as an attractive focus for all the residents of the Borough, whilst recognising its role as a District Centre for most of the surrounding estates.’

(c) The fourth bullet point within Policy CS11 being amended to read:

‘Encouraging greater movement within the Borough by cycling and walking through improvements to the

existing Redway network and other paths including more direct routes, enhanced facilities and signage, better integration with transport interchange hubs, and improved surveillance; and by extending the Redways network throughout major new development areas (including the creation of routes that are shorter than the equivalent road journey).'

- (d) The ninth bullet point within Policy CS13 being amended to read:

'Redways (another unique element of MK) should be built within the landscape corridor of all new grid roads, as well as elsewhere within new developments.'

- (e) The following additional 'Threat' be added to Table 2.1:

'The impacts of Peak oil and national measures to reduce CO2 emissions to avoid climate change may not be easily implementable in Milton Keynes.'

and a definition of 'Peak oil' being added to the Glossary.

- (f) The following additional sentence being added to the end of paragraph 3.5:

'MK Council will also sign-up to The Sustainable Communities Act 2007.'

2. That the accountable Cabinet Member be authorised to agree the detailed publication and consultation arrangements for the Core Strategy prior to submission to the Secretary of State
3. That the Corporate Director Environment be authorised to agree any updating, clarification or factual corrections to the Core Strategy, either prior to the pre-submission consultation period, prior to submission to the Secretary of State, or in the lead up to the Public Examination.

CL82

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- (a) Question from Councillor Tunney to Councillor Crooks (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Tunney pointed out the head count of the Council's staff had risen by 110 in 2009 and the full time equivalents by 92 staff and asked Councillor Crooks what was the full additional cost, including both salaries and overheads of the extra posts.

Councillor Crooks stated that the cost of the Council's staff was based on the number of funded posts on the establishment rather than the headcount alone. The establishment figure reflects the headcount plus funded vacancies so was the most appropriate figure to consider if the cost to the Council was the main concern.

The establishment saw a net increase of 103 funded posts between November 2008 and November 2009.

An initial high level review had revealed that a large part of this increase was due to TUPE transfers of posts back into the Council together with a significant number of additional posts in caring roles for children and young people and adults that were grant funded by the Government.

Further analysis would be required to identify the growth in the establishment beyond these roles and to compare costs with the costs of previous structures.

Councillor Crooks agreed to provide a detailed written response by the end of the week once the further analysis had been undertaken.

Councillor Crooks emphasised the importance of the issue and indicated that the Cabinet would, at its next meeting, be considering a Workforce Development Strategy. A requirement of the Strategy would be for the Cabinet to receive a regular report on the implementation of the Strategy, which would allow both the Cabinet and all Members to scrutinise the Strategy's implementation.

Councillor Tunney asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Crooks.

(b) Question from Councillor Edwards to Councillor S Clark (Children)

Councillor Edwards asked Councillor Clark about the overall cost effect to the Council due to the changes in providing children's hot meals to Milton Keynes Schools as a result of the following:

1. The demolition of the Council's canteens.

Councillor Clark responded:

The demolition of the two kitchens was carried out under the scope of the corporate Access MK programme. The space vacated became additional office accommodation. The total costs for the works in the changeover were:

Saxon Court kitchen to office space: £220,000.

Civic Offices kitchen to office space: £386,000.

2. Alternative arrangements in providing in-house hot meals to the Council's schools following the loss of the Saxon Court staff canteen.

Councillor Clark responded:

The closure of the Saxon Court kitchen in April 2007 resulted in a re-balancing of school meal production by the Synergy Catering DSO throughout the remaining

Synergy Hub kitchens. The Saxon Court kitchen provided approximately 700 meals per day and the Civic Offices kitchen produced approximately 400 per day. The realignment of services away from Saxon Court increased the Civic operation to approximately 900 per day, though they were not all previously supplied by the Saxon Court kitchen.

In order to accommodate this increased production, a total of £3,058 was spent on de-commissioning Saxon Court kitchen equipment and its re-installation in the Civic Offices kitchen. There was no further expenditure on the Drayton Park or Queen Eleanor school hub kitchen sites, which took the remaining meal requirements.

3. The contract with Sodexo (overall costs to-date) to provide hot meals to the Council's schools.

Councillor Clark responded:

The Council's contract with Sodexo Ltd ran from April 2008 to 5 July 2009.

Expenditure related to bringing school kitchen hubs up to standard in 2008/09 amounted to £78,700 (paid by the Children and Young People's Directorate budget).

Resolution of dispute with Sodexo Ltd amounted in 2009/10 to a total of £39K (paid by the Children and Young People's Directorate budget). (Sodexo's original claim totalled £332K.)

4. The Cygnet Catering Services contract (overall costs to-date) in providing the Council's schools with meals.

Councillor Clark responded:

The Council's contract with Cygnet Foods Ltd began on 6 July 2009.

Expenditure related to hub kitchen equipment purchases and negotiations took place over the transfer of the school meals contract to another provider, within the context of a substantial drop in school meal numbers arising from the poor performance / early termination of the contract with the first provider. This amounted in 2009/10 to £150,349 (paid by the Children and Young People's Directorate budget).

5. The Council's involvement in TUPE and redundancy arrangements for the Council's catering staff.

Councillor Clark responded:

The closure of the Staff Catering Services to both Civic and Saxon Court Offices resulted in the direct

redundancy of 3 posts with compensatory payment amounting to £15,029.

46 Council employees were transferred under the TUPE arrangements to the first provider – Sodexo Ltd, as of April 2008, resulting in an annual saving in salary costs of £347K. No redundancies occurred.

When catering staff were transferred under the TUPE arrangements from Sodexo Ltd to Cygnet Foods Ltd as of 6 July 2009, 8 ex-Council employees were made redundant due to the contractor's different method of provision at a cost of £55,141.

6. Administration costs to bring about the changes.

Councillor Clark responded:

The legal and consultancy costs of letting the school meals contract in 2008/09 amounted to £26,446.

The legal and consultancy costs in relation to the school meals contract in 2009/10 amount, to date, to £7,813.

Councillor Clark also reported that the take-up of school meals had continued to improve since the changeover to the new contractor from late July 2009. From a much reduced level of take-up for the 15 months during which the previous supplier operated in Milton Keynes schools, average daily take-up figures for the 64 primary schools in the central contract had increased as follows:

September: 2,035 school meals provided daily

October: 2,470 school meals provided daily

November: 2,700 school meals provided daily.

Councillor Edwards made a supplementary comment.

(c) Question from Councillor A Geary to Councillor Crooks (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Geary asked Councillor Crooks, that given the recent revelations of the overpayment of expenses to some Members of the Council, and the potential that taxpayers' money had been lost, whether he could inform the Council of any such other overpayments which had taken place to his knowledge since he became responsible for budgetary issues and strategic finance and if so what had been the burden on the tax payer.

Councillor Crooks indicated that he would provide a written answer to be circulated by the end of the week.

- (d) Question from Councillor White to Councillor Williams (Cabinet Member for Housing and Adult Social Care)

Councillor White asked Councillor Williams, in light of the recent tragic deaths of an elderly couple in Northampton apparently as a result of the cold weather, to give an assurance that a similar event could not happen in Milton Keynes and to outline what extra measures had been put in place to prevent such an occurrence.

Councillor Williams indicated that that he was not able to give such an assurance, but he had every confidence in the Council's officers to ensure that risks were minimised. Councillor Williams referred to a number of new policies which were being implemented, which had been based on best practice and scrutinised by Members of all political groups. Councillor Williams also indicated that any findings resulting from any inquiry held by Northamptonshire County Council would be assessed and the Council's practices modified if appropriate.

Councillor White asked a supplementary question which Councillor Williams undertook to reply to in writing.

- (e) Question from Councillor P Geary to Councillor Mallyon (Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways)

Councillor Geary asked Councillor Mallyon whether all potholes in the Borough's roads which needed to be repaired, would be repaired in the next few months

Councillor Mallyon indicated that it was unlikely, but as many as could be repaired, within the available resources, would be repaired. Councillor Mallyon also indicated that additional resources had already been identified and he was seeking to identify further resources to allow more potholes to be repaired. However, the recent bad weather had significantly worsened the problem.

Councillor Geary asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Mallyon.

- (f) Question from Councillor C Morris to Councillor Crooks (Leader of the Council)

Councillor C Morris referred to a mistake made by the Council in paying an invoice and asked Councillor Crooks, bearing in mind the error in over paying Members referred to earlier, whether an urgent investigation could be held to see if there were any major deficiencies in the way in which the Council made payments.

Councillor Crooks indicated an audit report on the payment of invoices was already being prepared and he would take advice as to whether the terms of that investigation could be widened to include all payments.

Councillor Morris asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Crooks.

- (g) Question from Councillor Coventry to Councillor Mallyon (Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways)

Councillor Coventry asked Councillor Mallyon why it had not been possible to grit many roads and particularly footpaths and Redways during the recent bad weather and whether there had been a breakdown in the plans.

Councillor Mallyon indicated that there had been a breakdown in the delivery of salt to Milton Keynes which had meant that it had been necessary to prioritise the areas where the salt was used, which had generally resulted in only bus routes being salted. Councillor Mallyon also indicated that current salt stocks would only allow for seven or eight further runs on the prioritised routes. If further salt was received the Council would be able to widen the areas salted.

Councillor Coventry asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Mallyon.

- (h) Question from Councillor Dransfield to Councillor Crooks (Leader of the Council).

Councillor Dransfield referred to the potential reduction in the Council staff head count by 70, mentioned at the meeting of the Budget Review Group the previous evening, and asked Councillor Crooks for his rationale for targeting the posts identified.

Councillor Crooks indicated that he had a rationale, which would become clear when he presented the budget to the Cabinet on 16 February 2010.

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

- (i) Question from Councillor Miles to Councillor S Clark (Cabinet Member for Children)

Councillor Miles asked Councillor Clark if she could provide a reassurance that there was no risk to the Council's safeguarding of children in care, as a result of the recent computer downtime.

Councillor Clark indicated that there was no risk to children as the Council had procedures in place to deal with such an occurrence.

- (j) Question from Councillor Hoyle to Councillor Crooks (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Hoyle asked Councillor Crooks what his proudest achievement had been during his year as Leader of the Council. Councillor Hoyle suggested that the achievements could be presiding over a black-hole in the budget, or wasting millions of pounds on travellers' sites to the distress of residents.

Councillor Crooks indicated a list of achievements which included: the appoint of the senior management team by the previous Leader; the new Bletchley Leisure Centre; the Core Strategy; support for the World Cup bid; the move to bid for city status; the holding of an international arts festival in July every two years; and the findings of the Total Place Survey refresh which had found satisfaction increasing in the Council, in Milton Keynes as a place to live, in Milton Keynes Council as offering value for money, and transport improvements.

Councillor Hoyle asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Crooks.

- (k) Question from Councillor Gerrella to Councillor S Clark (Cabinet Member for Children)

Councillor Gerrella ask Councillor Clark, given the economic problems being faced by the area and the country more generally, could she give the Council her view on the fact that some people were unable to attend work last week because of schools being closed and they had been unable to get childcare.

Councillor Clark indicated that schools had a duty of care, but also staff had a duty to get into work if at all possible. She recognised that there were extenuating circumstances last week and on Wednesday many schools had to close because of the weather conditions, but on Thursday many staff made it into work and were able to make sure the sites were safe to allow most schools to open on Friday. Councillor Clark stressed that the decision to close a school was for the headteacher and the chair of governors.

- (l) Question from Councillor Bint to Councillor Mallyon (Cabinet Member for Member for Transport and Highways)

Councillor Bint asked Councillor Mallyon, as the Council was responsible for naming roads and public amenities, such as the Coachway, if he could confirm that the the Coachway would continue to be known as the 'Coachway' and the road leading to it named appropriately, such as 'Coachway Road'.

Councillor Mallyon indicated that they would.

SIR MICHAEL PITT'S REVIEW OF THE 2007 FLOODING

Councillor Edwards moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Lloyd:

- “1. That this Council endorse the terms of reference of the recent Flood and Water Management Bill which followed Sir Michael Pitt's review of the flooding in 2007 and referred to the role of local authorities being enhanced so that they take responsibility for leading the co-ordination of flood risk management in their areas.
2. That the Council notes that the Flood and Water Management Bill aims to provide better, more sustainable management of flood risk for people, homes and businesses, help safeguard community groups from unaffordable rises in surface water drainage charges and protect water supplies to the consumer.
3. That this Council agrees to request the Cabinet to give greater attention to the Milton Keynes Water Courses by:
 - (a) providing regular inspections;
 - (b) maintenance of storm drains leading into the water courses;
 - (c) replacing old drainage pipe lines that are too small in diameter to cope for the volume of water as a result of new development;
 - (d) dredging on a regular basis to increase the water capacity;
 - (e) ensuring that all trees, shrubs and obstructions that prevent the flow of water are removed;
 - (f) undertaking more inspections of road-side drains;
 - (g) ensuring that all residents are aware of their riparian responsibilities if their land backs onto a water course;
 - (h) regular landscape maintenance of trees and bushes overhanging the water courses;
 - (i) ensuring health and safety measures are in place where dangers might arise for young children; and
 - (j) giving greater concern to new building development that has an impact on the drainage systems of the older towns and existing water courses.”

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

RESOLVED –

1. That this Council endorse the terms of reference of the recent Flood and Water Management Bill which followed Sir Michael Pitt's review of the flooding in 2007 and referred to the role of

local authorities being enhanced so that they take responsibility for leading the co-ordination of flood risk management in their areas.

2. That the Council notes that the Flood and Water Management Bill aims to provide better, more sustainable management of flood risk for people, homes and businesses, help safeguard community groups from unaffordable rises in surface water drainage charges and protect water supplies to the consumer.
3. That this Council agrees to request the Cabinet to give greater attention to the Milton Keynes Water Courses by:
 - (a) providing regular inspections;
 - (b) maintenance of storm drains leading into the water courses;
 - (c) replacing old drainage pipe lines that are too small in diameter to cope for the volume of water as a result of new development;
 - (d) dredging on a regular basis to increase the water capacity;
 - (e) ensuring that all trees, shrubs and obstructions that prevent the flow of water are removed;
 - (f) undertaking more inspections of road-side drains;
 - (g) ensuring that all residents are aware of their riparian responsibilities if their land backs onto a water course;
 - (h) regular landscape maintenance of trees and bushes overhanging the water courses;
 - (i) ensuring health and safety measures are in place where dangers might arise for young children; and
 - (j) giving greater concern to new building development that has an impact on the drainage systems of the older towns and existing water courses.”

CL84 WARD BASED BUDGETS – OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2009

The Council received details of grants awarded by Ward Members from the Ward Initiatives Budget.

CL85 QUARTERLY REPORT ON SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS

The Council noted that in accordance with Access to Information Procedure Rule 17.3, the Provisions for Special Urgency, as set out in Access to Information Procedure Rule 16, had been used once during the period October 2009 to December 2009, to allow the Leader to take a decision on the ‘World Cup 2018/2022 – Final Bid Stage’.

THE MAYOR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10.20 PM