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Minutes of the MEETING of the MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL held on  
WEDNESDAY 19 JANUARY at 7.30 pm

**Present:** Councillor Khan (Mayor)  
Councillors Baume, Bowyer, R Bradburn, Darlington, Exon, Fuller,  
A Geary, Hall, D Hopkins, Jenkins, Marland, McLean, Middleton,  
Montague, Z Nolan, Taylor, Trendall, Walker.  
Alderman McKenzie and 7 members of the public.

**Apologies:** Councillors Brown, Crooks, Cryer-Whitehead, Lancaster, Marlow and  
Wilson-Marklew and Aldermen Bartlett, Beeley, Bristow, Coventry,  
Henderson, Howell, McCall and Miles and Alderwomen Irons,  
Henderson, Lloyd and Saunders.

Councillors Alexander, Baines, Balazs, K Bradburn, M Bradburn, Carr,  
Clarke, De Villiers, Ferrans, P Geary, Gilbert, Hearnshaw, V Hopkins,  
Hosking, Hume, Hussain, Imran, Legg, McPake, McQuillan, Minns,  
Nazir, B Nolan, Priestly, Raja, Rankine, Reilly, Rolfe, Townsend,  
Verma, Wallis and Wardle joined the meeting remotely.

**CL99 MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the special and ordinary meetings of the Council  
held on 24 November 2021 be approved and signed by the Mayor as  
correct records, subject to the recording of Alderman McCall as an  
apology for both meetings.

**CL100 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

None.

**CL101 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor made announcements in respect of:

- (a) Individuals who either live or work in Milton Keynes who had  
been recognised in the New Year's Honours list;
- (b) A reminder on submitting Ward Based Budget applications and  
training that was available for Councillors;
- (c) A local couple who had recently celebrated their 81st wedding  
anniversary;
- (d) An injury suffered by the Deputy Chairman of Moulsoe Parish  
Council; and

- (e) The recent deaths of Councillor Bowyers' father, Councillor Crooks' mother, Andy Squires and Nicole Jones

**CL102**

**PETITIONS**

None

**CL103**

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

- (a) Question from Rebecca Cave to Councillor Walker (Leader of the Conservative Group)

Due to a technical difficulty Rebecca Cave was not online at the start of public questions and her question was read out by the Head of Democratic Services.

“Will the leader of the Conservative group join us in condemning the Prime Minister for his decision to attend a bring your own bottle party at Number 10 Downing Street, when residents in Milton Keynes were unable even to visit their dying relatives.”

Councillor Walker indicated that he thought the Prime Minister was wrong to do so and while his apology was welcome the Prime Minister and those working in Number 10 had fallen short of what the public expected from those working in the highest office. The lack of humility shown had also been disappointing and upsetting. Ultimately the running of Number 10 was the responsibility of the Prime Minister and he had acknowledged that he and his team had lost the public trust. Many sacrifices had been made and the anger at these parties was real. The Prime Minister must fully explain himself once the report had been published and then would need to rebuild the trust which had been lost by delivering on the manifesto promises the government were elected on in 2019.

Rebecca Cava joined the meeting at this point and as a supplementary question, asked Councillor Walker, will the leader of the Conservative group agree that now, the only reason why anyone would follow the Prime Minister's leadership would be out of sheer curiosity?

Councillor Walker indicated that as Leader of the Conservative Group in Milton Keynes he was focused on local issues and doing his job of holding this Council to account and he would very much be focusing on bins and not Boris.

(b) Question from Nana Oguntola to Councillor Townsend (Cabinet member for Public Realm)

The question was withdrawn.

**CL104 BUSINESS REMAINING FROM THE LAST MEETING**

None.

**CL105 MAKING OF THE ASTWOOD AND HARDMEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Councillor Marland (Cabinet member responsible for planning) moved the following recommendation from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14 December 2021, which was seconded by Councillor McLean.

“Making of the Astwood and Hardmead Neighbourhood Plan

That Council be recommended to make the Astwood and Hardmead Neighbourhood Plan pursuant to the provisions of Section 38(A)(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.”

On being put to the vote the recommendation was declared carried by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

That the Council makes the Astwood and Hardmead Neighbourhood Plan pursuant to the provisions of Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**CL106 AUDITOR APPOINTMENTS 2023**

Councillor Middleton (Cabinet member for Resources) moved the following recommendation from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14 December 2021, which was seconded by Councillor Marland.

“Auditor Appointments 2023

That the Council be recommended to accept the Public Sector Audit Appointments’ invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023.”

On being put to the vote the recommendation was declared carried by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

That the Council accept the Public Sector Audit Appointments’ invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023.

**COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS**

- (a) Question from Councillor Baines to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Baines, referring to overnight parking by trucks and the litter and waste left behind by drivers, asked Councillor Marland, when would this Council provide a secure truck park and enforce the illegal parking.

Councillor Marland indicated that the Council would look at how it could ease these issues through the Economic Strategy and making sure the right provision was in place through future planning policy.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Baines asked Councillor Marland could the Community Infrastructure Levy be utilised for this work?

Councillor Marland indicated that the facility would need to be part of an adopted policy of the Council to be able to use the Community Infrastructure Levy and that he would undertake to include this on the agenda for a future meeting of the Planning Cabinet Advisory Group at the appropriate time.

- (b) Question from Councillor K Bradburn to Councillor Townsend (Cabinet member for Public Realm)

Councillor K Bradburn, referring to the 140 tonnes of litter dropped every year in Milton Keynes, asked Councillor Townsend, what was the Council doing to stop littering?

Councillor Townsend indicated that the Council spends £3.5 million a year on collecting litter and street cleansing. At the beginning of January a team of enforcement officers were introduced which so far had issued 400 fixed penalty notices for littering and dog fouling. Enforcement would be combined with education such as working with secondary schools and promoting pocket ashtrays.

- (c) Question from Councillor Rankine to Councillor Townsend (Cabinet member for Public Realm)

Councillor Rankine, referring to the longstanding issue of pavement parking in Queensway, asked Councillor Townsend, would the Council commit to fixing this problem with some urgency?

Councillor Townsend indicated that officers had been sent to the area to assess options and meetings were planned to take place with the Parish and Town Council's to discuss potential resolutions.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Rankine asked Councillor Townsend, would the Council consider providing a formal reporting option for problem parking?

Councillor Townsend indicated that she would speak to officers to see if the complaints process for poor parking could be streamlined and in the meantime people could report issues with parking to their ward councillor or the Cabinet member directly.

- (d) Question from Councillor Hume to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Hume, referring to a Conservative MP who had put his constituents above party politics and joined the Labour party, asked Councillor Marland, what would he say to any Conservative councillors who were worried about the direction of the party locally?

Councillor Marland indicated that as local councillors it was their job to focus on what residents wanted. As an administration they were focused on tackling child poverty, the impact of inflation, rising energy costs and personal tax. There was always room on their benches for progressive people to join them.

- (e) Question from Councillor Hall to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Hall, referring to a question she had previously asked about the establishment of the new town heritage list, asked Councillor Marland, when will appointments to the list be made?

Councillor Marland indicated that while there had been a delay to the initial deadline, work on this was moving forward and discussions had been held with the MK Forum.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Hall asked Councillor Marland would the delays to this work affect the funding that had been received to support the project?

Councillor Marland indicated that he did not believe that the delay in this work would impact the funding of the project and the establishment of the list was imminent.

- (f) Question from Councillor Clarke to Councillor Middleton  
(Cabinet member for Resources)

Councillor Clarke, referring to the balanced budget and below inflation council tax rise, asked Councillor Middleton, could he let the Council know how the prudent use of reserves had helped the Council reach this position?

Councillor Middleton. indicated that the administration had been prudently using reserves and were using some this year to balance the budget. Reserves would be used in the coming years to provide infrastructure such as medical and community facilities and road infrastructure. Reserves were forecast to drop from £145 million in 2022 to £87 million in 2025.

- (g) Question from Councillor Taylor to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Taylor, referring to the question he had previously asked Councillor Wilson-Marklew regarding the recent announcement that homeowners would need to insulate their properties to a minimum of Level C to get a mortgage, asked Councillor Marland, what plans the Council had to assist homeowners to insulate and improve their properties.

Councillor Marland indicated that he would ensure Councillor Taylor received a response by the end of the week.

- (h) Question from Councillor Baume to Councillor R Bradburn  
(Cabinet member for Economy, Recovery & Renewal)

Councillor Baume, asked Councillor R Bradburn, could he provide an update on how the Council was supporting businesses since the impact of the omicron strain of covid-19.

Councillor R Bradburn indicated that since the start of the pandemic the Council had distributed 11,500 grants worth over £64.7 million and had an Economic Recovery plan in place worth over £3 million. There was a further £5.9 million funding for businesses that had not previously qualified for support and the Council was also working in partnership to provide support and training for small to medium businesses.

- (i) Question from Councillor A Geary to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Councillor A Geary, referring to the fact that over the last two years members of the public have not been able to access the council building and have been actively discouraged from attending meetings in person, asked Councillor Marland, when would the civic offices return to a welcoming environment for members of the public.

Councillor Marland indicated that it was his understanding that no member of the public had been refused physical access to a meeting and they were given the option of attending online or in person. Hybrid meetings had increased public participation and this was good for democracy.

As a supplementary question, Councillor A Geary asked Councillor Marland as we look forward to the easing of restrictions and getting life back to normal, what was his thinking on getting life back to a more normal way or is what we see the new normal?

Councillor Marland indicated that he was not in a position to tell anyone what the new normal would be and he would make a judgement on how best to protect staff and members of the public and would take advice on this from the Director and Deputy Director of Public Health.

- (j) Question from Councillor Hussain to Councillor Middleton (Cabinet member for Resources)

Councillor Hussain, referring to the £35 million project to regenerate Wolverton, asked Councillor Middleton, could he provide an update on the demolition of the Agora Centre.

Councillor Middleton indicated that the purchase had now been completed and the Council was the owner of the Agora and its environs. Councillor Middleton noted that it was disappointing that a private developer hadn't been successful in progressing a redevelopment project but that demolition would begin in the next few months and a planning application had been submitted for additional carparking adjacent to the site.

- (k) Question from Councillor Raja to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Raja, referring to the number of MK Connect vehicles utilising the charging points for longer than required at MK Coachway asked Councillor Marland, if he could please provide an update as to what measures the Council was taking to alleviate the issue.

Councillor Marland indicated that the Council Transport Lead had raised this issue with the operator and they had informed their drivers not to utilise the charging points for longer than necessary and that if they continued to do so it would become a disciplinary matter.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Raja asked Councillor Marland how many operators does the Council have and how do they know when the vehicles need charging or are overstaying at a charging point?

Councillor Marland indicated that the Council works with one operator who is responsible for their workforce.

- (I) Question from Councillor Minns to Councillor Townsend  
(Cabinet member for Public Realm)

Councillor Minns, referring to the introduction of the fly tipping action plan, asked Councillor Townsend, if she could provide an update on the fly tipping situation in Milton Keynes.

Councillor Townsend indicated that there were 267 incidences of fly tipping reported in December and this was the lowest monthly figure since 2018. The Council was keeping an eye on a number of hot spots including deploying CCTV to two of these sites. Residents were also providing good intelligence which was leading to prosecutions.

## **CL108**

### **ASYLUM SEEKER ACCOMMODATION IN MILTON KEYNES**

Councillor Trendall moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor R Bradburn:

- “1. That this council notes:
  - a) The United Kingdom has a responsibility to house those seeking asylum in the UK in accommodation, which is safe, and where those so housed are accorded dignity whilst a decision on their status is made.
  - b) That the Home Office has decided without consultation with the council or the local people, to place asylum seekers in accommodation in the former Woughton House Hotel, Woughton-on-the-Green, in Campbell Park & Old Woughton Ward.
2. That this council resolves that the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, write to the Home Secretary and ask that they:
  - a) explain why this location (Woughton House Hotel), further from the coast than almost anywhere else in the UK, was selected;
  - b) explain why the Home Office contractor, Clearsprings, is asking for community volunteers to help with local transport when their director was paid £3.6m last year, and additionally shared in a £1.4m dividend bonus;

- c) explain why Milton Keynes residents who wish to volunteer are being asked by Clearsprings to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements, and are being told it is a requirement of the Official Secrets Act;
- d) explain why it is the residents of Milton Keynes who are coming forward with clothing for the asylum seekers, and not the Home Offices' contractor, who is paid out of public funds;
- e) explain the Covid-19 vaccination status of the individuals, especially so as they will be allowed to 'come and go';
- f) engage with local faith group leaders to ensure that the asylum seekers are able to properly take part in their religious observances; and
- g) agree to allow unannounced visits by the three ward councillors and council officers, including but not limited to those working in Public Health, Environmental Health and Adult Social Care."

Councillor Walker moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Jenkins

- “1. That a new clause 1(c) be added as follows:  
‘Recognises that Councillors’ language on this sensitive issue can play an important role in reassuring communities and supporting asylum seekers.’
2. That the words ‘further from the coast than almost anywhere else in the UK’ be removed from clause 2(a)
3. That clause 2(d) is removed in its entirety and replaced with the following:  
‘Welcomes and praises the generosity of residents, charities, and other groups who have stepped up to support those who have been located at the hotel.’
4. That clause 2(e) is removed in its entirety.
5. That the words ‘the three ward councillors and’ are removed from clause 2(g).”

The amendment was not accepted.

Councillor A Geary moved the suspension of Council Procedure Rule 13.6 which was seconded by Councillor Trendall. This was carried by acclamation.

The meeting adjourned to see if agreement could be reached on the wording of a new amendment.

Councillor Walker withdrew his original amendment and moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Jenkins.

- “1. That a new clause 1(c) be added as follows:  
‘Recognises that Councillors’ language on this sensitive issue can play an important role in reassuring communities and supporting asylum seekers.’
2. That the words ‘further from the coast than almost anywhere else in the UK’ be removed from clause 2(a)
3. That clause 2(d) is removed in its entirety and replaced with the following:  
‘Welcomes and praises the generosity of residents, charities, and other groups who have stepped up to support those who have been located at the hotel.’
4. That clause 2(e) is removed in its entirety and replaced with the following:  
‘As a priority, the refugees should be offered vaccinations, because no one is safe until everyone is safe;’
5. That the words ‘the three ward councillors and’ are removed from clause 2(g) and the words ‘and full access to the three Ward Councillors’ be added after ‘Adult Social Care’.”

The amendment was accepted.

The Motion was carried by acclamation.

RESOLVED –

1. That this Council notes that:
  - a) The United Kingdom has a responsibility to house those seeking asylum in the UK in accommodation, which is safe, and where those so housed are accorded dignity whilst a decision on their status is made.
  - b) That the Home Office has decided without consultation with the council or the local people, to place asylum seekers in accommodation in the former Woughton House Hotel, Woughton-on-the-Green, in Campbell Park & Old Woughton Ward.
  - c) Recognises that Councillors’ language on this sensitive issue can play an important role in reassuring communities and supporting asylum seekers.

2. That this council resolves that the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, write to the Home Secretary and ask that they:
  - a) explain why this location (Woughton House Hotel) was selected;
  - b) explain why the Home Office contractor, Clearsprings, is asking for community volunteers to help with local transport when their director was paid £3.6m last year, and additionally shared in a £1.4m dividend bonus;
  - c) explain why Milton Keynes residents who wish to volunteer are being asked by Clearsprings to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements, and are being told it is a requirement of the Official Secrets Act;
  - d) praises the generosity of residents, charities, and other groups who have stepped up to support those who have been located at the hotel and seeks clarification from the Home Office contractor in relation to their role in the provision of clothing;
  - e) as a priority, the refugees should be offered vaccinations, because no one is safe, until everyone is safe;
  - f) engage with local faith group leaders to ensure that the asylum seekers are able to properly take part in their religious observances; and
  - g) agree to allow unannounced visits by council officers, including but not limited to those working in Public Health, Environmental Health and Adult Social Care and full access to the three Ward Councillors.

## **CL109**

### **GRID ROADS**

Councillor Taylor moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor A Geary:

- “1. That this Council notes that:
  - a) Milton Keynes’ road system is unique in the United Kingdom for its innovative use of the grid road system;
  - b) the grid road system, together with the redway network and underpasses, were a central part of the original new town plan;
  - c) the grid road system is a network of national speed limit, fully landscaped routes that form the top layer of the street hierarchy for both private and public transport in Milton Keynes;

- d) the system is unique because the grid roads run in between districts, rather than through them, allowing the facilitation of higher speed limits due to the absence of persons and buildings close to roads;
  - e) a key principle of the grid road system includes grid junctions being linked by Milton Keynes' famous roundabouts, with over 130 in the borough;
  - f) grid roads discourage traffic from travelling through housing areas, thereby reducing noise and other pollution in pedestrian zones;
  - g) the success of the grid roads system has led to improved air quality as outlined in a 2019 report by researchers at the Birmingham Institute for Forest Research and Lancaster University's Environment Centre; and
  - h) grid roads were designed to be and have become one of the unique selling points of Milton Keynes and continue to be the city areas greatest assets in allowing relatively free flowing traffic.
2. That this Council recognises that:
- a) The grid road system and the original design principles of Milton Keynes are being eroded through developments such as:
    - i) Whitehouse
    - ii) V2 Extension Grange Farm
    - iii) SE MK
    - iv) MK:E
    - v) The city streets in Broughton & Brooklands
  - b) The future development of MK as documented in both Plan:MK and the MK 2050 plan are not fully considering the continuity of the grid road system, the redway network nor underpasses.
  - c) Due to the current development practises, we are at risk of losing the unique identity of MK and a design feature that is an asset to our economy and local way of life.
  - d) Infrastructure before expansion is a key principle in the growth and development of MK and grid roads play a crucial role in this.

3. That this Council resolves to:
  - a) Reaffirm its commitment to the original design principles of Milton Keynes, in so far as to the importance of the grid road system as a means of transport and fast inter connections across our city.
  - b) Request the Cabinet to initiate the creation of a specific Planning Grid Roads SPD. The SPD will provide advice to developers on how to incorporate grid roads into their designs and applications in order to ensure the safety of the residents of Milton Keynes by providing appropriate bridges or underpasses, instead of road level pedestrian crossings; and to support our environmental ambitions by requiring that all grid roads should remain isolated from the housing areas.”

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

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

RESOLVED –

The Motion was lost.

## **CL110**

### **YOUTH MAYOR**

Councillor Montague moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor Exon:

- “1. That this Council:
  - a) recognises the Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet and praises the work of the 36 members, who have most recently run excellent campaigns on public safety, votes at 16 and affordable activities in Milton Keynes; and
  - b) supports the principle of running elections as a way of engaging young people in democracy.
2. That this Council notes that over 14,000 local young people voted in the Youth Cabinet elections in 2019.
3. That this Council resolves to:
  - a) encourage officers to support the development of the youth democracy agenda, for example by exploring with young people the possibility of creating the role of a Youth Mayor, who would be elected by the Youth Cabinet for a term of 1 year and would represent the young people of the city at civic events, including accompanying the Mayor of Milton Keynes to various engagements; and

- b) explore the possibility of creating the role of Councillor Youth Democracy Champion.”

The Council heard from four members of the public during consideration of this item.

The Motion was carried by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

1. That this Council:
  - a) recognises the Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet and praises the work of the 36 members, who have most recently run excellent campaigns on public safety, votes at 16 and affordable activities in Milton Keynes; and
  - b) supports the principle of running elections as a way of engaging young people in democracy.
4. That this Council notes that over 14,000 local young people voted in the Youth Cabinet elections in 2019.
5. That this Council resolves to:
  - a) encourage officers to support the development of the youth democracy agenda, for example by exploring with young people the possibility of creating the role of a Youth Mayor, who would be elected by the Youth Cabinet for a term of 1 year and would represent the young people of the city at civic events, including accompanying the Mayor of Milton Keynes to various engagements; and
  - b) explore the possibility of creating the role of Councillor Youth Democracy Champion.”

#### **CL111**

#### **SCHEME OF COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES FOR 2022-23**

The Mayor moved the recommendations in the report which were seconded by Councillor Marland:

On being put to the vote the recommendations were declared carried by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors’ Allowances be received and noted.
2. That the Independent Remuneration Panel and its Clerk be thanked for its work.
3. That the revised Scheme of Councillors’ Allowances, based on the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Councillors Allowances be adopted to take effect from 1 April 2022.

4. That in respect of parental leave for Councillors, the following be agreed:
  - a) the Parental Leave Policy for Councillors; and
  - b) where Councillors take qualifying parental leave in accordance with the Policy, the period of such parental leave ('the Period') shall be treated as a good reason for the Councillor failing to attend any meeting or meetings during the Period for the purposes of section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.
4. That authority be delegated to the Director of Law and Governance to make minor typographical and consequential amendments to the Scheme of Councillors' Allowances and the Parental Leave Policy for Councillors.
5. That the Independent Remuneration Panel report on allowances for members of Parish and Town Councils, be noted.

**CL112 APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTees TO THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

The Mayor moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Marland:

- "1. That the individuals set out in Annex A, be Co-opted to the Audit, and Standards Committees of Milton Keynes Council, from 1 February 2022, for a period of 4 years from 1 February 2022."

On being put to the vote the recommendation was declared carried by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

That the individuals set out in the report, be Co-opted to the Audit, and Standards Committees of Milton Keynes Council, from 1 February 2022, for a period of 4 years from 1 February 2022.

**CL113 UPDATE TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Mayor moved the following recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Marland:

"That the minor changes proposed to the Council's Financial Regulations be agreed."

On being put to the vote the recommendation was declared carried by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

That the minor changes proposed to the Council's Financial Regulations be agreed.

**CL114**

**QUARTERLY REPORT ON SPECIAL URGENCY PROVISIONS**

The Council received a quarterly report on special urgency decisions.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

**CL115**

**WARD BASED BUDGETS 2021/22**

The Council received a report on the Ward Based Budgets for 2021/22.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

THE MAYOR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10:13 PM

[The recording of this meeting is available to view on the Council's YouTube Channel at: https://www.youtube.com/user/MiltonKeynesCouncil](https://www.youtube.com/user/MiltonKeynesCouncil)