



Minutes of the MEETING OF MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL held on WEDNESDAY
22 JANUARY 2020 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor Crooks (Mayor)
Councillors Akter, Alexander, Baines, Baume, Bint, Bowyer,
Brackenbury, K Bradburn, M Bradburn, R Bradburn, Brown, Cannon,
Carr, Cryer-Whitehead, Darlington, Exon, Ferrans, A Geary, P Geary,
Gilbert, Gowans, V Hopkins, Jenkins, Khan, Lancaster, Legg, Long,
Marklew, Marland, Marlow, McCall, McLean, McPake, Middleton,
Miles, Minns, Montague, Nazir, O’Neill, Raja, Rankine, Reilly, Small,
Townsend, Trendall, Walker, Wales, Wallis, Williams and Wilson
Alderman McKenzie and Alderwoman Saunders

Apologies: Councillors Green, D Hopkins, Hosking, Petchey, Priestley and Wales
and Aldermen Bartlett, Beeley, Bristow, Coventry, Henderson,
Howell and Alderwomen Irons, Henderson and Lloyd

Also Present: 16 members of the public

CL89 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
27 November 2019 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a
correct record.

CL90 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

The Monitoring Officer advised that she had granted a dispensation
to speak and vote to all councillors on Item 6 (Scheme of Councillors’
Allowances 2020/21).

None disclosed.

CL91 ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) New Year Honours

The Mayor congratulated the following persons who had
received New Year Honours:

- Christopher Bridgeman who received an MBE for services
to the Community in Wolverton and Milton Keynes;

- Nadiya Hussain who received an MBE for Services to Broadcasting and Culinary Arts;
- Theratil Ouseph who received an BEM for services to Badminton in Great Britain and the Promotion of Sport within the British Asian community; and
- Val Symon who received an BEM for services to the community in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire

(b) 20 in 20 Challenge

The Mayor, referring to the award of European City of Sport status for 2020, emphasised that while looking forward to a year of special events with sport and leisure partners, the most important element was to encourage local people to be more active, whatever their fitness level.

To that end, the 'MK 20 in 20 pledge' was launched on Monday asking everyone, individuals young and old; families; schools; businesses; clubs; and organisations, to make a pledge to be more active or to make it easier for others to be active.

The Mayor invited councillors to make a pledge, or to seek some inspiration by following the hashtag #MK20in20 on social media.

(c) Ministry of Defence Case Study

The Mayor announced that the Council recently had a case study published in the Ministry of Defence's Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report and that it was a real honour for the Council to be recognised in this way. The report highlighted the work the Council was doing locally to support veterans as an employer and through a number of innovative schemes including veteran awareness training sessions for local GPs delivered by Dr Thao Nguyen and promoting both coaching courses and security qualifications to local veterans with disability or mental health conditions, delivered with MK Dons Sports and Education Trust.

The Mayor thanked the Armed Forces Covenant Group and Councillor Baines, the Council's Armed Forces Champion, for delivering these initiatives and also congratulated them on their achievement.

(d) General Election – 12 December 2019

The Mayor congratulated all the staff involved in the General Election held on 12 December 2019 on the efficient way in which it was managed and delivered.

The Mayor also congratulated Iain Stewart on his re-election and Ben Everett on being elected for the first time and wished them both success in representing their constituents.

CL92

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(a) Question from David Lee (Tinkers Bridge Residents' Association) to Councillor Gowans (Cabinet member for Planning and Transport)

David Lee referring to comments on the local Tinkers Bridge Facebook page about the Arriva bus service, asked Councillor how these comments could be passed onto an appropriate body.

Councillor Gowans indicated that the majority of bus services in Milton Keynes, including the 5 and 6, were operated commercially by Arriva and complaints should therefore, in the first instance, be made to the bus operator directly. Councillor Gowans went on to say that if a passenger was unhappy with how a complaint was handled they could contact Transport Focus, who were the independent watchdog for transport users.

Councillor Gowans advised that the Traffic Commissioner's Office was the Regulatory Body for bus operations in England. The Commissioners could fine operators if they were not meeting required standards. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency also monitored services for punctuality and reliability on behalf of the Traffic Commissioner and details of how to complain were on their website.

Councillor Gowans also stated that through the Council's partnership agreement with Arriva it was working together to put measures in place to improve bus reliability where they are affected by congestion."

CL93

COUNCIL TAX BASE 2020/21 (LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME)

Councillor Middleton (Cabinet member for Resources and Innovation) moved the following recommendation from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 November 2019, which was seconded by Councillor Marland:

“That the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, as adopted by the Council on 23 January 2019, be continued for 2020/21, with amendments that reflect changes to related benefits and to the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations; retaining the delegation to the Director Finance and Resources to make technical legislative changes.”

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

RESOLVED -

That the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, as adopted by the Council on 23 January 2019, be continued for 2020/21, with amendments that reflect changes to related benefits and to the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations; retaining the delegation to the Director Finance and Resources to make technical legislative changes.

CL94

REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL’S CONSTITUTION

Councillor McLean moved the following recommendation from the meeting of the Constitution Commission held on 16 January 2020, which was seconded by the Councillor Brackenbury:

“That in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.2 consideration of the recommendation from the meeting of the Constitution Commission held on 16 January 2020 be adjourned, without discussion, until the Council meeting on 26 February 2020.

RESOLVED -

That in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.2, the following recommendation, having been proposed and seconded, stand adjourned to the next ordinary meeting of the Council:

“That the Council be recommended to adopt the following amendments to Procedure Rules 9.3 (Notice of Public Questions) and 9.12 (Petitions):

9.3 Notice of Questions

A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Monitoring Officer no later than **48 hours (excluding weekends and public holidays)** before the start of the meeting.

e.g. If a meeting starts at 6:30 pm on a Tuesday the deadline for questions would be 6:30 pm on the preceding Friday.

9.12 Petitions

- (b) Petitions received by no later than **48 hours (excluding weekends and public holidays)** before the start of the meeting may be presented to the Council.

e.g. If a meeting starts at 6:30 pm on a Tuesday the deadline for petitions would be 6:30 pm on the preceding Friday."

CL95

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

- (a) Question from Councillor Baines to Councillor Long (Cabinet member for Housing and Regeneration)

Councillor Baines, referring to a report from one of his constituents concerning delays in replacing a central heating boiler which broke down on 19 December and had still not been replaced, asked Councillor Long if he believed that this level of service was within the Council's Service Level Agreement with Mears.

Councillor Long apologised on behalf of the Council Administration for any poor level of service experienced by the tenant.

Councillor Long reported that the satisfaction rating for Mears was currently 98%. However, his councillor case work demonstrated that the repairs and maintenance service provided by Mears tended to be inconsistent.

Councillor Long recognised that there was a need to review the service levels currently provided by Mears. The Council had recently resumed undertaking the client role in respect of the repairs and maintenance contract and was considering post repair quality control visits.

Councillor Long indicated that as Mears was scheduled to undertake the Borough wide Council home refurbishment programme and potentially the regeneration work, if successfully tendered, it was important to get the performance and quality correct.

- (b) Question from Councillor McPake to Councillor Gowans (Cabinet member for Planning and Transport)

Councillor McPake asked Councillor Gowans if he could arrange a survey of bus services operating in Milton to identify those services which were difficult for wheelchair users and then to request providers to address any access issues.

Councillor Gowans indicated that he was happy to request officer colleagues to arrange such a survey and that it was important that wheelchair access was included in future criteria when the Council commissioned bus services.

- (c) Question from Councillor Brown to Councillor Darlington (Cabinet member for Public Realm)

Councillor Brown, referring to the Eco Warriors scheme, which had been successfully introduced in primary schools, asked Councillor Darlington if it was planned to roll out the scheme to secondary schools.

Councillor Darlington indicated that the Eco Warriors scheme had been successfully piloted over the autumn term in four primary schools and had been rolled out to years 3, 4 and 5 in all primary schools.

Councillor Darlington reported that the Council had been approached by a number of organisations, including the Parks Trust and the Tesla Drivers' Association, about being involved with the Eco Warriors scheme. Councillor Darlington suggested that the involvement of the Tesla Drivers' Association would really help encourage secondary schools boys in particular to become involved in the Eco Warriors scheme.

Councillor Darlington added that the Council had recently been rated as the number 1 local authority by DEFRA for (weekly collection) recycling rates and in the top 4% in England overall.

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

Councillor P Geary asked Councillor Marland if he believed he worked well with others.

Councillor Marland responded that he thought he occasionally worked well with others.

As a supplementary question, Councillor P Geary, referring to recent quotes from the Leaders of neighbouring councils in connection with the Milton Keynes 2050 Strategy and this Council's alleged failure to discuss with those councils the possible development beyond the current Borough boundaries, which suggested a certain arrogance by this Council and was both disrespectful to neighbouring councils and damaging to the regional reputation of this Council, asked

if Councillor Marland would apologise to the neighbouring councils and withdraw the Milton Keynes 2050 Strategy.

Councillor Marland referred to the recent motions agreed by the Council expressing concerns about prospective developments within Aylesbury Vale District Council's area at Shenley Park and Salden Chase, both on the boundary of Milton Keynes, and the responses from both Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council that they were able to choose where they planned growth in their area.

Councillor Marland indicated that it was the Council's intention to engage with neighbouring councils about the inevitable growth facing the region and specifically the growth of Milton Keynes, as part of the Milton Keynes 2050 Strategy consultation process.

Councillor Marland pointed out that the Milton Keynes 2050 Strategy had no statutory status and it was not the Council's intention to withdraw it.

- (e) Question from Councillor Brackenbury to Councillor Darlington (Cabinet member for Public Realm)

Councillor Brackenbury, referring to the flooding that took place in Downs Barn on Boxing Day, expressed his appreciation to the Fire Service, Anglian Water and the Council's officers for their response.

Councillor Brackenbury indicated that residents had been reporting blocked drains for quite a while before the flooding, but no action had been taken until after the flooding had occurred, causing resident to believe they had previously been pushed to the back of the queue.

Councillor Brackenbury reported that Residents were now expressing concerns about a number of blocked ditches and asked Councillor Darlington if the ditches would be attended to as a matter of some priority in order that residents did not once more feel that they had been pushed to the back of the queue.

Councillor Darlington, thanked Councillor Brackenbury for his kind words about the Council's response to the flooding and the officer colleagues involved, and indicated that the Boxing Day incident, when a water main had burst, demonstrated excellent cross agency working and demonstrated that the

Council was implementing the recommendations of the recent Flood Review.

Councillor Darlington undertook to ensure that the ditches were inspected and any necessary work prioritised.

Councillor Darlington referred to the recommendations of the Flood Review and assured the Council that greater priority would now be given to flooding issues in line with the recommendations.

(f) Question from Councillor Wilson to Councillor Walker (Leader of the Conservative Group)

Councillor Wilson asked Councillor Walker if he was embarrassed to be associated with the tactics employed by the Conservative Party during the General Election, which included impersonating both a fact check organisation and the Labour Party and editing media footage inappropriately.

Councillor Walker indicated that he believed the tactics, which had delivered the best result for the Conservative Party since 1983, were outstanding and would allow the Party to deliver an agenda for the whole of the United Kingdom with the backing of those voters from the Labour heartlands who had abandoned the Labour Party.

Councillor Walker expressed the view that the Conservative Party was the only Party that could deliver an agenda for the working class people of the United Kingdom

As a supplementary question, Councillor Wilson asked Councillor Walker if he was embarrassed and ashamed to be associated with the lies told by the Conservative Party during the General Election, which included that an aide to Matt Hancock was assaulted when he walked into someone; that there would be no goods checks between Northern Ireland and Great Britain as a result of the Conservative Withdrawal Agreement/Brexit Deal; and Boris Johnson saying he was happy to be interviewed by anybody called Andrew from the BBC.

Councillor Walker responded, indicating that only two political parties, the British National Party and the Labour Party had been investigated by the Human Rights Commission, so he would not be lectured by the Labour Party.

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

Councillor Rankine, referring to the Council's bid for Wolverton, submitted last year, for funding from the Government's High Street Fund, asked Councillor Marland what undertaking he could give with regard to improving the transparency around the selection process for bids for Government monies, in order to ensure that ward councillors were aware and had the opportunity to lobby and input into the process.

Councillor Marland explained that in respect of the High Street Fund bid the Council had been given little time in which to submit a bid and Wolverton had a scheme that was already developed, which was not necessarily the case for other High Streets in the Borough.

Councillor Marland stated that ideally the Council would want to make both transparent and sensible decisions, but on some occasions it was only possible to take sensible decisions, because of the short timescales associated with some funding bids.

Councillor Marland indicated that in the case of the Town Centre Fund bid the Government had given plenty of notice which was allowing the Council to consult on its bid.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Rankine, appreciating that some of the decision making processes had to be curtailed in certain instances, asked Councillor Marland if it would be possible to publish a regular list of schemes that Council had been invited to bid for, as this would enable councillors to see both what the Council was and was not bidding for and input their comments.

Councillor Marland indicated that generally when the Government invited bids for projects there were prescribed criteria. With reference to the Bletchley Town bid, the Council was already developing a Prospectus was able to develop a bid in the time available and allow for involvement from interested parties. However, in many instances the Council was invited to submit a bid, but regrettably was not given the time to develop the bid in consultation with interested parties.

Councillor Marland undertook to consider how best to make available to councillors and parish and town councils possible bids the Council had been invited to participate in.

- (h) Question from Councillor R Bradburn to Councillor Darlington (Cabinet member for Public Realm)

Councillor Bradburn asked Councillor Darlington to update the Council on the V4 underpass project.

Councillor Darlington indicated that, despite the underpass being a complicated construction project, because of the number of public utility supplies which had to be negotiated, it was currently on time.

Councillor Darlington also indicated that ward councillors had been invited to visit to view the works and a further visit was to be arranged.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Bradburn, referring to complaints he was receiving from residents of Two Mile Ash about traffic problems associated with the Underpass construction, asked Councillor Darlington to request officer colleagues to provide details of the volume of complaints about traffic problems received before the scheme commenced and presently.

Councillor Darlington indicated that she was happy to provide the information requested, but she understood that the number of complaints had significantly decreased.

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

Councillor Walker asked Councillor Marland why he wanted to extend the Borough boundaries into North Buckinghamshire.

Councillor Marland indicated that it was not a case of trying to annex part of North Buckinghamshire, instead he was trying to initiate a conversation with neighbouring councils about planning the growth of Milton Keynes.

Councillor Marland outlined that the growth figures in the Milton Keynes 2050 Strategy were very similar to those being imposed by Government and less than the one million homes which Iain Stewart MP had recently been advocating as part of a growth funding deal. It was essential that the growth of Milton Keynes was both planned and to current standards, as opposed to simply allowing high density development and the

associated impact on existing communities, as was the Conservative Group's approach for the regeneration areas.

Councillor Marland emphasised that when neighbouring councils considered proposing development on this Council's boundaries, those councils should have had a prior conversation with this Council about the development to ensure it supported the long term vision for Milton Keynes and adopted many of the Milton Keynes design standards.

As a supplementary question Councillor Walker, referring to what he believed was growing opposition to the Milton Keynes 2050 Strategy, both from amongst voters and across the region, asked Councillor Marland to withdraw the Strategy and start again, this time instigating a proper consultation process with interested parties.

Councillor Marland indicated that he believed that the residents of Milton Keynes would want to know why the Conservative Group Leader was so interested in protecting parts of North Buckinghamshire outside of Milton Keynes.

Councillor Marland stated that Milton Keynes needed proper planned growth with the infrastructure to match as the Government was expecting to see the development of in excess of one million homes developed across the Oxford to Cambridge Arc. If the Council did not have a plan which included growth beyond its boundaries it would be necessary to further develop existing communities in order to achieve the Government's growth targets.

CL96

PEDESTRIAN ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

Councillor Alexander moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor Williams:

- "1. That the Council recognises the difficulties experienced by many persons with mobility issues who rely on mobility aids, such as mobility scooters and wheelchairs and for persons with prams and buggies, or similar, when using the pavements and pathways of Milton Keynes.
2. That the Council believes there should be equality of access for all residents using the pavements and pathways of Milton Keynes.

3. That the Development Control Committee be requested to take into account the provisions of the Equality Act of 2010 to ensure that people with mobility issues are given due consideration with regards to planning applications and to ensure that applicants take into account the relevant aspects of the Act with regard to dropped kerbs and restricted access.
4. That the Council requests the Cabinet to undertake to end this inequality by:
 - (a) undertaking to introduce a 5 year programme commencing in 2020/21 to install dropped kerbs at all road crossings and remove footpath chicanes which make access difficulties for some persons, unless essential for safety, in which case, an alternative be provided which both allows access and does not compromise safety;
 - (b) making adequate budget provision in each of the financial years 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25;
 - (c) ensuring that the programme is delivered over a 5 year period;
 - (d) taking what action is necessary to ensure that motorists do not park alongside a dropped kerb, for example by providing double yellow lines, which may prevent disabled people and persons with prams, buggies or similar from accessing the dropped kerb to cross the road; and
 - (e) ensuring, when reviewing existing planning policies, or considering future planning policies the access needs, of people with mobility issues, when using the pavements and pathways of Milton Keynes, are given due consideration.”

The Council heard from two members of the public during consideration of this item and noted the invitation to councillors to visit the Centre for Integrated Living.

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

RESOLVED -

1. That the Council recognises the difficulties experienced by many persons with mobility issues who rely on mobility aids, such as mobility scooters and wheelchairs and for persons with prams and buggies, or similar, when using the pavements and pathways of Milton Keynes.
2. That the Council believes there should be equality of access for all residents using the pavements and pathways of Milton Keynes.
3. That the Development Control Committee be requested to take into account the provisions of the Equality Act of 2010 to ensure that people with mobility issues are given due consideration with regards to planning applications and to ensure that applicants take into account the relevant aspects of the Act with regard to dropped kerbs and restricted access.
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 - (b) making adequate budget provision in each of the financial years 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25;
 - (c) ensuring that the programme is delivered over a 5 year period;
 - (d) taking what action is necessary to ensure that motorists do not park alongside a dropped kerb, for example by providing double yellow lines, which may prevent disabled people and persons with prams, buggies or similar from accessing the dropped kerb to cross the road; and
 - (e) ensuring, when reviewing existing planning policies, or considering future planning policies the access needs, of people with mobility issues, when using the pavements and pathways of Milton Keynes, are given due consideration.”

CL97

SCHEME OF COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES 2020/21

The Council considered adopting a Scheme of Councillors' Allowances for 2020/21, which took account of the recommendation from the Independent Remuneration Panel that a 2% increase be applied to the allowances paid to councillors for 2019/2020.

The Mayor moved and the Deputy Mayor seconded:

- "1. That the Scheme of Councillors' Allowances be adopted to take effect from 1 April 2020.
2. That the decision of the Independent Remuneration Panel to adopt the provisions of the 2014 report on allowances for members of Parish and Town Councils, be noted."

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

RESOLVED –

1. That the Scheme of Councillors' Allowances be adopted to take effect from 1 April 2020.
2. That the decision of the Independent Remuneration Panel to adopt the provisions of the 2014 report on allowances for members of Parish and Town Councils, be noted.

CL98

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The Council considered changes to the memberships of the Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee and the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED –

That the following changes in membership of committees be confirmed:

- (a) Councillor Marlow to replace Councillor Hosking on the Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee; and
- (b) Councillor Wallis to replace Councillor Akter on the Standards Committee.

CL99

WARD BASED BUDGETS 2019/20

It was noted that for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 December 2019, applications totalling £11,459.50 had been approved and further that the deadline for submitting applications for 2019/20 was the end of February 2020.

CL100

QUARTERLY REPORT ON SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS

The Council noted that, in accordance with Access to Information Procedure Rule 17.4, the Provisions for Special Urgency, as set out in Access to Information Procedure Rule 16, were not used during the period 1 September to 31 December 2019.

The Council was advised, in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16(j), that with the agreement of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the scrutiny Management Committee, the Cabinet member for Planning and Transportation had agreed that the call-in procedure would not apply to his decision in respect of the Council's Response to the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Proposed Main Modification Consultation 2019, taken on 16 December 2019, as delay in submitting the Council's response would have potentially seriously prejudiced the public's interest as a later response would have been out of time.

THE MAYOR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 8:38 PM