

Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the CABINET held on WEDNESDAY 10 JANUARY 2013 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor A Geary (Chair)
Councillors Bald, Bint, Brock, Dransfield and P Geary

Officers: D Hill (Chief Executive), L Bull (Corporate Director [Community Wellbeing]), I Ali (Acting Assistant Director [Law and Governance]) and S Heap (Democratic Services Manager)

Apology: Councillor Hopkins

Also Present Councillors McLean and Miles and 2 members of the public

C112 CABINET ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Bint announced that in 2012 the number of bus passengers had increased by more than 10% and that this was the second year in a row to see such growth. It meant that in excess of 9 million bus journeys were made during 2012.

Councillor Brock announced that the contract for the provision of community health services had, on 19 December 2012, been awarded to Central London NHS Trust. The Council remained committed to providing integrated services with Milton Keynes Community Health Services and would monitor closely the transition to the new provider.

Councillor P Geary referred to the Council's Neighbourhood Employment Programme, which he believed had been a great success, and announced that it was intended, in the Budget for 2013/14, to use some of the income from the Casino license to expand the Programme. Councillor Geary also announced that one of the other housing authorities in Milton Keynes had agreed to join the programme and provide additional funding. He believed this showed that other bodies in Milton Keynes had faith in the programme, recognised the success of the programme and wanted to be part of it.

C113 TENANCY STRATEGY

The Cabinet considered the following recommendation from the Council meeting held on 9 January 2013, resulting from the referral from the Executive Scrutiny Panel in respect of the adoption of the Tenancy Strategy:

"This matter be referred to Cabinet, asking that the Cabinet consider and make provision for the following recommendations:

- (a) that the level of household income threshold for renewal of a flexible tenancy should be set at a more realistic and much higher level than that in the current draft policy, as to do otherwise will undermine communities, work and families;

- (b) that the minimum tenancy should be a minimum of 10 years, so allowing households to see their children through schooling and the early years of family life;
- (c) that Affordable rent properties should be let to a broad range of households allowing a range of people to choose social housing; and
- (d) that any alleged breaches of the tenancy standard by registered providers (Council and housing associations etc) should be referred to the Tenants Panel, to be set up under the Localism Act 2011 as part of the new national complaints regime that culminates with the new Housing Ombudsman service.”

The Cabinet noted that the Council had agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should be requested to provide appropriate arrangements for the early scrutiny of the Tenancy Strategy as it came into effect.

The Cabinet recognised that as the Council was required to have a Tenancy Strategy in place by 15 January 2013, it would not be possible to change the existing Strategy at this late stage.

The Cabinet also noted that the Strategy could be reviewed, once adopted, in order that the Council’s concerns could be considered.

In considering this item the Cabinet heard from Councillors McLean and Miles.

RESOLVED -

1. That, taking account of the need for the Council to have an adopted Tenancy Strategy in place by 15 January 2013, the decision, to adopt the Tenancy Strategy, as agreed at the Cabinet’s meeting on 17 October 2012 (Minute C63 refers), be confirmed.
2. That the Council’s decision to request the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to provide appropriate arrangements for the early scrutiny of the Tenancy Strategy be supported and the Management Committee requested to include in that wider review the following issues referred by the Council:
 - (a) that the level of household income threshold for renewal of a flexible tenancy should be set at a more realistic and much higher level than that in the current draft policy, as to do otherwise will undermine communities, work and families;
 - (b) that the minimum tenancy should be a minimum of 10 years, so allowing households to see their children through schooling and the early years of family life;

- (c) that Affordable Rent Properties should be let to a broad range of households allowing a range of people to choose social housing; and
- (d) that any alleged breaches of the tenancy standard by registered providers (Council and housing associations etc) should be referred to the Tenants Panel, to be set up under the Localism Act 2011 as part of the new national complaints regime that culminates with the new Housing Ombudsman Service.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7:17 PM