

PARISH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD
CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

9 MARCH 2000



Minutes of the meeting of the PARISH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY held on THURSDAY 9 DECEMBER 1999 at 7.15 pm

Present:	Councillor K Wilson	-	Milton Keynes Council
	Councillor Seymour	-	Milton Keynes Council
	Councillor Tapp	-	Milton Keynes Council
	M Franklin	-	Lavendon Parish Council
	I Fraser	-	Campbell Park Parish Council
	D Mynard	-	Shenley Brook End Parish Council
	D Pafford	-	Campbell Park Parish Council
	G Mann	-	Emberton Parish Council
	B Abbott	-	Bletchley and Fenny Neighbourhood Council
	J Marling	-	Bletchley and Fenny Neighbourhood Council
	Dee Scarland	-	Newport Pagnell Town Council
	A Francis	-	New Bradwell Neighbourhood Council
	W Molcher	-	Filgrave and Tyringham Neighbourhood Council
	K Sidebottom	-	West Bletchley Neighbourhood Council
	K Sisson	-	West Bletchley Neighbourhood Council
	Council K Owen	-	Loughton Parish Council
	A Dnes	-	Stony Stratford Neighbourhood Council
	R Nix	-	Central Milton Keynes Neighbourhood Council
	K Heanes	-	Stony Stratford Neighbourhood Council
	D Labbett	-	Great Linford Parish Council

Officers: A Colyer (Assistant Treasurer (Corporate Finance)), A Hudson (Head of Infrastructure), A Prockter (Landscape and Countryside Manager) P Robinson (Senior Policy Officer) and T Mabbott (Committee Manager)

Apologies: J Geary
Councillor White

1.0 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 1999 were received.

2.0 CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Assembly received a report from Isabella Fraser on the work of the Crime and Community Safety Partnership, which highlighted some of the work done in pilot schemes which could, if successful, be applied more widely. In particular, the Committee noted the potential of the anti-vandalism scheme in Fullers Slade.

The Assembly welcomed the report.

3.0 PARISH PARTNERSHIP FUND CRITERIA

The Assembly noted the results of the consultation on proposals for change to the criteria for allocating Parish Partnership Fund grants. The Assembly noted that the consensus that the timing of the deadline for applications should be changed in order to allow local councils to plan more effectively had been accepted by Milton Keynes Council and would be incorporated into the proposals put before Policy and Resources Committee.

The Assembly welcomed the fact that the bulk of the proposals had incorporated the views of local councils, particularly the need for different criteria for those very small local councils with a council tax base of less than £200.

It was hoped that the revised criteria would now be approved by the Council in the Spring of next year, and be implemented with effect from the 2001/02 fund.

4.0 LOCAL COUNCILS CONFERENCE

The Assembly received the Conference Report and Summary. As a result of the success of the inaugural conference for Local Councils, it had been planned to organise another one on 9 September 2000.

It was agreed that any new ideas and suggestions for the Conference would be welcomed and that a steering group needed to be established.

RESOLVED:

That a Sub-Group be established to finalise arrangements for holding the Conference of Milton Keynes Local Councils, comprising of Parish Councillors and clerks from both rural and urban areas.

5.0 REVIEW OF PARISH ARRANGEMENTS

The Assembly noted that Milton Keynes Council's draft submission to the DETR had been circulated for comments at the end of November, and that 18 responses had been received from Parish Councils. Of these, only a small number of outstanding issues remained to be resolved, and it was hoped that the final document would be sent to the Secretary of State shortly.

6.0 COUNCIL TAX BILLING ARRANGEMENTS

The Assembly received a report on proposed changes to Council Tax billing arrangements. It was noted that consultation had taken place, and that there had been responses from local councils.

Local council representatives expressed concern at the way the Section 136 element would be identified on the individual Council Tax Bill, as much of Section 136 spending is out of the control of Local Councils.

It was agreed that the legal implications of separate billing needed to be investigated, but further noted that the timescales for implementation this year were short.

7.0 MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL BUDGET 2000/2001

It was noted that Milton Keynes Council had set its budget in October 1999 on the assumption that the Council's Standard Spending Assessment, set by central Government, would be as forecasted. It was reported that this was in fact not the case, and that the actual amount of financial support that Milton Keynes Council would receive from central government was lower than expected, leading to a shortfall of approximately £1.4 million. It was agreed that further updates on the financial situation would be provided to the Assembly.

8.0 CLOSURE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Assembly noted that one area in which the Council would need to make savings as a result of the budget shortfall was in the provision of public conveniences. The appropriate Local Councils had been approached to ascertain whether they would wish to take the opportunity to take over the running of such facilities.

9.0 DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

The Assembly noted that the Council was considering various proposals, with a view to drawing up a scheme to identify how its functions will be discharged, as a result of central government's proposals for the re-organisation of local government decision-making processes.

The Council was also considering proposals to develop locality working under the new political management arrangements. These proposals now needed to be formalised for consultation with Local Councils. Further reports would also be made to the Consultative Assembly.

10.0 STARS FORUM

It was reported that the proposals for changes to the operation of the Sustainable Transport and Road Safety had gone out for consultation and that only two responses had been received.

It was noted that the Assembly supported the idea of the STARS Forum being conducted in two parts, the first part for Local Council issues with the second part for issues raised by other organisations.

11.0 SIX MONTHLY COMPLAINTS REPORT

The Assembly considered the six monthly complaints report, and noted that only one complaint had been received in the six month period to November 1999. This complaint had been addressed to the satisfaction of the Council concerned.

12.0 PARISH NEWSLETTER COMPETITION

The Assembly gave its support to a proposal for a competition to find the best parish and neighbourhood newsletter, as a means of spreading good practice and improving local councils' public profile.

13.0 ITEMS RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILS

(a) Verge Maintenance

The Committee noted that Haversham Parish Council had agreed that it would like to explore the possibility of taking over responsibility for verge maintenance, partly for cost reasons, but also as a means of improving the quality of the work carried out. It was noted that this proposal had a number of implications, both legal and financial, and that a report would be brought back on this to a future meeting of the Assembly.

(b) Funding of Maintenance Costs

The Assembly noted that, as there was no one present from Woughton Parish Council to speak to this item, which was deferred from the September meeting, it would fall and not be automatically re-submitted to the next meeting.

14.0

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted that the dates of the meetings of the Consultative Committee for 1999/2000 and 2000/01 were as follows:

9 March 2000

22 June 2000

7 September 2000

7 December 2000

8 March 2001

All meetings would commence at 7.00 pm at the Civic Offices.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 8.52 PM