

Chief Executive
Howard Miller

To: Members of the Milton Keynes Parish/
Neighbourhood Consultative Assembly

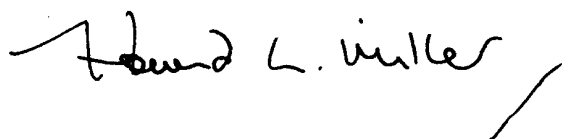
**PLEASE NOTE
TIME OF
MEETING**

26 November 1999

Dear Councillor

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **MILTON KEYNES PARISH/NEIGHBOURHOOD CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY** to be held at the Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes on **THURSDAY 9 DECEMBER 1999 at 7.15 pm** when the business set out overleaf will be transacted.

Yours faithfully



Chief Executive

AGENDA

Item No:

1. Apologies

2. Minutes

To receive the Minutes of the Consultative Assembly meeting held on 16 September 1999 (Item 2) (**Page 6**).

3. Crime and Community Safety

To consider a report on crime and community safety from Isabella Fraser, of Campbell Park Parish Council. This item was deferred from the meeting of this Assembly held on 16 September 1999. (Item 3) (**Page 10**)

4. Parish Partnership Fund Criteria

To consider any new responses from Parish Councils and to give detailed consideration to all responses on the proposed changes to the arrangements for awarding grants from the Parish Partnership Fund. This item was deferred from the meeting of this Assembly on 16 September 1999. (Item 4) (**Page 11**)

5. Local Councils Conference

To consider a report from Paul Robinson (Corporate Policy Officer) on the Local Councils Conference which was held on 11 September 1999. (Item 5) (**Page 30**)

6. Review of Parish Arrangements Update

Local Councils have recently been consulted on the Council's draft submission to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions in support of a review of parishing arrangements within the area of the Borough of Milton Keynes. The deadline for Local Council's comments was 30 November 1999. This report has been written prior to that deadline and, at the time of writing, very few comments had been received on the draft submission. An update will be given at the Consultative Assembly's meeting of the responses received and on what the next stage of the process will be.

7. Council Tax Billing Arrangements

At the last meeting of the Consultative Assembly it was reported that the Council was considering changing the Council Tax billing arrangements in two ways. Firstly, consideration was being given to the feasibility of bringing forward the instalment date for collecting Council Tax to the first of each month with effect from 1 April 2000. Secondly, to change the layout of the Council Tax Bill to show the amounts of Council Tax payable to Parishes and Neighbourhood Councils separately on Council Tax Bills.

It was noted that all Local Councils would be consulted on the proposals. A copy of a report submitted to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee on 15 September 1999

is attached at ITEM 7. That report sets out the information which has been sent to Local Councils requesting their comments.

An oral update will be given on responses received and what the present situation is regarding these two matters (Item 7) (**Page 32**).

8. Milton Keynes Council Budget for 2000/01

The Consultative Assembly may be aware that the Council has been considering its budget for next year. The Council has been aiming to frame the budget and next year's council tax level five months earlier than usual. This has been made possible by early planning and greater certainty of the Council's Revenue Support Grant from the Government. The budget proposals not only relate to next year, but for the following two years as well, enabling medium term financial planning.

Most of the savings proposals arise from increased efficiency and imaginative use of resources. However, the extent of the budget pressures require that consideration has had to be given to reducing or ceasing to provide certain services.

A copy of a report submitted to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee on 19 October 1999 is attached at Item 8 for the Consultative Assembly's information. (Item 8) (**Page 36**).

9. Closure of Public Conveniences

The Consultative Assembly may be aware from the previous report on this agenda that the Council has been considering its budget for next year. It is stated in that report that most of the savings proposals arise from increased efficiency and imaginative use of resources. However, the extent of the budget pressures require that consideration has had to be given to reducing or ceasing to provide certain services. Unfortunately, one of the proposals is for the Council's public conveniences throughout the borough to be closed from April next year unless alternative arrangements can be made for their future use.

Local Councils will know better than most how important these facilities are to the local community and this is something the Council would prefer not to do. However, it wishes to ensure that its budget is placed on a firmer footing with the aim of ending the serious financial difficulties faced by the Council since local government reorganisation. Unfortunately, this means that not all the services the Council provides at present can be resourced.

One of the objectives within the Parish Partnership Convention is to develop new methods of joint working and partnership. In terms of service delivery, it states that if a Parish or Town Council wishes to take on delegated responsibility for service delivery at a local level, this Council will encourage this where it is cost effective and practicable.

The Local Councils affected by this proposal have been contacted as it is recognised that public conveniences are a facility which they might wish to see retained within its area. The Local Councils have been asked to indicate whether they might be interested in providing this service in future, either by an agency arrangement or directly.

An oral update will be given at the meeting regarding the present position.

10. Democratic Renewal/Local Government Modernisation - an enhanced Role for Parish Councils?

The attached paper Item 10 is a summary of the key points within the draft Local Government (Organisations and Standards) Bill. The Council has established a Democratic Structures Working Group to consider the various aspects and report back to the Policy and Resources Committee on any proposals to change the Council's structures.

As part of its deliberations the Council will wish to consider the potential for an enhanced role for Parish Councils. The Consultative Assembly is invited to consider what role it would wish Parish Councils to have as a result of changes in this Council's structures.

An oral report will be given at the meeting as to the present position of the Council's deliberations (Item 10) (**Page 68**).

11. STARS Forum

To consider a report from Paul Robinson (Corporate Policy Officer) on the responses from Local Councils on the review of the mechanism for considering transport and road safety issues raised by Local Councils.

This Item was deferred from the meeting of this Assembly held on 16 September 1999 (Item 11) (**Page 72**).

12. Six Monthly Complaints Report

To consider a report from Paul Robinson (Corporate Policy Officer) detailing the concerns expressed by Local Councils and the action taken to address those concerns (Item 12) (**Page 74**).

13. Parish Newsletter Competition

At the recent Local Council Conference in September it was noticed that a number of Local Councils produce very good quality newsletters/magazines. Discussions have commenced amongst officers within the Council on an idea that the Council runs a competition to find the best parish/town/neighbourhood newsletter/magazine. Entry would be open to all Local Councils. Judging would be based on readability, clarity, cost-effectiveness (thereby not disadvantaging those with smaller budgets) plus other criteria yet to be finalised.

The benefits would be to spread good practice and generally improve communications with the public. The views of the Consultative assembly are requested.

14. Items Raised by Local Councils

To consider the following item raised by Woughton Parish Council, which was deferred from the meeting of this Assembly held on 16 September 1999:

To consider the funding of maintenance costs for projects funded by Parish Councils on Milton Keynes Council Property

The Parish Council believes that it has been common practice in the past for MK Council to take over anything that the Parish Council pays for on MKC buildings.

15. Dates for Future Meetings

It is normal practice to agree dates for the following municipal year at the March meeting of the Consultative Assembly. However, requests have been received from Parish Councils if the dates for 2000/01 could be agreed at this meeting as this will assist them in the planning of their meetings during that year.

It is therefore suggested that the dates for meetings to be held during the municipal year 2000/01 be as follows:

22 June 2000

7 September 2000

7 December 2000

8 March 2001.

All of these dates are Thursdays. All meetings will be held at the Civic Offices and will commence at 7.15 pm.

Please note that the next meeting of the Consultative Assembly will be held on Thursday 9 March 2000.