



Minutes of the MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL held on WEDNESDAY 12 JUNE 2013 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor White (Mayor)
Councillors Alexander, Bald, Barney, Bint, Brackenbury, Bradburn, Bramall, Brock, Brunning, M Burke, S Burke, Coventry, Dransfield, Eastman, Edwards, Exon, Ferrans, A Geary, P Geary Hawthorn, Hopkins, Hoyle, Jury, Kennedy, Legg, Long, Marland, D McCall, I McCall, McDonald, McKenzie, McLean, Middleton, Miles, Morris, O'Neill, Richards, Shafiq, Small, Wales, Wallis, Webb, Wharton, C Williams, P Williams and Zealley

Apologies: Councillors Klein, Maric and Tallack and Alderpersons Bristow, Ellis, E Henderson, I Henderson, Howell and Lloyd

Also Present: 22 members of the public

CL17 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 15 May 2013 and 22 May 2013 be approved and signed by the Mayor as correct records, subject to the names of the mover and seconder of the motion at Minute CL07 of the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2013 being amended to the 'Mayor' as the mover and 'Councillor Marland' as the seconder.

CL18 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

The Chief Executive declared an interest in Item 7 (Returning Officer's Fees) as the Council's Returning Officer.

CL19 QUESTIONS FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Mr P Jones asked Councillor Brock, the Cabinet Member responsible for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, if the Council, or the NHS could compulsorily purchase the closed Willen Surgery premises and open it once more and transfer the former patients back.

Councillor Brock indicated that she understood the concerns of the former patients, but the Council was neither legally nor contractually involved with the closure of the surgery. However, Councillor Brock undertook to supply a copy of the NHS England response to the Willen Surgery issue to Mr Jones for information and pass on his concerns to NHS England.

CL20

**ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS - LOCALISM ACT SECTION 28
ARRANGEMENTS AND WORKING GROUP**

Councillor Miles moved the following recommendation from the Constitution Commission held on 24 April 2013, which was seconded by Councillor Ferrans:

- “1. That the ‘Nolan Principles’ contained within the Guidance to the Code of Conduct be updated to reflect the 14th report of the Committee for Standards in Public Life.
2. That the Guidance to the Code of Conduct be removed from the Constitution, to aid its expeditious updating.
3. That the Standards Committee’s Terms of Reference be amended to provide for the delegation of the initial determination of a complaint to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with an Independent Person.”

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

RESOLVED -

1. That the ‘Nolan Principles’ contained within the Guidance to the Code of Conduct be updated to reflect the 14th report of the Committee for Standards in Public Life.
2. That the Guidance to the Code of Conduct be removed from the Constitution, to aid its expeditious updating.
3. That the Standards Committee’s Terms of Reference be amended to provide for the delegation of the initial determination of a complaint to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with an Independent Person.

CL21

**ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL OF LAND AND BUILDINGS
PROCEDURE RULES**

Councillor Miles moved the following recommendation from the Constitution Commission held on 24 April 2013, which was seconded by Councillor Ferrans:

“That the revised Acquisition and Disposal of Land and Buildings Procedure Rules be recommended to the Council for approval and inclusion in the Constitution.”

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

RESOLVED -

That the revised Acquisition and Disposal of Land and Buildings Procedure Rules be recommended to the Council for approval and inclusion in the Constitution.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- (a) Question from Councillor Bradburn to Councillor Dransfield (Cabinet member responsible for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning)

Councillor Bradburn asked Councillor Dransfield to discuss whether he thought Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education was an educational visionary, or a meddling classroom maniac.

Councillor Dransfield indicated that he thought that it should be discussed.

Councillor Bradburn asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Dransfield.

- (b) Question from Councillor Bramall to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Labour Group)

Councillor Bramall asked Councillor Marland if he supported comments from some members of the Labour Group that businesses in Milton Keynes should make greater contributions to the Council, even though the Labour Party was saying that the Country was in economic recession.

Councillor Marland asked for details of when the alleged statements had been made, but indicated that the Labour Group did not have a policy which insisted that business make a contribution to the Council.

Councillor Bramall asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Marland.

- (c) Question from Councillor Long to Councillor Brock (Cabinet member responsible for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing)

Councillor Long, referring to press reports that nationally the Citizens Advice Bureau had seen a 40% increase in the number of persons seeking advice on welfare issues asked Councillor Brock to detail what dialogue she was having with the Citizens Advice Bureau locally and what actions is she taking to ensure that it has the capacity to be able to provide good quality advice.

Councillor Brock indicated that the Citizens Advice Bureau was an important advice service in Milton Keynes providing advice and information services on behalf of the Council. The Council was also doing extensive work to support persons affected and a cross departmental working group had been established to oversee the Council's approach.

Councillor Long asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Brock.

- (d) Question from Councillor D McCall to Councillor A Geary (Leader of the Council)

Councillor D McCall asked Councillor A Geary if his Administration was trying to cancel Christmas and many other community events in Milton Keynes by insisting that volunteers who organise such community events, which were dependent on road closures, attended a 5 day course on road closures.

Councillor A Geary indicated that his Administration had made no changes to the procedures which existed previously.

Councillor D McCall asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor A Geary.

- (e) Question from Councillor Wharton to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Labour Group)

Councillor Wharton asked Councillor Marland if, bearing in mind Councillor Edwards' objections to the Milton Keynes Service Partnership, whether, if the Labour Group formed an administration, it would close the Partnership.

Councillor Marland indicated that there was no appetite within the Labour Group to close the Partnership, but if the Group was to form an administration it would review all of the Council's contractual relationships to ensure the Council was providing the best services in the best way.

Councillor Wharton asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Marland.

- (f) Question from Councillor Barney to Councillor A Geary (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Barney asked Councillor A Geary if the Council was being proactive on child sexual exploitation protection measures in place in Milton Keynes.

Councillor A Geary requested Councillor Dransfield, the responsible Cabinet member to respond on his behalf. Councillor Dransfield indicated that he was satisfied that adequate measures were in place to protect children.

Councillor Dransfield suggested that Councillor Barney should request a briefing on measures in place in Milton Keynes to reassure himself.

Councillor Barney asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor A Geary.

- (g) Question from Councillor Ferrans to Councillor A Geary (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Ferrans asked Councillor A Geary for an explanation why various schemes requested as a result of Members using their Ward Budgets had not been progressed by Transport Officers, and also whether there was a process for monitoring the progress of such matters.

Councillor A Geary indicated that he would follow-up the issues raised and respond to Councillor Ferrans.

- (h) Question from Councillor Hoyle to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Labour Group)

Councillor Hoyle asked Councillor Marland if it was Labour Group policy to support community asset transfer.

Councillor Marland indicated that that he believed that it was necessary to consider the merits of each individual transfer.

Councillor Hoyle asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Marland.

- (i) Question from Councillor Marland to Councillor Bald (Cabinet member responsible for Finance, Housing and Regeneration)

Councillor Marland asked Councillor Bald if she could update the Council on progress on the transfer of the Laurels Site at New Bradwell to a housing co-operative.

Councillor Bald indicated that the intention, as far as she understood it was still to transfer the property to the housing co-operative, but she would check the current position and respond to Councillor Marland.

Councillor Marland asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Bald.

- (j) Question from Councillor Jury to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Labour Group)

Councillor Jury asked Councillor Marland if he agreed with the Leader of the Labour Party that benefits should be capped, including housing benefits for some people.

Councillor Marland indicated that the Labour Leader only advocated a cap on the spending on benefits within a three year period to allow a spending review and the opportunity for local authorities to negotiate with private landlords on rent levels charged by private landlords in the social housing sector.

Councillor Jury asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Marland.

- (k) Question from Councillor Middleton to Councillor A Geary (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Middleton asked Councillor A Geary if he supported the actions being taken by the community in Wolverton to campaign to keep the branch of Nationwide Building Society open and, if he did, would he support the online petition.

Councillor A Geary indicated that he supported the campaign and would sign the petition.

Councillor Middleton asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor A Geary.

- (l) Question from Councillor Richards to Councillor A Geary (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Richards asked Councillor A Geary if he shared his concern and surprise at the implication from an earlier question that the Labour Group locally and the Labour Party nationally actually had policies to offer the people of Milton Keynes and the country.

Councillor A Geary indicated that he did.

Councillor Richards asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor A Geary.

- (m) Question from Councillor Miles to Councillor Dransfield (Cabinet member responsible for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning)

Councillor Miles, referring to statements from Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education, asked Councillor Dransfield what his philosophy was with regard to the number and value of teaching assistants in Milton Keynes schools.

Councillor Dransfield indicated that he believed that it was up to each governing body to determine how to spend its budget and choose how it used teaching assistants, particularly in seeking to improve standards.

Councillor Miles asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Dransfield.

- (n) Question from Councillor M Burke to Councillor Bald (Cabinet member responsible for Finance, Housing and Regeneration)

Councillor M Burke, referring to a previous question on the subject, asked Councillor Bald when action would be taken to address problems with bin cupboards at certain properties at Bradwell.

Councillor Bald indicated that she would investigate the current position and respond to Councillor M Burke.

Councillor Burke asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Bald.

- (o) Question from Councillor D McCall to Councillor Bint (Cabinet member responsible for Transport and Highways)

Councillor D McCall asked Councillor Bint how many of the identified 110 missing road signs were replaced by 31 March 2013.

Councillor Bint apologised that Councillor D McCall had not received a response to his previous questions and indicated that he had previously requested that a programme for replacement should be prepared and publicised to Members. Councillor Bint undertook to follow up the action required.

Councillor D McCall asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Bint.

- (p) Question from Councillor A Geary to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Labour Group)

Councillor A Geary, referring to Councillor Marland's earlier answer regarding Milton Keynes Service Partnership, asked Councillor Marland if he was aware that the Administration was constantly reviewing the services provided by the Partnership and asked if the Labour Group would work with the Administration for the security of jobs and its wellbeing of the running of the Partnership.

Councillor Marland indicated that his Group would work with the Administration where appropriate, but he believed that there were improvements to be made in the running of a number of the Councils contracts.

Councillor A Geary asked a supplementary question which was answered by Councillor Marland.

CL23

MK CHARTER ON LANDMINES, CLUSTER MUNITIONS AND IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES

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

- “1. That the Council, on behalf of its residents, recognises the human tragedy in terms of loss of lives and injury, particularly to children, that the legacy of landmines and clusters munitions is continuing to cause on a daily basis.
2. That the Council welcomes the international treaties that have been signed and calls upon those countries that have not signed, or ratified the international treaties yet to do so. The Council also asks those Governments that have signed to restate to the UN their resolve to support the aims of the treaties and the need to clear already affected areas.

3. That the Council salutes the courage of those people both civilian and military who are engaged in demining and who daily risk their own lives.
4. That the Council believes that the demining of an area allows towns and villages to develop economically and thereby is a catalyst which helps ensure that development aid can transform lives and will give future trading opportunities between those areas cleared and ourselves.
5. That the Council, in welcoming progress made in recent years, believes that there is an urgent need to raise awareness of the ongoing problem and to speed up demining and therefore commits our city to raising awareness of this issue, especially through our schools.”

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

RESOLVED -

1. That the Council, on behalf of its residents, recognises the human tragedy in terms of loss of lives and injury, particularly to children, that the legacy of landmines and clusters munitions is continuing to cause on a daily basis.
2. That the Council welcomes the international treaties that have been signed and calls upon those countries that have not signed, or ratified the international treaties yet to do so. The Council also asks those Governments that have signed to restate to the UN their resolve to support the aims of the treaties and the need to clear already affected areas.
3. That the Council salutes the courage of those people both civilian and military who are engaged in demining and who daily risk their own lives.
4. That the Council believes that the demining of an area allows towns and villages to develop economically and thereby is a catalyst which helps ensure that development aid can transform lives and will give future trading opportunities between those areas cleared and ourselves.
5. That the Council, in welcoming progress made in recent years, believes that there is an urgent need to raise awareness of the ongoing problem and to speed up demining and therefore commits our city to raising awareness of this issue, especially through our schools.

HOMELESSNESS, HOUSING AND NEW BUILD

Councillor Coventry moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor M Burke:

- “1. That this Council notes the recent BBC investigation which revealed that last year the Council spent £1.4million on placing homeless families into temporary accommodation and that this is the worst local authority performance in England outside of London.
2. That this Council also notes that many of these temporary placements were in accommodation outside of Milton Keynes and that this may have a detrimental impact on families who are separated, and on children’s education.
3. That this Council further notes that this situation is as a result of not having enough social housing places available in the City, that Milton Keynes is one of few authorities to house more qualifying tenants in the private rented sector than the social housing sector, and that as a result of the ‘Bedroom Tax’ and other changes to benefits, demand for Council and social housing is likely to rise in the future.
4. That this Council therefore resolves:
 - (a) to request the Cabinet to take immediate action on the recommendations made by the Homelessness Review Group when the Group reports to them in the near future;
 - (b) to request the Cabinet to adopt a policy which ensures people adversely affected by the changes to benefits will not lose their homes and add to the burden on current waiting lists for property;
 - (c) to request the Cabinet to seek to find ways to use Milton Keynes Development Partnership assets to implement new Council and Council-led social and affordable housing project that balances traditional models with innovative models such as Community Land Trusts;
 - (d) to request the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to request removal of the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap for local authorities, like Milton Keynes, who wish to build new properties by using any surplus not taken up by other authorities, and thus not adding to public borrowing overall; and

- (e) to welcome the steps taken by the Administration to recommence building of new Council properties, but notes that it is a small number of properties, designated for a specific need rather than for general housing stock; that funding for this scheme was reallocated from funds granted for another project; and that this approach is not a sustainable model for the new build requirements of the City.”

Councillor Bald moved the following amendment, which was seconded by Councillor A Geary:

- “1 That in Clause 1 the word ‘revealed’ be replaced by the word ‘reported’, the word ‘temporary’ be replaced by the words ‘bed and breakfast’ and the following additional words be added at the end of the Clause ‘However, this Council also notes that numbers of households in temporary accommodation, including bed and breakfast, are average for unitary authorities.’.
2. That in Clause 2 the words ‘many of these temporary’ be replaced by the words ‘around 60% of bed and breakfast’, the words (18% of whom are in Deanshanger and Old Stratford) be added after the word ‘placements’ and the following additional words be added at the end of the Clause ‘This Council also notes that the Administration is committed to reducing bed and breakfast usage significantly and out of area placements in particular and that since January 2013 the number in bed and breakfast has reduced from over 100 to 84 at 3 June 2013; furthermore virtually all non bed and breakfast temporary placements are within Milton Keynes.’.
3. That in Clause 3 the word ‘house’ be replaced by the word ‘have’, the word ‘qualifying’ be deleted, the words ‘reflecting the fact that the housing market is diversifying and that Milton Keynes’ approach to meeting housing needs is flexing to meet those challenges;’ be added after the words ‘social housing sector’, the words ‘Bedroom Tax’ be replaced by the words ‘new social housing size criteria rules’, the words ‘is likely to’ be replaced by the word ‘may’ and the following additional words be added at the end of the Clause ‘and Milton Keynes policy on housing must be able to respond appropriately’.
4. That in Clause 4(a) the word ‘immediate’ be replaced with ‘appropriate and timely’ and following additional words be added at the end of the Clause ‘, after many months of hard work’.

5. That in Clause 4(b) the words 'adopt a' be replaced by the words 'apply its' and all the words in the Clause after the word 'policy' be replaced with the words 'on rent payment and follow up sympathetically taking into account any temporary issues caused by changes to welfare payments, calling on the Discretionary Housing Fund if appropriate'.
6. That in Clause 4(c) the words 'Council land' be added after the word 'use'.
7. That in Clause 4(d) the words 'Leader and be added before the words 'Chief Executive' and the words 'yet again, in addition to requests made in the City deal bid,' be added after the words 'Chief Executive to'.
8. That in Clause 4(e) the word 'some' be added before the words 'funding for this scheme', the word 'and' after the word 'project' be deleted and the words 'that an additional £1m per year has been allocated in each of the last 2 years budgets for the purpose of building new Council homes, but with the current constraints around the HRA and general fund in terms of borrowing, notes' be added and the words 'not a sustainable model for the new build requirements of the City be replaced by the words 'still insufficient to fulfil the aspirations and requirements of the city in coming years'."

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost, with 19 Members voting in favour, 28 Members voting against and 0 Members abstaining from voting.

Councillor Hawthorne moved the following amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Hoyle:

- "1 That in Clause 1 the word 'revealed' be replaced by the word 'reported', the word 'temporary' be replaced by the words 'bed and breakfast' and the following additional words be added at the end of the Clause 'However, this Council further notes that bed and breakfast is only part the picture and must be considered alongside temporary accommodation, where for example our nearest neighbour, Luton with a smaller population, has over 700 households in private sector temporary accommodation compared with our 170 (including bed and breakfast); and that temporary accommodation levels in Milton Keynes are on a par with all unitary authorities. Furthermore Council notes that until January this year the Council was not permitted to fulfil its homelessness duty through the private sector to ensure bed and breakfast levels were minimised; the Council is now able to do this after the previous Cabinet member for Housing guided through a policy change, which was opposed by both Labour and the Liberal Democrats and had this change happened sooner bed and breakfast solutions would have cost tax

payers less and would have seen far fewer people struggle in bed and breakfast.’

2. That in Clause 2 the words ‘many of these temporary’ be replaced by the words ‘of the 84 households in bed and breakfast at 3 June 2013, although 46 are out of area, 19 of these are very close by in Deanshanger and Old Stratford; that for those placed’, the words ‘and that’ after the words ‘Milton Keynes’ be deleted and the following additional words be added at the end of the Clause ‘This Council notes that the Administration are committed to reducing bed and breakfast usage significantly and out of area placements in particular and that since January the number in bed and breakfast has reduced from 100 to 84 households at 3 June13. Council further notes that the previous policy adopted by Labour and Liberal Democrats to bar temporary private rented accommodation caused additional and unnecessary suffering to families.’
3. That in Clause 3 the words ‘not having enough’ be replaced by the words ‘the supply of’, the words ‘places available in the City’ after the words ‘social housing’ be replaced with the words ‘not keeping pace with population growth, largely due to the policy for affordable housing and rents adopted by the previous Administration being unworkable for Registered Housing Providers and house builders. The Labour Housing Spokesperson, supported by the Liberal Democrat Spokesperson, said at the Strategic Housing Forum “I would prefer to see no houses built in Milton Keynes at all than one affordable rent property” a statement which lead to funding for an additional 30 affordable properties going elsewhere and a Social Registered Landlord taking their interests away from Milton Keynes. The delays in agreeing affordable rents at Development Control Committee under Liberal Democrat and Labour chairmanships resulted in properties lying empty while people were placed in bed and breakfast outside Milton Keynes as this was the only solution available. The Council therefore welcomes the recently agreed new policy on affordable rents driven through by the current Administration, supported by Labour, which has started to release and increase new supply. The Council also notes’, the words ‘as a result of the ”Bedroom Tax”’ be replaced by the words ‘this should be seen as a flexible, proactive approach to meeting housing demand; that as a result of the social housing size criteria’ and the following additional words be added at the end of the Clause ‘and therefore this flexible approach is to be applauded’.

4. That in Clause 4(a) the word 'immediate' be replaced with 'appropriate and timely' and following additional words be added at the end of the Clause 'The Council regrets that this report has taken so long to be presented to Cabinet, as Cabinet was prepared for it and ready to act in December 2012.'
5. That in Clause 4(b) the words 'adopt a' be replaced by the words 'apply its' and all the words in the Clause after the word 'policy' be replaced with the words 'on rent payment and follow up sympathetically taking into account any temporary issues caused by changes to welfare payments, calling on the Discretionary Housing Fund if appropriate'.
6. That in Clause 4(c) the words 'Council land' be added after the word 'use'.
7. That in Clause 4(d) the words 'whilst noting that Council has already written to and met with government to request a relaxation of the Housing Revenue Account debt cap and further noting that the Government's response was to point out that to have agreed one of the lowest rent increases in the country in 2012 (pushed through by Labour and Liberal Democrats) indicated that the Council was not prepared to help itself to improve its capacity to invest in social housing; nevertheless the Council also resolves' be added at the beginning of the Clause and the words 'yet again' be added after the words 'Local Government'.
8. That in Clause 4(e) the word 'some' be added before the words 'funding for this scheme' and the words 'that this approach is not a sustainable model for the new build requirements of the City' be replaced by the words 'further notes that £1m was allocated in the 2012/13 and 2013/14 Housing Revenue Account budgets for new Council housing, this being the first time that this has happened for over 15 years; that this Administration would have invested more were it not prevented from doing so by the Housing Revenue Account debt cap and the need to maintain and enhance the repairs and maintenance budgets'."

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost, with 18 Members voting in favour, 28 Members voting against and 1 Member abstaining from voting.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried with 29 Members voting in favour, 18 Members voting against and 0 Members abstaining from voting.

The Council heard from 5 members of the public during its consideration of this motion.

RESOLVED -

1. That this Council notes the recent BBC investigation which revealed that last year the Council spent £1.4million on placing homeless families into temporary accommodation and that this is the worst local authority performance in England outside of London.
2. That this Council also notes that many of these temporary placements were in accommodation outside of Milton Keynes and that this may have a detrimental impact on families who are separated, and on children's education.
3. That this Council further notes that this situation is as a result of not having enough social housing places available in the City, that Milton Keynes is one of few authorities to house more qualifying tenants in the private rented sector than the social housing sector, and that as a result of the 'Bedroom Tax' and other changes to benefits, demand for Council and social housing is likely to rise in the future.
4. That this Council therefore resolves:
 - (a) to request the Cabinet to take immediate action on the recommendations made by the Homelessness Review Group when the Group reports to them in the near future;
 - (b) to request the Cabinet to adopt a policy which ensures people adversely affected by the changes to benefits will not lose their homes and add to the burden on current waiting lists for property;
 - (c) to request the Cabinet to seek to find ways to use Milton Keynes Development Partnership assets to implement new Council and Council-led social and affordable housing project that balances traditional models with innovative models such as Community Land Trusts;
 - (d) to request the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to request removal of the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap for local authorities, like Milton Keynes, who wish to build new properties by using any surplus not taken up by other authorities, and thus not adding to public borrowing overall; and
 - (e) to welcome the steps taken by the Administration to recommence building of new Council properties, but notes that it is a small number of properties, designated for a specific need rather than for general housing stock; that funding for this scheme was reallocated from funds granted for another project; and

that this approach is not a sustainable model for the new build requirements of the City.”

CL25

MEALS ON WHEELS AND SOCIAL CARE COSTS

Councillor Long moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Wallis:

- “1. That this Council notes that in 2012/13 the charge for the Meals on Wheels service was £5.19 per meal; one of highest charges in the country and second only to Richmond Council, one of the most affluent districts in England.
2. That this Council further notes that the Conservative Administration will increase this charge to £5.33 in the 2013/14 year, which compares to the average cost for a Meals on Wheels Service in England of £3.66, and that the Milton Keynes Council service is £3.06 more expensive than the same service provided by Warrington Council.
3. That this Council also notes that charges for the laundry service and home care service are amongst the highest in the England and have risen again this year.
4. That this Council therefore resolves:
 - (a) that a full review of adult social care charges, with comparisons to other comparable authorities, is undertaken by Assistant Director (Adult Social Care) and made available to the Budget Review Group and Health and Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee;
 - (b) that a value for money assessment is undertaken by the Assistant Director (Joint Commissioning) on contract costs to ascertain why Milton Keynes Council charges are amongst the highest in England and if this is linked to service procurement; and
 - (c) that if value for money savings can be identified, then the Council seek to negotiate with current contractor with a view to reducing any excessive cost and passing savings to service users.”

Councillor Brock moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Bramall:

- “1. That in clause 1, delete all after ‘per meal’ and add ‘and that the decision to charge 100% of cost for meals was taken by the previous administration in January 2011 and confirmed by Council in every budget since’.
2. That in clause 2, delete all after ‘in the 2013/14 year’ and replace with ‘in line with the 2.7% increase agreed by Council at it’s Budget setting meeting in February 2013 and that:

- (a). The Milton Keynes Meals on Wheels service charge covers a hot, two course meal, plated if required, a welfare check and medication prompt if needed, which receives much positive feedback from service users;
 - (b) Some authorities do not contract a hot meal service; some providing only frozen meals, or signposting to suppliers' costs will therefore vary across councils and comparing price alone is misleading.'
- 3 That in clause 3, delete all after 'laundry service' and replace with 'Community Alarm, Telecare and Telehealth are uplifted by CPI each year in line with the Council's Charging Policy. These services along with the Meals-on-Wheels service make up the flat rate charges subject to annual uplift. The Council recognises that:
- (a) Milton Keynes' Laundry Service includes door to door collection/return washing, drying and ironing of standard items and for service users with incontinence problems there is no charge. Some authorities do not offer a Laundry Service, some refer clients to local laundrettes, few offer a service comparable to Milton Keynes;
 - (b) 'Homecare' is not subject to the Flat Rate Charging Policy, and forms part of assessed packages of care. Social Care Assessments are free to all and 43% of all those in receipt of support packages pay nothing, whatever support they receive, or whatever it costs.'
4. That in clause 4(a) after 'full review of adult social care' insert 'flat rate services and', delete 'with comparisons to' and insert 'benchmarked against' and also delete one of the 'and Health'.
5. That in clause 4(b) after 'undertaken' insert 'on the Meals on Wheels contract' and delete all after 'Assistant Director (Joint Commissioning)'."

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried, with 19 Members voting in favour, 15 Members voting against and 13 Members abstaining from voting.

On being put to the vote the substantive motion was declared carried with 33 Members voting in favour, 0 Members voting against and 13 Members abstaining from voting.

RESOLVED -

- 1. That this Council notes that in 2012/13 the charge for the Meals on Wheels service was £5.19 per meal; and that the decision to charge 100% of cost for meals was taken by the previous administration in January 2011 and confirmed by Council in every budget since.

2. That this Council further notes that the Conservative Administration will increase this charge to £5.33 in the 2013/14 year, in line with the 2.7% increase agreed by Council at it's Budget setting meeting in February 2013 and that:
 - (a) the Milton Keynes Meals on Wheels service charge covers a hot, two course meal, plated if required, a welfare check and medication prompt if needed, which receives much positive feedback from service users; and
 - (b) some authorities do not contract a hot meal service; some providing only frozen meals, or signposting to suppliers, costs will therefore vary across councils and comparing price alone is misleading.
3. That this Council also notes that charges for the laundry service, Community Alarm, Telecare and Telehealth are uplifted by CPI each year in line with the Council's Charging Policy. These services along with the Meals-on-Wheels service make up the flat rate charges subject to annual uplift. The Council also recognises that:
 - (a) Milton Keynes' Laundry Service includes door to door collection/return washing, drying and ironing of standard items and for service users with incontinence problems there is no charge. Some authorities do not offer a Laundry Service, some refer clients to local laundrettes, few offer a service comparable to Milton Keynes; and
 - (b) 'Homecare' is not subject to the Flat Rate Charging Policy, and forms part of assessed packages of care. Social Care Assessments are free to all and 43% of all those in receipt of support packages pay nothing, whatever support they receive, or whatever it costs.
4. That this Council therefore resolves to request the Cabinet:
 - (a) to undertake a full review of adult social care flat rate services and charges, benchmarked against other comparable authorities, and with the outcome of the review being made available to the Budget Review Group and Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee;
 - (b) to undertake a value for money assessment on the Meals on Wheels contract; and
 - (c) if value for money savings can be identified, to negotiate with current contractor with a view to reducing any excessive cost and passing savings to service users.

CL26 PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Mayor moved and the Deputy Mayor seconded the following procedural motion:

“That Council Procedure Rules 11 and 13.6[a] be waived in order to allow a revised motion in respect of the Closure of Willen Village Surgery to be submitted and also to allow amendments to be moved of which notice has not been given by the deadline in the Constitution.”

The procedural motion was declared carried by acclamation.

RESOLVED -

That Council Procedure Rules 11 and 13.6[a] be waived in order to allow a revised motion in respect of the Closure of Willen Village Surgery to be submitted and also to allow amendments to be moved of which notice has not been given by the deadline in the Constitution.

CL27 CLOSURE OF WILLEN VILLAGE SURGERY

With the consent of the Council the motion was withdrawn by its mover:

CL28 CLOSURE OF WILLEN SURGERY

With the consent of the Council the motion was withdrawn by its mover.

CL29 CLOSURE OF WILLEN VILLAGE SURGERY

Councillor Brackenbury moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Morris:

“That the Council:

1. notes with regret the closure in April of the popular GP Surgery at Willen and the lack of prior notice given to patients registered there;
2. commends the public for the way they have coped with the disruption and distress caused by these events;
3. believes that in such circumstances, it would have been better to allocate patients to other practices on a geographic basis rather than a surname basis (for the travel convenience of patients, especially those with limited mobility and to ensure all members of a household get allocated to the same practice) and requests that the Cabinet Member provides feedback to the relevant authorities on this point;

4. in particular notes the distress caused by suggesting that surgeries as far away as Bletchley were accepting registrations when in fact all Willen patients had been re-allocated more locally;
5. is also concerned about the piles of uncollected post inside the surgery building, including urgent medical information;
6. calls for the owner and leaseholder of the surgery to give firm public assurances that medical information posted to the surgery will be processed appropriately;
7. recognises and appreciates the work carried out by Healthwatch:MK in handling patient enquiries, and notes the efforts made to get all patients registered with other GPs as speedily as possible, yet believes NHS England should have taken responsibility for answering patients' concerns;
8. criticises NHS England for being so unwilling to answer questions from media, members of the public and officials which only served to heighten inevitable concerns;
9. asks the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to review whether there are any lessons for the Council to be learned from the closure, with or without input from NHS England;
10. notes the scarcity of available places at alternative practices in the immediately surrounding area, and the apparent absence of ongoing liaison over the needs of the borough as it changes; and
11. calls on the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Cabinet Member to press NHS England for a long-term plan for GP facilities to meet the growing needs of Milton Keynes' residents, including the likelihood of Willen Village Surgery re-opening in time, and to set up a mechanism for discussing changes due to the growth of the city in future."

Councillor P Williams moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Long:

- "1. That the words 'and those who rely on public transport,' be inserted after the word 'mobility' in clause 3.
2. That clause 8 be deleted and replace with 'believes that the response from NHS England and health authorities was poor, lacked clarity and caused increased concern to residents and requests that a full explanation as to why enquires were dealt with in such a poor manner'.
3. That all words in clause 9 after 'closure' be deleted and replaced with 'seeking input from all relevant bodies as needed and consider asking the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee to scrutinise the matter fully'.

5. That in clause 11 the words 'health services in Milton Keynes, with particular focus on' be inserted before 'GP', the word 'facilities' after 'GP' deleted and replaced with the word 'services' and the words 'a plan for the Willen area of the city and' be inserted after the word 'included'.
6. That a new clause 12 be inserted that reads:

'also asks the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Health to request a full investigation into the circumstances surrounding the closure of Willen Village Surgery as unanswered serious questions remain around the closure such as the workload of the practice, patient care and the engagement with patients after the closure.'

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost, with 15 Members voting in favour, 32 Members voting against and 0 Members abstaining from voting.

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

The Council heard from a member of the public during its consideration of this motion.

RESOLVED -

That the Council:

1. notes with regret the closure in April of the popular GP Surgery at Willen and the lack of prior notice given to patients registered there;
2. commends the public for the way they have coped with the disruption and distress caused by these events;
3. believes that in such circumstances, it would have been better to allocate patients to other practices on a geographic basis rather than a surname basis (for the travel convenience of patients, especially those with limited mobility and to ensure all members of a household get allocated to the same practice) and requests that the Cabinet Member provides feedback to the relevant authorities on this point;
4. in particular notes the distress caused by suggesting that surgeries as far away as Bletchley were accepting registrations when in fact all Willen patients had been re-allocated more locally;
5. is also concerned about the piles of uncollected post inside the surgery building, including urgent medical information;
6. calls for the owner and leaseholder of the surgery to give firm public assurances that medical information posted to the surgery will be processed appropriately;

7. recognises and appreciates the work carried out by Healthwatch:MK in handling patient enquiries, and notes the efforts made to get all patients registered with other GPs as speedily as possible, yet believes NHS England should have taken responsibility for answering patients' concerns;
8. criticises NHS England for being so unwilling to answer questions from media, members of the public and officials which only served to heighten inevitable concerns;
9. asks the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to review whether there are any lessons for the Council to be learned from the closure, with or without input from NHS England;
10. notes the scarcity of available places at alternative practices in the immediately surrounding area, and the apparent absence of ongoing liaison over the needs of the borough as it changes; and
11. calls on the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Cabinet Member to press NHS England for a long-term plan for GP facilities to meet the growing needs of Milton Keynes' residents, including the likelihood of Willen Village Surgery re-opening in time, and to set up a mechanism for discussing changes due to the growth of the city in future.

CL30

ARMED FORCES COVENANT

The Council received a report from Councillor Richards, the Council's Armed Forces Member Champion, on the work undertaken by the Council in support of the Community Covenant adopted by the Council on 13 March 2012.

The Council noted that the Covenant set out a framework for sharing information about the issues facing serving and retired Armed Forces personnel and helped build an understanding of how agencies could provide continued support as well as help the transition from Service to civilian life and then in the longer term.

Councillor Richards reported that the Covenant had led to the setting up of a Milton Keynes Armed Forces Liaison Group, which had created an armed forces web page to assist the Armed Forces Community with a full range of subjects, including how to access advice and Council services. The Group also provided support at Combat Stress support group meetings in Milton Keynes organised by the local Combat Stress team.

The Council noted that the Council was also working with Buckinghamshire County Council to host Armed Forces Day, a family fun event on 29 June 2013; which provided an opportunity to show the Council's support for the Armed Forces Community.

CL31 RETURNING OFFICER'S FEES

The Council considered the Returning Officer's for Borough and Parish Elections for 2013/14.

The Council noted that Section 35(4) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 required the Council to meet all expenditure properly incurred by a Returning Officer in relation to holding an election and that it had been the practice for many years for the Council to adopt a schedule of fees and disbursements agreed with the district councils in Buckinghamshire.

RESOLVED -

That the Buckinghamshire Scheme for Election fees be adopted for 2013/14.

CL32 WARD BASED BUDGETS

The Council noted the outturn position of the Ward Based Budgets for 2012/13.

CL33 QUARTERLY REPORT ON SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS

The Council noted that in accordance with Access to Information Procedure Rule 17.3, that the Provisions for Special Urgency, as set out in Access to Information Procedure Rule 16, were used once during the period 1 March 2013 to 31 May 2013, for the agreement of the Management Arrangements of Older Peoples Day Services with Milton Keynes Council.

The Council also noted that in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.1, the Cabinet member, when making the decision on the Management Arrangements of Older Peoples Day Services decided, with the consent of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, to waive the call-in process as failure to make the decision would have seriously prejudiced the Council's interests by jeopardising the Council's ability to provide a continuation of the existing service.

THE MAYOR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10:46 PM