

Minutes of the MEETING OF MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL held on WEDNESDAY
16 SEPTEMBER 2020 at 7.30 pm

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

Alderman Bartlett

Apologies: Councillors Alexander, Green, Hosking, Nazir and Priestley and
Aldermen Beeley, Bristow, Coventry, Henderson, Howell and
McKenzie and Alderwomen Henderson, Irons, Lloyd and Saunders

Also Present: 215 members of the public

CL33 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
17 June 2020 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct
record.

CL34 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Councillor Jenkins disclosed a potential pecuniary interest in item
6(b)(iv) (Planning for the Future) as she had a business connection
with one of the companies mentioned during debate.

CL35 ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Appointment of Countess Howe as Lord-Lieutenant for
Buckinghamshire

The Mayor announced that the Queen had appointed the
Countess Howe as Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of
Buckinghamshire to succeed Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher when
he stepped down on 27 November 2020.

The Mayor informed the Council that he had sent Countess Howe a letter of congratulation on behalf of the Council.

(b) Battle of Britain Memorial Day

The Mayor announced that he had attended an event at the MK Rose on 15 September 2020, accompanied by the Mayoress, Councillor Trendall, the Council's Armed Forces Champion, and his Chaplain to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain. He had laid a wreath on behalf of the Council.

The Mayor informed the Council that the event was the first of his Mayoral engagements to be streamed live to You Tube, which to date had received in excess of 25k views.

CL36

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR

Further to Minute CL03 of its meeting held on 20 May 2020, the Council considered the appointment of the Deputy Mayor of Milton Keynes for the Council Year 2020/21.

It was moved by Councillor Marland and seconded by Councillor McPake that Councillor Mohammed Khan be appointed Deputy Mayor of Milton Keynes for the remainder of the Council year 2020/21.

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

RESOLVED -

That Councillor Mohammed Khan be appointed Deputy Mayor of Milton Keynes for the remainder of the Council year 2020/21.

CL37

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(a) Question from Ethan Wilkinson to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Ethan Wilkinson, referring to the ongoing consultation by the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal Board requesting residents to suggest schemes which could form part of a bid for up to £25 million from Government for improvements to Bletchley and Fenny Stratford, asked Councillor Marland, given that the promotional YouTube video had just a little over 250 views, how many responses had been received from local residents.

Councillor Marland indicated that to date over 230 responses had been received which he considered was a good response when taking account of the nature of the consultation and the current circumstances and short timeframe.

Councillor Marland, emphasised that he would like to see a greater response to the consultation and accordingly colleagues had been talking with the Council's consultants; the Chair and members of the Town Deal Board, which include parish councils; faith groups; and residents associations about how the level of responses could be improved.

Councillor Marland recognised the importance of ensuring that local people were engaged with the process and that they could identify the tangible benefits to their lives which would result from the changes, rather than just aiming to make the Town more attractive to new residents.

Councillor Marland invited Mr Wilkinson to come forward with any ideas about how he believed engagement could be improved.

As a supplementary question Ethan Wilkinson, indicating that many local residents appeared not to be aware of the online survey and referring to the promotional video in which the Chair of the Town Deal Board said that 'there will be lots of other ways', asked Councillor Marland what other ways would be used to raise awareness and make the survey more accessible to local residents.

Councillor Marland indicated that the Council was willing to listen to any ideas that could help it better engage the community in the regeneration of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford.

Councillor Marland also indicated that the Council was working with its consultants to try and maximise community involvement and this included an increased social media campaign and working with parish councils and residents' associations.

Councillor Marland emphasised that the regeneration of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford was a project that would continue well beyond the life of the Towns Deal and it was important that the Council continued to ensure the community remained engaged going forward.

(b) Question from Alderman Paul Bartlett to Councillor Darlington (Cabinet member for Public Realm)

Alderman Bartlett, referring to the road narrowing scheme put in place in Stony Stratford High Street to assist social distancing, asked Councillor Darlington to advise on:

- the number of reviews undertaken as to the impact of the measures, the results of those reviews and whether the reviews showed a 'positive benefit' to residents; businesses; employees; ex-employees; and visitors;
- the frequency and results of consultation with businesses, visitors, employees, ex-employees;
- the research and scientific analysis undertaken by the Council and its consultants, before, since and during the implementation of the initial scheme and the second scheme; and
- how the findings of the Reviews had been recorded and shared with visitors, residents, businesses, employees, and ex-employees.

Councillor Darlington indicated that this information had already been provided to Stony Stratford Town Council, of which Alderman Bartlett was a member, so the information was already available to him.

As a supplementary question Alderman Bartlett, recognising that most of the information had been provided to the Town Council with the exception of the benefits gained, asked Councillor Darlington if she could outline the positive benefits the measures had achieved.

Alderman Bartlett, referring to what he believed was a lack of confidence in both Councillor Darlington and the management of the scheme by the residents of Stony Stratford, also asked Councillor Darlington to explain what she would do to restore the confidence of residents.

Alderman Bartlett also asked Councillor Darlington if she would be willing to attend a meeting being organised by the Town Council, involving residents and the local business community to discuss the road narrowing scheme.

Councillor Darlington took the opportunity to thank Stony Stratford Town Council for its constructive engagement in implementing the road narrowing scheme and stressed that if businesses were to be helped it was important to create an environment where shoppers and visitors felt confident and safe.

Councillor Darlington emphasise that the road narrowing measures had been unanimously supported by the Town Council and she had received a considerable amount of positive feedback from the Town Council, local businesses and residents.

Councillor Darlington indicated that she would willing attend the meeting being organised by the Town Council if invited and that she had already met with the Town Council and the Business Association on a number of occasions to discuss the scheme.

(c) Question from Chris Taylor to Councillor Townsend (Cabinet member for Community Safety)

Chris Taylor, welcoming on behalf of residents the bund installed to stop illegal encampments on Chaffron Way by Furzton, asked Councillor Townsend when the bund would be grassed over as it was a muddy eye soar, that made the area look messy.

Councillor Townsend indicated that, unfortunately it had not been possible to commence work on the bund earlier in the year due to poor weather and lockdown restrictions, but preparation work had now been completed and it was hoped to start seeding the bund with grass and wild flowers in the next two or three weeks.

Chris Taylor referring to the number of illegal encampments on Furzton Football pitch, off Lynmouth Crescent asked Councillor Townsend, as a supplementary question, for a reassurance that barriers were going to be installed in suitable places so that the illegal encampments did not continue to occur.

Councillor Townsend indicated that site had been assessed and it was the intention to begin installing bollards to restrict access within the next week.

(d) Question from Sue Malleson to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Sue Malleson, referring to the Council's recent agreement at a planning inquiry to what she believed to be a non-compliant S106 for South Caldecotte in the parish of Bow Brickhill which allocated £250,000 of landowners' money to Hazard Alley, located over eight miles away and having no discernible connection to South Caldecotte or Bow Brickhill, together with the Council's refusal to allocate funds to mitigate the effects the development would have on the village of Bow Brickhill, both which she understood to be in contravention of the Regulations asked Councillor Marland why had this been allowed to happen.

Councillor Marland indicated that he believed that the Council's officers should be given some credit, because after four days of evidence and legal argument the Council's case supporting the Development Control Committee's decision to refuse permission was so strong that the appellant effectively gave up and proposed a revised scheme to the Inspector that redesigned the layout to meet the objections of the Council. Additionally, the developer would be meeting the Council's costs.

Councillor Marland explained that at the point the revised scheme was submitted the Council had no legal basis to continue to oppose the scheme.

Councillor Marland outlined that the Council had secured over £5m in S106 funding, although the Council would not be making any decisions on S106 allocations, as those decisions were for the Inspector, as was the lawfulness of any allocation.

Councillor Marland expressed reservations as to why the developer was seeking to allocate S106 funding to a specific organisation, particularly as he believed that the Section 106 process was not and should not be used as a means for developers to pick and choose who benefited from S106 funds as that potentially brought the system into disrepute and he would be writing to the planning inspector to say so.

Sue Malleson, referred to the agreement between the Developer and the Council in respect of the S106 Agreement, which suggested that the Council was happy with the S106 Agreement, despite it being, in her view, contrary to Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010, as the S106 Agreement did not relate directly to the development in question

As a supplementary question Sue Malleson asked Councillor Marland, should the Inspector decide that the S106 Agreement was not compliant with Regulation 122, if the Council would allocate the S106 money to a project which directly benefited the community impacted by the development.

Councillor Marland indicated that if the inspector decided that the £250k the Developer was intending to allocate to Hazard Alley was contrary to the Regulations then the Council would have to rely on other means to collect a development contribution.

Councillor Marland, with regard to the lawfulness of the of the intended S106 contribution to Hazard Alley, understood the contribution met the Condition in the Planning Consent related to training, however, as previously stated, the lawfulness of the contribution would be determined by the Inspector.

Councillor Marland pointed out that the Council had secured £5m in other contributions from the Developer, so hopefully an element of that money could be allocated to help some of the need of the community referenced by Sue Malleson

(e) Question from Norman Tooke to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Norman Tooke, referring to National Planning Policy in respect of enforcement and in view of the long-standing criticism that had been levelled at the Council's ability to enforce by a number of residents and councillors, asked Councillor Marland if he believed that the Council's enforcement role was being carried out satisfactorily and whether residents should have confidence in it.

Councillor Marland referred to the importance of planning enforcement and there being trust in the system.

Councillor Marland indicated that since April, the Council had had placed a strong focus on enforcement, with the number of outstanding cases being halved, despite the number of new cases having more than doubled.

Councillor Marland explained that enforcement was not easy and was not as simple as the Council sending a letter and then taking action. The process could be lengthy and often involved appeals which caused delay and this was generally difficult to communicate to the public who just wanted action to be taken. The Council also had limited resources and therefore had to prioritise cases, which was also difficult to explain to people who, for obvious reasons, always felt that their issue was the most important.

Councillor Marland admitted that the Council's enforcement system had in the past been in need of improvement. As a result of a Local Government Ombudsman finding, better record keeping had been put in place for further reassurance around the service and a Planning Improvement Board established. The increased focus on this area had meant that improvements had been made and would continue.

Councillor Marland expressed the opinion that some of the criticism of the enforcement service has gone too far and generally residents could have faith in the service.

Norman Tooke, referred to the 412 closed enforcement cases in the last 6 months, as reported to the Development Control Committee, and the subsequent critical decision issued by the Secretary for State in respect of the Council's pre-investigation in respect of unauthorised development at 42 Portland Drive, Willen, despite the Willen Residents' Group warning the Council about the potentially flawed investigation, which had seen the Appeal costs awarded against the Council.

As a supplementary question Norman Tooke asked Councillor Marland how residents could trust that the 412 closed enforcement cases had been properly investigated in light of the criticism of the Council by the Secretary of State over how the Council had handled the pre-investigation in respect of the unauthorised development at 42 Portland Drive, Willen.

Councillor Marland indicated that he had previously referred to measures being undertaken in response to a Local Government Ombudsman's report to improve the Council's record keeping in respect of enforcement action taken.

Councillor Marland referred to the politicisation of a number of enforcement cases, particularly 42 Portland Drive, Willen, which was a very complicated case which carried a massive reputation risk for all parties, including the Council and suggested that to judge the Council on this one very complex and difficult case was both misplaced and unhelpful.

(f) Question from Manish Verma to Councillor Townsend
(Cabinet member for Community Safety)

Manish Verma, referring to parking problems being experienced by residents of Oxley Park and Kingsmead, specifically cars being parked on pavements, blocking both the pavement and driveways, asked Councillor Townsend if it would be possible for the Council to take a more proactive approach and help find a long term solutions to this persistent issue.

Councillor Townsend indicated that the Council did have a borough-wide pavement and parking ban. However, the ban needed to be activated in each area, as not all areas suffered the problem.

Councillor Townsend advised that ban would only be implemented if there was either significant community support, or the ban was being requested on safety grounds.

Councillor Townsend stressed the importance of community support, because in a number of areas residents made use of either pavement or verge parking so would not support a ban. Therefore, before a ban was implemented the Council would undertake a consultation exercise.

Councillor Townsend also advised that the Police could enforce against vehicles parked on pavements and verges which were judged to be causing an obstruction.

Councillor Townsend invited Manish Verma, if he had any further questions, or required further information to send her an email.

As a supplementary question Manish Verma, referring to the proposed public art installation at the Oxley Park and Kingsmead Local Centre and also expressing concerns at the potential for the installation to attract anti-social behaviour, asked Councillor Townsend if it was possible to review the appropriateness of the installation in light of concerns from the community about possible anti-social behaviour as had happen in other areas.

Councillor Townsend indicated that she would look into this matter and respond in writing.

(g) Question from Edward Hume to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Edward Hume, referring to the recent decision by the Council's Development Control Committee regarding the Bletchley Landfill site, asked Councillor Marland to ensure that enforcement action would be taken if the planning condition to restore the land was not complied with.

Councillor Marland acknowledged that enforcement would be the usual route if the permission was not adhered to and indicated that it was likely that the Development Control Committee to consider the matter further, particularly as it was unlikely that the restoration would be straightforward. The restoration plans, as defined in the original approval, expected the site to be full at this point and for the associated funding to have accumulated in order to fund the restoration, but as this was not the case the Council would need to work with the applicant to design a new restoration programme and agree a way forward.

Councillor Marland also emphasised that enforcement or any other action could also be delayed if the applicant decided to appeal the decision by the Development Control Committee.

As a supplementary question Edward Hume, referring to options other than enforcement as suggested by a member of the Development Control Committee, such as a short term extension of the planning permission, asked Councillor Marland what provisions were available to ensure that there would be no short extensions.

Councillor Marland explained that any application to extend the life of the permission on the site would be dealt with as a separate application and decision by the Development Control Committee.

CL38 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE MILTON KEYNES CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL 2018/19

The Council received the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report which was presented by Councillor M Bradburn, Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel and seconded by Councillor Miles.

The Chair also thanked colleagues, both fellow councillors and officers, for their work and support for the Panel and particularly drew attention to the duty of all councillors to act as the corporate parent

The Council also heard from Councillors K Bradburn, Brown, D Hopkins, McLean and Nolan.

In summing up Councillor M Bradburn undertook to supply Councillor Mclean with clarification of the following issues:

- (a) what was notable about the gang related violence in November 2019 that caused it to be referenced in the report; and
- (b) why did the Council rent six flats from the private sector which turned out to be unsuitable for young people leaving care and did the Council get any benefit from the flats.

CL39 CHANGE OF NAME FOR THE REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Crooks (Chair of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee) moved the following recommendation from the meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 25 June 2020, which was seconded by Councillor Walker:

“That the Committee formally requests Council that its name be changed to the Regeneration and Renewal Scrutiny Committee.”

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

RESOLVED –

That the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee be renamed the Regeneration and Renewal Scrutiny Committee.

CL40 MONITORING OFFICER’S REPORT – CONSIDERATION OF A STANDARDS INVESTIGATION REPORT ABOUT AN ELECTED COUNCILLOR

In accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Mayor ruled that this matter, arising from a decision of the Standards Sub-Committee held on 10 September 2020, should be

considered as a matter of urgency in light of the Council considering the appointment of the Deputy Mayor at this meeting and considering appointments to committees.

Councillor Brackenbury introduced the decision of the Standards Sub-Committee held on 10 September 2020, which required Councillor Priestley to submit a formal written apology to the Monitoring Officer to be published for a Council meeting.

The Council noted the apology submitted by Councillor Priestley.

CL41

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

- (a) Question from Councillor Montague to Councillor O'Neill (Cabinet member for Health and Wellbeing)

Councillor Montague, referring to his understanding that the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) was operating a waiting list, asked Councillor O'Neill if she had any further information and whether there was anything the Council could do to help the situation.

Councillor O'Neill indicated that CAMHS was the responsibility of the Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group and not the Council, but her understanding was that as referrals had reduced during the Pandemic waiting times had reduced.

Councillor O'Neill outlined that the Council's role in respect of the mental health of young people was prevention based which was largely delivered by the Public Health Team through an on-line platform. During the Pandemic the platform had seen greater use and the Council had invested in additional resources to better support the platform.

Councillor O'Neill also indicated that the Council was reviewing available advice in respect of on-line bullying, to ensure the advice offered by the Council was current and helped young people suffering bullying. The Council had also made additional resources available to provide coaching for young people to help them address mental health issues.

Councillor O'Neill undertook to update Councillor Montague with any further information that became available in respect of CAMHS, particularly with regard to its waiting list.

- (b) Question from Councillor Bowyer to Councillor O'Neill
(Cabinet member for Health and Wellbeing)

Councillor Bowyer, referring to the financial difficulties being experienced by the Centre for Integrated Living as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the importance of the service offered by the Centre to people with disabilities, their carers and helpers, asked Councillor O'Neill what measures the Council was able to implement to ensure the survival of the Centre.

Councillor O'Neill indicated that she recognised the importance of the work of the Centre for Integrated Living for many residents across Milton Keynes.

Councillor O'Neill outlined that, later in the week, she would be discussing with the Chair of the Centre the possibility of the Centre working with the Council to develop and implement the Council's Physical Disability Strategy, which she hoped would secure the survival of the Centre.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Bowyer asked Councillor O'Neill to ensure that the Council was kept updated on the negotiations with the Centre for Integrated Living in respect of the involvement of the Centre in the development and implementation of the Council's Physical Disability Strategy.

Councillor O'Neill thanked Councillor Bowyer for being such an advocate for the Centre and undertook to keep the Council updated.

- (c) Question from Councillor Brackenbury to Councillor Walker
(Leader of the Conservative Group)

Councillor Brackenbury, referring to the question he asked of Councillor Walker at the 17 June 2020 meeting of Council (Minute CL29 [p] refers) regarding the representations Councillor Walker was making to Government in respect of the Government honouring its pledges to local authorities in respect of support as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic, asked Councillor Walker, in line with his invitation to ask a follow-up question in September, for an update on the representations he had made.

Councillor Walker indicated that he had made a number of representations to the two MPs for Milton Keynes and on 31 August 2020 he had written to the Secretary of State urging both him and the Government to fulfil the promises made to local government during the Pandemic, so ensuring that the Council could continue to deliver the services that were essential to the people of Milton Keynes.

Councillor Walker also referred to his public comments which also urged the Government to fulfil its commitments.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Brackenbury, referring to the Government's recently announced Regulations, which included the 'Rule of 6' and Local Authority Covid-19 Marshalls, of which local authorities were not aware and an idea that had since been dropped by Government, asked Councillor Walker if this example showed that there was room for improvement in how the Government was communicating with local government.

Councillor Walker indicated that as the country was in the middle of a crisis it could be expected that communication could break down at times, and this was clearly an example.

Councillor Walker agreed that communication could be improved, not only between Government and local government, but also more generally between the many different bodies delivering a response to the Pandemic and the emerging economic crisis.

- (d) Question from Councillor Gowans to Councillor Townsend (Cabinet member for Community Safety)

Councillor Gowans, referring to speculation that the Government was to cancel the Milton Keynes to Aylesbury link of the East / West Rail project, asked Councillor Townsend if there had been any consultation on this possibility and whether the Council still supported the East / West rail project in its entirety.

Councillor Townsend indicated that while there had been speculation in the media there had been no official confirmation from the Department for Transport, the East / West Rail Consortium or Network Rail. However, she would follow up with these bodies to establish whether there was any validity in the media speculation.

Councillor Townsend reported that at a recent meeting of the Oxford / Cambridge ARC Local Authorities, the Leader of the Council had confirmed the Council's commitment to the entire East / West Rail project. However, the view of Buckinghamshire Council was not known as it had withdrawn from the ARC Local Authority Group.

As a supplementary question Councillor Gowans, referring to the recently published report from Network Rail on the Decarbonisation of the Rail Network which identified the electrification of the East / West Rail project as a potential carbon saving scheme and the fact that electrification had been removed from the project some time ago, asked Councillor Townsend if she would make representations to the Secretary of State to provide funding for the electrification as part of the build stage rather than at a later stage once the line was in use with which would potentially incur additional cost and disruption.

Councillor Townsend indicated that the Council continued to support the full electrification of the East / West Rail Line as part of the initial development and opening phase and she understood that the Department for Transport had asked the East / West Rail Consortium to consider electrification, although at this stage the request was not supported by the necessary funding.

Councillor Townsend reported that the Council was advocating, as part of the ARC Recovery Plan, the electrification of the Line and this would be considered by the ARC Local Authority Group towards the end of the year.

Councillor Townsend undertook to write to the Secretary of State to urge that funding was provided for full electrification as part of the initial build stage.

- (e) Question from Councillor Jenkins to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Jenkins referred to the development of 3,000 homes in Danesborough and Walton Ward and the implications for accessing the development, which would either be across a railway line, which it was expected would be closed for up to 45 minutes in every hour when the East / West Rail Link was operational, or by the busy A5/A4146 roundabout.

Councillor Jenkins also referred to the emerging Supplementary Planning Document for the area which mentioned the possibility of a bridge over the railway line, but gave no mention of the bridge's alignment or how it would be delivered.

Councillor Jenkins asked Councillor Marland if he would be willing to meet the Ward Councillors to discuss the issue further.

Councillor Marland indicated that there were no secret proposals for a bridge.

Councillor Marland explained that a Planning Inquiry and site allocation required evidence to show that the site allocation, crossings, highways, bridges etc were feasible and could be delivered. This did not amount to a proposal and where several options existed, such as on this allocation, more technical work would be undertaken as the planning policy for the scheme was progressed.

Councillor Marland outlined that developers were able to make their own proposals when they brought forward an application if there was no Supplementary Planning Document in place. Approval for any scheme would be the responsibility of the Development Control Committee.

Councillor Marland also indicated that he was happy to meet the Ward Councillors and other interested parties, along with officer colleagues, to discuss the matter and that the Cabinet Planning Advisory Group would continue working on the development of a Supplementary Planning Document

As a supplementary question, Councillor Jenkins, referring to an email included as part of the papers for the South Caldecote Planning Enquiry which suggested that officers had carried out work on the alignment for a bridge, despite Ward Councillors being told that this work did not exist, and considering the impact any bridge could have on businesses, future developments and existing residential properties, asked Councillor Marland, in the interests of transparency, if the Ward Councillors could be briefed on the work undertaken to date.

Councillor Marland stressed that the transport work carried out to date was a feasibility study and not a proposal.

Councillor Marland indicated that officer colleagues were willing to make the work carried out to date on a bridge public on the understanding that the work was just a feasibility study to demonstrate the residential development was viable and could be delivered.

Councillor Marland emphasised that that there were no secret proposals and any scheme for a bridge would be brought forward as part of the Supplementary Planning Document process.

- (f) Question from Councillor McPake to Councillor Darlington (Cabinet member for Public Realm)

Councillor McPake, referring to the problem caused by abandoned supermarket shopping trolleys which the Council currently collected and the extensive administration involved in returning the trolleys, asked Councillor Darlington if she could ask officer colleagues to approach the major supermarkets with a view to the supermarkets taking responsibility for collecting their shopping trolleys abandoned within a five minute walk of their premises, which should include their car park and local bus stops.

Councillor Darlington indicated that she was happy to discuss the idea with officer colleagues, including asking officers to ensure that the supermarkets were meeting the full costs currently incurred by the Council in collecting the abandoned trolleys.

Councillor Darlington also referred to the damage that trolleys abandoned in hedges and water courses had on biodiversity.

Councillor McPake, as a supplementary question, referring not only to the increase in abandoned shopping trolleys but also the increase in general litter resulting from the increased number of residents taking exercise during the recent Covid-19 lockdown, asked Councillor Darlington if she could investigate with officer colleagues possible measures to encourage people to take their litter home and so reduced the levels of littering.

Councillor Darlington agreed that the levels of littering had significantly increased as more people had taken the opportunity to enjoy the many open spaces in Milton Keynes and, referring to an ongoing campaign and discussions with the Parks Trust as to ways to best reduce littering, indicated that that she would discuss possible additional measures with officer colleagues.

Councillor Darlington also took the opportunity to welcome the work carried out by an increasing number of voluntary groups to collect litter in their local areas, but emphasised that it should not be the responsibility of the community to collect litter and people should be acting in a more responsible way and taking their litter home.

(g) Question from Councillor Rankine to Councillor Middleton (Cabinet member for Resources)

Councillor Rankine, welcoming any potential investment in sports in Milton Keynes and expressing his view that, with the right investment, the full size 18 hole golf course at Windmill Hill could be a viable community golf venue, asked Councillor Middleton to provide an update on the proposed development, hopefully including a commitment to the retention of an 18 hole golf course.

Councillor Middleton indicated that he and officer colleagues had been working on revised proposals for the Windmill Hill site which would hopefully meet the demands of all parties, including the retention of an 18 hole golf course. This had included commissioning reports on the valuation of the site and on biodiversity issues, both reports were still awaited.

Councillor Middleton also indicated that he had updated a number of residents and users of the golf course as to progress.

Councillor Middleton stated that he was unable to make any formal announcements at the present time, but he hoped to be in a position to do so in the near future.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Rankine, thanking Councillor Middleton for his efforts to retain an 18 hole golf course, asked Councillor Middleton to give a commitment that local residents would still have access to the course, which provided them with a valuable amenity which many used for walks.

Councillor Middleton indicated that he was unable to give a commitment to retaining public access to the golf course, because if, as intended, the course was heavily used, there would be a significant risk of walkers being hit by a golf ball. Councillor Middleton did however undertake to look at all alternatives, but asked that local residents and golfers were open to working with him to reach a compromise.

(h) Question from Councillor Carr to Councillor O'Neill (Cabinet member for Health and Wellbeing)

Councillor Carr, recognising that Covid-19 testing was not a responsibility of the Council, asked Councillor O'Neill, in light of the increase in Covid-19 infection rates and the need for some schools to close as a result, if she could give an update as to the provision of additional testing sites in Milton Keynes.

Councillor O'Neill indicated that she understood that demand for tests at the main testing site in Central Milton Keynes remained reasonably constant. However, it appeared that demand in other areas of Milton Keynes for tests was on the increase, mainly as a result of school children returning to school.

Councillor O'Neill emphasised the importance of an efficient testing and track and trace programme if the rate of infections was to be reduced.

Councillor O'Neill outlined that Council was seeking the reopening of the walk-in test centre and she undertook to make representations to the Secretary of State for additional testing capacity in Milton Keynes.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Carr asked Councillor O'Neill if she would also raise with Government the potential impact on the education of children and on attainment rates if it was necessary for schools to close because testing was not available and seek an assurance that schools would not be closed unnecessarily.

Councillor O'Neill, agreeing the importance of keeping schools open whenever possible, indicated that she would make representations to Government as requested.

(i) Question from Councillor D Hopkins to Councillor Darlington (Cabinet member for Public Realm)

Councillor D Hopkins, referring to the recent closure of a pedestrian railway crossing in Woburn Sands, known as 'School Crossing' on supposed safety grounds, which has forced pedestrians, including school children to share the main level crossing along with vehicles, asked Councillor Darlington to consider what measures could be put in place to help alleviate the situation, which could include requesting Network Rail to reopen 'School Crossing' until such time as one of the following measures could be put in place:

- A safe pedestrian crossing erected as part of the main level crossing which provided a defined separation between pedestrians and vehicles;
- Electronic safety gates at 'School Crossing'; or
- A footbridge being erected at 'School Crossing'.

Councillor D Hopkins also took the opportunity to thank senior highway colleagues for their robust representations to Network Rail in an attempt to persuade Network Rail to keep 'School Crossing' open.

Councillor Darlington stated that she thought that Network Rail's decision to close the crossing was short sighted and had little regard for safety. She had accordingly written to Network Rail's Chief Executive Officer seeking an urgent meeting, copying in the local MP, to discuss the situation.

Councillor D Hopkins, as a supplementary question, asked Councillor Darlington what would be the alternative course of action if Network Rail refused to reopen 'School Crossing', suggesting that Councillor Darlington could meet with the Town Council and himself to discuss options.

Councillor D Hopkins also sought an assurance that funding would be available if it was necessary for the Council to erect a safe pedestrian crossing, as part of the main level crossing, which provided a defined separation between pedestrians and vehicles, as this was a matter of some urgency.

Councillor Darlington indicated that she was willing to meet with Councillor D Hopkins and the town Council to discuss the potential options available.

- (j) Question from Councillor Wales to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Wales asked Councillor Marland if he could provide an update on the Towns Deal for Bletchley.

Councillor Marland reported that the Council had been informed today that its bid for £1m for Redway improvements and remedial works to the former Bletchley Fire Station site had been successful and works would start as soon as possible.

CL42 PROCEDURAL MOTION

Councillor D Hopkins moved the following procedural motion in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12(c) which was seconded by Councillor Walker:

“That the order of business be changed in order to bring forward the motions on ‘The Impact of Covid-19 on Black and Ethnic Minority Communities’ and ‘Covid-19 Economic Recovery’.

On being put to the vote the procedural motion was declared lost with 14 councillors voting in favour, 35 councillors voting against and 0 councillors abstaining from voting.

CL43 CONTINUATION OF VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Councillor Montague moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor K Bradburn:

“That this Council notes:

- (a) As part of the government’s lockdown measures, councils are permitted to hold meetings and committees virtually, which Milton Keynes Council has been doing successfully.
- (b) The hard work and support put in by the Democratic Services and IT teams to help in the set up and running of virtual meetings and committees.
- (c) Virtual meetings make Milton Keynes Council a more inclusive and flexible council.
- (d) Virtual meetings play a role in increasing the attendance record of all members.
- (e) Live-streaming virtual meetings can increase public awareness and participation in local government.

- (f) Live-streaming virtual meetings increases the openness and transparency of the Council.
- (g) That the 'place' of the meeting is set by the Monitoring Officer for Council/Committee Meetings and by the Leader for Executive meetings.

That this Council resolves to:

1. Request that the Monitoring Officer and Leader of the Council, continue the hosting of virtual, live-streamed meetings and committees where appropriate, alongside the option to physically attend, where legislation and guidance allows.
2. Lobby the government to continue to allow virtual meetings and remote attendance in local government.”

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

RESOLVED –

That this Council notes:

- (a) As part of the government's lockdown measures, councils are permitted to hold meetings and committees virtually, which Milton Keynes Council has been doing successfully.
- (b) The hard work and support put in by the Democratic Services and IT teams to help in the set up and running of virtual meetings and committees.
- (c) Virtual meetings make Milton Keynes Council a more inclusive and flexible council.
- (d) Virtual meetings play a role in increasing the attendance record of all members.
- (e) Live-streaming virtual meetings can increase public awareness and participation in local government.
- (f) Live-streaming virtual meetings increases the openness and transparency of the Council.
- (g) That the 'place' of the meeting is set by the Monitoring Officer for Council/Committee Meetings and by the Leader for Executive meetings.

That this Council resolves to:

1. Request that the Monitoring Officer and Leader of the Council, continue the hosting of virtual, live-streamed meetings and committees where appropriate, alongside the option to physically attend, where legislation and guidance allows.
2. Lobby the government to continue to allow virtual meetings and remote attendance in local government.

CL44

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON BLACK AND ASIAN MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) COMMUNITIES

Councillor Reilly moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor O'Neill:

“That this Council notes:

- (a) The first NHS England report into COVID-19, which found that compared to white people, people of Black and Asian ethnic origin were found to be at a higher risk of death from coronavirus.
- (b) The second NHS England report into understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups which found:
 - (i) Individuals from BAME groups are more likely to work in occupations with a higher risk of COVID-19 exposure.
 - (ii) They are more likely to use public transportation to travel to their essential work.
 - (iii) Historic racism and poorer experiences of healthcare or at work may mean that individuals in BAME groups are less likely to seek care when needed or as NHS staff are less likely to speak up when they have concerns about Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or risk.
- (c) In some BAME communities, households may be disproportionately hit by the pandemic economically, for instance if members of the household are carers or are self-employed. This may lead to BAME workers having to continue to work in jobs that are higher risk.
- (d) The Milton Keynes Local Outbreak Control Plan, which acknowledges the disparities of COVID-19 in BAME groups and aims to reduce those inequalities and protect vulnerable groups.

That this Council resolves to:

- (a) request that Cabinet consider implementing the recommendations from the Public Health England report 'Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups' where possible and appropriate.
- (b) request that Cabinet to consider investigating whether there is a need for extra support for BAME communities as part of the COVID-19 Recovery Strategy, undertaking a more targeted, specific response.
- (c) Write to the two Milton Keynes MPs, asking they acknowledge the two Public Health England reports and hold the Conservative Government to implementing the recommendations."

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

RESOLVED –

That this Council notes:

- (a) The first NHS England report into COVID-19, which found that compared to white people, people of Black and Asian ethnic origin were found to be at a higher risk of death from coronavirus.
- (b) The second NHS England report into understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups which found:
 - (i) Individuals from BAME groups are more likely to work in occupations with a higher risk of COVID-19 exposure.
 - (ii) They are more likely to use public transportation to travel to their essential work.
 - (iii) Historic racism and poorer experiences of healthcare or at work may mean that individuals in BAME groups are less likely to seek care when needed or as NHS staff are less likely to speak up when they have concerns about Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or risk.
- (c) In some BAME communities, households may be disproportionately hit by the pandemic economically, for instance if members of the household are carers or are self-employed. This may lead to BAME workers having to continue to work in jobs that are higher risk.

- (d) The Milton Keynes Local Outbreak Control Plan, which acknowledges the disparities of COVID-19 in BAME groups and aims to reduce those inequalities and protect vulnerable groups.

That this Council resolves to:

- (a) request that Cabinet consider implementing the recommendations from the Public Health England report 'Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups' where possible and appropriate.
- (b) request that Cabinet to consider investigating whether there is a need for extra support for BAME communities as part of the COVID-19 Recovery Strategy, undertaking a more targeted, specific response.
- (c) Write to the two Milton Keynes MPs, asking they acknowledge the two Public Health England reports and hold the Conservative Government to implementing the recommendations.

CL45

LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOODS

Councillor D Hopkins moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor Walker:

"That this Council supports the concept of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and requests the Cabinet to introduce them when and where feasible in locations where they have the support and involvement of the local community."

Councillor McCall moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Trendall and accepted by Councillor D Hopkins, mover of the motion:

1. That the word 'investigates' be added after Cabinet, and the word 'introduce' changed to 'introducing'.
2. That the words 'and appropriate,' added after 'feasible'.
3. That the words 'and where available funding allows,' added after the word 'appropriate,'."

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

RESOLVED –

That this Council supports the concept of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and requests the Cabinet investigates introducing them when and where feasible and appropriate, and where available funding allows, in locations where they have the support and involvement of the local community.

CL46

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Councillor Crooks moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor Trendall:

“That this Council:

- (a) supportive of the Government's commitment that more houses be built;
- (b) mindful of its unanimous commitment to the growth of Milton Keynes expressed in its response to the MK Futures Commission report on 20 July 2016;
- (c) aware that in Milton Keynes under successive administrations, local government has not failed the city - some 16,000 houses have already been granted planning permission, but developers have failed to build them;
- (d) committed to the principles behind the 2011 Localism Act and the importance of Neighbourhood Plans; and
- (e) convinced of the value of a comprehensive democratic input from residents and businesses at all stages of the planning process,

Resolves to encourage the Cabinet to prepare a response to the Government's consultative White Paper *Planning for the Future* which includes the following points:

- (1) the dangers in grounding the Local Plan process on a reduced evidence base, on a potentially inadequate time for public consultation and meaningful involvement, and of introducing the threat of sanctions to already financially challenged councils;
- (2) the removal of the opportunity for local community input and democratic accountability by the proposed increase (within Renewal Zones) of automatic permitted development rights together with the threat to democratic scrutiny by the inclusion of an option to remove the Public Examination process from the approval of a Local Plan and the removal of

democratically accountable decision-making on the balancing of competing requirements that emerges at detailed application stage for most developments;

- (3) the undesirability of removing the "duty to cooperate" with neighbouring councils in the preparation of Local Plans, particularly pertinent in Milton Keynes where local boundaries follow historic divisions long overtaken by the city's development;
- (4) the renewal of nationally imposed top down housing targets based on a standard method for calculating housing need regardless of local circumstances, with no indication of any local planning authority's ability to determine key elements of outline plans such as housing size and tenure mix, and access arrangements together with the impact on the principle of mixed neighbourhoods and community cohesion by allowing block allocations of affordable housing and executive housing to be considered on separate planning applications;
- (5) the need to ensure that any housing allocations deliver the required number of bedrooms, not homes with too few bedrooms, to house our population;
- (6) the expectation that 'First Homes' will take priority over all other forms of affordable home ownership which may raise barriers to home ownership, not lower them, by lessening the opportunity for shared ownership, and reduce the supply of much needed affordable homes for rent resulting in homelessness;
- (7) the likelihood that the design code provisions will produce either:
 - (i) too detailed a manual to be helpful with lots of options and hundreds of pages, or
 - (ii) an 'identikit Britain' manual with such limited options that community character will be reduced to a memory, and all innovation stifled, or
 - (iii) a minimalist manual with so few policies that developers will be able to reduce standards;
- (8) the threat to the rural economy, park-based leisure facilities, visitor buildings at historic sites and much else from the binary 'development or none' approach to protecting sites;

- (9) the implications for environmental protection and biodiversity of the proposal that sustainability appraisals be abolished;
- (10) the impracticality of determining the infrastructure requirements and practicality of all sites proposed in just 12 months from the close of the call for zoning proposals - let alone when every Planning Authority in the country will be doing so during the same 12 months;
- (11) the difficulty for local councils that the proposed new national infrastructure levy will only be paid upon occupation leaving councils having to borrow in order to pay for and deliver any infrastructure needed up front, which is aggravated by the lack of any method for ensuring that the infrastructure levy actually covers the cost of the required infrastructure in an area, and by the White Paper's silence on how any infrastructure less unrelated to councils - for example medical facilities and public transport - is to be delivered; and
- (12) that the housing delivery test be replaced by:
 - (a) An agreed timescale for submitting reserved matters or equivalent, and for completion of each phase or parcel, at outline approval of plans on each major site.
 - (b) Addressing the problem of developers who will not bring forward reserved matters or build housing on time through the tax system so that land approved for development does not lie untouched or incomplete as at present.
 - (c) A restriction on the sanctioning of Councils to those who fail to maintain a valid Local Plan that allocates sufficient housing, or who fail wholesale to determine plans within agreed timescales - councils should not be sanctioned when developers fail to build plans that they have assured councils are deliverable.

That this Council further resolves that:

- (13) that the Cabinet be requested to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government asking that local councils be given access to sufficient resource to promote large scale investment in quality affordable housing to rent

- (14) that the critical importance of development framework SPDs and related design guides and codes under the proposed system be recognised, and that the Cabinet assess the resource implications of producing them independently of developers in order to retain control over future developments.”

Councillor Petchey moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Cryer-Whitehead and accepted by Councillor Crooks, mover of the motion:

“That the following words be added as a new second clause (10) ‘the threat to archaeology and heritage through the removal of consideration in the planning process for evaluation and mitigation of the effect of development on heritage assets’ and that second clause (10 – 14) be renumbered 11-15 accordingly’.”

Councillor Walker moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Bint and accepted by Councillor Crooks, mover of the motion:

“That in the first clause (b), the words ‘unanimous commitment to the growth of Milton Keynes expressed in its response to the MK Futures Commission report on 20 July 2016’ are replaced with the words ‘noting of the MK Futures Commission report on 20 July 2016, which has been used to inform the Cabinet’s growth ambitions as outlined in the Council plan’.”

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

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

RESOLVED –

That this Council:

- (a) supportive of the Government's commitment that more houses be built;
- (b) mindful of its noting of the MK Futures Commission report on 20 July 2016, which has been used to inform the Cabinet’s growth ambitions as outlined in the Council Plan;
- (c) aware that in Milton Keynes under successive administrations, local government has not failed the city - some 16,000 houses have already been granted planning permission, but developers have failed to build them;

- (d) committed to the principles behind the 2011 Localism Act and the importance of Neighbourhood Plans; and
- (e) convinced of the value of a comprehensive democratic input from residents and businesses at all stages of the planning process,

Resolves to encourage the Cabinet to prepare a response to the Government's consultative White Paper *Planning for the Future* which includes the following points:

- (1) the dangers in grounding the Local Plan process on a reduced evidence base, on a potentially inadequate time for public consultation and meaningful involvement, and of introducing the threat of sanctions to already financially challenged councils;
- (2) the removal of the opportunity for local community input and democratic accountability by the proposed increase (within Renewal Zones) of automatic permitted development rights together with the threat to democratic scrutiny by the inclusion of an option to remove the Public Examination process from the approval of a Local Plan and the removal of democratically accountable decision-making on the balancing of competing requirements that emerges at detailed application stage for most developments;
- (3) the undesirability of removing the "duty to cooperate" with neighbouring councils in the preparation of Local Plans, particularly pertinent in Milton Keynes where local boundaries follow historic divisions long overtaken by the city's development;
- (4) the renewal of nationally imposed top down housing targets based on a standard method for calculating housing need regardless of local circumstances, with no indication of any local planning authority's ability to determine key elements of outline plans such as housing size and tenure mix, and access arrangements together with the impact on the principle of mixed neighbourhoods and community cohesion by allowing block allocations of affordable housing and executive housing to be considered on separate planning applications;
- (5) the need to ensure that any housing allocations deliver the required number of bedrooms, not homes with too few bedrooms, to house our population;

- (6) the expectation that 'First Homes' will take priority over all other forms of affordable home ownership which may raise barriers to home ownership, not lower them, by lessening the opportunity for shared ownership, and reduce the supply of much needed affordable homes for rent resulting in homelessness;
- (7) the likelihood that the design code provisions will produce either:
 - (i) too detailed a manual to be helpful with lots of options and hundreds of pages, or
 - (ii) an 'identikit Britain' manual with such limited options that community character will be reduced to a memory, and all innovation stifled, or
 - (iii) a minimalist manual with so few policies that developers will be able to reduce standards;
- (8) the threat to the rural economy, park-based leisure facilities, visitor buildings at historic sites and much else from the binary 'development or none' approach to protecting sites;
- (9) the implications for environmental protection and biodiversity of the proposal that sustainability appraisals be abolished;
- (10) the threat to archaeology and heritage through the removal of consideration in the planning process for evaluation and mitigation of the effect of development on heritage assets;
- (11) the impracticality of determining the infrastructure requirements and practicality of all sites proposed in just 12 months from the close of the call for zoning proposals - let alone when every Planning Authority in the country will be doing so during the same 12 months;
- (12) the difficulty for local councils that the proposed new national infrastructure levy will only be paid upon occupation leaving councils having to borrow in order to pay for and deliver any infrastructure needed up front, which is aggravated by the lack of any method for ensuring that the infrastructure levy actually covers the cost of the required infrastructure in an area, and by the White Paper's silence on how any infrastructure less unrelated to councils - for example medical facilities and public transport - is to be delivered; and

- (13) that the housing delivery test be replaced by:
- (a) An agreed timescale for submitting reserved matters or equivalent, and for completion of each phase or parcel, at outline approval of plans on each major site.
 - (b) Addressing the problem of developers who will not bring forward reserved matters or build housing on time through the tax system so that land approved for development does not lie untouched or incomplete as at present.
 - (c) A restriction on the sanctioning of Councils to those who fail to maintain a valid Local Plan that allocates sufficient housing, or who fail wholesale to determine plans within agreed timescales - councils should not be sanctioned when developers fail to build plans that they have assured councils are deliverable.

That this Council further resolves that:

- (14) that the Cabinet be requested to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government asking that local councils be given access to sufficient resource to promote large scale investment in quality affordable housing to rent
- (15) that the critical importance of development framework SPDs and related design guides and codes under the proposed system be recognised, and that the Cabinet assess the resource implications of producing them independently of developers in order to retain control over future developments.

CL47

COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Councillor Walker moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor Rankine:

“That this Council notes with concern:

- (a) The economic crisis resulting from the global coronavirus pandemic.
- (b) The Centre for Cities (21st August 2020) report showing Milton Keynes in the bottom 10 towns and cities across the UK for its offline retail recovery in terms of spend.
- (c) The significant rise in unemployment in Milton Keynes and across the country.

- (d) The lack of short-term policies and initiatives in the Cabinet's Economic Recovery Plan.
- (e) The significant rise in unemployment in Milton Keynes and across the country and across the country and notes the end date of the Government's furlough scheme.

Furthermore, that this Council:

- (a) Reaffirms its support for Milton Keynes' retail sector and understands its importance to supply chains, people's livelihoods and financial security.
- (b) Recognises that to drive local economic growth and support for employment, small businesses, high streets and town centres, it must invest in relevant expertise and ensure sufficient staffing levels.
- (c) Highlights its determination to do all it can to protect people's jobs and income across the entire economy.
- (d) Reaffirms its commitment for MK to be a leading European City and encourages inward investment into Milton Keynes from around the globe to support our recovery.
- (e) Welcomes the Government's schemes and funding which has protected jobs and helped restart the economy.
- (f) Believes the consequences of the economic crisis should also be considered a public health issue.

That this Council therefore resolves, to call on the Cabinet to:

1. Consider a free parking scheme to stimulate visitor numbers in Central Milton Keynes to support the retail sector.
2. Invest in additional staffing levels in relevant areas of the Council such as planning, legal and economic development, to provide additional support and capacity to local businesses.
3. Draft a new and competitive inward investment strategy that will put MK at the forefront of the UK's economic recovery.
4. Work with our local MPs to draft a package of 'shovel ready' projects that can be submitted to Ministers and considered as part of the Government's ongoing spending review.
5. Broaden the £500,000 green recovery fund to incentivise businesses to create new green jobs.

6. Request the Public Health team focuses resource on analysing and addressing public health challenges resulting from the economic crisis.”

The Mayor indicated that, having taken advice, he had decided to rule out of order an amendment, submitted by Councillor Ferrans, as, in his opinion it negated the original motion. The Mayor gave a commitment that where amendments were potentially out of order, that there would be a process put in place to allow for negotiation, prior to the withdrawal deadline.

On being put to the vote the motion was not agreed.

CL48

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989 AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COMMITTEES AND POLITICAL GROUPS) REGULATIONS 1990.

It was reported that, in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, that the Conservative Group was entitled to 29.8246% of the seats on the Council’s Committees, the Labour Group was entitled to 40.3509% of the seats, the Liberal Democrat Group is entitled to 26.3158% of the seats and 1.7544% of seats were vacant.

Where a local authority was not entirely comprised of Political Groups it had a duty to secure proportional appointments for ungrouped Councillors which meant that, as the only ungrouped member of the Council, Councillor Baines was entitled to be allocated 1.7544% of the available seats on Committees.

The Council also considered confirming a number of changes to the membership of its committees and sub-committees.

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

- “1. That the report be noted.
2. That the following changes to the membership of the Council’s committees be confirmed:
 - (a) Audit Committee
That Councillor Legg be replaced by Councillor Priestley.
 - (b) Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee / Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Call-in Sub-Committee

- (i) That the seat currently held by Councillor Townsend be allocated to Councillor Baines as an independent councillor.
 - (ii) That Councillor Raja be appointed to the Conservative Group vacancy.
- (c) Community and Housing Scrutiny Committee / Community and Housing Scrutiny Committee Call-in Sub-Committee
- That Councillor Townsend be replaced by Councillor Gowans.
- (d) Development Control Committee / Development Control Panel
- That Councillor Baines be replaced by Councillor Cryer-Whitehead.
- (e) Licensing Committee / Licensing Sub-Committee
- That the seat currently held by Councillor Green be allocated to Councillor Baines as an independent councillor.
- (f) Regeneration and Renewal Scrutiny Committee / Regeneration and Renewal Scrutiny Committee Call-in Sub-Committee
- That Councillor Baines be replaced by Councillor
- (e) Licensing Committee / Licensing Sub-Committee
- That the seat currently held by Councillor Green be allocated to Councillor Baines as an independent councillor.
- (f) Regeneration and Renewal Scrutiny Committee / Regeneration and Renewal Scrutiny Committee Call-in Sub-Committee
- That Councillor Baines be replaced by Councillor Lancaster.
- (g) Regulatory Committee / Regulatory Sub-Committee
- That the seat currently held by Councillor Green be allocated to Councillor Baines as an independent councillor.

(h) Scrutiny Management Committee / Scrutiny Management Committee Call-in Sub-Committee

That Councillors Legg, Miles and Townsend be replaced by Councillors Brown, Gowans and Priestley.

CL49

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

The Council considered approving the appointment of a panel of Independent Persons for a period of four years, to support the Council in for dealing with allegations of misconduct against councillors.

It was reported that the Council was required appoint at least one Independent Person to assist with the following duties:

- To be available to councillors, or co-opted councillors of Milton Keynes Council or of any parishes within the Borough, for consultation, should their behaviour be subject to an allegation of misconduct; and
- To be available for the Council to seek advice from and to take into account their views, before making a decision on an allegation it has decided to investigate.

Additionally, it was noted that the Council was required to include two Independent Persons as part of any panel considering the dismissal of a statutory officer (Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, or Monitoring Officer).

The Council was advised that a panel of 10 Independent Persons was appointed in September 2012 following a joint recruitment exercise with Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Councils, alongside Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority and Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Combined Fire Authority. The appointments were renewed in September 2016, but the membership of the panel had reduced over time and further to a resolution of the Standards Committee on 23 July 2020, a fresh recruitment exercise was undertaken, with a view to increasing the size of the panel.

Councillor Brackenbury, Chair of the Standards Committee moved:

1. That Sarah Austin, Stephanie Boyce, Dr Vasco Fernandes, Christopher Fogden, John Jones and Deborah Maggs be appointed to serve as Independent Persons for Milton Keynes Council, from 1 October 2020, for a period of 4 years.

2. That each Independent Person receive an annual payment of £300, plus a fee of £75 for each case referred.

Councillor Raja, a Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee seconded the motion.

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

RESOLVED –

1. That Sarah Austin, Stephanie Boyce, Dr Vasco Fernandes, Christopher Fogden, John Jones and Deborah Maggs be appointed to serve as Independent Persons for Milton Keynes Council, from 1 October 2020, for a period of 4 years.
2. That each Independent Person receive an annual payment of £300, plus a fee of £75 for each case referred.

CL50

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 6 June 2020 to 3 September 2020.

CL51

WARD BASED BUDGETS 2020/21

The Council noted that for the period 1 April 2020 to 3 September 2020, applications totalling £1,450.90 had been approved.

THE MAYOR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10:51 PM