



Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 19 July 2023 at 19:30

Present: Councillor Legg (Mayor)

Councillors M Bradburn (Deputy Mayor), Andrew, Andrews, Ahmad, Bailey, Bell, K Bradburn, R Bradburn, Cannon, J Carr, Clarke, Crooks, Darlington, Exon, Ferrans, Fuller, Geary, Hall, Hearnshaw, D Hopkins, V Hopkins, Hume, Hussain, Imran, Kendrick, M Khan, Lancaster, Long, Mahendran, Marland, McBride, McLean, McPake, McQuillan, Middleton, Muzammil, Nayee, Nolan, Oguntola, Petchey, Rolfe, Smith, Taylor, Townsend, Trendall, Wardle and Wilson-Marklew and 23 members of the public

Apologies Councillors Adewale, Balazs, Brown, A Carr, De Villiers, N Khan, Priestley, Verma and Whitworth

Aldermen Bartlett, Alderman Beeley, Alderman Bristow, Alderman Connor, Alderman Coventry, Alderman Geary, Alderman Henderson, Alderwomen Henderson, Alderwomen Irons, Alderman Lewis, Alderwomen Lloyd, Alderman McCall, Alderman McKenzie, Alderman Miles, Alderwoman Saunders and Alderman Tallack

CL21 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14 June 2023 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

CL22 Disclosures of Interest

None received.

CL23 Announcements

The Mayor made announcements in respect of:

- (a) The King's Birthday Honours;
- (b) MK Can world record attempt; and
- (c) The recent death of David Baume.

CL24 Petitions

The Council received a petition from residents requesting a 20 MPH speed limit in Wolverton town. The Cabinet member undertook to ask Highways Officers to undertake a technical assessment of the area.

The Council received a petition from residents requesting a 20 MPH speed limit on streets in Oxley Park. The Cabinet member undertook to ask Highways Officers to undertake a technical assessment of the area.

ACTIONS:

The Cabinet member agreed to ask officers to undertake a technical assessment of the areas in Wolverton and Oxley Park that had been requested for a reduction in speed to 20MPH.

CL25 Questions from Members of the Public

Questions were received from eight members of the public. The Mayor advised that the questions on Galley Hill would be taken together so that Councillor Middleton would provide a combined response to all of the initial questions before members of the public would ask any supplementary questions.

David Lee asked Councillor Darlington, how many apprentices had been taken on for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund project, and how many local people were expected to gain some of these domestic retrofit qualifications as part of phase 1 of the work?

Councillor Darlington indicated that there were 48 jobs created in wave one and these included 12 Level 1 carbon awareness, 2 Level 2 thermography, 3 retrofit site managers and 2 Level 3 NVQ insulation and building. The Council had also invested £200,000 this year and £900,000 next year as part of the Social Prosperity Fund and was looking for people to partner with to develop skills and training on the regeneration estates.

As a supplementary question, David Lee asked Councillor Darlington, national figures suggest that around 40 people per year in Milton Keynes needed to be trained to meet the national demand for this work, is there anything else the Council could do to deliver those figures?

Councillor Darlington indicated that to achieve the aspirations of being carbon neutral required a government to put in place a skills programme that would ensure that people in the UK were able to be trained to do the work that was needed.

Mick Allsopp asked Councillor Middleton, in Jan 2023 the Council proposed a new lease with the Church at Galley Hill Small Meeting Place which had now been suspended indefinitely. The Council was also having talks with GHRA up until June 2023 regarding the new Arts Centre with potential use by the Galley Hill community - this seemed to have disappeared as well. The Council already had these new plans concluded in December 2022. Why have you not informed us of your real intentions?

Simon Palmer asked Councillor Middleton, since February 2021 the council had spent around £500,000 on works to the former Arts Centre part of the building, leaving that part a huge empty shell without a proper damp course and a weak leaky roof, that would not be able to support solar panels, and was completely unsuitable for any community activities. Would the council arrange an investigation into the costs of the poorly carried out, expensive, farcical renovation before any further taxpayer's money was wasted?

Parish Councillor Roy Adams asked Councillor Middleton, why was the Council discussing a placemaking proposal for a significant development in the Stony Stratford Town Council area without notifying the Town Council and making proposals that were contrary to the Stony Stratford Neighbourhood plan which was accepted and agreed by Milton Keynes Council in 2018?

Parish Councillor Paul Randall asked Councillor Middleton, the Council's placemaking proposal appeared to be looking at building another supermarket and a drive thru takeaway just a few hundred yards away from the current premises. Why does the Council appear to be looking to take away this couple's livelihood and why did they only find out about these plans from a chance conversation with one of the estate's residents?

Colin Wiginton asked Councillor Middleton, under the proposals there would be a new road coming into the corner of the Galley Hill residential estate to access the proposed shop and takeaway. Had the council taken into account the additional traffic problems which would arise for the residents of the local area?

David Tavener asked Councillor Middleton, in good faith GHRA had been pressing the Council for several years to restore the former Arts Centre to Galley Hill residents for community use. A £500,000 refurbishment had been carried out which had resulted in a building with a leaking roof, damp ingress through walls as well as a huge space not partitioned or with any heating. Just prior to June residents were advised in confidence that negotiations to lease the property were cancelled and the Council had alternate proposals. In light of the Galley Hill residents and stakeholders rejection of the proposals will the Council now withdraw them and enter into round table discussions with stakeholders on alternative options to present to residents?

Anu Chandur asked Councillor Middleton, from the recent proposed placemaking document for Galley Hill, that neither the residents nor the Champions Ministry Church would be able to use any part of the building. Before this strategy was drawn up did the council realise the amount of good works that currently takes place and that would continue if residents had obtained the premises in a usable condition?

Councillor Middleton indicated that he had attended the Stony Stratford Town Council meeting the previous evening and had addressed a number of the issues raised. He advised that despite spending £500,000 on bringing the Arts Centre up to a lettable and structurally sound condition and over seven months of negotiations, a lease on the building was still not able to be agreed with the Galley Hill Residents Association.

There were now no leases on any of the local centre units which is not a position that can continue.

The Council was bringing forward these proposals as the lease position needs to be rectified. Bringing forward a low cost supermarket would bring with it employment, low cost good quality food and a capital receipt which could be used for the public realm and towards a new community space.

Councillor Middleton indicated that he understood very clearly from the local community that their “red-line” was a good quality community space. He committed to speaking to a number of people as part of a working group and working alongside residents to deliver the best result for the local community.

As a supplementary question Simon Palmer asked Councillor Middleton with regard to the repairs undertaken to the former Arts Centre and your statement that it had been brought up to a lettable state, the roof was still leaking so could he advise when would the repairs be completed to actually bring the building up to a lettable state?

Councillor Middleton indicated that the building works that were undertaken were subject to warranty. Unfortunately, some of the water sealing hadn't come up to standard. The Council had committed to providing a watertight and structurally sound building and he would provide a timeframe as to the work that would be undertaken under warranty to ensure the building was structurally sound and water tight.

As a supplementary question Parish Councillor Roy Adams asked Councillor Middleton when did discussions on this significant placemaking proposal first take place as there was a story in the MK Citizen around three months ago indicating that Aldi was coming to Stony Stratford.

Councillor Middleton indicated that the wider placemaking plans for this area were first discussed with the Town Council in 2020 the Council had for a number of years held an ambition for a wider placemaking scheme for the area. More recently, the plans for this area were progressed when it became clear that new leases would not be signed. The Galley Hill Residents Association was informed in June and a public meeting was held to advise that because a lease had not been signed the Council would bring forward the placemaking plans. There are a number of other reasons including the need to remove the derelict Watling Way Pool which was becoming a magnet for antisocial behaviour, providing improved parking provision and a new highway access. A significant number of problems in the local area could be solved by this wider placemaking scheme.

As a supplementary question Parish Councillor Paul Randall asked Councillor Middleton that he understood that the Council had reports from analysts that when a low cost supermarket was opened close to a convenience store that there was greater footfall for that smaller store, would the Council be able to share that report or the relevant pieces of it.

Councillor Middleton indicated that he would make inquiries on this. It was industry practice and experience that the creation of a new supermarket in the vicinity of a

convenience store drove more footfall to the convenience store and was for example the corporate strategy of the Co-Op Stores.

As a supplementary question Colin Wiginton asked Councillor Middleton, this proposal would mean that there would be more cars coming in and out of Galley Hill and it would be used as a rat run, had the Council done any sort of traffic assessment of their proposal?

Councillor Middleton indicated that as part of the wider placemaking scheme it would be able to try to solve some of these highways concerns including creating a new road access and additional parking provision. This first decision would be a decision in principle only which would be followed by the proper planning process which would include a transport assessment. Councillor Middleton indicated that he would be happy to bring this information to the working group at the appropriate time so that residents could satisfy themselves that there would not be additional stress on the estate roads.

ACTIONS:

1. Councillor Middleton undertook to have a full copy of his response to public questions on Galley Hill published on the Councils Modern.Gov website.
2. Councillor Middleton undertook to establish a representative working group to discuss emerging plans for Galley Hill local centre including the potential provision of new community space.

CL26 Business Remaining from Last Meeting

None.

CL27 Licensing Committee - 13 June 2023

Councillor Exon (the Vice Chair of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee) moved the following recommendation from the meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee held on 13 June 2023, which was seconded by Councillor McLean:

“That the Council adopt the Statement of Licensing Policy 2023 - 2028.”

The recommendation was agreed by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

That the Council agree to adopt the Statement of Licensing Policy 2023 – 2028.

CL28 Corporate Oversight and Scrutiny Management Committee - 5 July 2023

Councillor Hume (the former Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Management Committee) moved the following recommendation from the meeting of the Corporate Oversight and Scrutiny Management Committee held on 5 July 2023, which was seconded by Councillor D Hopkins:

“That Council receive the Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-23.”

The recommendation was agreed by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-23 be received.

CL29 Audit Committee - 13 July 2023

Councillor Crooks (the current Chair of the Audit Committee) moved the following recommendations from the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 13 July 2023, which was seconded by Councillor Geary:

- “1. That the Audit Committee Annual Report 2022-23 be received by Council.
2. That the revised Audit Committee Terms of Reference be agreed by Council.”

Councillor Crooks noted that the Annual Report should be received subject to the review and correction if necessary of the committee attendance figures.

The recommendations were agreed by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Audit Committee Annual Report 2022-23 be received by Council.
2. That the revised Audit Committee Terms of Reference be agreed by Council.

CL30 Councillors' Questions

Questions were received from Councillors Rolfe, Bell, McLean, Ferrans, Geary, V Hopkins and Hume.

Question from Councillor Rolfe to Councillor Townsend (Cabinet member for Public Realm)

Councillor Rolfe asked Councillor Townsend, what was being done to resolve any issues where wheelie bins were mistakenly delivered to households that would be continuing to use sacks?

Councillor Townsend indicated that she wasn't personally aware of any issues with mis-delivery of bins to households that would still use sacks. If there were any problems residents could contact the Council and it would be resolved.

Question from Councillor Bell to Councillor Nolan (Cabinet member for Children and Families)

Councillor Bell asked Councillor Nolan, could she remind Councillors how families could book spaces to attend the Summer of Play events?

Councillor Nolan indicated that there was an online booking system and parents just needed to filter this to 'holiday activities with food'. Children who were eligible for free school meals would have been given a link by their school to use.

Question from Councillor McLean to Councillor Townsend (Cabinet member for Public Realm)

Councillor McLean asked Councillor Townsend, was there going to be a new process to assess requests for 20 MPH speed limits and if so could this be shared with all parishes?

Councillor Townsend indicated that the current process was in the public domain and she would speak to officers about sharing it with parishes. Any conversations about a new process had only taken place at an officer level and it was not on the forward plan for development at this stage.

Question from Councillor Ferrans to Councillor Middleton (Cabinet member for Resources)

Councillor Ferrans asked Councillor Middleton, would the Cabinet member join her in encouraging residents to attend the celebrations and support the re-opening of the CMK Market.

Councillor Middleton encouraged as many people as possible to attend the relaunch of Milton Keynes Market from the 5 – 13 August. The Council had been working closely with MKDP and current stall holders and there were a number of exciting plans including additional stalls, events and enhanced facilities.

Question from Councillor Geary to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Geary asked Councillor Marland, when did negotiations with Aldi commence over the site in Galley Hill?

Councillor Marland indicated that the Council had been talking to Aldi and Lidl for quite a while about the site at Galley Hill and that providing somewhere that sells affordable food would do more for the regeneration of the area than a lot of other things the Council could do.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Geary asked Councillor Marland, when was an agreement reached?

Councillor Marland indicated that no deal had been finalised and that it would go through the proper processes of the Council as would any future planning application.

Question from Councillor V Hopkins to Councillor Townsend (Cabinet member for Public Realm)

Councillor V Hopkins asked Councillor Townsend, would she advise when Burney Drive in Eagles Farm South and Glebe Farm would be fully opened and could she confirm that the route would only be opened when calming and speed restriction measures were in place?

Councillor Townsend indicated that road was still under construction with the overall timeframe determined by the developer. It was understood by the Highways team that it would be substantially opened in the next twelve months with several traffic calming conditions installed from day one, including 20 MPH speed limit, weight restriction and pedestrian crossing. Once opened the road would be monitored for rat running and if necessary additional traffic calming measures would be considered.

As a supplementary question, Councillor V Hopkins asked Councillor Townsend, there was a danger that the traffic would continue into Glebe Farm via the bus access point which was meant to be controlled by bollards and monitored by CCTV, which had not been installed, would the Cabinet member be able to review the situation?

Councillor Townsend indicated that she would ask officers to provide her with a written response on that question.

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

Councillor Hume asked Councillor Marland, with regard to the recent announcement on the closure of the Bletchley Station ticket office and the impact this would have on those who relied on that for support and assistance, did the Leader of the Council agree that this was a backwards step by the government.

Councillor Marland indicated that closing the ticket office was not good for Bletchley and the numbers of people who used that facility daily. Given the planned redevelopment in the area the ticket office should be developed not closed down and this was a short sighted decision by Network Rail and the government. There was a growing concern about the future of ticket officers and stations in the area.

ACTION:

Councillor Townsend undertook to ask officers about concerns to do with vehicles accessing Green Farm via the bus only access point.

CL31 Motion 1 - Windrush Compensation Scheme

Councillor Clarke moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor R Bradburn:

“1. That this Council notes that:

- a) This year on the 22 June was the 75th Anniversary of HMT Empire Windrush, which in 1948 was the first crossing that brought hundreds of Caribbeans to the UK during the post-war period to help the country rebuild, the families of some of whom settled in Milton Keynes to the city's great benefit.
- b) The Windrush Scandal which emerged in April 2018 due to the Conservative government's 'hostile environment' policy saw the British Home Office deny residency rights and citizenship to many people who had been living in the UK legally for if not most, but all of their lives. Thousands of people across the UK were stripped of their British passports, right to work, healthcare, and benefits.
- c) The Windrush Compensation Scheme that was launched in 2019 designed to ensure those affected could receive payments for the devastating effects on their lives has so far only resulted in 1,518 people receive compensation for their suffering, and a further 1,988 with eligible claims have been awarded no compensation.

- d) People have been forced out of their homes and jobs, causing many to become homeless and fall ill as they have had no access to healthcare.
- e) The Compensation Scheme does not cover any legal fees for any applicants making claims, this means that for many who have been left jobless and in debt, they can't afford the legal representation they need to complete the claim.
- f) Where compensation has been received, in some cases payments have been made only after the person has died.

2. That this Council believes that:

- a) The Windrush Compensation Scheme is not fit for purpose, the 44-page long application form is complex, and the requirements make it almost impossible for people to prove their status.
- b) The Windrush generation are victims through no fault of their own, they were invited here by the British Government and have worked hard all their lives, paying tax and national insurance yet they are being denied access to compensation.
- c) The Government should make the scheme more accessible, and as suggested in the Windrush Lessons Learnt Review, the Home Secretary should appoint a migrant's commissioner and commit to holding reconciliation events with people affected to listen and reflect on their stories.

3. That this Council resolves to:

- a) Ask the Chief Executive of the Council to write to the Home Secretary to:
 - i) ask for the Windrush Compensation Scheme process to be simplified and for legal aid to be awarded; and
 - ii) request the appointment of a migrant's commissioner and commit to holding reconciliation events with people affected to listen and reflect on their stories, as suggested in the Windrush Lessons Learned Review.
- b) Continue leading the way by celebrating an annual Windrush Day in Milton Keynes to celebrate and recognise the huge contribution of the Windrush generation and the community groups here today that continue to support residents across the city.
- c) Ensure the appointed Ethnic Minority Champion attends Windrush celebrations each year to mark the impact of their contribution to Milton Keynes."

The Council heard from two members of the public during the debate on the motion.

The motion was carried by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

1. That this Council notes that:
 - a) This year on the 22 June was the 75th Anniversary of HMT Empire Windrush, which in 1948 was the first crossing that brought hundreds of Caribbeans to the UK during the post-war period to help the country rebuild, the families of some of whom settled in Milton Keynes to the city's great benefit.
 - b) The Windrush Scandal which emerged in April 2018 due to the Conservative government's 'hostile environment' policy saw the British Home Office deny residency rights and citizenship to many people who had been living in the UK legally for if not most, but all of their lives. Thousands of people across the UK were stripped of their British passports, right to work, healthcare, and benefits.
 - c) The Windrush Compensation Scheme that was launched in 2019 designed to ensure those affected could receive payments for the devastating effects on their lives has so far only resulted in 1,518 people receive compensation for their suffering, and a further 1,988 with eligible claims have been awarded no compensation.
 - d) People have been forced out of their homes and jobs, causing many to become homeless and fall ill as they have had no access to healthcare.
 - e) The Compensation Scheme does not cover any legal fees for any applicants making claims, this means that for many who have been left jobless and in debt, they can't afford the legal representation they need to complete the claim.
 - f) Where compensation has been received, in some cases payments have been made only after the person has died.
2. That this Council believes that:
 - a) The Windrush Compensation Scheme is not fit for purpose, the 44-page long application form is complex, and the requirements make it almost impossible for people to prove their status.
 - b) The Windrush generation are victims through no fault of their own, they were invited here by the British Government and have worked hard all their lives, paying tax and national insurance yet they are being denied access to compensation.
 - c) The Government should make the scheme more accessible, and as suggested in the Windrush Lessons Learnt Review, the Home Secretary should appoint a migrant's commissioner and commit to holding reconciliation events with people affected to listen and reflect on their stories.
3. That this Council resolves to:

- a) Ask the Chief Executive of the Council to write to the Home Secretary to:
 - i) ask for the Windrush Compensation Scheme process to be simplified and for legal aid to be awarded; and
 - ii) request the appointment of a migrant's commissioner and commit to holding reconciliation events with people affected to listen and reflect on their stories, as suggested in the Windrush Lessons Learned Review.
- b) Continue leading the way by celebrating an annual Windrush Day in Milton Keynes to celebrate and recognise the huge contribution of the Windrush generation and the community groups here today that continue to support residents across the city.
- c) Ensure the appointed Ethnic Minority Champion attends Windrush celebrations each year to mark the impact of their contribution to Milton Keynes.

CL32 Report on Committee Proportionality

The Mayor moved and the Deputy Mayor seconded the following recommendations:

“That Council note the revised political makeup of Milton Keynes City Council and agree:

- (a) revised allocations to Committees, and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority as set out in Annex A of the report; and
- (b) revised appointments to Committees, and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority as set out in Annex B of the report.”

The recommendations were agreed by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

That Council note the revised political makeup of Milton Keynes City Council and agree:

- (a) revised allocations to Committees, and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority as set out in Annex A of the report; and
- (b) revised appointments to Committees, and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority as set out in Annex B of the report.