



SUMMONS TO THE MEETING OF MILTON KEYNES CITY COUNCIL

When: Wednesday 24 January 2024 at 19:30

Where: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes MK9 3EJ and on [YouTube](#)

Sharon Bridglalsingh
Director Law and Governance

Public Questions and Petitions

The deadline for the submission of public questions and petitions is 7.30 pm on Monday 22 January 2024 and should either be delivered to the address below or sent by email to democracy@milton-keynes.gov.uk

The Mayor has the discretion to extend the deadline if the matter is sufficiently urgent and relates to a matter that has arisen in the last 48 hours, subject to the question being submitted a minimum of 30 minutes before the start of the meeting.

Public Speaking

Persons wishing to speak on an agenda item must give notice by not later than 7.15 pm on the day of the meeting. Requests can be sent in advance by email to democracy@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Enquiries

Please contact Roslyn Tidman on 01908 254589 or roslyn.tidman@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Public attendance / Participation

All our meetings are open to the public to attend.

We use our best efforts to either live stream meetings on YouTube, or upload recordings afterwards. From time to time there are technical problems which could mean we are unable to stream the meeting. When this happens, our meetings will continue, and we will do our best to upload a recording of the meeting after it takes place. Meeting minutes form the formal record and are published after every meeting.

For those registering or entitled to speak, facilities will be in place to do so in person or via video / audio conferencing, but this is not guaranteed. From time to time there are technical problems which mean we are unable to enable remote participation. When this happens our meetings will continue, although we will try to provide alternatives options, for example through a telephone call as opposed to a video call.

If you wish to speak at a meeting we recommend reading our guide to Public Participation at Meetings first to understand the process and technology behind participation. This information is [available in our Document Library](#)

Agenda

Agendas and reports for the majority of the Council's public meetings [can be accessed online](#).

Webcasting and permission to be filmed

Please note that this meeting will be filmed either for live broadcast or to view after the meeting on the internet and can be viewed online at [YouTube](#). Generally, the public gallery is not filmed, but by entering the meeting room and using the public seating area you are consenting to be filmed.

Recording of Meetings

The proceedings at this meeting (which will include those making representations by video or audio conference) will be recorded and retained for a period of six months, for the purpose of webcasting and preparing the minutes of the meeting.

In accordance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, you can film, photograph, record or use social media at any Council meetings that are open to the public. If you are reporting the proceedings, please respect other members of the public at the meeting who do not want to be filmed. You should also not conduct the reporting so that it disrupts the good order and conduct of the meeting. While you do not need permission, you can contact the Council's staff in advance of the meeting to discuss facilities for reporting the proceedings and a contact is included on the front of the agenda, or you can liaise with staff at the meeting. View the [Guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government](#)

Agenda

Procedures

1(a) Apologies

1(b) Minutes

(Pages 5 - 34)

To approve, and the Mayor to sign as correct records, the Minutes of the meetings of Council held on 22 November 2023 and 5 December 2023.

1(c) Disclosures of Interest

Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, other registerable interests, or non-registerable interests (including other pecuniary interests) they may have in the business to be transacted, and officers to declare any interests they may have in any contract to be considered.

1(d) Announcements

Public Involvement

2(a) Petitions

Any petitions received by the deadline of 7.30 pm on Monday 22 January 2024 will be reported at the meeting.

2(b) Questions from Members of the Public

To receive questions and provide answers to questions received from members of the public by the deadline of 7:30 pm on Monday 22 January 2024 and any urgent questions agreed by the Mayor.

3. Business Remaining from Last Meeting

None.

4. Reports from Cabinet and Committees

4(a) Making the Emberton Neighbourhood Plan - Delegated Decisions (19 December)

(Pages 35 - 38)

Councillors' Matters

5. Councillors' Questions

Councillors to ask questions of the Leader, a Cabinet Member, the Chair of any Committee, or the Leader of a Political Group on the Council.

6. Notices of Motions

The motions are set out in full below:

- 6(a) **Motion 1 - Demand the Government hold a public inquiry into the shortage of ADHD medication** (Pages 39 - 40)
- 6(b) **Motion 2 - Recognising the contribution of Tamil people to Milton Keynes** (Pages 41 - 42)

Reports

7. **Report on Changes to the Council's Constitution** (Pages 43 - 48)
To consider a report on proposed changes to the Council's constitution.
8. **Electoral Review - Council Size Submission** (Pages 49 - 88)
To consider a report on the Council's Council Size Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
9. **Scheme of Councillors Allowances for 2024/25** (Pages 89 - 102)
To consider a report on the Scheme of Councillors' Allowances for 2024/25.
10. **Ward Based Budgets 2023/24** (Pages 103 - 104)
All Councillors have a budget of £1,000 to spend on Ward based issues, giving them the ability to make contributions to projects carried out in their local communities by local organisations.

For the period 1 April 2023 to 9 January 2024, applications totalling £14,600 (Ward Based Budget) have been approved. Details of the applications are attached.

Contact Officer: Siobhan Pitkin (Business Support & Civic Events Manager) - 01908 252426.

Background Papers: None
11. **Quarterly Report on Special Urgency Decisions**
In accordance with Access to Information Procedure Rule 17.4, to note that the Provisions for Special Urgency, as set out in Access to Information Procedure Rule 16, which provides for key decisions to be taken within the usual 5-day notice period, subject to the agreement of the Chair/Vice-Chairs of the Scrutiny Management Committee, was not used during the period 1 September 2023 to 31 December 2023.

The Council is also advised that Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16(j), which provides for the call-in procedure to not apply with the agreement of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Scrutiny Management Committee, was not used during the period 1 September 2023 to 31 December 2023.

Contact: Peter Brown (Head of Democratic Services) - 01908 253671

Background Papers: None



Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 22 November 2023 at 19:30

Present: Councillor Legg (Mayor)

Councillors M Bradburn (Deputy Mayor), Andrew, Andrews, Ahmad, Bailey, Bell, K Bradburn, R Bradburn, Brown, Cannon, A Carr, 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, Muzammil, Nayee, Nolan, Oyakhire, Petchey, Priestley, Rolfe, Smith, Taylor, Townsend, Trendall, Verma and Wilson-Marklew

Alderman Miles and Alderwoman Saunders and 12 members of the public

Apologies Councillors Adewale, De Villiers, N Khan, McPake, McQuillan, Middleton, Oguntola, Wardle 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 and Alderman Tallack

CL57 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That with the correction to the spelling of the name of the member of the public at CL151 that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18 October 2023 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

CL58 Disclosures of Interest

Councillor D Hopkins advised, for the purpose of transparency, that with regard to Item 6(c) Motion 3 – Is Milton Keynes Killing me, that he was an asthmatic.

Councillors McBride (unpaid Director, MK Dons SET) and Priestley (Board Member, MK Dons SET) declared a Non-Registerable Interest in Item 6(a), Motion 1 – The Provision of Youth Football Facilities across Milton Keynes, and left the Chamber while the matter was discussed and decided.

Councillors Crooks and Rolfe advised, for the purpose of transparency, that with regard to Item 6(a), Motion 1 – The Provision of Youth Football Facilities across Milton Keynes, that they were a member of the Board of the MK Dons SET.

CL59 Announcements

The Mayor made Announcements in respect of: Armistice Day/Remembrance Sunday; White Ribbon Day; Christmas Lights Switch On and the safe arrival of Councillor Adewale's twin daughters.

CL60 Petitions

The Council received a petition from Parish Councillor Pryor on behalf of local residents requesting the Council implement a 20 MPH limit in the High Street, Haversham.

The Cabinet member advised that this request was already included in the recently agreed 20 MPH programme of works.

CL61 Questions from Members of the Public

Questions were received from five members of the public.

Careera Jain (Youth Council member) asked Councillor Darlington, what resources had been provided for young people to support information and awareness of the White Ribbon campaign to end violence and abuse against women and girls?

Councillor Darlington indicated that local schools had access to a programme called 'break the cycle' which was for survivors or perpetrators or those at risk of perpetrating violence against women or girls. The Council was also talking to schools and asking them to consider signing up to be White Ribbon Schools.

As a supplementary question Careera Jain asked Councillor Darlington, was there any resources available to those young people who were home schooled or not in education, employment or training?

Councillor Darlington indicated that these were both harder to reach groups and she was keen that the programme become fully integrated into the curriculum rather than an add-on so that all young people could access this resource and preferably from as an earlier age as possible.

Elvashio Chattell (Chair of the Youth Council) asked Councillor Darlington, how could we encourage young people, especially men and boys to be positive advocates and ambassadors for the White Ribbon in MK?

Councillor Darlington indicated that it was important that local positive male role models came forward to act as advocates and ambassadors for the White Ribbon campaign.

As a supplementary question Elvashio Chattell, asked Councillor Darlington, the starting point to these conversations is often by assuming guilt, how can we approach these conversations more positively?

Councillor Darlington indicated that there was often some defensiveness but acknowledged that the silent majority who were not perpetrating this behaviour

should be promoted as behaving in a normal, positive way and we should use the voices of these positive male role models more.

Laurence Kavanagh asked Councillor Townsend, regarding major events at Campbell Park, can the Cabinet member give an undertaking that those living in Campbell Park and Campbell Wharf would always be able to access their homes, regardless of what is taking place in the park?

Councillor Townsend indicated that access to all properties should be maintained and this should be a key consideration of any traffic management plan for events at Campbell Park. The Cabinet member undertook to ask officers to investigate the concerns about the early closure of the road and to ensure that event organisers were aware of their responsibility to have marshalls in place to maintain exit and entry points.

As a supplementary question Laurence Kavanagh asked Councillor Townsend, that it would be helpful for large events if the no-stopping signage could be extended further along Avebury Boulevard?

Councillor Townsend indicated that she would ask officers to investigate this request.

David Lee (Tinkers Bridge Residents Association) asked Councillor Darlington, with regard to the evidence required to access grant funding for events, would the Cabinet member agree that, while financial accountability must be present, the detail required in this case has been excessive, and counterproductive to facilitating a very desirable activity?

Councillor Darlington indicated that every single penny in the Housing Revenue Account needed to be accounted for and it must be spent on the benefit of current or future tenants. The Council had rigorous processes in place which were currently under review including where the money was spent within the HRA.

As a supplementary question David Lee asked Councillor Darlington, when volunteers carry out activities this means that Council funds go further and the work of residents associations and volunteer groups should be supported?

Councillor Darlington thanked all volunteers for the work they did during the covid pandemic and are continuing to do through the cost of living crisis to support residents in every area across the city. There were amazing volunteers in Milton Keynes which help to create and strengthen our communities.

Will Matthews submitted a question but did not attend the meeting. The Mayor did not ask for a response to be provided.

ACTIONS:

Councillor Townsend undertook to ask officers to make sure that the organisers of major events at Campbell Park are clear on their commitments regarding road closures and to ask officers to investigate the request regarding the extension of no-stopping signage along the urban clearway.

CL62 Business Remaining from Last Meeting

None remaining.

CL63 Constitutional Changes - Planning Committee (7 September 2023)

This item was taken with Item 7 – Report on Changes to the Council’s Constitution.

CL64 Councillors' Questions

Questions were received from Councillors Hume, Andrew, Oyakhire, Andrews, K Bradburn, Smith, M Khan, Clarke, Hearnshaw, Bailey and Lancaster.

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

Councillor Hume asked Councillor Marland, with regard to the dozens of councils across the country who were threatened effectively with bankruptcy and who were issuing Section 114 Notices, could he please reassure members that this Council was not going bankrupt?

Councillor Marland indicated that he was not able to provide this reassurance as on the current trajectory all councils were going bankrupt it just depended on how well run they were as to how long they could stave that off. Hopefully, when the draft budget was published the Administration would be able to show that this was a well run council who could provide a balanced budget for the next year and for future years.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Hume asked Councillor Marland, an important part of balancing the budget was the savings that were identified, could he provide an update on the position with regard to in-year savings?

Councillor Marland indicated that the Council had delivered on 94% of its in-year savings and this was a fantastic example of how officers and the scrutiny process deliver. The Leader further noted that a massive reason the Council had achieved a balanced budget was due to the work of Councillor Middleton as Cabinet member with responsibility for finance. The Leader advised that Councillor Middleton was stepping down from the Cabinet due to personal reasons and that this Council owed him a debt of gratitude for his work on this challenging portfolio over the last 9 and a half years.

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

Councillor Andrew asked Councillor Nolan, with regard to the question she asked last month regarding the serious issue of the transport incident with the Hanslope school bus and the request that Councillor Nolan meet with her and share relevant information, could she please provide an update as none had yet been provided?

Councillor Nolan indicated that she would ensure that a follow up happens to update Councillor Andrew.

Question from Councillor Oyakhire to Councillor R Bradburn (Cabinet member for Economy and Culture)

Councillor Oyakhire asked Councillor R Bradburn with regard to Milton Keynes having a thriving, vibrant and prosperous business community and being named as a hot spot for tech start ups, could the Cabinet member give members an update on what this Council was doing to support local tech start ups?

Councillor R Bradburn indicated that the Council was committed to supporting businesses and this year had set aside a fund to support small local tech start ups five of each would be awarded £7,000 each to ensure tech talent stays within Milton Keynes to create new jobs and opportunities for local people.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Oyakhire asked Councillor R Bradburn, when could applicants apply for the scheme?

Councillor R Bradburn indicated that applications were open now and could be accessed via www.themkig.com.

Question from Councillor Andrews to Councillor R Bradburn (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group)

Councillor Andrews asked Councillor R Bradburn, with regard to the Leader of the Council receiving a briefing about an offer of a landowner to accommodate a nuclear waste disposal facility in the City, was he briefed on this issue either by officers or the Leader of the Council?

Councillor R Bradburn indicated that he was not briefed on this issue.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Andrews asked Councillor R Bradburn, did he think that it was important that all councillors and officers, especially the Leader, should set an example by following the rules and keeping confidential information private and did he feel that the actions of the Leader had destroyed confidence that this Council could keep information confidential?

Councillor R Bradburn indicated that he was not privy to the facts so was unable to comment.

Councillor Marland asked the Mayor if he could make a Point of Personal Explanation and advised that the Council had been alerted to the fact that a site in the north of Milton Keynes had been identified and the Nuclear Waste services were keen to take that site forward if there was local support. Councillor Marland advised that he did not meet the officers from the Nuclear Waste Services, Council officers did and it was made clear that any proposal to take the site forward would only be progressed if there was local support but would ultimately be the decision of the government. Councillor Marland made no apology for asking the people of Milton Keynes whether there was local support for the site as that was the policy of the Nuclear Waste Services. In doing so a member of Parliament called the Council a liar and therefore it was in the public interest for him to disclose information to show that that the Council was not lying.

Question from Councillor K Bradburn to Councillor J Carr (Cabinet member for Tackling Social Inequalities)

Councillor K Bradburn asked Councillor J Carr, could she confirm what support the Council was providing to charities to support them over the winter?

Councillor J Carr indicated that the Council had recently published its 'Winter Plan' that included over £5m in funding support. This included £9,000/month towards the rental for the shared charities hub, £100,000 to support food charities and £300,000 to support people with financial advice and counselling.

Question from Councillor Smith to Councillor Mahendran (Chair of Planning Committee)

Councillor Smith asked Councillor Mahendran, could she provide an update on the recent Royal Town Planning Institute awards?

Councillor Mahendran indicated that the service had previously won an award for the best planning authority in the South East and while they did not win the main award they were the only team that was awarded a highly commended in the category. This was an outstanding achievement for the service given the criticism they had received from some quarters.

Question from Councillor M Khan to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Councillor M Khan asked Councillor Marland, could he provide assurance to all the people of Milton Keynes that the Council is one hundred percent committed to supporting peace between Israel and Hamas?

Councillor Marland indicated that I think you are correct that even a limited ceasefire is a move in the right direction, and I am in no doubt that we would all like to see a full ceasefire in Gaza as quickly as possible.

The loss of human life, particularly of innocent women and children, is always distressing. The level of the humanitarian situation in Gaza is unacceptable and needs to be urgently and sustainability addressed.

This council has been very clear that the terrorist actions of Hamas are evil. People in Israel have a right to live in security and to bring those responsible for terror to justice, and see an end to the ordeal for the hostages and their families.

However, this must be done in way that does not punish the innocent people of Palestine and within international law. It is right that pressure is being applied to ensure the government of Israel allows humanitarian aid into Gaza and Keir Starmer and the Prime Minister are right to be leading the calls for that to happen.

It is though clear that to be effective, any ceasefire must mean an end to violent action by both the government of Israel and Hamas. All leaders have an obligation to use their influence to bring this about. Anything other than that will simply mean the cycle of violence will continue.

The only way to a peaceful future will be a stable ceasefire and a renewed international effort to establish a two-state solution of a safe and secure Israel and a viable state of Palestine.

Milton Keynes City Council has already been very clear, on a unanimous cross-party basis, this is our collective view.

What is certain, however, is nothing I say will change the situation in Gaza at all. My focus therefore, as Leader of Milton Keynes City Council, is to ensure that we work with all our communities to foster good relationships where people can express their heartfelt opinions in a way that does not fall back on Anti-Semitic tropes or Islamophobic slurs.

Question from Councillor Clarke to Councillor R Bradburn (Cabinet member for Economy and Culture)

Councillor Clarke asked Councillor R Bradburn, how did he think AI would impact the business community in Milton Keynes?

Councillor R Bradburn indicated that he was fortunate to recently attend a roundtable to discuss artificial intelligence and it was clear that this was only a starting point for business across the city to work together to share ideas and best practice in this field. The Council would continue to assist, steer and listen to all businesses as it was our residents who would benefit from Milton Keynes being at the forefront of AI and the tech sector.

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

Councillor Hearnshaw asked Councillor Marland, could he provide an update on the establishment of a working group of Galley Hill residents and whether the Council is still looking to take forward its commitment on the community space?

Councillor Marland acknowledged that while there had been some delay in establishing the working group it would be a key priority for the new Cabinet member. The Leader gave assurances that the Council was committed to providing either a refurbished space in the existing building or a new space for the people of Galley Hill and Fullers Slade to have a community space going forward.

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

Councillor Bailey asked Councillor Townsend, could she provide an update as to how the new collection service had impacted on recycling and waste rates?

Councillor Townsend indicated that so far residual waste was down 21%, mixed dry recycling was up 37% and food and garden waste was up 12%. There was also much lower rates of contamination which showed that residents were thinking a lot more about what they did with their rubbish.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Bailey asked Councillor Townsend, could the Cabinet member confirm the Christmas waste collections schedule so this could be shared with residents?

Councillor Townsend indicated that in the week of Christmas that food and garden waste would be suspended and double recycling collections would take place.

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

Councillor Lancaster asked Councillor Marland, could he provide an update on the meeting with Crest Nicholson directors about Kingsmead Green?

Councillor Marland. indicated that there had been an exchange of letters which he would share with Councillor Lancaster but the Council had made clear their position that a 60 mph grid road in this area would not be acceptable, that the green needed to be maintained and that any development needed to ensure that the S106 contributions recompensed for the pressures that would be put on Milton Keynes services.

ACTIONS:

1. The Leader advised that Councillor Middleton was stepping down from the Cabinet and new Cabinet and Committee appointments would be announced in due course.
2. Councillor Nolan undertook to ensure that officers updated Councillor Andrew on the investigation into the school bus incident in Hanslope and the follow up actions that had been put in place.
3. The Leader gave assurances that establishing the working group and investigating the provision of a community facility in Galley Hill would be a priority for the new Cabinet member for Resources.
4. The Leader advised that he would update Councillor Lancaster on the recent meeting with Crest Nicholson regarding the proposed development at Shenley Park and any potential impact on Kingsmead Green so that he could share this information with local residents.

CL65 Motion 1 - The Provision of Facilities for Youth Football Across Milton Keynes

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

- “1. That this Council notes that:
- a) When presenting the outstanding Leah Williamson on 28 February 2023 with her Freedom of the City award this council undertook to ensure that there would be a legacy across MK in her honour to mark this momentous achievement.
 - b) Girl's football has been growing at a phenomenal rate in recent years, and the success of the Lionesses at European and World level has certainly

accelerated that demand. Add to that the ever-growing population growth and expansion in MK - demographically still a young profile, means that the continued growth for already thriving mixed grassroots youth football will continue for the foreseeable future.

- c) Sadly, the reality is that MKCC is still playing catch up in terms of facilities, and in many ways failing to reach its own rather modest targets set before the Lionesses recent achievements. Nowhere represents this more than in the Danesborough & Walton ward and in Wavendon in particular. Wavendon is MK's fastest growing area and home to the largest and oldest grassroots football club with more girl's teams than any other.
- d) Historically Woburn & Wavendon FC has relied upon pitch provision in Central Beds to satisfy demand for its members (who are mostly MK residents), reflecting a deficit in pitch provision.
- e) The Strategic Land Allocation in SE MK promised 8.6 hectares of playing fields to satisfy demands from new developments. However, only just over 2 hectares will eventually be delivered, simply adding further to the deficit. Similarly, grassroots football requires adequate midweek artificial floodlit facilities. These too have lagged behind demand. Already the new 3G at Glebe Farm Combined School in Wavendon is fully booked with a substantial waiting list.

2. That this Council believes that youth football enables our young people to:

- a) Make friends - making friends is an important part of social development for young people. Youth soccer teams provide not only the opportunity for our children, settled or newly arrived and of either gender not only to make friends, but also find a place where they can belong, build self-esteem and confidence, and create a safe space to talk about tough issues. Peer feedback and problem-solving addresses the causes of teenage vandalism and associated anti-social behaviour in some young people by giving them somewhere to go and somewhere to belong.
- b) Build life skills - playing football helps our young people build valuable life skills, such as hard work, decision-making, problem-solving, and communication. Through healthy competition, it also teaches the importance of teamwork and cooperation, balanced by good sportsmanship.
- c) Be active and healthy – youth football is a fun activity that helps young people to stay active and helps combat childhood obesity. With physical activity comes many health benefits like muscular development, but it's also important for kids to learn motor skills like coordination and balance.
- d) Promote gender equality - gender equality is core to effective and sustainable development, and participating in youth football can help break down gender stereotypes.

- e) Experience the joy of childhood - when it comes down to it, football is a game! It's an outlet for kids to play and have fun.
3. That this Council resolves to ask the executive to:
- a) Provide more safe, well designed and constructed grass pitches within future expansion areas in line with real not minimum estimates of demand. The provision of playing fields needs to match the promises made in full. Past deficits need to be addressed. Football facilities need to be delivered earlier in line with housing development (not years later after the majority of houses have been constructed and the communities have moved in).
 - b) Address the need for more floodlit artificial surfaces in line with new housing developments and population growth.
 - c) Address the issues associated with costs and accessibility – be it grass or artificial surface, there has been some reliance on schools to open up their facilities across the city for community use. Community access agreements need to be delivered with all schools be they Academies or Maintained, with a requirement in the agreements to offer realistically priced and year-round community access.
 - d) Undertake a city-wide audit of all youth football facilities and existing grass pitches to assess the level of investment required to improve quality, reduce postponements and grow truly local participation.
 - e) Include a specific section (prepared in conjunction with Sport England) either included in or as an associate document to Plan:MK 2, devoted to setting out just how Plan:MK 2 will ensure the delivery of open space provision for youth football through an ambitious determination to accelerate the provision of such facilities and meet the demand for grassroots football (especially for girls) and in so doing engage and work with the National Football Foundation to garner advice, financial assistance and guidance.”

Councillor J Carr moved the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Bell:

- “1. That this Council notes that:
- a) When presenting the outstanding Leah Williamson on 28 February 2023 with her Freedom of the City award this council undertook to ensure that there would be a legacy across MK in her honour to mark this momentous achievement.
 - b) Girl's football has been growing at a phenomenal rate in recent years, and the success of the Lionesses at European and World level has certainly accelerated that demand. Add to that the ever-growing population growth and expansion in MK - demographically still a young profile, means that the continued growth for already thriving mixed grassroots youth football will continue for the foreseeable future.

- c) Sadly, the reality is that MKCC is still playing catch up in terms of facilities, and in many ways failing to reach its own rather modest targets set before **The Council's pitch strategy, prepared using the Sport England matrix is being delivered, but the increase in the women's games shows the need for more space to meet our aspirations driven by** the Lionesses recent achievements. Nowhere represents this more than in the Danesborough & Walton ward and in Wavendon in particular. Wavendon is MK's fastest growing area and home to the largest and oldest grassroots football club with more girl's teams than any other.
- d) Historically Woburn & Wavendon FC has relied upon pitch provision in Central Beds to satisfy demand for its members (who are mostly MK residents), reflecting a deficit in pitch provision.
- e) The Strategic Land Allocation in SE MK promised 8.6 hectares of playing fields to satisfy demands from new developments. However, only just over 2 hectares will eventually be delivered, simply adding further to the deficit. Similarly, grassroots football requires adequate midweek artificial floodlit facilities, **which is recognised within the strategy, with clubs encouraged to access funding via the FA and Football Foundation to ensure this is delivered.** These too have lagged behind demand. Already the new 3G at Glebe Farm Combined School in Wavendon is fully booked with a substantial waiting list.

2. That this Council believes that youth football enables our young people to:

- a) Make friends - making friends is an important part of social development for young people. Youth soccer teams provide not only the opportunity for our children, settled or newly arrived and of either gender not only to make friends, but also find a place where they can belong, build self-esteem and confidence, and create a safe space to talk about tough issues. Peer feedback and problem-solving addresses the causes of teenage vandalism and associated anti-social behaviour in some young people by giving them somewhere to go and somewhere to belong.
- b) Build life skills - playing football helps our young people build valuable life skills, such as hard work, decision-making, problem-solving, and communication. Through healthy competition, it also teaches the importance of teamwork and cooperation, balanced by good sportsmanship.
- c) Be active and healthy – youth football is a fun activity that helps young people to stay active and helps combat childhood obesity. With physical activity comes many health benefits like muscular development, but it's also important for kids to learn motor skills like coordination and balance.
- d) Promote gender equality - gender equality is core to effective and sustainable development, and participating in youth football can help break down gender stereotypes.

- e) Experience the joy of childhood - when it comes down to it, football is a game! It's an outlet for kids to play and have fun.
3. That this Council resolves to ask the executive to:
- a) **Continue to provide more safe, well designed, and constructed grass pitches within future expansion areas in line with the pitch strategy calculations as affirmed by stakeholders** ~~real not minimum estimates of demand~~. The provision of playing fields needs to match the promises made in full. Past deficits need to be addressed. Football facilities need to **continue to be delivered earlier**, in line with housing development ~~(not years later after the majority of houses have been constructed and the communities have moved in)~~. **as shown by the facilities at Brooklands, Tattenhoe Park, Fairfields and Whitehouse, but recognising the increasing need for more, including in the South East.**
 - b) **Continue to address the need for more floodlit artificial surfaces in line with new housing developments and population growth as set out with the Council's Pitch Strategy.**
 - c) **Continue to address the issues associated with costs and accessibility – be it grass or artificial surface, and value community cohesion with partner agencies who deliver more, such as schools, Town and Parish Councils and community groups, who** ~~there has been some reliance on schools to open up their facilities across the city for community use.~~ **Continue to expect Community access agreements to be adhered to as set out within Planning Consents, whether they** ~~be need to be delivered with all schools be they Academies or Maintained,~~ with a requirement in the agreements to offer realistically priced and year-round community access.
 - d) **Support the ongoing** ~~Undertake a city-wide~~ audit of all youth football facilities and existing grass pitches **undertaken via the FA and Pitch Power**, to assess the level of investment required **and encourage all landlords and clubs to take up the funding available from the Football Foundation** to improve quality, reduce postponements and grow truly local participation.
 - e) Include a specific section (prepared in conjunction with Sport England) either included in or as an associate document to Plan:MK 2, devoted to setting out just how Plan:MK 2 will ensure the delivery of open space provision for youth football through an ambitious determination to accelerate the provision of such facilities and meet the demand for grassroots football (especially for girls) and in so doing engage and work with the National Football Foundation to garner advice, financial assistance and guidance.”

Councillor D Hopkins accepted the Amendment.

The Substantive Motion was carried by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

1. That this Council notes that:
 - a) When presenting the outstanding Leah Williamson on 28 February 2023 with her Freedom of the City award this council undertook to ensure that there would be a legacy across MK in her honour to mark this momentous achievement.
 - b) Girl's football has been growing at a phenomenal rate in recent years, and the success of the Lionesses at European and World level has certainly accelerated that demand. Add to that the ever-growing population growth and expansion in MK - demographically still a young profile, means that the continued growth for already thriving mixed grassroots youth football will continue for the foreseeable future.
 - c) The Council's pitch strategy, prepared using the Sport England matrix is being delivered, but the increase in the women's games shows the need for more space to meet our aspirations driven by the Lionesses recent achievements. Nowhere represents this more than in the Danesborough & Walton ward and in Wavendon in particular. Wavendon is MK's fastest growing area and home to the largest and oldest grassroots football club with more girl's teams than any other.
 - d) Historically Woburn & Wavendon FC has relied upon pitch provision in Central Beds to satisfy demand for its members (who are mostly MK residents), reflecting a deficit in pitch provision.
 - e) The Strategic Land Allocation in SE MK promised 8.6 hectares of playing fields to satisfy demands from new developments. However, only just over 2 hectares will eventually be delivered, simply adding further to the deficit. Similarly, grassroots football requires adequate midweek artificial floodlit facilities, which is recognised within the strategy, with clubs encouraged to access funding via the FA and Football Foundation to ensure this is delivered. Already the new 3G at Glebe Farm Combined School in Wavendon is fully booked with a substantial waiting list.
2. That this Council believes that youth football enables our young people to:
 - a) Make friends - making friends is an important part of social development for young people. Youth soccer teams provide not only the opportunity for our children, settled or newly arrived and of either gender not only to make friends, but also find a place where they can belong, build self-esteem and confidence, and create a safe space to talk about tough issues. Peer feedback and problem-solving addresses the causes of teenage vandalism and associated anti-social behaviour in some young people by giving them somewhere to go and somewhere to belong.
 - b) Build life skills - playing football helps our young people build valuable life skills, such as hard work, decision-making, problem-solving, and

communication. Through healthy competition, it also teaches the importance of teamwork and cooperation, balanced by good sportsmanship.

- c) Be active and healthy – youth football is a fun activity that helps young people to stay active and helps combat childhood obesity. With physical activity comes many health benefits like muscular development, but it's also important for kids to learn motor skills like coordination and balance.
- d) Promote gender equality - gender equality is core to effective and sustainable development, and participating in youth football can help break down gender stereotypes.
- e) Experience the joy of childhood - when it comes down to it, football is a game! It's an outlet for kids to play and have fun.

3. That this Council resolves to ask the executive to:

- a) Continue to provide more safe, well designed, and constructed grass pitches within future expansion areas in line with the pitch strategy calculations as affirmed by stakeholders. The provision of playing fields needs to match the promises made in full. Past deficits need to be addressed. Football facilities need to continue to be delivered earlier, in line with housing development as shown by the facilities at Brooklands, Tattenhoe Park, Fairfields and Whitehouse, but recognising the increasing need for more, including in the South East.
- b) Continue to address the need for more floodlit artificial surfaces in line with new housing developments and population growth as set out with the Council's Pitch Strategy.
- c) Continue to address the issues associated with costs and accessibility – be it grass or artificial surface, and value community cohesion with partner agencies who deliver more, such as schools, Town and Parish Councils and community groups, who open up their facilities across the city for community use. Continue to expect Community access agreements to be adhered to as set out within Planning Consents, whether they be Academies or Maintained, with a requirement in the agreements to offer realistically priced and year-round community access.
- d) Support the ongoing audit of all youth football facilities and existing grass pitches undertaken via the FA and Pitch Power, to assess the level of investment required and encourage all landlords and clubs to take up the funding available from the Football Foundation to improve quality, reduce postponements and grow truly local participation.
- e) Include a specific section (prepared in conjunction with Sport England) either included in or as an associate document to Plan:MK 2, devoted to setting out just how Plan:MK 2 will ensure the delivery of open space provision for youth football through an ambitious determination to accelerate the provision of such facilities and meet the demand for grassroots football (especially for

girls) and in so doing engage and work with the National Football Foundation to garner advice, financial assistance and guidance.

CL66 Motion 2 - Boys NEED Bins

Councillor Trendall moved the following Motion which was seconded by Councillor R Bradburn:

- “1. That this Council notes:
 - a) Prostate Cancer UK’s campaign “Boys NEED Bins” which highlights the growing number of those who suffer with incontinence due to prostate treatment; and
 - b) that 1 in 8 men will get prostate cancer and 1 in 3 men over the age of 65 are estimated to have a urinary incontinence problem in the UK.
2. That this Council believes that:
 - a) men who suffer with incontinence should feel comfortable and dignified and be able to dispose of their incontinence pads; and
 - b) sanitary bins should be provided in all toilets so that waste products can be disposed of in a discreet and hygienic manner.
3. That this Council resolves to request the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council to work with officers of the Council to:
 - a) roll out a programme to provide sanitary bins in Council owned accessible toilets as soon as practicable in the present circumstances both financial and logistical;
 - b) write to the city’s MPs to ask them to publicly back the “Boys NEED Bins” campaign; and
 - c) call on other organisations across the city to support the campaign and provide sanitary bins for their employees and public use.”

The Motion was carried by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

1. That this Council notes:
 - a) Prostate Cancer UK’s campaign “Boys NEED Bins” which highlights the growing number of those who suffer with incontinence due to prostate treatment; and
 - b) that 1 in 8 men will get prostate cancer and 1 in 3 men over the age of 65 are estimated to have a urinary incontinence problem in the UK.
2. That this Council believes that:

- a) men who suffer with incontinence should feel comfortable and dignified and be able to dispose of their incontinence pads; and
 - b) sanitary bins should be provided in all toilets so that waste products can be disposed of in a discreet and hygienic manner.
3. That this Council resolves to request the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council to work with officers of the Council to:
- a) roll out a programme to provide sanitary bins in Council owned accessible toilets as soon as practicable in the present circumstances both financial and logistical;
 - b) write to the city's MPs to ask them to publicly back the "Boys NEED Bins" campaign; and
 - c) call on other organisations across the city to support the campaign and provide sanitary bins for their employees and public use.

CL67 Motion 3 - Is Milton Keynes Killing Me?

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

"1. That this Council notes that:

- a) Over the last 10 years the area of Wavendon and Woburn Sands has seen continual construction activity, with 9 major developments leading to the rise in the number of dwellings in Wavendon Parish increasing from approx. 350 to more than 3100 (with many more under construction) and with the expectation that as many of 4000 will be constructed in the so-called SEMK urban expansion area over the coming decade. As a result, residents in the area have endured almost continuous exposure to construction and its impacts.
- b) The physical environment is a key determinant of health. Construction activity can lead to relatively large changes in the physical environment in short periods of time. However, the impacts of construction activity on health outcomes are complex and are often overlooked in the planning process. Existing evidence of the way in which continual exposure to construction activity may result in health impacts is relatively limited.
- c) Through evaluation of conversations and observations from residents, local teaching staff and contractors and traders, it is clear that construction activity affects the lives of residents in Wavendon parish in particular. However, it is also reasonable to assume this impacts the lives of residents across the city area. As construction activity has increased across the area, there have been increases in complaints about dust, noise, vibration, vehicle movements and accidents.

- d) It is common to park in an area where construction is underway and to return to a vehicle within one or two hours to find it covered with dust. This is especially concerning when visiting schools such as St Marys CoE Primary or Glebe Farm Combined which are surrounded by ongoing residential developments under construction and where pupils, teaching staff and local residents have no choice other than to breath in these particles.
- e) Although there are a number of mitigation measures that are already put in place to lessen the impact of construction on local residents, it is clear that many residents in Wavendon have continued to feel the adverse effects of construction activity, in particular the continual breathing in of often microscopic particles of dust. Going forward, as construction in the area (and in other areas of MKCC) is likely to continue at a similar scale, continued emphasis must be placed on further measures that can be put in place to mitigate the adverse effects that many local residents have highlighted.
- f) According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) definition in 1948 stated that *“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”* Demolition and construction activity can lead to relatively large changes in the physical environment in short periods of time. And that whilst construction activity enables the evolution in the built environment necessary to support sustainable and healthy livelihoods it can also result in sudden changes in noise, pollution, dust and vibration that have knock-on impacts on health outcomes. Whilst construction activity is temporary, these changes can result in lasting effects on human health.

2. That this Council believes that:

- a) Residents across MK do ‘their bit’ in supporting much needed housebuilding but it seems to fall on the same communities, time and time again to take the burden and impacts of such building, year in, year out. Residents should have more consistent access to construction information and noise and pollution monitoring data and be made fully aware of the health and well-being impacts construction has on existing communities.
- b) The use of mitigation measures differs widely between construction sites. Best practise should be adopted consistently across all sites. However, currently, not all negative impacts can be fully avoided nor mitigated. Further appraisal, monitoring and constant review is required.
- c) Evaluation of the cumulative impact of development on health outcomes is a relatively new topic. MKCC (as one of the country’s fastest expanding areas) needs to be at the forefront of developing policy and practices to address the health impacts of development, including through the establishment of a MKCC Development Coordination Team (possibly funded by 106/Tariff monies). What is clear through discussion with local residents is that the cumulative impact of construction can have large impacts on health, often

beyond those identified by existing Health Impact Assessment tools and policy led planning deliverables.

3. That this Council resolves to ask the executive:
 - a) To commission a report into the impacts of construction on existing communities, and those early movers into such expanding developments. In effect, to source and commission an independent socio-economic and health consultancy specialising in understanding the impact of development and infrastructure on social, economic and health outcomes.
 - b) That the findings of the consultancy report should contribute to the developing evidence base towards the local plan Plan:MK 2 (MK2050).
 - c) That, subject to an appropriate evidence base, consideration be given to the remaining undeveloped area on the south east of Milton Keynes (located within the parishes of Wavendon and Woburn Sands) being granted a planning holiday where any future growth is only phased at the latter end of the PlanMK: 2 (MK2050) period, in effect to be undertaken no earlier than the mid 2040's."

Councillor Mahendran moved the following Amendment which was seconded by Councillor Marland.

- "1. That this Council notes that:
 - a) Over the last 10 years the area of Wavendon and Woburn Sands has seen continual construction activity, with 9 major developments leading to the rise in the number of dwellings in Wavendon Parish increasing from approx. 350 to more than 3100 (with many more under construction) and with the expectation that as many of 4000 will be constructed in the so-called SEMK urban expansion area over the coming decade. As a result, residents in the area have endured almost continuous exposure to construction and its impacts.
 - b) The physical environment is a key determinant of health. Construction activity can lead to relatively large changes in the physical environment in short periods of time. However, the impacts of construction activity on health outcomes are complex and are often overlooked in the planning process. Existing evidence of the way in which continual exposure to construction activity may result in health impacts is relatively limited.
 - c) Through evaluation of conversations and observations from residents, local teaching staff and contractors and traders, it is clear that construction activity affects the lives of residents in Wavendon parish in particular. However, it is also reasonable to assume this impacts the lives of residents across the city area. As construction activity has increased across the area, there have been

increases in complaints about dust, noise, vibration, vehicle movements and accidents.

- d) It is common to park in an area where construction is underway and to return to a vehicle within one or two hours to find it covered with dust. This is especially concerning when visiting schools such as St Marys CoE Primary or Glebe Farm Combined which are surrounded by ongoing residential developments under construction and where pupils, teaching staff and local residents have no choice other than to breath in these particles.
- e) Although there are a number of mitigation measures that are already put in place to lessen the impact of construction on local residents, it is clear that many residents in Wavendon have continued to feel the adverse effects of construction activity, in particular the continual breathing in of often microscopic particles of dust. Going forward, as construction in the area (and in other areas of MKCC) is likely to continue at a similar scale, continued emphasis must be placed on further measures that can be put in place to mitigate the adverse effects that many local residents have highlighted.
- f) According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) definition in 1948 stated that *“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”* Demolition and construction activity can lead to relatively large changes in the physical environment in short periods of time. And that whilst construction activity enables the evolution in the built environment necessary to support sustainable and healthy livelihoods it can also result in sudden changes in noise, pollution, dust and vibration that have knock-on impacts on health outcomes. Whilst construction activity is temporary, these changes can result in lasting effects on human health.
- g) That there are a great deal of wider determinates of health and the council has an obligation to be mindful of using phrases such as *“Is Milton Keynes Killing Us,”* with little to no evidence cited other than unscientific individual conversations that may or may not be subject to high levels of confirmation bias of our own unsubstantiated views.
- h) That there is a great deal of evidence that residents in Milton Keynes are dying prematurely due to several issues such as, but not limited to, the lack of affordable housing, poverty, stress, homelessness, a health and social care in crisis, record NHS waiting lists, the need to use foodbanks to feed children and severe prolonged cuts to public services in this country caused by the Conservative government and supported by a ramshackle, disorganised and incompetent local Conservative Group on MK City Council and two local Conservative Members of Parliament.
- i) One of the biggest factors in the health of an individual is the ability to live in a safe, secure and affordable home, a right now denied to millions of people due to 13 years of failure by a Conservative government and the lack of a

coherent long term planning, infrastructure and house building policy in this country, typified by the Member of Parliament for Milton Keynes North nationally supporting housing growth yet continually opposing and undermining well-planned growth in Milton Keynes.

2. That this Council believes that:

- a) Residents across MK do 'their bit' in supporting much needed housebuilding but it seems to fall on the same communities, time and time again to take the burden and impacts of such building, year in, year out. Residents should have more consistent access to construction information and noise and pollution monitoring data and be made fully aware of the health and well-being impacts construction has on existing communities.
- b) The use of mitigation measures differs widely between construction sites. Best practise should be adopted consistently across all sites. However, currently, not all negative impacts can be fully avoided nor mitigated. Further appraisal, monitoring and constant review is required.
- c) Evaluation of the cumulative impact of development on health outcomes is a relatively new topic. MKCC (as one of the country's fastest expanding areas) needs to be at the forefront of developing policy and practices to address the health impacts of development, including through the establishment of a MKCC Development Coordination Team (possibly funded by 106/Tariff monies). What is clear through discussion with local residents is that the cumulative impact of construction can have large impacts on health, often beyond those identified by existing Health Impact Assessment tools and policy led planning deliverables.

3. That this Council resolves to ask the executive:

- a) ~~To commission a report into the impacts of construction on existing communities, and those early movers into such expanding developments. In effect, to source and commission an independent socio-economic and health consultancy specialising in understanding the impact of development and infrastructure on social, economic and health outcomes~~ To progress a proper evidence base that ensures the impact of new growth is taken into account, and proper mitigations are in place, when developing polices for the New City Plan.
- b) ~~That the findings of the consultancy report should contribute to the developing evidence base towards the local plan Plan:MK 2 (MK2050).~~
- b) That, subject to an appropriate evidence base, consideration be given to the remaining undeveloped area on the south east of Milton Keynes (located within the parishes of Wavendon and Woburn Sands) being granted a planning holiday where any future growth is only phased at the latter end of the

~~Plan MK: 2 (MK2050)~~ **New City Plan** period, in effect to be undertaken no earlier than the mid 2040's, **noting the Leader of the Conservative Group consistently supporting the investigation of new settlements in the North of the council area to allow this to happen."**

Councillor D Hopkins did not accept the Amendment.

On being put to the vote the Amendment was carried.

Councillor Mahendran, the owner of the Substantive Motion, requested that the Motion be withdrawn. On being put to the vote the Motion was withdrawn.

RESOLVED:

The Substantive Motion (the Amendment having been carried) was withdrawn, with the consent of the meeting.

CL68 Motion 4 - Cycling and Walking Infrastructure

Council McLean moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor Geary.

"1. That this Council notes that:

- a) the cycling and walking infrastructure plan - area schemes, are currently out for consultation;
- b) schemes were developed without the input of many (if any) councillors despite them having in some cases detailed knowledge of historical schemes and their outcomes which this council has forgotten;
- c) at some consultation events, members of the public expressed frustration at the proposals and Ward Councillors were not present to help and facilitate discussions between members of the public and officers; and
- d) parishes and other organisations were informed about this scheme before MKCC councillors when they should have been informed before following the long accepted protocol on Councillor-Officer Relations (Annex E) that there should not be surprises for MKCC councillors from the council in the wards they represent.

2. That this Council:

- a) agrees this was unacceptable and must not be repeated;
- b) asks the Chief Executive to remind all staff, in-line with long held custom and practice, that councillors should be involved in the development of plans and should be informed well in advance of schemes going out for consultation; and
- c) further asks the Chief Executive to make sure that Heads of Service ensure in future this happens."

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

RESOLVED:

The Motion was lost.

CL69 Motion 5 - Housing Ombudsman's Findings

Councillor Geary moved and Councillor Taylor seconded the following motion:

- “1. That this Council notes:
 - a) with embarrassment and regret the findings of the housing ombudsman, a finding of severe maladministration against the council in regard to housing repairs for a disabled resident and her son, issues that went on over a space of years;
 - b) that this finding showed over 120 logs of works that needed attention over 4 years;
 - c) that the Council failed to react even after a MKCC Councillor became involved;
 - d) that the Council failed to respond within the required timescales to both a stage 1 and stage 2 complaint;
 - e) that the Council did not express empathy or sympathy with the tenant, something that costs nothing; and
 - f) that the Council was instructed to both apologise and pay compensation of £5,500.
2. That this Council requests that the Chief Executive:
 - a) confirm the compensation has been paid and the apology has been sent;
 - b) further write to the resident highlighting this meeting and further apologising on behalf of the Labour Liberal Democrat coalition and all members of the Council;
 - c) undertake a lessons learned exercise if it has not already happened and for the outcomes of this exercise, along with the full list of any changes to the way the Council operates to be forwarded to all Councillors as soon as possible, so that members can be assured that the issues highlighted in this report will not be repeated in this service or any other; and
 - d) be asked to provide assurances in writing to Councillors that the lack of empathy or sympathy in this case is isolated and is not cultural to the organisation as a whole.”

Councillor Darlington moved the following amendment to the motion which was seconded by Councillor Townsend:

- “1. That this Council notes:

- a) with embarrassment and regret the findings of the housing ombudsman, a finding of severe maladministration against the council in regard to housing repairs for a disabled resident and her son, issues that went on over a space of years;
 - b) that this finding showed over 120 logs of works that needed attention over 4 years;
 - c) that the Council failed to ~~react~~ **ensure sufficient record keeping of actions taken by council officers and the contracted service provider took to try and resolve the issues raised, and that a number of actions did not meet the standard expected by the Council** even after a MKCC Councillor became involved;
 - d) that the Council failed to ~~respond~~ **keep proper records and communicate appropriately** within the required timescales to both a stage 1 and stage 2 complaint;
 - e) that the **Ombudsman believes that in dealing with the complaint and concerns the Council did not do so with sufficient empathy or understanding of the resident's situation** ~~Council did not express empathy or sympathy with the tenant, something that costs nothing;~~ and
 - f) that the Council was instructed to both apologise and pay compensation of £5,500.
2. That this Council ~~requests that the Chief Executive:~~
- a) **requests that the Chief Executive** confirm the compensation has been paid and the apology has been sent;
 - b) ~~further write to the resident highlighting this meeting and further apologising on behalf of the Labour Liberal Democrat coalition and all members of the Council~~ **places an apology on behalf of the Executive and whole Council for this matter on record publicly;**
 - c) ~~undertake a lessons learned exercise if it has not already happened and for the outcomes of this exercise, along with the full list of any changes to the way the Council operates to be forwarded to all Councillors as soon as possible, so that members can be assured that the issues highlighted in this report will not be repeated in this service or any other~~ **notes the issue was discussed at the meeting of the Housing, Planning and Placemaking Scrutiny Committee held on the 27 September 2023 (draft minute HPPSC15) in which the Director of Environment and Property, and the Head of Housing Maintenance, Investment and Corporate Health and Safety gave an extensive presentation on the actions the Council has taken to improve the service in light of the LGO findings and that the committee made several recommendations on the matter, and asks that the information given at the**

meeting, and any subsequent actions taken, be made available to all Councillors; and

- d) ~~be asked to provide assurances in writing to Councillors that the lack of empathy or sympathy in this case is isolated and is not cultural to the organisation as a whole~~ understands that in light of continued financial pressures on council services, caused by continued funding cuts and the chaos of a Conservative government, supported by a ramshackle, disorganised and incompetent local Conservative Group on MK City Council and two local Conservative Members of Parliament, investment into services such as housing and support services such as customer services is not at a level the Council would like, but reiterates that this case is unacceptable and requests that during the budget setting process the Cabinet be asked to ensure that appropriate resources are being provided to address the issues raised by this case so it is not repeated in future; and
- e) welcomes the findings of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) into the matter, who is satisfied with the direction of the service, and that substantial improvements have been made over the last three years.”

Councillor Geary did not accept the Amendment.

On being put to the vote the Amendment was carried.

On being put to the vote the Substantive Motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That this Council notes:
 - a) with embarrassment and regret the findings of the housing ombudsman, a finding of severe maladministration against the council in regard to housing repairs for a disabled resident and her son, issues that went on over a space of years;
 - b) that this finding showed over 120 logs of works that needed attention over 4 years;
 - c) that the Council failed to ensure sufficient record keeping of actions taken by council officers and the contracted service provider took to try and resolve the issues raised, and that a number of actions did not meet the standard expected by the Council even after a MKCC Councillor became involved;
 - d) that the Council failed to keep proper records and communicate appropriately within the required timescales to both a stage 1 and stage 2 complaint;
 - e) that the Ombudsman believes that in dealing with the complaint and concerns the Council did not do so with sufficient empathy or understanding of the resident’s situation; and

f) that the Council was instructed to both apologise and pay compensation of £5,500.

2. That this Council:

- a) requests that the Chief Executive confirm the compensation has been paid and the apology has been sent;
- b) places an apology on behalf of the Executive and whole Council for this matter on record publicly;
- c) notes the issue was discussed at the meeting of the Housing, Planning and Placemaking Scrutiny Committee held on the 27 September 2023 (draft minute HPPSC15) in which the Director of Environment and Property, and the Head of Housing Maintenance, Investment and Corporate Health and Safety gave an extensive presentation on the actions the Council has taken to improve the service in light of the LGO findings and that the committee made several recommendations on the matter, and asks that the information given at the meeting, and any subsequent actions taken, be made available to all Councillors;
- d) understands that in light of continued financial pressures on council services, caused by continued funding cuts and the chaos of a Conservative government, supported by a ramshackle, disorganised and incompetent local Conservative Group on MK City Council and two local Conservative Members of Parliament, investment into services such as housing and support services such as customer services is not at a level the Council would like, but reiterates that this case is unacceptable and requests that during the budget setting process the Cabinet be asked to ensure that appropriate resources are being provided to address the issues raised by this case so it is not repeated in future; and
- e) welcomes the findings of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) into the matter, who is satisfied with the direction of the service, and that substantial improvements have been made over the last three years.

CL70 Report on Changes to the Council's Constitution

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

- “1. That the Civic Honours Protocol attached at Annex B of the report, be agreed.
2. That revised constitution documents (shown with track changes), be agreed:
 - a) Introduction, Summary and Explanation (Annex C);
 - b) Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Annex D); and
 - c) Financial Regulations (Annex E).
3. That in respect of the Council’s Protocol on Councillor-Officer Relations:

- a) Appendix A (The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity) be removed, on account of the fact it is guidance published by the Secretary of State and accessible online; and
 - b) Revised Appendix C (Councillors' Access to Information – A Hierarchy of Rights) (Annex F shown with tracked changes), be agreed and moved to become an Appendix to the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules.
4. That fully revised Contract Procedure Rules (Annex G), be agreed.
5. That the changes to Planning Committee documents, endorsed by the Committee on 7 September (shown with tracked changes), be agreed:
- a) Officer Scheme of Delegation for Development Management Matters (Annex H); and
 - b) Procedure for Public Participation at Planning Committee (Annex I).
6. That authority be delegated to the Director – Law and Governance (in consultation with the Leaders of Political Groups) to make minor and consequential amendments to the following documents:
- a) Responsibility for Functions;
 - b) Officer Employment Procedure Rule; and
 - c) Statutory officers and Proper officer Functions"

During the debate on the item, Councillor Geary moved and Councillor D Hopkins seconded, that the item be deferred. On being put to the vote the motion to defer was lost.

On being put to the vote the recommendations were carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Civic Honours Protocol attached at Annex B of the report, be agreed.
2. That revised constitution documents (shown with track changes), be agreed:
 - a) Introduction, Summary and Explanation (Annex C);
 - b) Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Annex D); and
 - c) Financial Regulations (Annex E).
3. That in respect of the Council's Protocol on Councillor-Officer Relations:
 - a) Appendix A (The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity) be removed, on account of the fact it is guidance published by the Secretary of State and accessible online; and
 - b) Revised Appendix C (Councillors' Access to Information – A Hierarchy of Rights) (Annex F shown with tracked changes), be agreed and moved to

become an Appendix to the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules.

4. That fully revised Contract Procedure Rules (Annex G), be agreed.
5. That the changes to Planning Committee documents, endorsed by the Committee on 7 September (shown with tracked changes), be agreed:
 - a) Officer Scheme of Delegation for Development Management Matters (Annex H); and
 - b) Procedure for Public Participation at Planning Committee (Annex I).
6. That authority be delegated to the Director – Law and Governance (in consultation with the Leaders of Political Groups) to make minor and consequential amendments to the following documents:
 - a) Responsibility for Functions;
 - b) Officer Employment Procedure Rule; and
 - c) Statutory officers and Proper officer Functions

CL71 Limited Scope Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

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

“That the Council approve the final proposals as set out in the report:

- a) To split the existing Polling District of Wavendon (HC) along the boundary shown in Annex B of the report with the effect that:
 - i. a new Polling District shown in Annex C of the report is created comprising the areas of Eagle Farm South and Glebe Farm (to the west of Newport Road / A1530); and
 - ii. the remainder of Wavendon Polling District (including land to the east of Newport Road / A1530) shown in Annex D will continue to vote at Wavendon Community Centre.
- b) The new Polling District will have its polling place designated as Glebe Farm all through School and its Polling Station will be the sports hall within the school.”

The recommendations were agreed by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

That the Council approve the final proposals as set out in the report:

- a) To split the existing Polling District of Wavendon (HC) along the boundary shown in Annex B of the report with the effect that:
 - i. a new Polling District shown in Annex C of the report is created comprising the areas of Eagle Farm South and Glebe Farm (to the west of Newport Road / A1530); and

- ii. the remainder of Wavendon Polling District (including land to the east of Newport Road / A1530) shown in Annex D will continue to vote at Wavendon Community Centre.
- b) The new Polling District will have its polling place designated as Glebe Farm all through School and its Polling Station will be the sports hall within the school.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 10.00pm



Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 5 December 2023 at 19:30

Present: Councillor Legg (Mayor)

Councillors M Bradburn, Andrews, R Bradburn, Brown, Darlington, Geary, Hall, Imran, Lancaster, Mahendran, Marland, McLean, McPake, Oyakhire, Rolfe, Townsend, Trendall and Wilson-Marklew and 8 members of the public

Apologies Councillors Andrew, Adewale, Ahmad, Bailey, Bell, K Bradburn, Cannon, A Carr, J Carr, Clarke, Crooks, De Villiers, Exon, Ferrans, Fuller, Hearnshaw, D Hopkins, V Hopkins, Hume, Hussain, Kendrick, M Khan, N Khan, Long, McBride, McQuillan, Middleton, Muzammil, Nayee, Nolan, Oguntola, Petchey, Priestley, Smith, Taylor, Verma, Wardle 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

CL72 Disclosures of Interest

None disclosed.

CL73 Announcements

None.

CL74 Reports from Cabinet and Committees

CL75 Cabinet - 5 December 2023 - The Lakes Estate Regeneration - Construction Contract

Councillor Darlington moved and Councillor Townsend seconded the following recommendation:

“That increased borrowing within the Capital Programme for up to £83.774M be approved.”

The Council heard from the Acting Chair of the Serpentine Court Steering Group during the debate on this item.

The recommendation was agreed by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

That increased borrowing within the Capital Programme for up to £83.774M be approved.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 7.45pm.

Executive Report

Delegated Decisions - 19 December 2023

Making of the Emberton Neighbourhood Plan

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Name of Cabinet Member | Councillor Peter Marland (Leader of the Council) |
| Report sponsor | Paul Thomas Director of Planning and Placemaking |
| Report author | David Blandamer Senior Urban Designer david.blandamer@milton-keynes.gov.uk |

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Exempt / confidential / not for publication | No |
| Council Plan reference | Not in Council Plan |
| Wards affected | Olney Ward |

Executive Summary

The report seeks agreement to recommend to Council that it makes (brings into legal force) the Emberton Neighbourhood Plan, following the successful referendum held on 23 November 2023.

1. Proposed Decision

- 1.1 That Council be recommended to make the Emberton Neighbourhood Plan pursuant to the provisions of Section 38(A)(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Reasons for the Decision

- 2.1 The local planning authority must make a neighbourhood plan where the majority of those who vote in a referendum are in favour of the draft neighbourhood plan.

3. Background to the Decision

- 3.1 The Emberton Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the Council for examination and subsequently publicised for a six-week period, ending on 20 June 2023. All comments received were then passed to the Examiner, Louise Brooke-Smith, who submitted her report on the Plan in September 2023, stating that the plan met the relevant basic conditions and requirements, and should proceed to referendum.

- 3.2 Following the examination, in consultation with the Parish Council, we accepted the examiner’s recommendations and proceeded to make arrangements for a referendum to be held on 23 November 2023.
- 3.3 The Emberton Neighbourhood Plan (attached at **Annex A** to the report) was successful at the referendum. In total, 117 people voted ‘Yes’ and 60 ‘No’; turnout was 34.5%. Under Section 38(3A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 a neighbourhood plan comes into force as part of the statutory development plan once it has been approved by referendum and used to determine relevant planning applications. The plan must still be made by the local planning authority within eight weeks of the referendum.
- 3.4 In accordance with the Act, the Neighbourhood Plan would be compatible with retained European Union and European Convention on Human Rights obligations. It would also meet the basic conditions (paragraph 37 of National Planning Policy Framework) required for neighbourhood plans. This was also the view of the Neighbourhood Plan examiner, as set out in her report (see **Annex B** to the report).

4. Implications of the Decision

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Financial | N | Human rights, equalities, diversity | Y |
| Legal | Y | Policies or Council Plan | Y |
| Communication | N | Procurement | N |
| Energy Efficiency | N | Subsidy | N |
| Workforce | N | Other | N |

(a) Financial Implications

Publicity and officer support costs associated with making neighbourhood plans is met within the Urban Design budget and staff resources to implement the plan come from the existing staff within the Development Plans and Development Management Teams.

b) Legal Implications

The Emberton Neighbourhood Plan has been consulted on in accordance with the relevant regulations and subjected to a referendum in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012.

In accordance with Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Regulations, we must, as soon as possible after deciding to make a neighbourhood development plan:

- (i) publish on the website and in such other manner as is likely to bring the Plan to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area:
- the decision document;
 - details of where and when the decision document may be inspected;

- (i) send a copy of the decision document to:
- the qualifying body; and
 - any person who asked to be notified of the decision.

In accordance with Regulation 20, we must, as soon as possible after making a neighbourhood development plan:

- (i) publish on the website and in such other manner as is likely to bring the Plan to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area:
- the neighbourhood development plan;
 - details of where and when the neighbourhood development plan may be inspected; and
- (ii) notify any person who asked to be notified of the making of the neighbourhood development plan that it has been made and where and when it may be inspected.

A Decision Statement (see **Annex C** to the report) will be published once Council makes the plan. As with any planning decision there is a risk of legal challenge, but that risk has been managed by ensuring that the regulations are being followed and that our decision-making process is clear and transparent.

5. Alternatives Considered

- 5.1 In the event of a ‘Yes’ vote in the referendum, we are obliged to proceed to make the Plan as outlined above, unless there is a breach of a retained EU obligation or Convention rights. The alternative option is to recommend to the Council that the Emberton Neighbourhood Plan is not made, if it is considered that there is a breach of a retained EU obligation or Convention rights.

6. Timetable for Implementation

- 6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be made by Council at its meeting to be held on 17 January 2024.

List of Annexes

- Annex A Emberton Neighbourhood Plan [Emberton Neighbourhood Plan | Milton Keynes City Council \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/emberton-neighbourhood-plan)
- Annex B Examiner’s Report
- Annex C Decision document for making the Emberton Neighbourhood Plan

List of Background Papers

- The Localism Act, 2011
- The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012
- National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 29 and 37

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NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Motion 1

Demand the Government hold a public inquiry into the shortage of ADHD medication

Councillor Bell (10 January 2024)

“1. That this Council notes that:

- a) In September 2023, the NHS issued a National Patient Safety Alert (NatPSA) about the shortage of certain medication used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- b) The shortage of medication has been caused by multiple factors, including changes to manufacturers, reduced production of some medications, delays in distribution, Brexit red-tape, and increased demands on stocks of medication with rapid rises in the number of ADHD diagnoses made.
- c) ADHD is a condition that affects people's day to day lives in many different ways. People with ADHD can be inattentive, hyperactive and impulsive, or a combination of both. Traits include restlessness, difficulties with organisation and concentration, and a tendency to act on impulse.
- d) ADHD can be a serious and impairing condition that affects children, young people, and adults across Milton Keynes.
- e) Although other medication remains available, they may not be suitable for everyone and the availability of this medication is not enough to meet the demands created by the shortage.
- f) The ADHD Foundation revealed that just over 200,000 (10%) of an estimated 2 million UK citizens with the condition are receiving medication.
- g) For people with ADHD stopping their medication can lead to withdrawal symptoms, leaving them feeling jittery.
- h) Many people are used to managing their ADHD traits with medication, thereby reducing the impact ADHD can have on their educational/professional life, relationships, and finances. Without this medication, people are left to navigate modern life which is geared towards neurotypical people, and this has the potential to negatively impact the day to day lives of people with ADHD in many different ways.
- i) Many people have been left without medication since September and will likely remain unable to access medication until Spring 2024.

2. This Council believes that:

- a) The severe shortage of medication is causing stress and worry among children, young people, and adults diagnosed with ADHD across the city.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

- b) ADHD medication is a lifeline for many, and without access to medication it can have a significant impact on their everyday lives, for children and young people this could mean struggling to attend or stay focused at school, and for adults struggling at work and with their everyday routines such as managing household chores, sleeping, and eating. The shortage is also negatively impacting people's mental and physical health.
 - c) People in Milton Keynes with ADHD are being let down and are being left stranded without support, with some only finding out there is a shortage of their medication when their pharmacy can no longer supply it.
3. That this Council resolves to:
- a) Ask the Chief Executive of the City Council to write to the Department of Health and Social Care and the city's MPs to demand they hold a public inquiry into the shortage of ADHD medication.
 - b) Call on residents across the city to sign the online petition demanding the Government hold a public inquiry into the shortage of ADHD medication <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/650973>"

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Motion 2

Recognising the Contribution of Tamil People to Milton Keynes.

Councillor Mahendran (11 January 2024)

- “1. That Milton Keynes is a thriving place that has consistently welcomed people from diverse backgrounds that have enhanced our city and contributed to the dynamism of our economic and social fabric.
2. That this Council notes that:
 - a) Tamil people have made significant contributions to the social, economic and cultural fabric of the UK; from serving in the Royal Air Force during the World War Two, Tamil scientists working on ground-breaking Covid vaccines, and an estimated 15,000 Tamil people working in the NHS, amongst other achievements;
 - b) the number of Tamil speaking people in Milton Keynes is increasing, with the 2021 census highlighting 1 in 100 people in the city can speak Tamil; and
 - c) many Tamil people came to Milton Keynes have experienced persecution and have rebuilt their lives here while contributing and enhancing our city.
3. That this Council further notes:
 - a) that January each year marks Tamil Heritage Month;
 - b) Pongal, the Harvest Festival, takes place from January 14 each year; and
 - c) that Tamil people make a rich contribution to social, economic and cultural life in Milton Keynes.
4. That this Council resolves to:
 - a) thank the Tamil community for their contribution to Milton Keynes and our country;
 - b) mark Tamil history month in an appropriate way;
 - c) highlight the celebration of Pongal; and
 - d) use the communications channels of the Council to raise awareness of these actions.”

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Council report

24 January 2024

REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Report sponsor | Sharon Bridglalsingh Director of Law and Governance |
| Report author | Peter Brown Head of Democratic Services Peter.brown@milton-keynes.gov.uk / 01908 253671 |

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Exempt / confidential / not for publication | No |
| Council Plan reference | Not in Council Plan |
| Wards affected | All wards |

Executive summary

The review of the Council's constitution in this council year is predominantly an exercise in ensuring legislative, consequential and other updates are reflected bearing in mind the comprehensive review of the Constitution in 2019. The bulk of changes identified were agreed by Full Council at its [November 22 meeting](#) and remaining proposed changes will come to Full Council once they have been considered by the relevant Committee, for example the Social Media Guidance for Councillors is under review by the Standards Committee.

This report brings forward the last significant change identified by the review which is to amend the Council Procedure Rules to ensure consistency with the Council's adopted Code of Conduct for Councillors in relation to how Councillors participate when they consider they have an Other or Non registrable interest. As it stands, there is a conflict between what the Code of Conduct and the Council Procedure Rules require a councillor to do. The proposed change addresses this by reflecting the position set out in the Code of Conduct: that a councillor may choose to address the meeting if the public are allowed to do so before leaving the room.

In accordance with Rule 21 of the Council Procedure Rules as this change is an amendment to the Council Procedure Rules, the report will be proposed and seconded without debate and stand adjourned until the next Meeting of the Full Council when it can be voted on.

The Council's Constitution and associated documents are available in full on the [Modern.gov](#) pages of the Council's website. Proposed revisions to Council Procedure Rules are set out in full in **Annex A** (amendments are shown as tracked changes for ease of consideration).

1. Decision/s to be made

- 1.1 That in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.2, the following recommendation, having been proposed and seconded, stand adjourned to the next ordinary meeting of the Council:
 - a) That revised Rule 19.5 of the Council Procedure Rules (shown with track changes), be agreed (**Annex A**)
 - b) That all councillors will attend mandatory refresher training in interests before the end of May 2024.

2. Background

- 2.1 Prior to being brought forward for consideration, Leaders of Political Groups were consulted upon the change proposed in this report.
- 2.2 The law prohibits any form of participation where a councillor has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI). That is reflected in the Constitution via the Code of Conduct already, and includes meetings where the councillor holding a DPI is not a decision maker at that meeting.
- 2.3 The proposed change addresses the circumstance where a councillor considers that they have an Other Registerable Interest (ORI) or Non Registerable Interest (NRI) in a matter. The Council's adopted Code of Conduct for Councillors (which replicates the Local Government Association's [LGA] model Code on this point, allows a Councillor to speak where they have an ORI or NRI if members of the public are allowed to do so. In contrast, section 19.5 of the Council Procedure Rules currently does not allow speaking where a Councillor has a Personal Interest (no longer relevant terms in the Code of Conduct but the principles are similar to an ORI or NRI).
- 2.4 It is recommended that section 19.5 is aligned to reflect the Code of Conduct for Councillors noting that this is what is also reflected in the LGA Model Code. As this is a change which directly affects participation of councillors, it is recommended that refresher training of all councillors should follow and be completed no later than the end of May 2024.

3. Why is the decision needed?

- 3.1 There is a conflict between Council Procedure Rules and the Council's adopted Code of Conduct. The basis of the position in the model LGA code is that there should be a high bar to prevent a Councillor from participating in a decision, and therefore the approach should be to allow the same participation rights afforded to members of the public, unless there is a good reason.
- 3.2 If this proposed change is made, it will reflect that is not an inherent misuse of position for a councillor holding an NRI or ORI to utilise any speaking rights afforded to members of the public and then leave a meeting. As a member of the local authority, Councillors are provided with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and make choices all the time that will impact others. However, they should not take advantage of these opportunities to further their own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.
- 3.4 The Code of Conduct applies to Councillors even when utilising public speaking rights at a meeting. The Code would not be disengaged, and so the principles and standards **(44)**

of behaviour required by Councillors would still apply. It would be a question of fact whether a councillor was acting in their capacity or not.

- 3.5 Councillors exercising speaking rights afforded to members of the public (where they have an ORI or NRI) would also be bound by the same rules – for example, giving notice in advance or abiding by time limits. There is no opportunity to speak if the public are not allowed to address the meeting on that item. This does not remove the option for another councillor who does not have NRI or ORI to make any relevant case or to represent the wider views of constituents of a councillor with a NRI or ORI.
- 3.6 A Councillor exercising a prerogative to speak as a member of the public would still need to declare the nature of the interest before proceeding. Each councillor is personally responsible for deciding whether or not to disclose an interest and it is also important that the public, and Councillors who are decision makers or committee members know about any interest that might have to be disclosed. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.
- 3.6 The change will reflect that Councillors must withdraw after speaking and must not be present in the room during the discussion or vote on the matter. This would take effect at a committee meeting, for example, even if a Councillor were not a member of the committee but was simply attending as a member of the public. By staying in the room, even if not permitted to speak or vote, it is a long-held doctrine of case law that a Councillor may still influence the decision or might gather information which would help in the furtherance of his or her interest. It is therefore in the public interest that a Councillor, after having made any representations, should withdraw from the room, and explain why they are withdrawing.

4. Timetable for implementation

- 4.1 Once seconded and proposed, this report and its recommendations stand adjourned until the next Full Council meeting when it can be debated, voted on and, any amendments agreed, take effect then.

Annexes

Annex A Draft Changes to Council Procedure Rule 19.5

Background papers

None.

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19.5 Conflicts of Interest

- (a) Councillors are under a duty to base their decision making on a consideration of the public interest, avoid conflict between personal interest and the public interest and resolve any conflict between the two, at once, and in favour of the public.
- (b) A councillor has a potential conflict of interest where any business of the meeting relates to or is likely to affect the subject matter of:
- (i) a disclosable pecuniary interest as described at [Appendix B Part 2 Paragraph A](#) of the Councillors' Code of Conduct and section 30(3) of the Localism Act 2011; or
 - (ii) [Other Registerable Interest \(ORI\), or Non Registerable Interest \(NRI\) ~~personal interest~~](#) as described at [Appendix Part 2 Paragraph B](#) of the Councillors' Code of Conduct
- (c) A councillor, where present at a meeting ([in any capacity](#)) who has a [disclosable pecuniary interest](#), must when prompted by the agenda item, at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent, disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest and unless a dispensation has been granted by the Council's Standards Committee:
- (i) not participate in any discussion of that matter at the meeting;
 - (ii) not vote on that matter at the meeting; and
 - (iii) leave the room whilst that matter is being [considered](#).~~debated~~.
- [\(d\) A councillor \(where present at a meeting in any capacity\) who has an other, or non registerable interest, must when prompted by the agenda item, at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent, disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest and unless a dispensation has been granted by the Council's Standards Committee:](#)
- [\(i\) not participate in any debate as a member of the body considering the matter;](#)
 - [\(ii\) not vote on that matter at the meeting; and](#)
 - [\(iii\) leave the room, whilst that matter is being considered, after having exercise any ability to address the meeting as a member of the public.](#)
- [Note: A councillor may speak on the matter, only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting, and if they choose to do so they will need to register to speak in accordance with these Procedure Rules.](#)
- (e) Where a councillor is present at the meeting where that member is to be called upon to make a decision in the public interest, and that councillor considers they have fettered their discretion in some other way before leaving the room he or she may first exercise the ability to address the meeting as a ward councillor or member of the public in accordance with these Procedure Rules.

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Council Report



24 January 2024

Electoral Review of Milton Keynes City Council

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Report sponsor | Sharon Bridglalsingh Director for Law and Governance |
| Report authors | Peter Brown Head of Democratic Services Peter.brown@milton-keynes.gov.uk |
| | Peter Taylor Electoral Services Manager Peter.taylor@milton-keynes.gov.uk |

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Exempt / confidential / not for publication | No |
| Council Plan reference | Not in Council Plan |
| Wards affected | All |

Executive summary

In October 2022 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission), notified the Council it had met intervention criteria for an Electoral Review. This was because more than 30% of our existing wards had an electoral imbalance of more than 10%. An electoral review commenced during the summer of 2023 which is broadly split into two stages:

| Phase | Activity | Dates |
|-------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Number of Councillors / wards needed | June '23 – Feb '24 |
| 2 | Boundaries and names of new wards | May '24 – April '25 |

This report is predominantly concerned with phase one of the review and asks Full Council to agree a position on how many Councillors it will need by 2030. In order to inform both phases of the review, electorate forecasts are also required to be prepared, both as a whole authority and Polling District level.

A Working Group of Councillors (Andrews, J Carr, Ferrans, Geary, Hume and Marland) was established to assist officers in the preparation of a Council size proposal and to provide feedback about the development of electorate forecasts. The Working Group supported a modest increase of Council size with some Groups supporting plus 3 Councillors and some plus 6 Councillors. Whilst not subject to a Council decision, the Working Group have supported officers to develop an electoral forecast of 220,000 local government electors by 2030.

1. Proposed Decision/s

- 1.1 That Council note the prepared overall local government electorate forecast of 220,000 by 2030.
- 1.2 That given the forecast increase in local government electorate by 2030, the Council confirms its position:
 - a) that ‘no increase’ to the Council’s size, neither secures appropriate representation for the residents of Milton Keynes, nor is sustainable from a Councillor workload perspective; and
 - b) a modest increase in Council size should be supported, recognising that there are arguments for and against an increase of plus 3 and plus 6 Councillors.
- 1.3 That the submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England attached at **Annex A**, with a proposed Council size of 63 (plus 6 Councillors), be agreed.
- 1.4 That authority be delegated to the Director of Law and Governance to make minor changes to the submission, in consultation with the Leaders of Political Groups.

2. Why is the Decision Needed?

- 2.1 As the Council is formally in review, the Commission require a submission from MKCC, to make a decision about the Councils’ size in March 2024. This will enable the second phase of the review (warding patterns) to be commenced, after elections in May 2024.

3. Background

- 3.1 Initially the Working Group directed itself to a question about the Council’s electoral arrangements (whether to continue to elect by thirds or to move to all out elections every four years). This is entirely a matter for MKCC, but any change would require significant public consultation and has a high bar in terms of Council support (two thirds of Councillors voting must support any change). Whilst some Councillors in the working group were supportive of exploring a move to all out elections, it became apparent that there would not be sufficient support for a change and so no further work was undertaken. This meant that Council size proposals were developed based on the principle of three member wards.

Council size

- 3.2 The Commission will make a final decision about our Council size having considered any proposals submitted. Proposals must be based on a range of factors and not solely driven by the ratio of Councillors to electors. Notwithstanding this, Milton Keynes is the fastest growing authority in the South East so there is a rudimentary argument that significant previous and expected growth will require additional Councillors. Indeed, the Commission will consider how our proposed council size compares to the number of and ratio of our CIPFA benchmarked authorities.

- 3.3 In line with published guidance from the Commission our draft Council size proposal considers a range of factors including governance arrangements, scrutiny functions and the representational role of Councillors in the community. To support our proposal a survey was prepared to consider the views of Councillors about the workload, activity and views about Council size. 75% of Councillors responded to the survey and more information relating to the results are set out in the draft Council size proposal.
- 3.4 If there is not unanimous support for the draft proposal, Political Groups and Councillors (along with any other interested parties) may also make a submission to the Commission about their preferred Council size.
- 3.5 Once the Council (and any others) have submitted their size proposals, the Commission will make a decision at their board meeting on 12 March about the Council size moving forward. This will then form the basis for consultation on warding arrangements. During Stage 2, the Commission could revisit their decision on Council size if they find that a different number of wards would deliver a warding pattern that better reflected local communities.

Electorate Forecasts

- 3.6 Alongside a Council size proposal, electorate forecasts must also be submitted by officers looking forward five years after the review completion in 2025 (to 2030). The Commission recognises that different approaches will be taken by different authorities but does provide a basic forecasting tool which considers the relationship between ONS population forecasts and the electorate over three years and then applies this to the ONS forecast population for 2030.
- 3.7 In discussion and agreement with the Commission and Working Group, this methodology was not used for three reasons:
- a) it relied on forecasts prepared in 2019, which significantly underestimated the population of Milton Keynes compared to census data for 2020 (and beyond);
 - b) it considered a relationship between the overall population and electorate as opposed to those over 18 and forecasts to be over 18; and
 - c) it applied overall forecast growth to all Polling Districts arbitrarily, which does not reflect the pattern of growth in Milton Keynes (some Polling District electorates have grown significantly, whilst others have fallen or remained relatively stable over a number of years).
- 3.8 Our approach, which has been shared with the Commission, instead compares the 18 plus population of Milton Keynes to registers over three years and then applies this relationship to the 18 plus population forecasts for 2030 using data for the Council's Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA), to achieve an overall forecast of 220,000.

3.9 Individual Polling District forecasts were then prepared using data based on likely housing completions, the number of young people attaining voting age in each ward and trends based on previous growth / decline. Because the total of all Polling District forecasts exceeded the overall forecast, in line with Commission guidance, they were then proportionately constrained back to 220,000 (the overall forecast).

4. Implications of the decision

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Financial | Y | Human rights, equalities, diversity | N |
| Legal | Y | Policies or Council Plan | N |
| Communication | Y | Procurement | N |
| Energy Efficiency | N | Workforce | N |

a) Financial implications

There are direct and indirect financial implications of an increased Council size. For example, more Councillors results in additional basic allowances being paid, whilst there are also additional costs, administering additional ward/s for elections.

Additional Councillors also require administrative and officer support and assuming no changes to the Council's Ward based budget scheme would be entitled to the same discretionary budget of £1,000.

As any increase in Council size would not take effect until 2026/27, pressures would need to be factored into the budget setting from this year onwards.

Table 1 - Illustrative increase in costs per year from 2026/27¹

| Scenario | Wards | Ratio | Basic allowance | WBB | Election Admin |
|----------------|-------|-----------|-----------------|--------|----------------|
| 57 (no change) | 19 | 1 : 3,842 | N/a | N/a | N/a |
| 60 (plus 3) | 20 | 1 : 3,650 | £37,500 | £3,000 | £2,000 |
| 63 (plus 6) | 21 | 1 : 3,476 | £75,000 | £6,000 | £4,000 |

b) Legal implications

The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act') gives the Commission the power to review the electoral arrangements of all, or any, principal councils in England.

The legislation states that 'the total number of members of the Council' forms part of an authority's electoral arrangements, but does not set out how many members (or Councillors) each authority (or type of authority) should have. Rather, it is the Commission's responsibility to determine the appropriate number of Councillors for each authority.

The Commission will, having had regard to size submissions from a Council, or other interested parties, agree a Council size that, in its judgement, enables the Council to take its decisions effectively, to discharge the business and responsibilities of the council successfully, and provides for effective community leadership and representation.

¹ Indicative costs shown - would be subject to indexation / inflationary pressures from 2027/28 onwards

c) Communication

Whilst there is no formal public consultation on this phase of the review, the Commission would take into consideration any alternative proposals submitted by Political Groups or other interested parties.

Once Stage 2 of the review commences significant consultation and engagement will be required with Parish Councils and other stakeholders.

5. Alternative(s)

5.1 To submit a different size proposal – this would require further work to review and present evidence to coherently support an alternative Council size.

5.2 To not submit a size proposal at all. Whilst there is no obligation on the Council to do so, this would mean that the Commission could make a decision about Council size that does not reflect the views of the Council. Alternatively, in the absence of a proposal the Commission may choose to undertake a public consultation on the matter, affecting the review timetable moving forward.

6. Timetable for implementation

6.1 An indicative timetable of events is set out below:

| Phase | Item / activity | Dates |
|-------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Draft Council Size Proposals considered by Full Council | January 2024 |
| | Council size proposal & electorate forecasts submitted | February 2024 |
| | Commission decision on Council Size | March 2024 |
| 2 | First consultation on Warding patterns | May – July 2024 |
| | Parish Briefing | May 2024 |
| | Second consultation on Warding patterns | October 2024 - January 2025 |
| | Final recommendations published | April 2025 |
| 3 | All out elections to new boundaries | May 2026 |

List of annexes

Annex A – Draft Council Size Submission

Background papers

Electoral Review of Milton Keynes City Council – a Guide for Councillors

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Council Size Proposal

January 2024



Contents

Part 1 – Introduction

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Executive summary | Page 3 |
| Introduction and background | Page 4 |

Part 2 – About Milton Keynes

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Our city | Page 5 |
| People and population | Page 6 |
| Our challenges | Page 8 |
| Our priorities | Page 10 |
| Our electoral registers | Page 11 |
| Conclusions | Page 12 |

Part 3 – Governance

| | |
|--|---------|
| Our governance / constitutional arrangements | Page 13 |
| Executive decision making | Page 14 |
| Overview and scrutiny | Page 15 |
| Other decision making | Page 16 |
| Conclusions | Page 19 |

Part 4 – Community Leadership

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Leadership in Milton Keynes | Page 19 |
| External partnerships | Page 20 |
| Casework | Page 21 |
| Other | Page 22 |
| Conclusions | Page 24 |

Part 5 – Final Conclusions and annexes

| | |
|---|--------------|
| The right number for Milton Keynes | Page 24 |
| A Meeting information (A1) / decision making structure (A2) | Page 26 |
| B More information about selected external partnerships | Page 28 |
| C Councillor survey results | Page 29 |
| D Insights from former Councillors | Page 30 |
| E Information and data sources | Page 34 (56) |

Executive summary

This submission proposes a revised council size of 63 which is an increase of 6 councillors (two wards) and represents a modest increase of just over 10%.

We are extremely proud of how representative we are of our communities in Milton Keynes, and we know this helps us to make better decisions. Our councillors are younger and more diverse than most councils, but this comes at a cost, because most also have to balance their duties with full time employment and their responsibilities as parents, carers, or other voluntary vocations. Evidence tells us that councillors have struggled to achieve an effective balance in the past and have sometimes had to make difficult choices about whether to continue, with young and talented councillors eventually drifting away. Many councillors already feel that there are too few councillors (our electorate grew faster than forecast at our last review) and draw a logical conclusion that inevitably more councillors will be required as our city continues to grow at pace.

Milton Keynes is growing fast, both in terms of its population and associated workload, but also its ambition and regional influence. It is not just a question of volume though, and the realisation of economic and geographical opportunities, must be balanced with substantial new town legacy issues. Alongside significant deprivation and health inequality, the Council will need to deliver new infrastructure alongside the challenge of maintaining highways, public realm, and housing stock, much of which was delivered together and will age simultaneously.

As a council we understand that we cannot simply continue to grow our numbers in a way that keeps pace with population growth over the coming decades, and that this would eventually result in an unsustainably high Council size. We also understand the current financial environment we operate in, and that an increase in Councillors equals increased costs and more work for officers. Therefore, a significant increase in Council size is neither affordable, nor the responsible thing to do.

The next 10 years will be critical in the continued evolution of Milton Keynes and whilst there are arguments to be made for a council size of 60 and 63, the latter will best provide the required capacity to deliver for the residents of Milton Keynes until 2030 and beyond.

Based on a forecast electorate of around 220,000 local government electors by 2030, alongside a council size of 63, the ratio of councillors to electors in Milton Keynes would be around 1:3,500 electors. Based on our CIPFA nearest neighbours' benchmarking group, we believe this puts us at the higher end, but not significantly out of step with comparable authorities.

| Authority | Ratio* |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Highest (Derby) | 1:3,510 |
| Median | 1:2,848 |
| Mean (Bury) | 1:2,571 |
| Lowest (Bracknell Forest) | 1:2,275 |
| | |
| Milton Keynes 2023 | 1:3,543 |
| Milton Keynes 2030 | 1:3,492 |

* Adjusted for Council's currently in 'review'

1 Introduction and background

This document has been developed in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Electoral Review of the council size (number of elected councillors) and the number of wards in Milton Keynes. The Council's last electoral review was in 2013 and resulted in an increase in size from 51 to 57. Before the 2013 review Council size had been unchanged since 1997 when the Council became a unitary authority.

The Council's size proposal has been developed by a cross party working group of elected councillors, with a range of experience and responsibility, supported by officers and subsequently agreed at full Council in January 2024. To support this work, all councillors were surveyed to understand their views about their workload and the council size and around 75% responded. We also spoke to some former councillors who had previously served in a range of positions but subsequently resigned from the Council because of demands on their time. Information from both sources is available as annexes.

The Council currently elects by thirds. There was no consensus amongst councillors to consider revised electoral arrangements (whole Council, all-out elections), which means that the Council size proposed is divisible by three, in order to support three member wards. There are advantages and disadvantages to both available electoral arrangements, but councillors and officers understand and work to mitigate the governance and resource challenges associated with elections by thirds.

Composition of the Council is currently as follows: Conservative 14, Labour 27, Liberal Democrat 16. Political Control of the Council is currently via a formal alliance of Labour and Liberal Democrat groups, although there is a reasonable prospect that the Labour group will take outright control of the Council after May 2024 elections.

The Council has a four-year [Council Plan](#) which was adopted in summer 2022 and sets out how we will deliver our [Strategy for 2050](#), which is our long-term vision for our city and the future. The plan explains our priorities and key objectives: for Milton Keynes to be a thriving, progressive and sustainable city. It also gives details of the outcomes that we want to see by 2026. An [annual delivery plan](#) breaks down what will be done to achieve these goals, with key milestones.

Unusually amongst predominantly urban authorities, Milton Keynes is fully-parished. In total there are 48 parishes in the city, with 41 parish councils (two of which are grouped) and 7 separate parish meetings. In total there are 347 parish council seats.

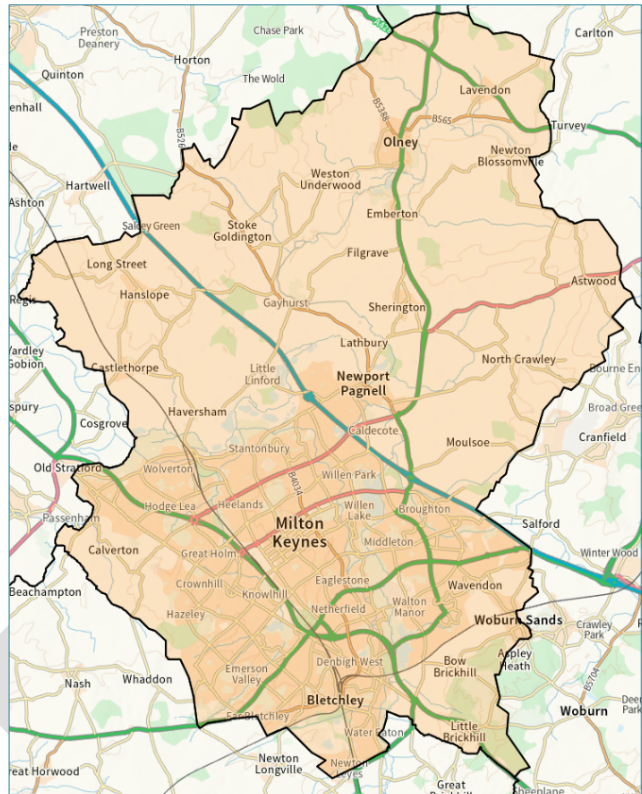
The Council operates a popular Youth Council and introduced a Youth Mayor role in 2023. Elections are held in schools every two years, supported by Democratic Services. Youth Councillors elected by their peers, alongside other co-opted young people, ensure a broad range of voices and experience are heard by decision makers. As well as regularly attending Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny Meetings, Youth Councillors are often joined at their meetings by MKCC Ward Councillors.

2 About Milton Keynes

Our city

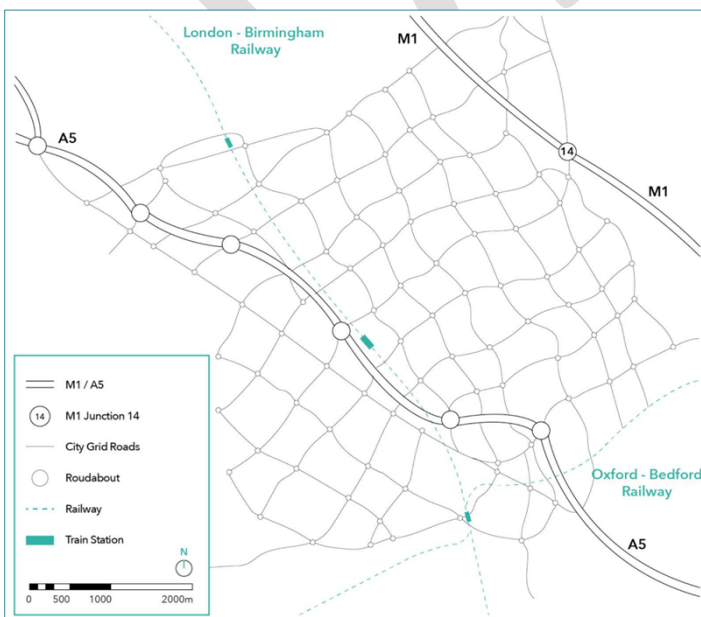
Milton Keynes was initially established as a non-metropolitan district with borough status in 1974, subsequently gaining unitary authority status in 1997. As part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022, Milton Keynes was designated a city, and became Milton Keynes City Council shortly afterwards.

Comprising 89 km² (34 sq. miles), including a city centre, thriving market towns and historic villages, Milton Keynes sits at the very north of the Southeast region, around 50 miles north of London and is roughly equidistant from Oxford and Cambridge.



About 60% of the city is urbanised, with the remainder consisting of agricultural land or other open space, predominantly in a more rural area to the North. The designated new city area blends with Bletchley to the South, Woburn Sands to the East, Stony Stratford and Wolverton to the West and Newport Pagnell to the North.

Despite a growing population, and relatively high population density (2,970/km²) Milton Keynes compares favourably to most places for green space per citizen (15m²). A range of interconnected, multifunctional 'linear parks' (parklands, green corridors, wetlands and lakes) run throughout the city. Milton Keynes' Parks Trust (a charity independent of the Council) manages over 6,000 acres of the city's green infrastructure.



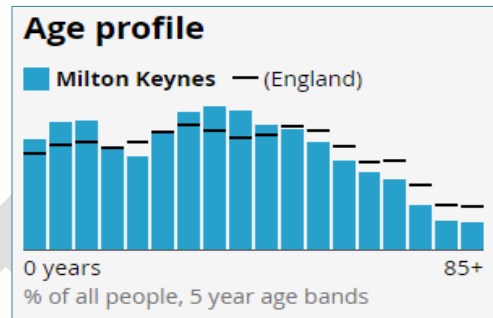
Much of Milton Keynes was purpose built and master planned, as the first of the 1960s new towns. Adopting a grid structure, comprising horizontal (H) and vertical (V) highways, which run between settlements and not through them, forming the basis and boundaries of natural communities. Alongside our grid roads are a network of 280km separated cycling and walking routes (Redways), which link the city, keeping vehicles and pedestrians separate.

People and population

The population of Milton Keynes is diverse and growing. Between censuses the population has increased by 15.3%, from around 248,800 to 287,000. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%), and the Southeast (7.7%), but comparable to some of our neighbouring authorities such as Bedford (17.7%) and Central Bedfordshire (15.7%). We're now well inside the top 20% of authorities in England for population size.

Older and younger population

Whilst the average age in Milton Keynes (37) remains slightly below England (40), our age profile has seen meaningful change at either ends of the scale, bringing with it, significant service pressure and other implications.



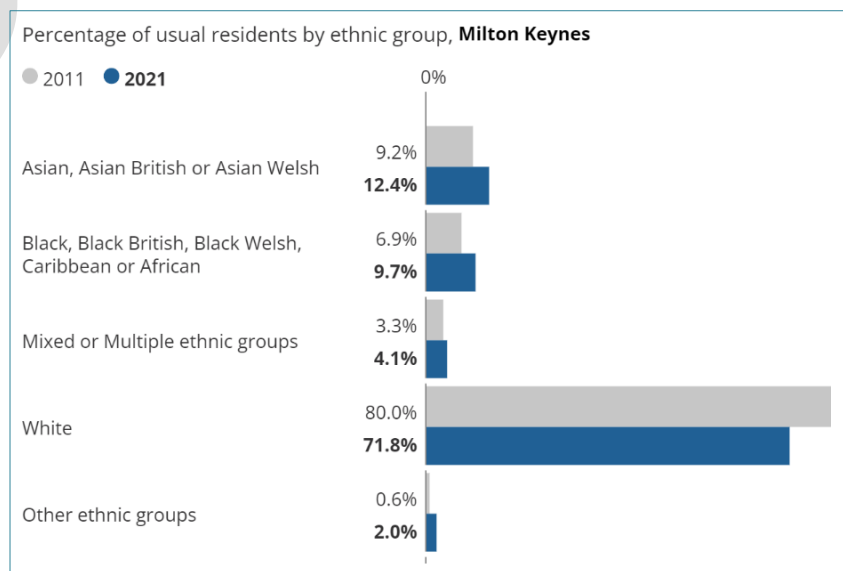
On average there are fewer people aged over 65 in Milton Keynes than elsewhere, but this number is growing fast. Those aged 65 years and over increased by 43% between census, which is a higher rise than anywhere else and compared with 20% across England.

Those aged 0-14 have also grown significantly and are now on average 1% higher than in England. As well as creating addition service demands and pressures in Childrens Services, the amount of young people who will attain voting age in the years between 2023 - 2030 will increase by 35% and as much as 66% in some areas.

Ethnicity

Milton Keynes is an increasingly diverse place and has nearly 30% ethnic demography (compared to 19% in England). Those identifying as Asian / Asian British increased 9.2% between census, whilst those identifying as Black / Black British, Caribbean or African rose 3%. The proportion of children in our schools from ethnic minority families is now over 50%.

Community cohesion in Milton Keynes is however strong, reflected in lower levels of reported hate crime than elsewhere in the Thames Valley area and strong / established groups such as Milton Keynes Islamic Arts and Culture (MKIAC) and the local Council of Faiths, regularly organising and leading interfaith community events.

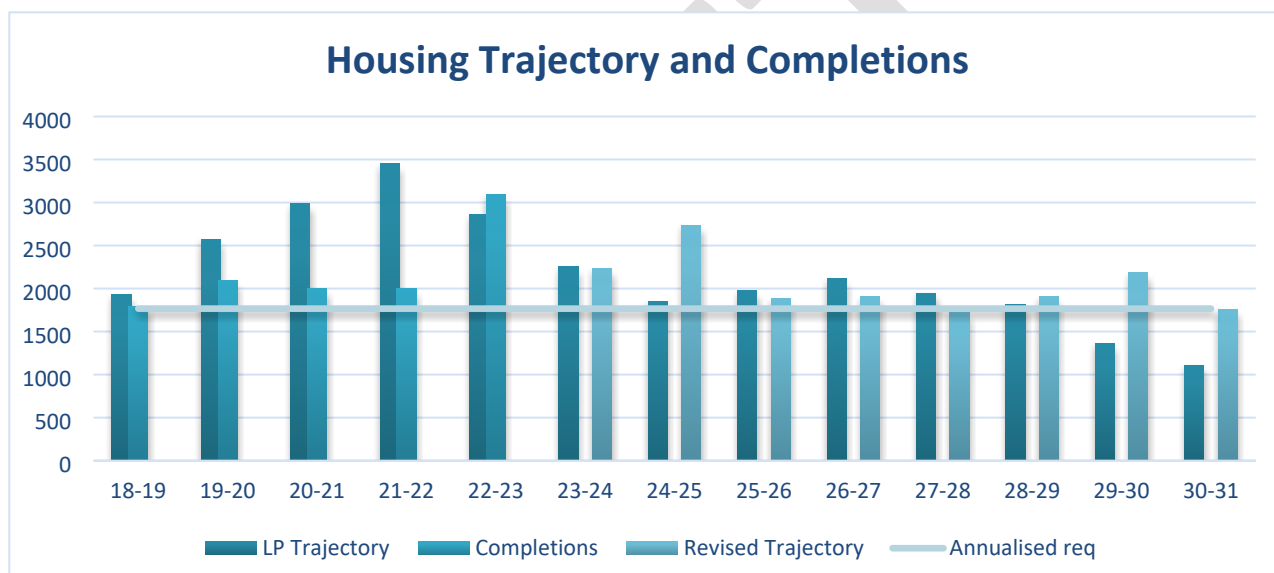


Population change

Latest ONS figures put yearly population increase in 2021 at around 2,500 per year, comprising around 45% natural increase (births and deaths) and 65% net migration. Population forecasts indicate that growth will be sustained until 2030 at between 2,700-3,000 per year with natural increase gradually slowing and net migration increasing.

Growth

Housing growth has been a feature of life in Milton Keynes for some time now and the Council has met its Housing Delivery Test (HDT) for the last 4 years, delivering over 10,000 homes over 5 years from 2018-2022. The Council's Monitoring and Implementation Team predict that a further 14,000 homes will be completed by the end of 2029 of which around 54% already have planning permission, a further 26% have outline permission and 20% are local plan allocation sites.



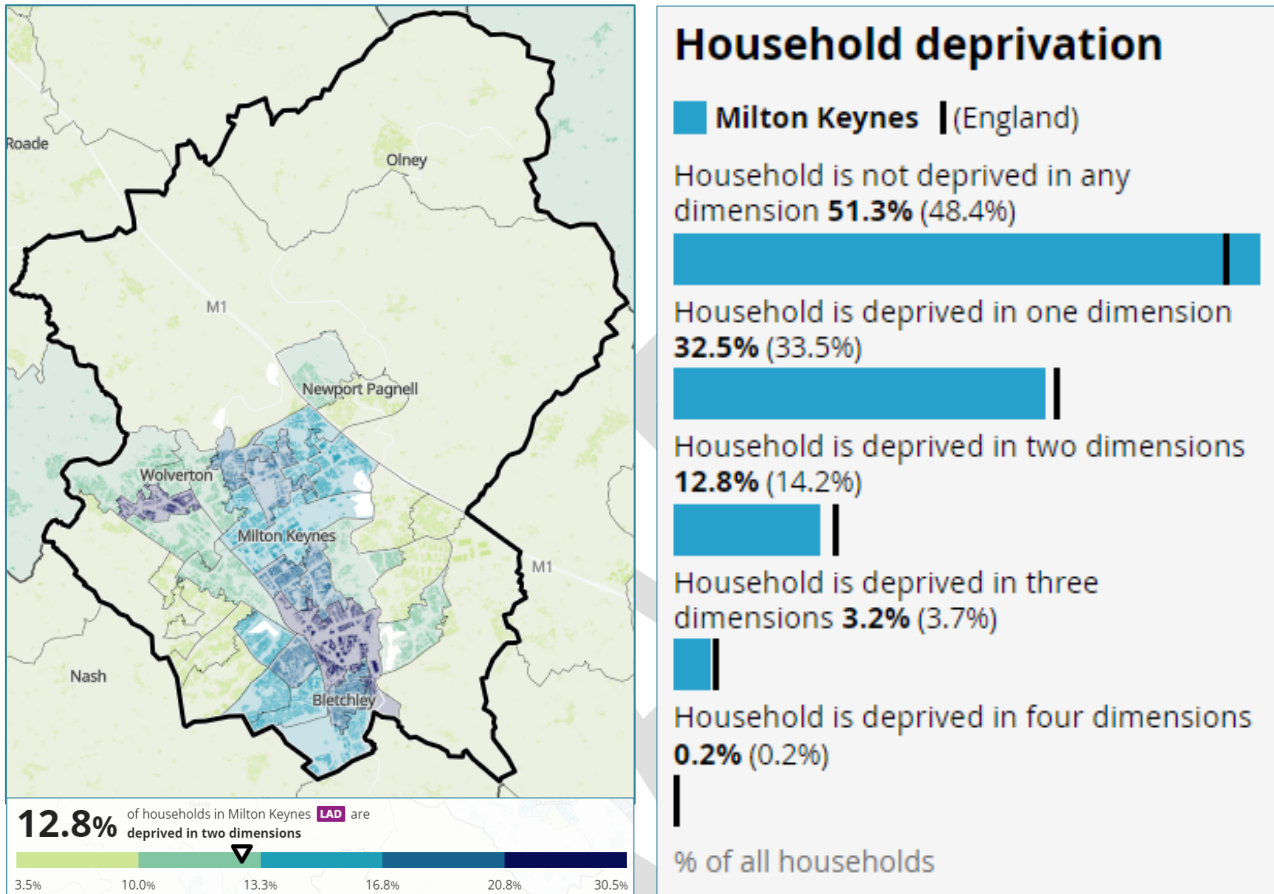
Whilst the Council's current local plan included a 20% buffer to ensure delivery of the required supply, data would suggest confidence in the Council's ability to deliver what is planned, based on current performance and dialogue with developers. Work is now well underway on the New City Plan which will run from 2030 onwards.

In addition to a range of local plan site allocations across the city ranging from less than 10 homes to over 1,000, there are also currently several strategic expansion areas across Milton Keynes including:

- [Eastern Expansion Area](#) (substantively complete - communities of Broughton / Brooklands)
- [Strategic Land Allocation](#) (underway - communities of Glebe Farm / Eagle Farm South)
- [Western Expansion Area](#) (underway - communities of Fairfields / Whitehouse)
- [Milton Keynes East Development Framework](#) (commencing in review period)
- [Southeast Milton Keynes Development Framework](#) (commencing in review period)

Our challenges

Milton Keynes ranks 107 out of 151 upper tier and unitary authorities (where 1 is the most deprived) for poverty and deprivation. However, this masks significant differences across the city and despite the good quality of life enjoyed by most people, many residents risk being left behind as the city grows. Some communities are among the most deprived in England whilst others do not have the skills needed to access good local jobs.



Health and wellbeing

Average life expectancy in Milton Keynes is very similar to that in England. However, women living in the most deprived areas live on average 5.6 fewer years than women from the least deprived areas. For men, the figure is 7.6 fewer years. These earlier deaths are commonly from cancer, coronary and cardiovascular diseases.

Nearly 30% of adults in Milton Keynes are classified as obese (25% in England), whilst 40% of children and adults in our most deprived areas undertake less than the recommended minimum amount of physical activity.

Child poverty

We know that child poverty in Milton Keynes is at a high level and rising. Nearly 20% of children are in poverty, compared to 15% in the Southeast, but once housing costs are taken into account, this number doubles. Over 7,000 children qualify for free school meals, whilst around 1,000 are in temporary accommodation.

Housing

The Council is a housing stock holding authority, with over 12,000 properties, the vast majority of which (around 70%) are general need, social rent properties. In 2022 8% of the Council's housing stock did not meet the decent homes standard, compared to 6% in England.

Many of the estates built in the 1970's are in need of substantial investment to ensure that homes meet modern standards and over half of our 'first phase' housing estates rank amongst the highest in the UK for deprivation measures. As a stock holding authority, a range of challenges, including construction inflation, Brexit and rent caps have significantly constrained headroom in the Council's Housing Revenue Account, resulting in difficult decisions about priority areas and regeneration.

Overall, there are around 124,000 homes in Milton Keynes of which around 85% are in urban areas, and 82% are houses or bungalows (77% in England). Housing tenure wise Milton Keynes is reasonably typical, with slightly higher levels of privately / affordable rented than in England. However, a much higher proportion of homeowners do not own their home outright (37% compared to 30%) leaving more of the city susceptible to cost of living and inflationary pressures.

Until recently the rate of new home building had not kept up with demand, especially for affordable housing. Our strong local economy has placed further upward pressure on demand and house prices. Private rents and our affordability ratio (house prices compared to earnings) have also increased, and more people are homeless or in temporary accommodation.

Milton Keynes is ranked 23rd of all 317 local authorities for barriers to housing and services (where 1 is the most deprived). Those who are disadvantaged experience particular challenges in relation to housing supply and standards.

Homelessness

Milton Keynes ranks as sixth for homelessness levels in England outside of London and the numbers of households living in temporary accommodation is more than double the rate for England (8 per 1,000 compared to 3.98). The most common reason for homelessness is relationship breakdowns or family / friends no longer being able to accommodate. Taken alongside a growing difference between the cost of housing and median salaries, the demand seems unlikely to slow.

Rough sleeping has also been an issue for the city having attracted national attention as 'tent city' in 2017. Significant effort and investment in the co-location of emergency beds and associated services, has however seen levels reduce by 65%, bucking the national trend of increased rough sleeping.

Our priorities

A thriving city

Milton Keynes has a global reputation as a centre of innovation and achievement. We want to continue to ensure that the city is an economic powerhouse and growing cultural centre by creating the right conditions for a successful economy in Central Milton Keynes and beyond. However, we know that around 1 in 5 of the jobs in Milton Keynes today are in business sectors that are likely to shrink due to automation. We also have a high proportion of residents without higher-level qualifications and more than 9,500 people in MK have no formal qualification at all.

Regeneration will help people in our most deprived neighbourhoods to improve their life chances through early childhood intervention, skills development and better access to jobs. And we aim to raise the aspirations and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other groups who do less well than their peers at every stage of education. This will include helping all our secondary schools achieve high standards and supporting new approaches in which businesses are working closely with our education providers to create new opportunities for all students.

Creating a city centre undergraduate university has been a long-held ambition for Milton Keynes and we recognise the very significant benefits a large-scale university will create for our city, including strengthening our education provision, increasing our economic competitiveness, creating regeneration opportunities in Central Milton Keynes, and further developing our leisure and cultural offer. The Council has recently agreed to fully support the [Open University's Campus 2030 Project](#), which will explore relocation of the Open University from its base at Walton Hall into Central Milton Keynes, including an in-person campus-based provision on land allocated for higher education in Plan:MK.

Central Milton Keynes is an important location for employment (where a quarter of the city's jobs are) and it is an increasingly popular place to live with more than 5,000 new homes planned. CMK is also home to many of our cultural, retail and leisure facilities and is blessed with one of our most iconic green spaces in Campbell Park. Via Renaissance:CMK, a project being delivered with Milton Keynes Development Partnership, we want to create a city centre that links up people-friendly public spaces and activities that serve a wide range of visitors. There are also plans for Station Square that will improve its role as one of the major gateways for those arriving in the city and to extend and improve our open market.

Regeneration in Bletchley is also a key focus, with East West Rail providing stronger links to Cambridge, Central Milton Keynes and Oxford, giving the town the opportunity to become a significant technology hub. Alongside significant works to the station itself, there are plans for comprehensive development around the station which will help create a positive experience for those arriving by train. We are also working with town councils that serve the area, local residents and stakeholders on a [£25 million Town Deal programme](#) for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford that will take forward many of these initiatives.

A progressive city

Milton Keynes was established as an ambitious project to meet the urgent housing crisis of the time. That foundation and continuing vision is under threat from increasing unaffordability, national planning regulations and underinvestment. We need to increase the supply of genuinely affordable housing, improve the mix of housing available to rent and buy, alongside improving and investing in our existing communities and housing through renewal and regeneration.

We want all our neighbourhoods to be safe, inclusive and welcoming places for everyone, whatever their background. Cleaner and safer environments are a key part of healthier communities and are also working with local people and partners to improve the health and wellbeing of local people. The Council has adopted a [Community-Led Regeneration and Estate Renewal Strategy](#) and our priorities are Bradwell, Fullers Slade and the Lakes Estate, which all have resourced Estate Renewal Forums. Approval has recently been agreed for Phase A of the Lakes Estate, which will see the demolition of Serpentine Court and the delivery of over 350 new homes, including 120 social and affordable rented Council homes.

A sustainable city

We are committed to Milton Keynes becoming net zero by 2030 and establishing itself as a world-leading smart and sustainable city, leading innovation and change so that we mitigate the impact of climate change. We will continue to pioneer new ways of working to reduce waste, increase recycling and reuse, reduce energy demand and investment in greater use of sustainable transport methods.

In 2018 Milton Keynes Council made the commitment to become Carbon Neutral by 2030 and Carbon Negative by 2050. This work is underpinned by a [sustainability strategy](#) and associated [action plan](#), which has seen our operational emissions reduce from 24,000 tCO₂e in 2018/19 to 16,400 tCO₂e in 2021/22. Current work has focused on street lighting LED conversion programmes, Re:Fit Programmes at key locations and one of very few functioning private wires at our Waste Recovery Park, which charges our waste fleet, powers our Waste Transfer Station, and in the future will charge electric buses in the city.

Our electoral registers

Elections and Democracy in Milton Keynes is well resourced and led. However, the raft of Elections Act changes will prove a significant distraction from the ongoing work to ensure that electoral registers are complete.

We have good levels of confidence in the accuracy of our electoral register. This is because we have established routines, based around internal data sharing and comply with statutory requirements around the annual canvass. We have less confidence in the completeness of our register. We estimate our register completeness is around 90% which is below the average of our CIPFA benchmarking authority group of 92%.

Ward Population (18+) v Local Government Electorate (Top and Bottom Wards)

| Rank | Ward | Census 2021 (18+) | Register 2021 | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1 | Olney | 10,010 | 9,584 | 95.74% |
| 2 | Newport Pagnell South | 9,472 | 9,012 | 95.14% |
| 3 | Tattenhoe | 9,053 | 8,560 | 94.55% |
| 17 | Loughton & Shenley | 11,469 | 9,947 | 86.73% |
| 18 | Woughton & Fishermead | 13,535 | 11,342 | 83.80% |
| 19 | Central Milton Keynes | 12,960 | 9,956 | 76.82% |
| Total (all 19 Wards) | | 217,520 | 195,825 | 90.03% |

Our challenges are not unique, and lower registration levels are reflected in areas where there are higher levels of deprivation, private rented housing and non-UK nationals.



There has been sustained housing development in Milton Keynes. This means that in some areas there can sometimes be properties on the register that have not fully completed and there is a lag in electors moving in and registering to vote.



Whilst there is no definitive data to extrapolate how much of the population is eligible to join the electoral register, data indicates that a higher percentage of residents in Milton Keynes are not from eligible nationalities.



In the city centre, there has been particularly concentrated growth of high-density housing, often as a result of prior consent office to residential conversions or the development of modern apartment blocks. Alongside the challenge of lower registration levels for those privately renting, evidence indicates that many are corporate lettings, or serviced apartments.

Conclusions

The next 10-15 years will be crucial for Milton Keynes, as we look to deliver a foundational economy, driven by a skilled workforce, alongside significant and sustained physical growth and regeneration. But we'll need to do this in the context of a challenging financial picture, including reduced government funding, growing service pressures associated with an expanding younger and older population, and simultaneously ageing 'new town' estates and infrastructure. Growth in particular represents additional burdens for the Council, and requires effort and time from councillors who play a key role:

- in decision making / shaping of planned development and other infrastructure;
- bringing together / guiding new communities; and
- fielding additional casework arising from consultations and construction.

Councillors represent different communities with different needs. Because of planned development, some areas have grown quickly and there is significant inequality of representation. Indeed, our electoral registers in 2018 were already around 4,000 higher than forecast at our last review.

However, this only tells part of the story and in some areas, large numbers of residents are either not on the electoral register, or not eligible to register, compounding the issue. For example, in Broughton Ward the ratio of councillors to adult population is around 1:4,781, whereas in Tattenhoe (where we estimate the register is 95% complete) this drops to 1:3,018. In practice, councillors cannot simply ignore or disregard residents who are not on the electoral register as they need to lead and understand their communities. Currently, around 9% of our electoral register is made up of EU nationals and depending on reciprocal arrangements with other nations we could see growing concentrations of residents with no effective local representation.

Our survey results were very clear; councillors felt strongly that more councillors would be required in the future to deal with continued growth. Nearly half felt that the current council size was already insufficient, whilst 86% felt the council size would need to increase in the future. Nearly a quarter felt it would need to increase significantly moving forward.

3 Our governance / constitutional arrangements

The Council operates an executive form of governance, with a Cabinet consisting of the Leader and up to 9 further Cabinet members, although in recent years, cabinet size has varied between 7 and 9. There is currently no political appetite or consensus for the Council to change its governance arrangements and the executive system has provided sufficient responsiveness and transparency through many years of no overall political control, including minority administrations, run by at various stages, the 3 major political groups.

The Council has a ceremonial Mayor, who chairs full Council and is the first citizen. Political groups are able to nominate the Deputy Mayor (who then succeeds the Mayor each year) based on electoral performance. This has the effect of the office of Mayor rotating through political groups periodically. By convention, the Mayor does not sit on any committees, principally because of civic demands on their time.

Executive, Council and committee meetings, generally take place during the evening, whilst some other partnership or advisory meetings are held during working hours. There are procedural provisions which require that meetings must resolve to continue after three hours and end after 4 hours. Like many councils, we were disappointed that provisions put in place for remote meetings during Covid were not continued in some form, but despite this, average attendance rates for councillors at meetings are very good (85% in 2023). The Council's constitution provides for generous public participation, with all executive, council and committee meetings offering allocated time for public questions and speaking on agenda items. These facilities are well used and around 40% of meetings in 2022/23 had some form of public participation. For our Planning Committee / Panel meetings, this figure is closer to 100%.

The Council has an [indexed allowance scheme](#) with Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) for Cabinet members, committee chairs and political group leaders. Additionally, the Council operates a [parental leave policy](#), which provides for councillors to take maternity leave and where they hold SRA positions, to continue to receive an SRA whilst another councillor fills the position and is also entitled to an SRA. Since the policy was adopted in January 2022, 6 councillors have taken maternity leave, including 1 Cabinet member.

There are currently 3 political groups represented on MKCC, although in the last decade there have also occasionally been a very small number of independent councillors. Each political group is currently entitled to a full time Political Assistant, who provide a range of administrative, research, communications / casework support, directed by group leadership.

The Council established Milton Keynes Development Partnership (MKDP) as a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) in 2013. Its primary role is to use and develop its portfolio of land assets to advance the Council's objectives to develop the city in line with the Council Plan and Plan:MK. Further to a recent governance review, MKDP has moved away from a model where councillors were board members, creating a cabinet advisory group, to provide oversight.

Executive decision making

Annually, the Leader agrees Cabinet portfolios and an executive scheme of delegation (including financial delegations). The Cabinet and Cabinet members take key decisions but also non key decisions that are reserved to the Cabinet or Cabinet members by the Leader's scheme of delegation. Our key decision threshold is set at £500,000 or where the impact would be significant on two or more wards.

The Cabinet meets 6 or 7 times a year, with meeting duration ranging from 30 minutes to over 2 hours, depending on the agenda. Cabinet meetings provide an opportunity for scrutiny committees to refer or report on matters to the Cabinet and for councillors and members of the public to ask questions of the Cabinet. However, Cabinet member decisions are also taken in public meetings (delegated decisions) in most weeks, except for when there are Cabinet meetings scheduled.

There are 4 cross party Cabinet Advisory Groups (CAG)¹ that meet as required and provide advice to the Cabinet and the Cabinet member. Although these advisory groups do not meet in public, generally an agenda and minutes are published whilst the meetings are also recorded and then uploaded to the Council's YouTube channel.

On a monthly basis, Cabinet also meets collectively with the Council's Corporate Leadership Team (Cab/CLT) and also informally (without officers present) to discuss council business and agree political approaches to issues.

¹ Planning / Local Plan Advisory Group, Corporate Parenting Panel, Owner's Advisory Group and Parishes Advisory Group.

Cabinet members also undertake a range of other work, including regular briefings with officers about their portfolio, communication or other media work and attendance at scrutiny meetings as required.

The Cabinet in numbers: 2022/23

- Executive reports considered and decisions taken in public meetings - 105
- Cabinet Advisory Group meetings - 11
- Scrutiny meetings attended by Cabinet members - 10
- Average hours spent by Cabinet members on executive business each week - 27

Overview and scrutiny

The Council has 6 scrutiny committees each of which meet up to 5 times in a Council year. These are supplemented by up to 2 task and finish groups, which run concurrently throughout the year. Additionally, the Council has recently re-constituted joint health scrutiny arrangements with other Councils in the health region.

Every year, the Council receives a report from scrutiny councillors. The report for 2022/23 is available [here](#). A brief review of scrutiny committees was undertaken prior to the 2023/24 council year, which had the effect of reducing the number of scrutiny committees by one, but not the volume of scrutiny work undertaken. This report can be viewed [here](#).

Each Scrutiny Committee has a chair and vice-chairs who are nominated from each respective political group and are supported by an Overview and Scrutiny Officer. Prior to a scrutiny meeting the Chair and Vice-Chairs (planning group) meet to review their work programme and agree approaches to forthcoming meetings with Directors and report authors. On occasion planning groups or scrutiny members also undertake site visits. There were 37 planning group meetings or site visits in 2022/23.

Given the sustained period of no overall control at MKCC, overview and scrutiny is a key feature of the Council's governance. Usually there are more scrutiny topics suggested than can be accommodated in work programmes and meetings usually run for 2.5 - 3 hours, enabling detailed scrutiny of two topics. Cabinet members do not arbitrarily attend scrutiny meetings and usually only do so where they, or the planning group feel it would be important to take questions or give their view, which is around 30% of the time.

Call-in provisions for executive decisions are generous (2 ward councillors, a parish council or 20 members of the public can call-in a decision) however, call-in is used maturely in Milton Keynes, which is a reflection of the transparency in decision making and the opportunity for all councillors and the public to engage with decision makers. Call-in is usually utilised only a handful of times a year, but is resource intensive for the councillors involved, with optional mediation followed by a scrutiny sub-committee if required. A scrutiny call in can typically take up to 10 hours for a Cabinet member and scrutiny committee chair, with relatively little notice.

It is convention that scrutiny officers support up to two task and finish groups which usually run concurrently during the council year. Task and finish groups vary in their length and complexity, but it is common that over a council year, there will be up to 10 meetings involving between 4-6 councillors to undertake a variety of work. Task and finish groups work to draw their findings into recommendations, and these are subsequently considered by the Cabinet. Periodically, scrutiny committees will consider progress against any agreed recommendations.

Given the range and scope of political choice involved in setting a budget, significant additional scrutiny work is undertaken in this area. The Budget and Resource Scrutiny Committee will (in addition to its usual work programme) meet several times in the autumn and over a number of weeks in January to scrutinise budget proposals in detail, preparing a report with recommendations to be considered by the Cabinet and Council before the budget is agreed.

Most councillors (42) are appointed to scrutiny committees which represents over 91% of the Council when cabinet members and the Mayor / Deputy are excluded from the calculation. Over 50% sit on two or more scrutiny committees and anecdotally, we find that juggling scrutiny work effectively can be difficult for many councillors.

Overview and scrutiny in numbers: 2022/23

- Meetings held in public - 47
- Agenda items - 97
- Referrals to Cabinet, officers, or other stakeholders – 241
- Detailed task & finish group reports prepared - 3



Non-executive decision making

Full Council meets monthly, apart from August, December and April. Meetings comprise a mix of referrals, public and councillor questions, policy and budget framework items, motions and other non-executive items. As council meetings start at 7.30pm there is a procedural closure provision to conclude the meeting within 30 minutes, once it has been running for 3 hours. Traditionally, closure is not uncommon at Milton Keynes, although in recent years it has been required far less.

Usually, a special council meeting is required at least once a year, to consider the bestowal of a civic honour, or for other special purposes. During 2022/23 there were 3 special council meetings (to confer Alderman status, to confer freedom of the city to Leah Williamson, and to formally receive the Letters Patent, conferring city status on Milton Keynes). Special council meetings can last from 1-2 hours and are often preceded or followed by a reception for guests and councillors.

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee meets monthly (10 or 11 meetings per year) to consider major planning applications and receive other updates or reports. Usually, meetings last for 2-3 hours and consider 2-3 planning applications and at least one other report. The Chair and Vice Chairs will meet with officers for 30-60 minutes in the week of committee to understand and clarify matters, prior to the meeting. The Chair also meets regularly with planning officers to understand the pipeline of applications and offer an opinion where there is ambiguity about whether an application should be referred to committee.

The scheme of delegation is generous in that ward councillors or parishes can request that an item be considered by committee, alongside items that would be referred because they are contentious or significant. However, the scheme works effectively (97% of applications are determined by officers) and was recently reviewed by committee. Notwithstanding this, the amount of material that councillors have to read and digest in advance of meetings is significant; agenda reading times can often run to upwards of 5 hours.

A sub-committee of 5 Councillors (known locally as the Planning Panel) considers minor and other planning applications and also meets monthly (10 or 11 meetings per year). The Panel is chaired by the main committee chair and there is a pre meeting the week of the Panel. Again, agendas usually comprise 2-3 planning applications with several hours of associated reading time.

It is very rare that there is no public speaking at Planning Committee / Panel, which can often add upwards of 30 minutes to the duration of a meeting.

Licensing and Regulatory Committees

Whilst Licensing and Regulatory Committees are discrete bodies with separate Terms of Reference, their membership is identical, and they meet 4 times per year, immediately after each other, on the same evening. The scheme of delegation is mature and operates effectively. Predominantly the committees consider policy matters which are then determined by the Council or the Executive.

Each of the committees operates a sub-committee comprised of three councillors, the majority of which are convened according to statutory triggers in the Licensing Act 2005 as opposed to a delegation requirement.

The work associated with sub-committees is however unpredictable and voluminous. On average there are in excess of 10 sub committees required each year, which are convened at very short notice and require members to read and consider large amounts of information beforehand. It is not uncommon for sub-committees to be cancelled, as applicants can often make concessions which lead to statutory consultees withdrawing their objections. This often happens after much of the preparatory work has been completed.

Standards Committee

The Council continues to operate a Standards Committee, despite their no longer being a statutory requirement to do so. The Standards Committee meets 4 times per year and meetings usually last between 60-90 minutes. In addition to considering complaint trends and promoting good conduct, the Standards Committee also usually undertakes a piece of policy work in each council year. This might be reviewing the Code of Conduct, the training framework, or other guidance documents. This work is usually led by a smaller working group of members, who are supported by officers and then work is formally agreed or referred onwards at committee meetings.

The Council's arrangements for dealing with standards complaints were recently reviewed and streamlined, removing a sub-committee step at initial assessment. However, Councillors are required for sub-committee hearings which require preparation and meeting time of well over 3 hours in total. Recently very few sub-committee meetings have been required, but this area can be unpredictable and the need for sub-committees can vary significantly from year to year.

Audit Committee

The Council's Audit Committee plays a key role in assessing the Council's accounts, governance, audit arrangements and risk profile. It meets four times each council year, although in recent years special meetings have often been required. The level of detailed information provided to councillors in agendas is significant and given the importance of their role, meetings often last for upwards of 2.5 hours with similar preparatory time. Cabinet members are not able to sit on the Audit Committee.

Other meetings

There are a range of other non-executive committees or meetings which are held in public during working hours and whose membership comprises councillors:

Joint Negotiating Committee – meets four times per year to consider a range of employment issues (not including dismissal appeals). Comprises 9 councillors and includes a pre (non-public) meeting with unions and staff side representatives. Taken together the two meetings usually last over 2 hours.

Health and Care Partnership – meets four times per year in line with statutory requirements for a Health and Wellbeing Board. Membership includes the Leader (as Chair), Portfolio holder for Health / social care and representatives from opposition groups, alongside other local health leaders. Meetings usually last around 2 hours.

Safer MK – meets three times per year and is the statutory Community Safety Partnership responsible for strategies to tackle local crime and community safety issues. Membership includes the Portfolio holder for Community Safety (as Chair), representatives from each Political Group as observers and one of the Council's members of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel. Meetings usually last between 1.5 and 2 hours.

Non-executive decision making and meetings in numbers: 2022/23

- Meetings held in public - 69
- Average number of pages per agenda - 75
- Meetings with public participation – 60%



Conclusions

Decision making at Milton Keynes City Council is councillor led, transparent and allows other councillors and members of the public to participate. Over many years, steps have been taken to ensure that delegations are used sensibly and pragmatically, and that business is done in an efficient way that minimises the demands on councillors’ time.

Notwithstanding this, good governance is important, and shortcuts should be avoided. This means that the demands on councillors’ time remain significant, both in terms of preparation, travel and attending meetings. On average, non-executive councillors spend 13 hours a week, on meetings and decision making, but don’t always feel able to allocate the amount of time to their duties they would like and feel that the burden can be excessive, does not allow a reasonable work life balance and puts the safe and effective discharge of the Council’s statutory functions at risk.

Executive members can carry a very significant workload (closer to 30 hours on meetings and decision making), but there is a degree of acceptance of the burdens and hours associated with such senior positions. Despite the growth of Milton Keynes and the associated increase in workload, the number of Cabinet members appointed is generally less than the maximum allowed. Cabinet members cannot sit on scrutiny committees, or the Audit Committee and generally don’t sit on other non-executive decision-making bodies, so evidence would suggest that appointing more Cabinet members would restrict the pool of councillors available to the controlling group(s) to fill other committee seats.

4 Leadership in Milton Keynes

Councillors in Milton Keynes are reflective of their communities and feel this helps them to do a better job. Certainly, they feel able to understand local issues effectively, and communicate and empathise with a diverse and growing population.

| | Milton Keynes population | MKCC Councillors | Councillors in England |
|--|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Average age | 37 | 36 | 60 |
| % Female | 51 | 45 | 41 |
| % Employed / self employed | 62 | 78 | 20 |
| % Black, asian or minority ethnic groups | 28 | 23 | 8 |
| Hours spent on Council business weekly | | 21 | 22 |
| Ratio of Councillors to electors | | 1:3,543 | 1:3,346 |

Despite nearly 80% of councillors being employed or self-employed and serving more residents on average than councillors in England, our councillors still dedicate 21 hours per week to council business. Realistically, there is little that can be done to reduce the community leadership burden as councillors play a key role understanding community needs, aspirations and opportunities, working with local people and organisations to secure improved outcomes and where necessary, resolve conflict.

External partnerships

Councillors are appointed or nominated to over 50 [external bodies](#), including organisations with significant responsibilities, regional influence and resources, including:

- Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Partnership
- Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority
- Buckinghamshire and River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board
- Central Area Growth Board
- Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Milton Keynes Parks Trust
- MK Dons Sports Education Trust
- Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

Around 65% of councillors are appointed to at least one external body / partnership and often the Council nominates two or more councillors. The demands of the appointments and partnership work will obviously vary considerably but experience tells us that councillors often struggle to juggle these duties, with the heavier burdens often falling to councillors who do not hold full time employment. Some meetings are held in locations up to an hour away from Milton Keynes, meaning a two-hour meeting can require 4-6 hours for preparation, attendance and travel. There are no additional allowances paid for any appointments, save for the fire authority which has its own [arrangements for allowances](#).

It is important that Milton Keynes has more than just a seat at the table and is able to lead, shape and influence given its position regionally. This means councillors need to be able to dedicate the time to best represent residents' interests in key areas:



The Council appoints 5 members to the [Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority](#) (meets 4/5 times per year), with one member currently serving as the Vice-Chair, three on the Executive Committee (meets 4/5 times per year) and two on the Audit and Scrutiny Committee (meets 3 times per year). Meetings are always held in Aylesbury, in person.



The Council appoints 2 members to the [Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel](#), with one member currently serving as the Chair. There are around 5 meetings per year which are held in person, in Aylesbury.



The effect and demands of revised regional health structures and governance, remain (to an extent) to be seen, but will require more co-operation, leadership and collaboration on a regional basis. In addition to a representative from each political group serving on the [Integrated Care Partnership Joint Committee](#), [joint regional health scrutiny](#) has also been recently re-established, (again with a representative from each political Group) with 3-4 meetings per year held at member authorities offices on a rotating basis.



Coordinated regional growth, transport, infrastructure and economic development is an area requiring increasing time and attention. East West Rail, the abolition of Local Enterprise Partnerships and exploring devolution require time to build strategic relationships and consensus across the geographical and political divide. In particular, the [Central Area Growth Board](#) has a key role in accelerating the delivery of planned growth and associated infrastructure and services across Bedford, Luton, Northampton and Milton Keynes.

Casework

Our councillor survey indicated that resident casework takes up a significant amount of councillors' time (on average around 30%) and this work is clearly an important and growing element of the modern councillors' duties.

Newly elected councillors often report feeling overwhelmed with the amount of casework they receive and struggle to settle into a sustainable approach, whilst many councillors report difficulties managing and tracking caseload. Councillors are supported with case work by the Council's customer services team, who log case work on a SharePoint system, progress chase and respond to issues raised. Overall, around 1 FTE undertakes this work although in busier periods more resources are allocated. Some more complex advocacy, or policy based casework is raised directly with senior officers, and this can be difficult to track and provide data on.

In reality, the approach to casework taken by councillors varies considerably depending on a number of factors, including whether the ward is represented by members of the same political group, how active and visible a councillor is, the characteristics of the ward and individual style.

Formally submitted casework has doubled in the last 12 months in Milton Keynes, although it is unclear what is driving this trend. Certainly, most councillors report receiving the majority of casework via email, and this may be symptomatic of more residents working from home since the Covid pandemic. However, the Council's casework framework is not well defined, and approaches about what is formally submitted and what is not, vary considerably between councillors. For example, in our survey 20-40% of case work time was accounted for by straightforward and linear activities such as signposting residents and making initial reports of public realm type defects or issues.

Other information

Training

There has been a significant turnover of councillors since 2021, with 55% of our current membership being in their first term of office. Training and acclimatising councillors is a challenge and whilst electing by thirds helps to soften the blow, it is not uncommon for committee chairs to change considerably from year to year, requiring tailored support to those in new roles. At the start of each year, focus naturally tends to be on the immediate technical skills required in quasi-judicial settings, and planning, licensing and audit training can be resource intensive. Planning Committee training for example is usually delivered over two long evening sessions and involves a mock committee exercise.

Each political group nominates a representative for a Councillor Training Group which meets 3-4 times per year. This group monitors training spend (we usually spend £10 - 15,000 per year on councillor training), and will start work soon on a member led development strategy.

Overall, it can be difficult to deliver ongoing training to councillors, in a coherent and planned way, especially when there are so many other competing priorities. In response, training is often delivered either online as bitesize sessions, incorporated into group meetings, or for external training over whole days, often at weekends.

Councillor champions

Each year councillors are appointed by full Council to specific [champion roles](#) (Armed Forces, LGBTQI+, Ethnic Minorities, Youth Democracy, and Older Persons) where they work to promote the work or objectives of particular groups, highlight issues and seek progress on a variety of matters. Each of the champion roles has a role profile and 4 roles are filled by current councillors, with one held by an Alderwomen.

Responsibilities vary but Armed Forces and Youth Democracy Champions are required to attend meetings and events on a regular basis. Some champion roles also have a modest associated discretionary budget of £1,000 to allocate towards projects or initiatives consistent with their roles.

Ward based budgets

All councillors are allocated a budget of £1,000 to spend during each council year. The scheme is to enable councillors to put forward proposals for expenditure to promote the wellbeing of local communities which they represent and is the opportunity to make a small but important contribution to projects in their ward.

Community groups will often approach councillors directly with proposals and they will then need to evaluate and decide how to allocate funds. Sometimes councillors work together to pool their funds in order to support larger scale projects, but all applications need to be in writing and sufficiently detailed to allow for authorisation and payment.

Parish Councils

We see parish councils as a key link between residents and the Council and we have a good track record of working alongside parish councils, both in terms of consultation / engagement and to devolve assets and services, where there is agreement. There is an established [protocol for working together](#), and our councillors take their relationships with parish councils seriously.

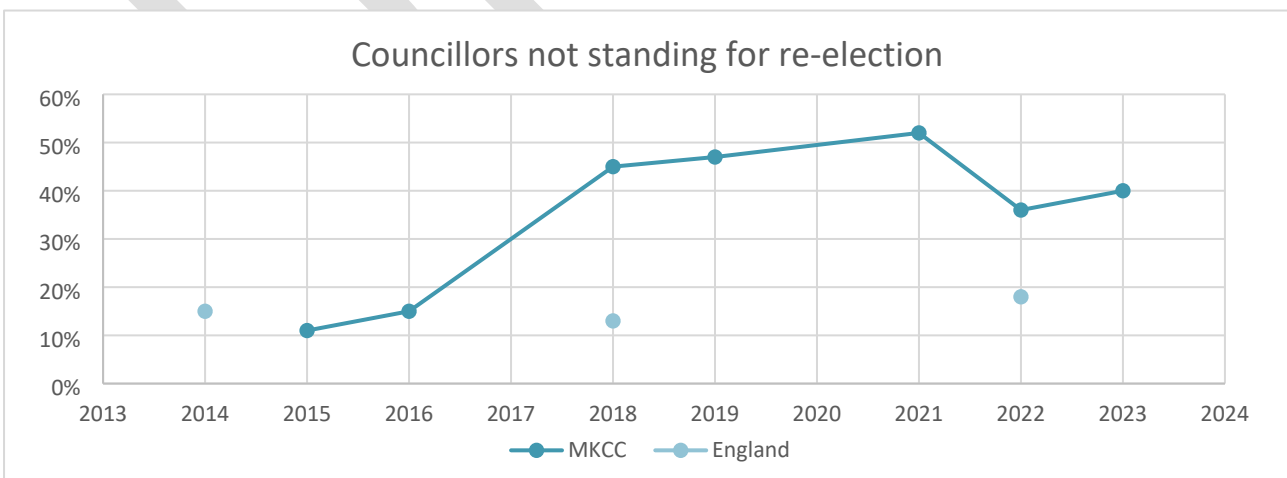
Our survey indicated that 40% of councillors also serve as parish, town or community councillors, whilst over 60% regularly attend parish council meetings. This is a significant time investment taken alongside all of a councillors' other duties and further complicated by parish boundaries that are often not co terminus with Ward Boundaries. For example, Campbell Park Parish Council is currently covered by four separate city council wards.

In addition to the Parishes Advisory Group, the Parishes Forum meeting is held quarterly, to bring clerks and councillors together to hear strategic updates. Chaired by the Cabinet member, meetings usually last for 1-2 hours and are online except for one meeting each year, which is held in the Council Chamber at our civic offices.

Retention

It is clear that recent growth and additional workloads have caused young and talented councillors to walk away. Over half (56%) of councillors are in their first term, whilst the average length of service is around 6.5 years, down from 8.4 years at our last review.

Since 2017 the number of councillors not re-standing for election has increased sharply and is more than double the rate in the years immediately after our last review. Whilst this cannot always be attributable to workload, this figure appears to be at odds with the national position based on LGA census results.



Nearly a third of current councillors surveyed have considered standing down because of workload, and councillors from across the political divide have taken the decision to walk away because of difficulties juggling work, young families and councillor positions with additional responsibility.

Our survey found that most councillors did not expect the amount of casework they had to deal with and the amount of time they spend on council business has increased over the years, whilst over half felt they did not have a good balance between their Councillor duties and other aspects of their life.

Conclusions

Councillors and council business is now more accessible than ever, something that is reflected in the growing use of social media, increased casework loads and the accessibility of public meetings. Technology has proved helpful in some respects, with the use of hybrid meetings for circumstances where there is no legal requirement for councillors to be present in person, and technology providing easier access to emails and other information.

However, regardless of the merits, the discontinuation of online attendance for councillors at committee and scrutiny meetings has removed the flexibility, accessibility and productivity benefits enjoyed during the Covid pandemic.

The Council has a good track record of working in partnership and is well regarded amongst strategic and local partners. However, these partnerships require continued work and engagement across all parties, but particularly from the Cabinet and senior councillors, as the political make up and leadership of our neighbouring authorities has changed considerably in recent years. Given the numbers of external bodies at which councillors are represented, and the levels of work arising from these, it is challenging for councillors to discharge their responsibilities effectively. Arguably, the current size of the Council is insufficient to manage council business without placing an excessive burden on members, but with an additional 20,000 or so local government electors in the next seven years it is incomprehensible that the Council does not need to grow.

5 Final Conclusions and annexes

The right number for Milton Keynes

It is clear that our council size needs to increase, and there was unanimity at full Council in this regard; maintaining our current size neither secures appropriate representation for the residents of Milton Keynes, or is sustainable from a councillor workload perspective.

We recognise that there are arguments to be made for both an increase of 3 (20 wards) and 6 (21 wards). In reality, 3 member wards mean the options are (to an extent) indiscriminate, and therefore any further increase is simply not realistic.

On one hand there is an argument to be made that an increase in electorate only affects part of a councillors' workload and the other aspects, such as scrutiny and decision making are relatively stable and might therefore be largely unaffected by growth. Since we forecast that the electorate will grow by around 10% by 2030 this would roughly equate to a 5% increase in workload and correlate to an additional 3 councillors.

(78)

However, this does not reflect the current realities. Our electorate has grown faster than forecast at our last review, and with housing growth comes additional work related to placemaking, community cohesion, the issue of highway and land adoption and delivery of required infrastructure. We have also become a much younger and more diverse council since our last review. Whilst this helps us to understand our communities and take better decisions it also means that councillors can struggle to balance their duties with other responsibilities. This is borne out by our retention rates and the testimony of talented councillors who have taken difficult decisions to step back.

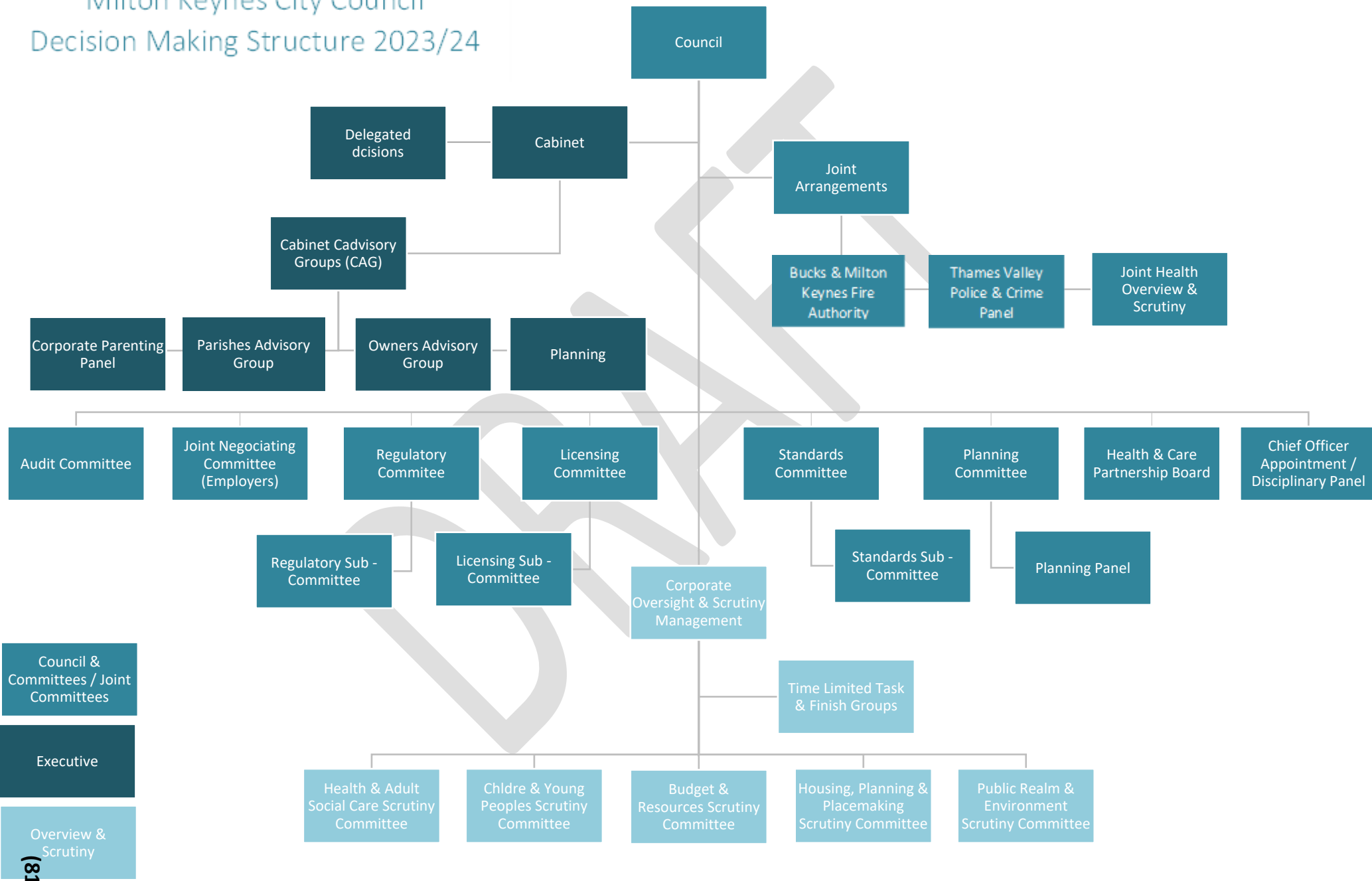
Over the years, our governance arrangements have matured, and we have streamlined processes and improved delegations. Ultimately though, the complex social and political landscapes in which councillors operate, require significant knowledge, understanding, preparation and participation. We need to be able to spread this workload better and respond to growth and a variety of other challenges in a way that is both appropriately led and resourced. An increase of 3 councillors only preserves the status quo, as opposed to addressing this issue.

DRAFT

| Type | Meeting | # MKCC Councillors | # meetings per year | Average length |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Executive | Cabinet | 9 | 6 | 1.5 hours |
| | Delegated decisions | 1-9 | 46 | 0.5 hours |
| Executive Advisory | Planning Advisory Group | 6 | 3-6 | 3 hours |
| | Corporate Parenting | 9 | 4 | 2.5 hours |
| | Owners Advisory Group* | 3 | 4 | 2.5 hours |
| | Parishes Advisory Group | 3 | 4 | 1.5 hours |
| Overview & Scrutiny | Corporate Oversight & Scrutiny Mgmt. | 11 | 5 | 2.5 hours |
| | Housing Planning & Placemaking | 11 | 4-5 | 2.5 hours |
| | Children & Young People | 11 | 4-5 | 2.5 hours |
| | Housing & Adult Social Care | 9 | 4-5 | 2.5 hours |
| | Public Realm & Environment | 11 | 4-5 | 2.5 hours |
| | Budget & Resources | 9 | 9 | 2.5 hours |
| | Joint Health | 3 | 2-4 | 2 hours |
| | Task & Finish Group | 4-6 | 5 | 2 hours |
| | Task & Finish Group | 4-6 | 5 | 2 hours |
| Council | Council | 57 | 9 | 2.5 hours |
| | Special Council | 57 | 1-2 | 1 hour |
| Regulatory & Advisory | Audit Committee | 11 | 4 | 2.5 hours |
| | Licensing Committee | 11 | 4 | 1.5 hours |
| | Licensing sub-Committee | 3 | 10 | 2.5 hours |
| | Planning Committee | 11 | 11 | 2 hours |
| | Planning Panel | 5 | 10 | 1.5 hours |
| | Regulatory Committee | 11 | 4 | 1 hour |
| | Regulatory sub-Committee | 3 | 2 | 1.5 hours |
| | Standards Committee | 11 | 4 | 1.5 hours |
| | Standards sub-Committee | 3 | As req | 2.5 |
| Other committees | Health & Care Partnership* | 4 | 4 | 2 hours |
| | Joint Negotiating Committee* | 9 | 4 | 1.5 hours |
| | Snr Officer Appointment / Disciplinary* | 4 | As req | 2.5 hours |
| Other meetings | Safer MK Partnership* | 5 | 4 | 2.5 hours |
| | Central Area Growth Board* | 1 (Leader) | 4 | 2 hours |
| | Parishes Forum | 1-3 | 4 | 2 hours |
| | Town's Deal Board* | 1 (Leader) | 6 | 2 hours |

* meetings held during working hours

Milton Keynes City Council Decision Making Structure 2023/24



Council & Committees / Joint Committees

Executive

Overview & Scrutiny
(81)

| Partnership | Role / responsibilities | # MKCC Councillors | # meetings per year |
|---|--|--|---|
| Bedfordshire Luton & Milton Keynes Integrated Care Partnership | Partnership of four local authorities, local NHS organisations and voluntary and community organisations, working with and for residents to support and improve everyone’s health and wellbeing. | 3 | 4 |
| Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority | Accountable body for Fire and Rescue Service, making decisions on policy, finance and resources. | 5/6 (dependent on proportion of LGE in MK) | 4 (full auth meetings) 5 (executive committee) 3 (overview and audit) |
| Buckingham & River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board | Provide land drainage, flood risk management and surface water management | 5 | 3 |
| Central Area Growth Board | Partnership between Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes City, North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Councils to coordinate and strengthen cross-boundary working between the local authorities in the Southeast Midlands. | 1 | 4 |
| East West Rail Main Line Partnership Strategic Board | Partnership which works with the government, the East West Railway Company, Network Rail, rail operators and others, to ensure that the full potential of East West Rail is realised in support of the delivery of economic growth. | 1 | 4 |
| England's Economic Heartland (Strategic Transport Leadership Board) | Sub-national transport body for the region advising government on transport infrastructure, services and policy framework | 1 | 5 |
| Milton Keynes Parks Trust | Independent charity with responsibility for over 6,000 acres of green space in Milton Keynes including parks, ancient woodlands, lakes, river valleys and 80 miles of landscaped areas along the city’s grid roads. | 3 | 4 |
| Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Council of Governors | Governing body for MKUH, comprising public and staff constituents, and stakeholder representatives, represent residents view and hold the Trust’s Non-Executive Directors to account. | 1 | 4 |
| MK Dons Sports Education Trust | Significant local independent charity aligned to MK Dons FC, focusing on education, social inclusion, health and wellbeing, girls and women’s football, football development and community delivery. | 3 | 3/4 |
| Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel | Oversees and scrutinises the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley. | 2 | 4-5 |

General

| | | |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| Councillors' other (non MKCC) responsibilities | | |
| Employed / self employed full time - 21 | Employed / self employed part time - 12 | |
| Fully retired - 2 | Caring responsibilities - 13 | Other (charitable) - 20 |
| Councillors with positions of responsibility | | |
| Yes - 27 | No - 15 | |
| Councillors appointed to outside bodies | | |
| Yes - 24 | No - 18 | |
| Councillors also serving as a Parish, Town or Community Councillor | | |
| Yes -15 | No - 25 | |
| Councillors regularly attending Parish, Town or Community Council meetings | | |
| Yes - 26 | No - 16 | |

Time commitments

| | | | |
|---|--------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Weekly hours spent on council business | | | |
| Council business (excl casework) - 15 | Casework - 6 | | |
| Time commitment compared to what expected prior to election | | | |
| More - 24 | Less - 1 | As expected - 17 | |
| Increase in time commitment over time | | | |
| Yes - 27 | No - 1 | Same - 4 | To soon to say - 10 |
| Councillors with enough time to dedicate to councillor responsibilities | | | |
| Agree - 19 | Neutral - 14 | Disagree - 9 | |
| Councillors with a good balance between councillor duties and other aspects of life? | | | |
| Agree - 14 | Neutral - 4 | Disagree - 24 | |
| Councillors who have considered standing down because of time demands? | | | |
| Agree - 12 | Neutral - 6 | Disagree - 24 | |

Council size

| | | |
|---|------------------------|--------------|
| Councillors' views on current council size | | |
| Not enough – 18 | About right - 24 | Too many - 0 |
| Councillors' views on council size 10-15 years ahead | | |
| Increase significantly - 10 | Increase slightly - 26 | |
| No increase - 6 | Reduce - 0 | |

Martin Gowans (Labour 2014 – 2021)

By way of context, I was first elected in 2014 (at 29 years old and after three years of marriage), re-elected in 2016 and stood down in 2021. I was an executive member 2016-2020. Outside of the Council, I undertook an MSC from September 2016 to August 2020, and had children in October 2015, June 2017 and one month after I stood down in June 2021. I worked in the same public sector organisation from before I was elected in 2014 until October 2020 when I moved to a private sector organisation. From October 2016 to October 2020 I worked 0.8 FTE (4 days per week).

As such my time was under a lot of pressure. I made use of the Council's childcare policy to fund a babysitter on evenings I had meetings at the children's bed time after the birth of my second child, who assisted my wife in putting the children to bed. I am appreciative of the efforts officers made in response to feedback to widen the definition of meetings to include non-public meetings as required in the routine nature of running an executive portfolio.

My public sector employer had a generous public service commitments policy. I was unable to make much use of this while a non-executive member as nearly all meetings and other activity were evening meetings with timings I could not dictate. As an executive member, I was able to schedule my regular meetings with officers during work time.

In addition to the formal council meetings is the wider community leadership role. This was often the part I felt I let down. There are also party commitments relating to campaigning which tie into this and with elections by thirds, this doesn't let up.

For me, ultimately there were not enough hours in the day and I had to prioritise my family. I do not regret this, but if course if we do not have representation from all parts of the community we will fail to represent the whole community. Whilst Milton Keynes Council is younger than average, there remains no room for complacency. Since standing down I have also progressed my career and now earn double what I used to.

Andy Reilly (Liberal Democrat 2018 - 2022)

I had already retired before I became a city councillor. I took it on expecting it to be a manageable and worthwhile part-time role that would give me an added interest in retirement. I greatly enjoyed my time on the Council and do miss it, but it was much more of a commitment than I had anticipated. I am in awe of councillors who also hold down a full-time job as it must be a considerable challenge.

In addition to full Council I was on the Planning Committee and two scrutiny committees. This was quite a workload as Planning Committee meets more frequently than other committees and has the occasional Planning Panel as well. As vice chair of one of the scrutiny committees I was also involved in committee preparation meetings.

I was also the Council's rep on the Council of Governors at Milton Keynes University Hospital. I found that to be a very important and interesting role as it coincided with the Covid pandemic. Add in the odd task-and-finish group and the commitment was significant.

Nevertheless, for a retired person it was manageable (even though it was more than I had expected). I stood down at the end of my term because my circumstances had changed, and the time commitment was no longer sustainable.

I support the idea of increasing the number of councillors as it should reduce the number of committees (and external bodies) that each councillor needs to cover.

John Bint (Conservative 2007 – 2021)

In terms of my view on how best the Council should respond to the continuing population growth of the City, I continue to believe that a large part of the work of a councillor is independent of the City's population or their ward population; it is linked to the range of services performed by the Council, and to the governance processes performed by councillors. Budget scrutiny, for example, is a process that consumes an amount of time irrespective of the population and the size of the budgets. Public transport takes an amount of councillors' time, irrespective of the number of buses, bus routes, passengers or budget. And so on.

The rest of a councillor's time is taken up with ward work that is directly related to the size of their ward electorate (as a good proxy for the size of their ward population). I took the view in 2012 (when we were discussing the changes that came into effect in 2014) that the total time spent on fulfilling the role of a Councillor was (on average) divided equally between these 2 activities. And therefore a (for example) 20% increase in ward population would generate a 10% increase in total workload, and therefore this should be addressed by a 10% increase in total number of Councillors.

You ask if the increase in workload was a factor in my personal decision to step down as a Ward Councillor in 2021, after 14 years. I had the privilege of representing some of the fastest-growing areas throughout my time as a councillor, and so for me, this constant growth in the number of streets, homes and people was part of the pleasure of this ward. In a sense, the development here is almost complete. I should add, rapid house-building not only creates more people with more issues, it creates major additional workload that is specific to new-build areas: school planning, missing signs on new streets, roads waiting ages (in some cases, years) for their final tarmac top surface, absence of litter bins, footpaths leading nowhere (until the next development is finished), public spaces not yet adopted and the developers refuse to cut the grass, and so on. So in my specific case, no, this growth in city population and councillor workload was not part of the decision to step down. But the increase in workload was very real, and I imagine it might easily have been a factor for some of my former colleagues on the Council.

Hannah O'Neill (Labour 2008-2021)

I was first elected at the age of 27 when I had no dependents and worked full time for a local charity. I was able to continue to work full time and carry out my duties as a ward councillor initially. However, even then, it was difficult to stay on top of the level of casework when representing a ward that is one of the most deprived in the country.

As my responsibilities on the Council grew, I had to start reducing my working hours, and in 2014 when I became Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing I had to reduce my hours further, squeezing a full time role into 28 hours.

My day job, ward work, campaigning expectations and executive role meant that I worked well into the night most nights and worked most weekends. In 2016 I had my daughter and in 2017 became a single mum. I had to rely heavily on family and supportive officers to continue to carry out my duties, without which I would have had to have stood down much sooner.

In 2019 I had my second child and my role on the Council had become almost all consuming leaving me no choice but to stand down from my day job and look for a genuine part time role. Lockdown really opened my eyes to just how much time I was spending away from the family and, especially as a blended family where my daughter would stay with her Dad every other weekend and one night a week, I realised there were days when I didn't even see her.

When the decision came to stand again in 2021, I chose to stand down. This was an incredibly tough decision, but one made for the right reasons. It was completely unsustainable for me to remain in the Executive, complete all the casework and campaigning and find a part time role whilst being a primary carer to my young family. Whilst I hope to make a return to local government one day it will not involve taking on responsibilities - this just seems impossible now.

Ben Nolan (Labour 2021 – 2023)

When I became a councillor, I had hoped that I could juggle the responsibilities alongside my young family and full-time work. I was one of the youngest councillors at MKCC and in a 57 seat council only a handful of us had children younger than school age - so I felt I was bringing an important perspective to the Council and improving the diversity of membership.

My local community is something I'm very passionate about and I had long been involved in community work via the local Labour Party, so it felt a natural extension. Whilst I was able to make all the core meetings, and officers were always very flexible about meeting me outside of work time, it was in the end too much to try and keep going, and I stepped down after just two years as a councillor.

I was representing Central Milton Keynes Ward, which meant I was covering residential and 'normal' casework, alongside significant planning, regeneration, and strategic placemaking initiatives, linked to significant development / growth. Finding the time to attend community events, meet with companies, planning staff etc. in a meaningful way, was ultimately too much for me, alongside my caring and job responsibilities. Because I felt that residents weren't getting enough of my time, I chose to step back. I would love to become a councillor in the future, but the sheer size and scale of the responsibilities at the moment in Milton Keynes would put me off until either my children have fully grown up, or I was not in full-time work. Both of these are unlikely to happen for some time, meaning that I wouldn't have the ability to stand for election again until I was significantly older. I would strongly support the idea of a slightly enlarged council to help reduce unsustainable workloads and open up becoming a councillor to people in similar life positions as me.

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Information supporting this submission has been taken from a range of sources:

Local Government Association - [National census of local authority councillors 2022](#)

Milton Keynes City Council - [Constitution](#)

Milton Keynes City Council - [Meeting information \(modern.gov\)](#)

Milton Keynes City Council - [Strategy for 2050](#)

Milton Keynes City Council - [Council Plan](#)

Bedford and Milton Keynes - [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

Milton Keynes Community Foundation - [Vital Signs Report 2023](#)

Milton Keynes Child Poverty Commission - [Our Children Deserve Better](#)

Healthwatch Milton Keynes - [the Health of our City](#)

Office for National Statistics - [Subnational population projections for England: 2018-based](#)

Office for National Statistics - [Ward data, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Office for National Statistics - [Facts and figures about people living in Milton Keynes](#)

Council Report

24 January 2024

Scheme of Councillors' Allowances 2024/25

Report sponsor **Sharon Bridglalsingh**
Director for Law and Governance

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| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Exempt / confidential / not for publication | No |
| Council Plan reference | Not in Council Plan |
| Wards affected | All |

Executive summary

The Council operates a scheme of allowances for Councillors which was fully reviewed and agreed for the year 2022/23. It provides for indexation of allowances for the subsequent 4 years. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (the 2003 Regulations) require that before the beginning of each year, the scheme for the payment of (uprated) allowances, must be agreed for that year.

The adopted arrangements for annual indexation are based on the percentage pay award for officers in the preceding year. However, there were variable percentage rates in 2023/24 pay award; the 2023/24 pay settlement for officers was based on a flat rate for JNC pay scales and 3.88% for subsequent pay scales. Therefore, the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) met on 5 January 2023 to consider and recommend an approach to indexation for 2024/25. The IRP also considered a minor amendment to the scheme in relation to the advance payment of expenses in specific circumstances.

The Council is not bound by the recommendations of the IRP but must have regard to them when setting the rates of allowances for Councillors.

1. Proposed Decisions

- 1.1 That the recommendations of the IRP to index allowances by 4.48% be noted and agreed for 2024/25 only.
- 1.2 That the revised Scheme of Councillors' Allowances attached at **Annex A** to this report be agreed to take effect from 1 April 2024.
- 1.3 That the recommendations of the IRP that (where paid) Town, Parish and Community Councils, allowances should also be indexed by 4.48% for 2024/25 only, be noted.

2. Why is the Decision Needed?

- 2.1 Under the terms of 2003 Regulations, the Council is required, before the beginning of each year, to agree the scheme for the payment of basic allowance to each member of the authority for that year.
- 2.2 The scheme must also make provision for the following allowances if an authority intends to make such payments in respect of the year:
 - (a) special responsibility allowance;
 - (b) dependants' carers' allowance;
 - (c) travelling and subsistence allowance; and
 - (d) co-optes' allowance.

Indexation

- 2.3 Under the terms of 2003 Regulations, where utilising an allowance scheme with indexation, the Council is obliged to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to review, comment and advise on the level of allowances paid to councillors at least every four years. The Council last appointed an Independent Remuneration Panel in summer / autumn 2021 and adopted its recommendations in January 2022 for the 2022/23 financial year.
- 2.5 It was not possible to index most allowances using the methodology previously agreed by Council utilising the percentage officer pay award for the previous year. This was because there was no single percentage pay settlement agreed for officers for 2023/24.
- 2.6 The Council's IRP met on 5 January 2024, to consider this issue. The recommendation of the Council's IRP was to uprate all allowances by 4.48 percent which is the median officer increase for 2023/24.
- 2.8 As the IRP has previously recommended that allowances for Town, Parish and Community Councils should be based on a percentage of MKCC basic allowances, the recommendation for Local Councils is that where paid, indexation should also be 4.48%. Each Local Council is however free to agree their own local arrangements having considered the IRP recommendations.
- 2.9 In line with the Council's decision to adopt the recommendations of the IRP in 2021/22 childcare costs will also be reimbursed in line with the real living wage of £12.00 from 1 April 2024.

Other changes

- 2.10 In agreement with the Leaders of Political Groups, the IRP was asked to provide a recommendation in respect of the advance payment of travel and subsistence costs by the Council, where hardship would be caused by a Councillor incurring the cost themselves and then claiming the expense back. The background to this change relates to the need for specific travel arrangements for disabled Councillors (such as disabled adapted taxis).

2.11 The IRP recommended an additional clause being added to the scheme of allowances, which provides for the advance payment of travel and subsistence costs on the basis of hardship, subject to:

- a) the authorisation of the Director of Law and Governance; and
- b) the reconciliation and publication (in line with legislative requirements) of expenses paid in advance, in the same way as other claimed expenses.

2.12 The additional clauses are set out at section 9 of the draft scheme (Annex A).

3. Implications of the decision

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Financial | Y | Human rights, equalities, diversity | N |
| Legal | Y | Policies or Council Plan | N |
| Communication | Y | Procurement | N |
| Energy Efficiency | N | Workforce | N |

a) Financial implications

The additional costs of indexation Allowances Scheme are provided for as part of the Council's draft budget for 2024/25.

b) Legal implications

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 make it a requirement to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel and for the Council to adopt a Scheme of Allowances for the forthcoming year by 1 April each year.

Under the terms of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council is required to take account of the recommendations of an independent panel before fixing its level of Councillors' Allowances.

c) Communication

The IRP's recommendation in respect of Parish, Town and Community Council's will be communicated to Clerks.

4. Alternative(s)

4.1 As the Council has a legal requirement to agree a scheme in advance of each municipal year it must do so. However, it could decide not to accept the recommended increase, agree an alternative increase / decrease or change, with the exception of the basic allowance, the allowances paid.

5. Timetable for implementation

5.1 The proposed scheme of councillor allowances, if adopted will come into force from 1 April 2024.

List of annexes

Annex A – Draft Scheme of Councillor Allowances 2024/2025

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Milton Keynes City Council

Scheme of Councilors' Allowances 2024/25

Note – allowances for 23/24 are shown in brackets but will be removed from the published scheme on adoption.

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**SCHEME OF COUNCILLORS'
ALLOWANCES
2024-2025**

1. General

- 1.1 This Scheme is made under the terms of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
- 1.2 At the meeting of the Council on 24 January 2024 it was agreed that the Council would adopt this Scheme after taking into account the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel in 2021/22.
- 1.3 Milton Keynes City Council currently has 57 councillors, who serve a 4 year term of office and all of whom are entitled to receive the allowances under this scheme.

2. Basic Allowance

- 2.1 All councillors to receive a Basic Allowance of £12,213 (£11,689) per annum. This is paid in 12 equal, monthly instalments.
- 2.2 If a councillor ceases to be a councillor before the end of his or her term of office, payment of the allowance ceases and a pro rata calculation is made to ensure that the councillor receives the right amount of allowance. If necessary, an adjustment for under or overpayment may have to be made to ensure that the correct final payment is made, and the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of Basic Allowance.
- 2.3 The Basic Allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs, such as the use of their homes for council business, telephone rental and broadband charges.

3. Special Responsibility Allowance

3.1 The Council also pays Special Responsibility Allowances to those councillors it considers to have significant, additional responsibilities over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor. These special responsibilities are related to the discharge of the Council's functions.

3.2 Milton Keynes City Council currently pays Special Responsibility Allowances for the following roles at the rates stated:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Leader of the Council | £36,637 (£35,066) |
| Deputy Leader of the Council | £18,318 (£17,533) |
| Main Opposition Group Leader | £16,487 (£15,780) |
| Cabinet Member* ¹ | £12,823 (£12,273) |
| Smaller Opposition Group Leader(s) | £9,160 (£8,767) |
| Chair of Corporate Oversight & Scrutiny Management Committee | £9,160 (£8,767) |
| Chair of Scrutiny Committee* ² | £5,496 (£5,260) |
| Chairs of Task and Finish Groups* ³ | £5,496 (£5,260) |
| Chair of Planning Committee | £9,160 (£8,767) |
| Chair of Licensing & Regulatory Committees (1 person) | £9,160 (£8,767) |
| Chair of Audit Committee | £5,496 (£5,260) |
| Chair of Corporate Parenting Panel | £5,496 (£5,260) |
| Chair of Standards Committee | £3,654 (£3,497) |

Notes:

*¹ A maximum of 8 Cabinet members may be appointed in addition to the Leader and Deputy Leader

*² Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee, Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, Housing Planning and Placemaking Scrutiny Committee, and Public Realm and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

*³ Payable pro rata depending on the length of time the Group is in place.

3.3 Special Responsibility Allowances are paid in 12 equal, monthly instalments.

3.4 In the event of a councillor ceasing to hold an office which entitled him or her to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance before the term of office is completed, payment of the Allowance ceases, and a calculation based on the number of days in the Council year concerned will be made to determine the entitlement. If necessary, an adjustment for under or overpayment may have to be made to ensure that the correct final payment is made, and the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of Special Responsibility Allowance.

- 3.5 Notwithstanding, any agreed Parental Leave Policy for Councillors, in the case of a councillor who is in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance being unable to carry out the duty for which the Allowance is payable for a period of three months or more, requiring the duty to be carried out by a specific councillor as deputy, the Council will consider the circumstances, with the option of ceasing the Special Responsibility Allowance payment to the councillor concerned, and making a retrospective payment to the deputising councillor for the whole of the three month period, and continuing until the original councillor is able to resume the duty concerned.
- 3.7 Under the terms of Milton Keynes City Council's Scheme of Allowances no councillor is allowed to receive more than one Special Responsibility Allowance, even if they fulfil more than one role.
- 3.8 In the event of a councillor already in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance being appointed to an office with a different level of Special Responsibility Allowance, a calculation based on the number of days in the Council year concerned will be made to determine the entitlement. If necessary, an adjustment for under or overpayment may have to be made to ensure that the correct final payment is made, and the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of the Special Responsibility Allowance.

4. Co-opted Members of Committees

- 4.1 Persons co-opted to serve on Committees, Sub-Committees or Panels, and who have voting rights, shall receive an allowance of £700 (£670) calculated pro-rata to the term of co-option. This is to be paid in 12 equal, monthly instalments and will be liable for tax and National Insurance.
- 4.2 All co-optees are eligible for travel and subsistence allowances at the Councillors' rate when carrying out the duties for which they are co-opted.
- 4.3 If the co-opted person ceases to serve as a co-opted member before the end of his or her term of co-option, payment of the Allowance ceases, and a calculation based on the number of days in the Council year concerned will be made to determine the entitlement. If necessary, an adjustment for under or overpayment may have to be made to ensure that the correct final payment is made, and the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of this allowance.

5. Civic Allowances

- 5.1 The Mayor of Milton Keynes receives a civic allowance of £12,823 (£12,273) per annum, paid in 12 equal, monthly instalments.
- 5.2 The Deputy Mayor of Milton Keynes receives a civic allowance of 50% of the Mayor's allowance, i.e. £6,412 (£6,137) per annum, paid in 12 equal, monthly instalments.
- 5.3 Civic Allowances are liable for tax and National Insurance.

5.4 In the event of a Mayor or Deputy Mayor ceasing to hold office before the term of office is completed, payment of the Allowance ceases, and a calculation based on the number of days in the Council year concerned will be made to determine the entitlement. If necessary, an adjustment for under or overpayment may have to be made to ensure that the correct final payment is made, and the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of the Civic Allowance.

6. Child Care and Dependent Carers' Allowance

6.1 All councillors and co-opted members of Council committees can claim, on production of appropriate receipts, the Child Care and Dependent Carers' Allowance.

6.2 Child Care:

The current Real Living Wage (as set by the Living Wage Foundation) of £12 per hour applies and will be up rated each November in line with the Living Wage Foundation's annual review.

6.3 Specialist Care:

Specialist care is reimbursed based on the actual costs incurred, subject to the production of receipts and medical evidence that this type of care is required. The allowance has no daily or monthly maximum claim when undertaking Approved Councillor Duties.

6.4 Claims for Child Care and Dependent Carers Allowance are inclusive of travel time associated with the Approved Duties.

6.5 Full details of the Dependent Carers' Allowance Scheme are listed in the Appendix of this Scheme.

7. Travel and Subsistence

7.1 Re-imbusement to councillors for travel and subsistence will be paid at the current rates agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for the reimbursement of Council officers, which are as HMRC (per mile) rates:

- Cars and vans 45p
- Motorcycles 24p
- Bicycles 20p
- Electric vehicles 45p

7.2 From 1 April, 2016 mileage claims are no longer liable for tax and National Insurance contributions.

7.3 Councillors will be reimbursed the full cost of travelling by the most appropriate means of transport at standard class rates whilst carrying out Approved Duties, provided a valid receipt (bus ticket etc), is produced to substantiate the claim.

7.4 All reasonable claims for subsistence expenses whilst carrying out Approved Duties will be paid provided they are supported by valid receipts. As there is no profit element in the payment of subsistence claims, this allowance is not subject to tax or National Insurance contributions.

8. Claimable Allowances

8.1 There is a 3 month time limit for submitting claims for the claimable allowances above i.e. Child Care and Dependent Carers' Allowance and Travel and Subsistence Allowances. Any claims made outside of this time limit will only be paid in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Director Law and Governance and the Chief Internal Auditor.

9. Advance payment of expenses

9.1 Where a Councillor would be financially disadvantaged and / or unable to undertake approved duties because of the initial cost outlay and associated delay in receipt of expense payments, consideration may be given to travel and subsistence expenses being borne directly by the Council as opposed to the Councillor bearing the expense and then submitting a claim for reimbursement.

9.2 The Director of Law and Governance will be required to authorise any advance payment of expenses.

9.3 Where the cost of travel and subsistence expenses is borne directly by the Council in the above circumstances these will be reconciled to a Councillor's expense account and published each year in accordance with legislative requirements.

10. Pensions

10.1 Councillors are no longer eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

11. Dual Authority Roles

11.1 Councillors cannot receive an allowance from more than one authority (e.g. Fire Authority) for the same duties.

12. Forgoing Allowances

12.1 A councillor may forgo all or part of any allowances to which he or she is entitled, provided he or she has given notice in writing to the Director Law and Governance.

13. Approved Duties

13.1 The list of "Approved Duties" under the regulations for which the Travel and Subsistence Allowance is payable is as follows:

- a) a meeting of the Council;
- b) a meeting of the Cabinet;
- c) a meeting of a committee of the Cabinet;

- d) a meeting of a committee or sub-committee of a committee of the Council where that councillor is a member of that committee, is substituting for a member of that committee or otherwise receives a specific invitation from the chair of that committee;
- e) a meeting of Cabinet members with the Corporate Leadership Team;
- f) a meeting with officer colleagues in relation to portfolio / corporate issues (to include Group Leaders, Cabinet members, Chairs, Vice-Chairs and opposition spokespersons) and Ward issues;
- g) a meeting of some other body to which the Council makes appointments or nominations (i.e. Outside Bodies);
- h) a meeting of a committee or sub-committee of a body to which the Council makes appointments or nominations;
- i) a meeting of a local authority association of which the Council is a member (e.g. Local Government Association);
- j) a meeting in the Councillor's Ward called by a Council Officer or Parish Council;
- k) duties undertaken on behalf of the Council in connection with the discharge of any function of the Council conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises;
- l) duties undertaken on behalf of the Council in pursuance of any Procedure Rule requiring a councillor or councillors to be present while tender documents are opened;
- m) duties undertaken on behalf of the Council in connection with arrangements made by the Council for the attendance of pupils at a school approved for the purposes of Section 342 of the Education Act 1996;
- n) a meeting which has been:
 - i) both authorised by the Council, a committee, or a sub-committee of the Council and one or more other authorities, or a sub-committee of a joint committee, and
 - ii) to which representatives of more than one political group have been invited or to which two or more Councillors have been invited;
- o) a meeting of the Cabinet, committee of the Cabinet, committee of the Council, or sub-committee, at which a councillor, who is not appointed to that body:
 - i) attends to present an item which he/she has requested be included on the Agenda in his/her name;
 - ii) is required to attend to answer questions/give evidence; or
 - iii) attends to present a report on behalf of another body of the Council;

- p) attendance at conferences, seminars and other Councillor Development and training events as approved by the Council or the Service Director (Legal and Democratic Services);
- q) attendance at casework surgeries organised at advertised times and venues within the Councillor's own ward;
- r) any other duty approved by the Council in connection with discharging the duties of the authority or its committees or sub-committees.

14. Indexing

14.1 The Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances, Civic Allowances and Co-Optees Allowances are subject to indexation commensurate with the percentage increase in staff salaries from the previous financial year, from April 2022 for a period of up to four years.

15. Duration

15.1 The above Scheme of Allowances is operative from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025 or such other time as agreed by the Council.

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Dependant Carer Allowance Scheme

1. The Scheme is open to all elected councillors of Milton Keynes City Council and co-opted members of Council committees.
2. The Scheme covers the care of dependants whether children, elderly people or people with disabilities for whom those listed in 1 above have responsibility.
3. The rate payable is as follows with no maximum time cap:
 - a) Childcare – Real Living Wage of £112 per hour
 - b) Specialist Care – actual costs subject to medical evidence supporting the requirement for specialist care
4. The Scheme covers care provided for a councillor's/co-opted member's dependant(s) whilst they are carrying out any 'approved duties', including travel time, as set out in Section 12 of the Scheme of Councillors' Allowances.
5. Carers must be over the age of 16 and not be a member of the claimant's own household.
6. Where the provision is for childcare, it is recommended that a registered child-minder / nursery or an approved child carer is used. However, it is ultimately the parents' responsibility to make adequate provision for their childcare needs.
7. Claims should be made on the Councillor' Business Expense claim forms, supported by valid receipts. Co-opted members of committees should submit their receipts with a covering letter to the Head of Democratic Services, Milton Keynes City Council, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ.
8. Receipts should contain the date the care was provided, length of time the care was provided, the 'approved duty' covered, the cost per hour and should be countersigned by both the carer and claimant. Claimants may wish to use the attached sample receipt as a standard format.
9. In accordance with paragraph 9 of the Council's Scheme of Councillors' Allowances claims for Dependent Carer Allowance payments should be submitted within 3 months of the event.

Dependant Carers' Allowance

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Data care provided | |
| Duty covered | |
| Time from | |
| Time to | |
| Total hours | |
| Cost per hour (£) | |
| Total (£) | |
| Name of Carer | |
| Signature of Carer | |
| Name of Claimant | |
| Signature of Claimant | |

| Date | Councillor | Ward | Party | Recipient | Details of Scheme | Amount £ |
|----------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|--|---|--------------|
| 09/05/23 | Victoria Hopkins | Danesborough & Walton | Conservative | Woburn Sands Music Festival | Funds to help with the Woburn Sands Music Festival which is raising funds for local charities. | 200 |
| 13/01/23 | Marie Bradburn | Bradwell | Lib Dem | St Lawrence Church Bradwell | Provision of funds to assist with advertising in promotion of celebrating Lawrence 800 years. | 500 |
| 19/06/23 | Mo Imran | Bletchley Park | Conservative | Bletchley Park Area Residents Association | Funds towards promoting events and activities for residents in the area. | 250 |
| 26/06/23 | Jennifer Wilson-Marklew | Stony Stratford | Labour | Stony Stratford Town Council | Support for maintaining the planting at the Horsefair Green memorial. | 350 |
| 26/06/23 | Jennifer Wilson-Marklew | Stony Stratford | Labour | Stony Stratford Harvest Show Committee | Funds to support the Harvest Festival. | 200 |
| 27/06/23 | Scott Balazs | Newport Pagnell South | Conservative | Giffards Park Primary School | Funds towards taking young people on Electra canal boat. | 200 |
| 25/07/23 | Peter Marland | Wolverton | Labour | Royal British Legion | Funds to purchase a Gazebo for community events. | 170 |
| 25/07/23 | Zoe Nolan | Loughton | Labour | Loughton Scout Group | Funds towards visit to Howe Wood for pond dipping and environmental learning. | 90 |
| 10/08/23 | Tracey Bailey | Danesborough & Walton | Labour | Duchess Grove Allotment Association | Funds towards a new shared shed for Walton Allotment Association who are providing fresh fruit and vegetables to local pensioners and families in need. | 400 |
| 23/08/23 | Debbie Whitworth | Olney | Labour | Lavendon Village School | Funds towards much needed outdoor play equipment. | 300 |
| 31/08/23 | Debbie Whitworth | Olney | Labour | 2nd Olney Brownies | Funds for uniforms for 2nd Olney and 1st Sherington Brownies, whose parents cannot afford to purchase these. | 150 |
| 18/09/23 | Jane Carr | Newport Pagnell South | Lib Dem | St Peter and St Pauls Church | Refreshments for early years play and stay sessions for local families. | 100 |
| 22/09/23 | Joe Hearnshaw | Stony Stratford | Labour | Whitehouse Community Council | Contribution towards bleed kits at Whitehouse Primary School and a Defibrillator Cabinet | 255 |
| 22/09/23 | Chantelle De Villiers | Stantonbury | Conservative | Stantonbury Parish Council | Funds towards Stantonbury Parish Skip Amnesty for 2023. | 1000 |
| 23/09/23 | Jane Carr | Newport Pagnell South | Lib Dem | 5th Newport Pagnell Scout Group | Grant towards summer camp in Jersey in 2024. To enable all scouts to attend, regardless of their parent/carers financial position. | 150 |
| 05/10/23 | Mo Khan | Bletchley East | Labour | Locals of the Lakes | Funds for Christmas food hampers. | 1000 |
| 29/09/23 | Waqas Ahmad | Bletchley Park | Labour | Flowers House Social Fund | Funds to enrich the lives of dementia sufferers and especially towards Christmas events. | 300 |
| 29/09/23 | Waqas Ahmad | Bletchley Park | Labour | MK Islamic Arts & Culture (MKIAC) | Towards working with Bangladeshi women mental health art workshop in Bletchley. | 300 |
| 29/09/23 | Waqas Ahmad | Bletchley Park | Labour | MK Christmas Party for the Elderly | Christmas day dinner for the elderly around MK. | 400 |
| 16/10/23 | Debbie Whitworth | Olney | Labour | Olney Infant Academy | Funds towards revitalising the entrance with plants, décor and signage. | 200 |
| 15/11/23 | Victoria Hopkins | Danesborough & Walton | Conservative | Wavendon Gate School | Funds for schoolbooks. | 200 |
| 15/11/23 | Mick Legg | Bletchley West | Labour | Bletchley Youth Centre | Funds to help with the cost of heating the building. | 500 |
| 15/11/23 | Mick Legg | Bletchley West | Labour | Cold Harbour C of E School | Funds to replace a broken bench outside of the school gates for use by parents and guardians. | 300 |
| 15/11/23 | Lauren Townsend | Bletchley West | Labour | Bletchley Youth Centre | Funds towards helping with the day-to-day cost of running the building following recent increases. | 500 |
| 17/11/23 | James Lancaster | Tattenhoe | Labour | Tattenhoe Youth FC | Funds to help replace vandalised goal posts. | 800 |
| 17/11/23 | Shanika Mahendran | Loughton | Labour | Tattenhoe Youth FC | Funds to help replace vandalised goal posts. | 1000 |
| 24/11/23 | Sue Smith | Woughton & Fishermead | Labour | Tinkers Bridge Residents Association | Funds towards Christmas Special catering and refreshments. | 150 |
| 27/11/23 | Shazna Muzammil | Tattenhoe | Conservative | Tattenhoe Youth FC | Funds to help replace vandalised goal posts. | 200 |
| 04/12/23 | David Hopkins | Danesborough & Walton | Conservative | MKCC Highways | Funds towards three Community speed watch signs in Wavendon. | 255 |
| 26/11/23 | Tracey Bailey | Danesborough & Walton | Labour | Love Woburn Sands | Funds towards supporting the Community transport car put on for the elderly residents of Woburn Sands. | 400 |
| 04/11/23 | Shazna Muzammil | Tattenhoe | Conservative | Westcroft Youth Club | Funds towards a pool table for Westcroft Youth Club. | 500 |
| 15/11/23 | Sue Smith | Woughton & Fishermead | Labour | Action Speaks | Funds to help with the catering costs for the Christmas project. | 150 |
| 28/11/23 | Debbie Whitworth | Olney | Labour | Emberton Parish Council | Funds to provide a grit bin for Olney Road (North). | 200 |
| 28/11/23 | Debbie Whitworth | Olney | Labour | Olney Town Council | Funds towards coffee morning drop ins for the residents of Olney and the surrounding villages in the ward. | 150 |
| 07/12/23 | Marie Bradburn | Bradwell | Lib Dem | Bradwell Parish Council | Funds towards hiring of Bradwell Memorial Hall for a quiz night in support of the new cancer ward at Mk University Hospital. | 80 |
| 04/12/23 | Rex Exon | Bradwell | Lib Dem | 1st Two Mile Ash Guides | To support the Rainbow Brownies and Guides to attend outdoor activities and environmental projects with The Parks Trust. | 300 |
| 04/12/23 | Rex Exon | Bradwell | Lib Dem | Bradwell Abbey Scout Group | To Support the Scout Group help children from poorer backgrounds to go to Summer Camps. | 400 |
| 04/12/23 | Rex Exon | Bradwell | Lib Dem | Milton Keynes Food Bank | Funds to support Milton Keynes Food Bank. | 100 |
| 04/12/23 | Rex Exon | Bradwell | Lib Dem | Hodge Lea MK United FC | To help funding for replacement football equipment for Youth Teams based in Hodge Lea Pavilion. | 200 |
| 04/12/23 | Nigel Long | Bletchley Park | Labour | West Bletchley WellBeing Counselling Service | Funds to provide free counselling sessions and associated support for West Bletchley residents. | 500 |
| 20/12/23 | Sue Smith | Woughton & Fishermead | Labour | Woughton Community Council | Funds towards the cost of meals for Councillors Community Christmas lunch with families with referrals. | 250 |
| 23/12/23 | Moriah Priestley | CMK | Labour | Mosaic Wise CIC | Funds to help provide wellbeing diaries to young people as gifts for over Christmas (care leaver project). | 350 |
| 27/12/23 | Charlotte Hall | Campbell Park & Old Woughton | Conservative | Falaise Nook Sheltered Housing | Funds towards Christmas and Social activities/events for Falaise Nook Sheltered Housing Scheme residents. | 200 |
| 01/01/24 | David Hopkins | Danesborough & Walton | Conservative | Wavendon Parish Council | Planters for Covid Memorial Garden in the courtyard of the old school hall building in Wavendon. | 200 |
| 01/01/24 | David Hopkins | Danesborough & Walton | Conservative | Walton MK Football Club | Funds to support Walton FC Under 7's (Titans) team. | 200 |
| | | | | | Total | 14600 |

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