

## Council Decision Notice

The following decisions were taken by Council at its meeting held on Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 19:30

### 1 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That with the correction to minute CL102 (Council Budget 2024/25 and MTFP 2024/25 to 2027/28) amending the wording 'The Mayor briefly adjourned the meeting between 8.10 pm and 8.25 pm' to add the following words: 'because of a power outage affecting Civic Offices and the wider area.

Upon the meeting reconvening, the Mayor proposed (with the consent of the Leaders of Political Groups), and with the agreement of the meeting, that in the exceptional and unprecedented circumstances of a power outage (and limited prospect of power returning), time limited emergency lighting, and the legal requirement to agree a budget within a timeframe, and secure timely printing of Council Tax notices, that the Council depart from its usual practice of debate, and that accordingly amendments be moved, seconded and voted upon without further discussion. Additionally, that the substantive motion which had already been moved and seconded also be voted upon without discussion', that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21 February 2024 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

### 2(a) Petitions

ACTIONS:

1. Councillor Marland agreed to pass the petition information on to officers for them to investigate future and undertook to do all that the Council could do to influence the provider of the No 1 and 2 bus service before any decisions were made about its future.
2. Councillor Marland agreed to ask officers to undertake a technical assessment of Hengistbury Lane, Tattenhoe, that had been requested for a reduction in speed to a 20 miles per hour zone.

### 2(b) Questions from Members of the Public

ACTIONS:

1. The Mayor asked Councillor Marland to send a written response to the question from Mr Bartlett.

2. Councillor Mahendran undertook to ask officers to investigate if there was any more information related to the potential location of towers within Milton Keynes as part of Project Skyway and would provide a written response on this to the member of the public.

#### **4(a) JNCE - 23 February 2024 - Annual Pay Policy**

RESOLVED:

That the Council agree the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25.

#### **5 Councillors' Questions**

ACTIONS:

1. Councillor Marland undertook that the issue of HGV parking, rest and welfare facilities would be considered as part of the process of developing the New City Plan.
2. Councillor Marland undertook to request the Cabinet member for Culture to write to Historic England for information regarding their plans for the maintenance and protection of the Danesborough Fort and agreed to meet with Councillor Hopkins to discuss the issue further.

#### **6(a) Motion 1 - Extension of the Franchise**

RESOLVED:

1. That this Council notes that:
  - a) The Elections Act is a major piece of national legislation with local implications for the residents of this local authority, including the use of mandatory photographic voter ID at the polling station, changes to overseas voting and voting and candidacy rights of EU citizens.
  - b) According to the 2021 census, one in six usual residents of England and Wales were born outside the UK. They live, work, study, make use of public services, and call the UK their home. Many foreign-born residents of this local authority from EU and Commonwealth countries can vote in our local elections. However, over 1 million residents across England and Northern Ireland do not have a right to vote.
  - c) Scotland and Wales implemented residence-based voting rights where all residents with lawful immigration status have the right to vote in local and devolved national elections.
  - d) Over 50% of people agree that every resident, no matter where they are from, should have the right to vote at least in local elections.
2. That this Council welcomes:

- a) That all our residents, no matter their nationality, call this local authority their home and bring significant value to our area.
  - b) That the voting and candidacy rights of EU citizens with pre-settled and settled status who entered the UK before 2021 will be maintained through the Elections Act.
  - c) That 11 local authorities across England have passed motions asking for the right to vote to be extended to all residents in local elections.
3. That this Council expresses concern that:
- a) EU citizens who enter the UK from the 1st of January 2021 and are not covered by bilateral voting rights treaties (currently only active with Denmark, Poland, Luxembourg, Portugal, and Spain) will lose voting and candidacy rights in local elections when the Elections Act is fully implemented. This will create an unequal situation where some EU citizens will have the right to vote where others will not.
  - b) The complexity in voting eligibility will cause confusion and will reduce voter turnout in local elections amongst migrant voters, a group already under-registered compared to British voters.
  - c) A burden will be placed on Local Authorities managing the removal of a significant number of EU citizens from the electoral register. This may result in some being wrongfully removed from the electoral register.
4. That this Council commits to:
- a) Write to the Minister of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the relevant shadow frontbenchers requesting that the franchise for local elections be extended to all qualifying foreign nationals in England and Northern Ireland in line with eligibility criteria in Scotland and Wales. This would ensure a UK-wide and fair approach to voting rights so that all our residents, who are also our council tax payers, are enfranchised.
  - b) Delivering a training to councillors and relevant officers on the changes brought by the Elections Act so that residents can be accurately informed about their current voting rights.
  - c) Work collaboratively with voluntary sector organisations in our local authority to reach residents about current voter eligibility rules and how to vote.
  - d) Ensure council officers in Democratic Services have a strategy in place to ensure that the implementation of the Elections Act, including the removal of some EU citizens from the register, does not wrongfully remove eligible voters from the register.

- e) Continue promoting voter registration and photo ID requirements to residents at citizenship ceremonies, events, and other communication channels.

**6(b) Motion 2 - Play Area Improvements Across Milton Keynes**

RESOLVED:

1. That this Council notes that:
  - a) there are over 400 play areas in Milton Keynes, which are an important factor in maintaining and improving the physical and mental health of our children;
  - b) the more often and the longer these areas are used, the better the outcomes for our families; and
  - c) the user-friendliness of these areas plays a large part in how often, and for how long these play areas are used.
2. That this Council believes that:
  - a) the better these areas are for the users, including importantly the parents and carers of our children, the more they will be used; and
  - b) improving these areas is therefore a factor in improving the welfare of our children.
3. That this Council resolves to ask Cabinet to consider:
  - a) ensuring that every new play area will be equipped with at least one bench seat so that parents/carers have somewhere to sit whilst children play, thus increasing dwell time;
  - b) ensuring that every new play area will be equipped with a waste bin;
  - c) retrofitting those play areas without a bench seat or bin through a five-year rolling upgrade to be complete by May 2029;
  - d) making bench seats with backs that are installed available for the fitting of memorial plaques;
  - e) encouraging companies to sponsor benches and bins to defray the cost to council taxpayers; and
  - f) writing to parish and town councils to and encourage them to place dog waste bins within 20m of each play area, as when there is a parent/carer and child there is often the family pet dog with them.

## 6(c) Motion 3 - Taxi Drivers and White Ribbon Ambassadors

RESOLVED:

1. This Council notes that:
  - a) Milton Keynes City Council became a White Ribbon Council in November 2022. This status shows our commitment to the White Ribbon campaign to protect and support women and girls from abusive and violent behaviour by men and boys. In gaining this accreditation we, the Council, sought to spread the support to all departments and sections of our Council and beyond, into our community.
  - b) Milton Keynes City Council currently licenses approximately 1,500 drivers to provide Private Hire and Hackney Carriage services. Once a license is acquired, a driver may operate anywhere in England, provided they are licensed with an operator in a corresponding local authority area.
  - c) A large proportion of drivers operating within the city boundaries are licensed by other Councils, as a result Milton Keynes City Council operates a more proactive stance regarding compliance and safety auditing, which is funded by higher licence fees.
  - d) At present all MKCC drivers are fit and proper persons, (meeting the required local standards as set out within our policy), and undertake safeguarding training to ensure they have a better understanding of the abuse suffered by children and vulnerable adults prior to obtaining their licence. Whilst remaining within the statutory licensing procedures, at present this training does not address the issues raised by White Ribbon.
  - e) MKCC receives a high proportion of complaints from women in regard to inappropriate behaviour or language by taxi drivers towards female passengers.
  - f) That other councils such as Newcastle are already promoting White Ribbon to taxi operators, door security, bar staff and other licenced facilities.
2. This Council resolves to:
  - a) ensure that all new applicants and license holders understand that verbal, physical and emotional abuse is not tolerated;
  - b) encourage all those experiencing abuse to report this to the Council;
  - c) ask officers to make appropriate arrangements (in consultation with relevant Portfolio holder and Regulatory committee chair) to revise the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy to include education about domestic abuse

into existing mandatory safeguarding and equality training for drivers, completion of which is recorded.

- d) invite all those Private Hire and Hackney Carriage drivers licenced by Milton Keynes City Council to become White Ribbon ambassadors and display the White Ribbon;
- e) encourage Operators to promote White Ribbon with their drivers, regardless of the origin of their licence; and
- f) ask the Portfolio holder and Regulatory Committee Chair to write to TFL and local authorities whose vehicles operate in Milton Keynes, to ask that they consider taking a similar approach.

#### **6(d) Motion 4 - The Growth of Milton Keynes**

RESOLVED:

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

#### **7 Returning Officer's Fees and Disbursements**

RESOLVED:

That the schedule of fees and disbursements for Principal Area and Parish elections, as set out in the annex to the report, be adopted for 2024/25.

#### **8 Review of the Council's Constitution**

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That the revised Councillors' Planning Code of Good Practice be adopted.
- 1.2 That the Procedure for Public Participation at Planning Committee Meetings, be amended as set out in the annex to the report
- 1.3 That the Joint Negotiating Committee (Employers' Side) Terms of Reference be amended as set out in the annex to the report
- 1.4 That authority be delegated to the Director of Law and Governance to:
  - a) in consultation with the chair and vice chairs of the Planning Committee, make minor typographical or consequential amendments to the Councillors' Planning Code of Good Practice; and
  - b) agree arrangements for hearings of a Grievance Sub-committee, or Grievance Appeal Sub-committee, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Joint Negotiating Committee (Employers' Side).

#### **9 Quarterly Report on Special Urgency Decisions**

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

**10 Ward Based Budgets 2023/24**

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.