



Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 18 October 2023 at 19:30

Present: Councillor Legg (Mayor)

Councillors M Bradburn, Andrew, Andrews, Ahmad, Bailey, Bell, R Bradburn, Brown, Cannon, A Carr, J Carr, Clarke, Crooks, Darlington, Exon, Ferrans, Fuller, Geary, Hall, Hearnshaw, D Hopkins, V Hopkins, Hussain, Kendrick, M Khan, Lancaster, Long, Mahendran, Marland, McBride, McLean, Nayee, Nolan, Oguntola, Oyakhire, Petchey, Priestley, Rolfe, Smith, Trendall, Verma, Wardle and Wilson-Marklew

Alderswoman Saunders and 36 members of the public

Apologies Councillors Adewale, K Bradburn, De Villiers, Hume, Imran, N Khan, McPake, McQuillan, Middleton, Muzammil, Taylor, Townsend and Whitworth

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

CL47 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13 September 2023 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

CL48 Disclosures of Interest

Councillor Oguntola declared a Non-Registerable Interest in Item 6(d), Motion 4 – Black History Month and left the Chamber while the matter was discussed and decided.

CL49 Announcements

The Mayor made announcements in respect of: the Newport Pagnell South by-election; Black History Month; the Mayor's Charity Golf Day; Oracle Red Bull Racing; City of Code of Light; MK Can; 'Debate not Hate' campaign; the death of Tetyana Millard; the Army Netball Team visit; and the safe arrival of Councillor N Khan's baby daughter.

CL50 Petitions

The Council received a petition on behalf of residents requesting the Council safeguard local green spaces and prevent Milton Keynes Council and Buckinghamshire Council extending the H6 Childs Way.

The Cabinet member advised that all members should be aware of the response that was sent to Buckinghamshire Council on the SPD consultation and the planning application. Ultimately, the Council does not agree with development on our borders that was unplanned, unmitigated expansion that impacts our services and was not good for Milton Keynes. It was noted that a road may be needed and if it was the Leader indicated that he had given the assurance that this Council would push for that not to be an extension of the grid road. The Cabinet member advised that he had arranged for the Director of Planning and Placemaking to meet with Crest Nicholson to reiterate that if there was going to be a road then it should be a small local road with limited traffic and that the green needed to be protected. The Highways Team had also been out and assessed the area and were currently doing work to ensure that saving the green was possible. The Cabinet member advised that in the next iteration of the Plan the administration would be more than amenable to take the highways corridor out of the plan for development and protect it for the future.

CL51 Questions from Members of the Public

Questions were received from three members of the public.

John Scott asked Councillor Marland, with regard to your support for residents to oppose the proposed road across Kingsmead Green, can you assure us that your change of approach is genuine and not just placatory tactics, given the very large number of residents who are opposed to the road?

Councillor Marland indicated that if Mr Scott was referring to the decision a number of years ago on a Supplementary Planning document than he did support the extension of grid roads. However, the policy was flexible so it did not include where it was not acceptable to put a 60 MPH grid road. The Leader noted that the Executive does not decide planning policy, it was set by the whole Council in Plan:MK. The Leader indicated he did not believe that Council planning officers were pushing for a fast connection at this site but he was happy to receive any evidence residents could show that this was the case.

As a supplementary question John Scott asked Councillor Marland, in a recent Delegated Decision meeting on Shenley Park SPD you suggested to residents that it would be possible to remove the transport corridor over the Green in the next version of Plan:MK and that would protect the Green, do you stand by that statement?

Councillor Marland indicated that yes he did.

Paul Bartlett was unable to attend the meeting but Councillor Marland agreed to take his question which was:

“Will the leader of MKCC acknowledge and confirm the relevance, importance, and his support of the status of: Parish Councils; Conservation Areas; Residents; and Neighbourhood Plans and their underlying role in democracy for communities throughout Milton Keynes?”

Councillor Marland responded yes to the question.

Jackie Wray asked Councillor Marland, with regard to local opposition to felling of trees at Polly's Yard, North Square, Newport Pagnell, why was planning permission given to fell the trees when advice from the Council Arboriculture Officer was that it was not conclusive that the trees were causing the subsidence and that an observation period was more appropriate?

Councillor Marland indicated he was not able to speak on behalf of the decision maker. However, all planning decisions were not made on a single issue they were made on a balance of issues. The Leader indicated that the reasons the decision was made would be in the decision notice.

As a supplementary question, Jackie Wray asked Councillor Marland, for a review of the decision as it had not gone through any decision making process and that it appears that one person had made that decision.

Councillor Marland indicated that was correct under the scheme of planning delegation and that it was not a matter for the Executive to request a review of a planning decision. The proper process would be for residents to request a Judicial Review of the decision if they wished to.

CL52 Business Remaining from Last Meeting

None remaining.

CL53 Corporate Parenting Annual Report - Cabinet - 12 September 2023

Councillor Nolan moved the following recommendation from the meeting of Cabinet held on 12 September 2023, which was seconded by Councillor M Bradburn:

“That the Corporate Parenting Annual Report be received.”

The recommendation was agreed by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Parenting Annual Report be received.

CL54 Councillors' Questions

Questions were received from Councillors McLean, Exon, Mahendran, Verma, Fuller, Bell, M Khan, Wardle, D Hopkins, Andrew and Verma.

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

Councillor McLean asked Councillor Marland, with regard to the new waste contract, does the Cabinet member agree that it would be good if all councillors could have sight of a lessons learned report so they could reassure residents of the actions that had been taken to resolve issues?

Councillor Marland indicated that the Chief Executive had recently met with the local CEO of Suez and he had asked that the November performance report be made available to all councillors in an accessible format. Members would be aware that this was a new supplier and a new collection system and that a lessons learned exercise on

the entirety of the roll out would be a good thing which potentially scrutiny could undertake and give recommendations to the Executive.

As a supplementary question, Councillor McLean asked Councillor Marland, while the update in Councillors News was useful, could a more in-depth report be included which would reassure groups of residents so they understood what the service was doing to resolve ongoing issues?

Councillor Marland indicated that officers were trying to understand any issues with collections and it was important to get a uniform way of addressing these across the city.

Question from Councillor Exon to Councillor Trendall (Cabinet member for Customer Services)

Councillor Exon asked Councillor Trendall, could he provide an update on what the Council was doing to combat illegal tobacco sales?

Councillor Trendall indicated that the Council in conjunction with Thames Valley Police had been carrying out unannounced inspections which included two premises in Bletchley where amongst over items over £20,000 of illegal tobacco was seized.

Question from Councillor Mahendran to Councillor D Hopkins (Leader of the Conservative Group)

Councillor Mahendran asked Councillor D Hopkins, does he agree that all people should be able to live their lives without the threat of violence, abuse and intimidation and they should not face levels of hate based on their identify?

Councillor D Hopkins indicated that he agreed with the question.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Mahendran asked Councillor D Hopkins, could he make a commitment that he and other members of his group would always be careful with their language and would never use the lives of LGBT+ people as a political football to try and divide the people of Milton Keynes?

Councillor D Hopkins indicated that he hoped his record with the Council over the last 33 years stood for itself and that he found the comments of some individuals abhorrent. He noted that we needed to stand as one united community in Milton Keynes and we should pride ourselves that we do that. He indicated that he would not sanction any such statement from any member of his Group or anyone associated with it.

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

Councillor Verma asked Councillor Marland, was the Council going to protect Kingsmead Green or would the Council let a grid road be built on it?

Councillor Marland indicated that it was inappropriate to build a full grid road in an area such as between Kingsmead and Oxley Park where houses had already been built to the highways corridor.

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

Councillor Fuller asked Councillor Marland, as today was Champions Day organised by UNISON to celebrate those working in local council services, would the Leader join her in thanking the brilliant Milton Keynes City Council staff?

Councillor Marland indicated that he would absolutely be thanking all of those who work on our behalf including contractors and our partners. The Council was a very lean organisation and the number of people delivering services was well below what it was 13 years ago and the levels of pay had not kept up with the private sector. The Leader noted that our staff do a wonderful job in difficult circumstances and sometimes they get things wrong but he noted that we would always support them as long as we are able to apologise and move on.

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

Councillor Bell asked Councillor R Bradburn, would he provide an update on what the City Council was doing to support growing businesses and to ensure there were more jobs and better opportunities for young people?

Councillor R Bradburn indicated that he had recently attended the MK STEM Festival which was aimed at students aged 5-18. Over 1,800 students took part across the day. The City Council had funded the transport to enable students to get to the venue.

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

Councillor M Khan asked Councillor Marland, would he support him in condemning the loss of life in Israel and Gaza and call for immediate humanitarian aid and a peaceful solution?

Councillor Marland indicated that there would be many in the City that have family in Gaza and we would want to send them all our support and he was sure that all in the chamber would want to see peace in that region.

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

Councillor Wardle asked Councillor Nolan, with regard to a local resident who had raised issues with the home to school transport provided by MK Connect for a student with special education needs, would the Cabinet member work with him to find a solution to improve the service received by the resident and her child?

Councillor Nolan indicated that she had spoken to the Cabinet member for Climate and Sustainability and together they would investigate the issues that had been raised and would be happy to work with the resident to resolve this situation.

Question from Councillor D Hopkins to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Councillor D Hopkins asked Councillor Marland, a previous Leader of the Council had described the Milton Keynes Development Partnership as undemocratic, dictatorial, a

waste of public money, did nothing for Milton Keynes and that Milton Keynes Council could do a far better job, what had changed?

Councillor Marland indicated that he didn't think anything had changed and was the question really meant to be should we build 1.5 million houses in the south east which he understood was the view of the Conservative MP for Milton Keynes. Locally controlled development corporations were touched on in the Strategy for 2050 and the Leader of the Council indicated that he did not think any future building should be controlled by an undemocratic development corporation. There may be other delivery models that he was happy to discuss how they might work but the final decision on any development should rest with this Council.

As a supplementary question, Councillor D Hopkins noted that he looked forward to continuing to work with the Leader of the Council to deliver that policy.

Councillor Marland indicated that it should be for local authorities to make decisions on applications in their own areas and it could not be right that in the Buckinghamshire Council Call for Sites that a number of potential sites were being proposed on the border with Milton Keynes that could see 40-50,000 houses built without any say from Milton Keynes Council. Labour was continuing to make the case for the importance of infrastructure before expansion in Milton Keynes.

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

Councillor Andrew asked Councillor Nolan, regarding the incident with the school bus at Hanslope, she understood that no-one from the Council or bus company had made any contact with the school after the incident happened, would the Cabinet member agree to meet with her to ensure that any incident involving school transport was conveyed to the Head Teacher, evidence of crisis communication processes was shared, to advise what changes had been made to safety procedures and that the findings of the investigation were shared with the school and councillors?

Councillor Nolan indicated that she was very sorry to hear of this incident involving one of our commissioned coaches. Child safety was obviously our highest concern and there had never been an incident like this before. A new bus had been provided and the Council had been assured of its safety. The Council shared a letter sent by the managing director of the coach service with all parents the next day. Investigations were ongoing which would include the regulatory body and the Cabinet member advised that they would ask that communication between the Head Teacher and the Chair of Governors was included in the investigation that will be carried out and any learning about how the Council deals with incidents like this were taken on board.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Andrew asked Councillor Nolan, the Head Teacher would really like to receive the detail of out what safety changes had been made?

Councillor Nolan indicated that she had spoken to officers and they were happy to facilitate a meeting to go over those details.

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

Councillor Verma asked Councillor Marland, with regard to the delivery of bins he was still receiving enquiries from residents who either hadn't had their new bins delivered or had been allocated bags instead of bins. Could the Cabinet member look into this and make sure that residents were provided with answers to their queries?

Councillor Marland indicated that he was sure there were some problems and this is one of the things that the Councillor Casework system was for. The Leader indicated that he was happy to receive any logs of casework that Councillor Verma had raised but not had a response to and he would ask the relevant Director to look at them.

ACTIONS:

1. Councillor Marland undertook to ask the Council's scrutiny team to give consideration to a lessons learned review of the procurement and implementation of the new waste and environment contract, at an appropriate time in the scrutiny work programme.
2. Councillor Nolan undertook to look into the concerns raised regarding a home to school transport case and to ask officers to explore a resolution with the family concerned.
3. Councillor Nolan undertook to ask officers to include the communication that occurred between the Head Teacher and the Board of Governors as part of the investigation into the incident with the school bus.
4. Councillor Marland advised that any logs of outstanding casework related to missed or undelivered bins should be sent to him and he would ask officers to follow up on any outstanding issues.

CL55 Notices of Motions: Urgent Motion

The Mayor ruled that in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council would debate an urgent motion as the motion deadline fell before the outbreak of war in Israel and Gaza

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

- "1. That this Council:
- a) expresses the deepest sympathy for all those in Israel affected by the Hamas terrorist attack on innocent men, women and children;
 - b) condemns the actions of Hamas and expresses total revulsion at the crimes that have been committed in the name of Palestinians; and
 - c) re-affirms our unbreakable belief that Israel has the right to exist as a peaceful democratic state in the Middle East without the constant threat of terrorist action and violence from those who do not believe that a state of Israel should exist and wish to eliminate all Jews from the region.

2. That this Council believes that:
 - a) Israel has a right to defend itself and take any action necessary to destroy Hamas, and any terrorist group, that commits crimes against civilians and bring perpetrators to justice;
 - b) all actions should be in accordance with International Law, protecting civilians from harm and providing aid and refuge to innocent people; and
 - c) democracies distinguish themselves from terrorists and dictatorships by observing the rule of law at all times, respecting human rights and protecting civilians from harm.

3. That this Council further believes that:
 - a) the only viable long-term solution for peace is a two-state solution with a secure Israel and viable state of Palestine;
 - b) terrorist acts do not further this aim;
 - c) the government of Israel should re-establish meaningful dialogue with the democratic institutions of the Palestinian Authority and establish a pathway to a lasting peace settlement;
 - d) all surrounding states and the International community have an equal obligation and duty to ensure a peaceful and stable region; and
 - e) we support the work in Milton Keynes of organisations such as the Council of Faiths to bring people from all backgrounds together to further the objectives of peace and understanding.”

The motion was carried by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

The Mayor ruled that in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council would debate an urgent motion as the motion deadline fell before the outbreak of war in Israel and Gaza

1. That this Council:
 - a) expresses the deepest sympathy for all those in Israel affected by the Hamas terrorist attack on innocent men, women and children;
 - b) condemns the actions of Hamas and expresses total revulsion at the crimes that have been committed in the name of Palestinians; and
 - c) re-affirms our unbreakable belief that Israel has the right to exist as a peaceful democratic state in the Middle East without the constant threat of terrorist action and violence from those who do not believe that a state of Israel should exist and wish to eliminate all Jews from the region.

2. That this Council believes that:
 - a) Israel has a right to defend itself and take any action necessary to destroy Hamas, and any terrorist group, that commits crimes against civilians and bring perpetrators to justice;
 - b) all actions should be in accordance with International Law, protecting civilians from harm and providing aid and refuge to innocent people; and
 - c) democracies distinguish themselves from terrorists and dictatorships by observing the rule of law at all times, respecting human rights and protecting civilians from harm.

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 - a) the only viable long-term solution for peace is a two-state solution with a secure Israel and viable state of Palestine;
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 - c) the government of Israel should re-establish meaningful dialogue with the democratic institutions of the Palestinian Authority and establish a pathway to a lasting peace settlement;
 - d) all surrounding states and the International community have an equal obligation and duty to ensure a peaceful and stable region; and
 - e) we support the work in Milton Keynes of organisations such as the Council of Faiths to bring people from all backgrounds together to further the objectives of peace and understanding.

CL55(a) Motion 1 - The Provision of Facilities for Youth Football Across Milton Keynes

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.2 the motion was withdrawn before the commencement of the meeting.

CL55(b) Motion 2 - Boys NEED Bins

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.2 the motion was withdrawn before the commencement of the meeting.

CL55(c) Motion 3 - Is Milton Keynes Killing Me?

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.2 the motion was withdrawn before the commencement of the meeting.

CL55(d) Motion 4 - Black History Month

Councillor Oyakhire moved and Councillor Priestley seconded the following motion:

- “1. That this Council notes that:
 - a) October marks Black History Month in the UK, a national celebration which honours the contributions and achievements of black heritage and culture;

- b) Black History Month is an opportunity to continue to amplify the voices of black people and to raise awareness of the inequalities they face across all sectors including education, policing, health, business, housing and more;
 - c) the theme this year is 'Saluting Our Sisters' which focuses on the stories of the lives and contributions of black women to celebrate their achievements and excellence; and
 - d) this Council's Equality Vision: 'Improve the way we engage, think and act to deliver equality and inclusion for everyone, every day' which helps to create opportunities and remove barriers across the organisation.
2. That this Council welcomes:
- a) the commissioning of 'The Black Female Pioneers of Milton Keynes', an exhibition which celebrates 11 pioneering black women in Milton Keynes, available to view at the Central Library from 4 October to 1 November 2023 and in Station Square; and
 - b) the positive and empowering initiatives to support the variety of events and activities taking place over the month of October such as free art and music workshops for children and families.
3. That this Council resolves to:
- a) continue to recognise Black History Month as an important month in the City Council's calendar each year;
 - b) continue to review policies and practices on a regular basis in line with the City Council's Equality Vision;
 - c) further explore diversity and inclusion training around ethnicity and equality for all City Council employees;
 - d) encourage schools across the city to design a programme to celebrate Black History Month each year; and
 - e) continue to salute all black women across the city who continue to work and deliver excellence all year round."

The Council heard from two members of the public in the consideration of this matter.

The motion was passed by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

1. That this Council notes that:
- a) October marks Black History Month in the UK, a national celebration which honours the contributions and achievements of black heritage and culture;

- b) Black History Month is an opportunity to continue to amplify the voices of black people and to raise awareness of the inequalities they face across all sectors including education, policing, health, business, housing and more;
- c) the theme this year is 'Saluting Our Sisters' which focuses on the stories of the lives and contributions of black women to celebrate their achievements and excellence; and
- d) this Council's Equality Vision: 'Improve the way we engage, think and act to deliver equality and inclusion for everyone, every day' which helps to create opportunities and remove barriers across the organisation.

2. That this Council welcomes:

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3. That this Council resolves to:

- a) continue to recognise Black History Month as an important month in the City Council's calendar each year;
- b) continue to review policies and practices on a regular basis in line with the City Council's Equality Vision;
- c) further explore diversity and inclusion training around ethnicity and equality for all City Council employees;
- d) encourage schools across the city to design a programme to celebrate Black History Month each year; and
- e) continue to salute all black women across the city who continue to work and deliver excellence all year round.

CL55(e) Motion 5 - Cycling and Walking Infrastructure

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.2 the motion was withdrawn before the commencement of the meeting.

CL55(f) Motion 6 - Housing Ombudsman's Findings

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.2 the motion was withdrawn before the commencement of the meeting.

CL56 Report on Committee Proportionality

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

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

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

The recommendations were agreed by acclamation.

RESOLVED:

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

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