



AGREEMENT TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP

MILTON KEYNES

Milton Keynes is a young, vibrant and prospering city – the most successful new town in the UK - with an increasing regional, national and international reputation. It has been the fastest growing UK city over the past 30 years in terms of population, employment and economic output, and has a strong culture of innovation, experimentation and doing things differently. We have a beautiful, unique borough, a true “city of trees” with a network of attractive parks, waterways and green open space. It is also a place of contrast and diversity, with urban and rural areas and a population which is welcoming and embraces change.

As we approach our 50th birthday in 2017, we would like Milton Keynes to remain a vibrant, growing city and tackle the challenges we have as a place and local authority to ensure a fairer, more prosperous city where everyone has an opportunity to succeed.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP

Successful cities typically have strong leadership that works together to achieve the best for those they represent. The outcome of the Local Government elections on 5 May 2016 resulted in No Overall Control. However, analysis shows that the combined Labour and Liberal Democrat vote was 56%, with Labour receiving the highest number of votes of all the political parties standing in Milton Keynes. We believe, therefore, that the electorate has given our two parties a strong democratic mandate to lead a progressive, fairer city.

We want to ensure there is a stable political environment over the next two years in order to effectively address the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. This is why the Labour Group and Liberal Democrat Group will work together in a formal partnership, as part of a new era of openness, co-operation, fairness and accountability.

PARTNERSHIP VISION

The Partnership will focus on achieving the best it can for Milton Keynes and acting in the best interests of its citizens and businesses. We will seek to build a co-operative, prosperous and inclusive Milton Keynes; a place where its people, businesses and the voluntary sector can thrive and succeed.

NATURE OF OUR PARTNERSHIP

In embarking on this Partnership we recognise that, as two politically independent parties, there is broad agreement over the policy areas that matter most to the residents, workers and businesses in Milton Keynes. This provides an excellent basis for working together collaboratively.

The Partnership is founded on the democratic principles of trust, openness and accountability with ongoing communication between the two parties.

We will work on this basis from the date of this Agreement and throughout the two year period up to the local government elections in May 2018.

To achieve this, the Liberal Democrat Group will support a Labour minority administration, with a Labour Leader of the Council. Labour Group councillors will form the Cabinet and will chair the Regeneration Committee.

Liberal Democrat Group councillors will chair the following committees: Scrutiny Management; Housing Scrutiny; Children’s Scrutiny; Executive Scrutiny and Budget Scrutiny.

The Liberal Democrat Group will support the implementation of the Labour manifesto with the exception of the move to a four-yearly election cycle and the Labour Group will support the implementation of the Liberal Democrat manifesto.

At the heart of this Partnership is recognition that despite the imposed government cuts, we need to operate successfully within the current financial context and ensure we deliver a balanced budget. We will meet this challenge by providing stable, community leadership, working with our partners for a progressive Milton Keynes and transforming the way we work.

KEY PRIORITIES

We will adopt a joint Council Plan that will set out clear priorities and deliverable policies, based on the manifestos of the two parties, and continue to implement our cooperative borough programme. This will provide a clear direction of travel over the two years of this Agreement. The Council Plan will be brought to a Full Council meeting in the summer of 2016. Meanwhile, the broad areas of priority and joint working are as follows:

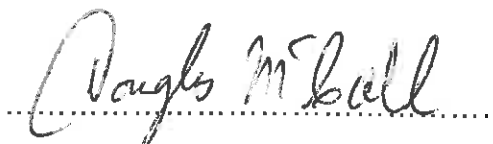
- In the light of ongoing significant Conservative government funding reductions, securing a balanced medium-term budget that mitigates as far as possible against impacting adversely on the most vulnerable;
- Focussing on addressing homelessness through implementing the recommendations of the Homelessness Task and Finish Group in a timely manner; the provision of one or more hostels; preventive and support services, and improving housing availability;
- Supporting work on a progressive Plan:MK focussed on affordable housing, economic growth, investment and future prosperity of Milton Keynes for everyone and more strongly implementing the current 30% affordable housing requirement for new homes and to review that percentage in line with current need;
- Embracing and strengthening our regional relationships to ensure we are well placed to optimise the opportunities and investment devolution may bring;
- Supporting improvement in our education and skills sector, ensuring a good local school place for every child and a non-selective model of education;
- Continuing a long history of innovation and sustainability, to review our Waste Strategy to ensure recycling rates are increased and waste is minimised;
- Acknowledging the importance of our road network, to review the Council's pothole policy and approach to road/pathway maintenance;
- Tackling our transport issues and improving public transport;
- Continuing to modernise our adult health and social care services with priority placed on promoting independence, prevention, integrated working, choice and dignity through empowering service users and their carers; Reducing health inequalities and working towards a healthier MK;
- Protecting our vulnerable children from harm and neglect and provide support so every child has the opportunity to succeed;
- Ensuring mental health services are integrated, co-ordinated and responsive to the needs of people; treated as the same priority to physical health and accessible to people of all ages.

SIGNED

This agreement is signed in Milton Keynes on **12 May 2016** by:



Peter Marland
Leader of the Labour Group - for and
on behalf of the MKC Labour Group



Douglas McCall
Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
- for and on behalf of the MKC Liberal
Democrat Group

Witnessed by:



Carole Mills – Chief Executive