



## CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO

### May 2008

#### A Message From The Leader – Cllr. Andrew Geary

The problems of the last few months, indeed somewhat longer, demonstrates clearly in Milton Keynes that our Borough lacks the kind of leadership that such a dynamic and exciting place requires. A debate recently about “Who runs this City?” organised by MK Forum found both the Leader of the Council and the former Chief Executive denying that they did! It seems incredible that, in the most quickly expanding (both in physical and economic terms) place in Europe no-one wants to own up to being its leader! Over the last year the Conservative Party has tried to encourage the Liberal Democrat Administration to demonstrate the kind of leadership that this Borough so badly needs and deserves. Their response has been one of denial. A kind of “it’s not our problem” approach. Exactly what Milton Keynes doesn’t need!

Partnership between many sectors and organisations across Milton Keynes is essential to deliver the aspirations and ideals that the Conservative Party has for Milton Keynes. We recognise that we cannot achieve our goals and aspirations alone. We need the help of partners locally as well as those further up the chain in national government. Many of you who live in the North of MK will have witnessed at first hand the way in which Mark Lancaster MP is consistently fighting for Milton Keynes in the House of Commons, and not toeing a government line at the expense of local people. That is the kind of leadership and focus that Milton Keynes needs and deserves, and under a Conservative lead Council Administration that is what it will get.

On May 1<sup>st</sup> you, the people of Milton Keynes, have the chance to make a change for the better. This election will be a two horse race for the line between tired Liberal Democrats and the Conservative Party. Labour will come a poor third. If you, like us share the vision of a Milton Keynes based on excellence, with strong and dynamic leadership, then I urge you to support and join with us. Together we can put Milton Keynes back where it belongs - at the forefront of national thinking.

Cllr. Andrew Geary  
Conservative Group Leader

## **Taxation**

**Conservatives** have always been committed to the principle of low taxation, based on the principle of an individual's choice to spend their own money on the goods and services they feel they most need and require. Under a **Conservative** Administration Milton Keynes Council will:

- 1) Commit to limit council tax rises each year to no more than the underlying rate of inflation.
- 2) Continue to press hard on the Government for a fair funding settlement for the residents of Milton Keynes in order to properly finance the delivery of first class public services, and fair funding for a city where the growth agenda has so many large demands on the public purse.
- 3) To manage the resources of the authority by careful and considerate administration, and a move away from the wasteful approach demonstrated by previous administrations.

## **Corporate Governance**

A **Conservative** administration is committed to a wholesale review of council services and functions. It is important to obtain maximum value for money, your money! So it is important to identify those areas of council services which require more resources, as well as those where money is currently being wasted. **Conservatives** believe in a bottom up approach of government and not a top down, with individuals always having the right to input into the process of how and when money is utilised and spent.

## Growth and Expansion

Local **Conservatives** have always resisted the imposition of mass housing expansion from central government, including the current proposals to find 70,000 new homes between now and 2031. But **Conservatives** support organic growth, based on the needs of both the people and the business community of Milton Keynes. A vibrant new city like Milton Keynes must not resist all growth, but it must be growth that is beneficial to all. A **Conservative** led administration will,

- 1) Continue to lobby for the replacement of the Milton Keynes Partnerships (the undemocratically, government appointed Quango which is currently overseeing the expansion of our city). A future **Conservative** government is already committed to winding up MKP within the first 100 days of it's election to power, and replacing it with a democratically elected body, accountable to the cabinet of Milton Keynes Council.
- 2) Continue to campaign of **I before E** (Infrastructure before expansion), so well championed across the city in recent years by your **local Conservatives**.
- 3) Fight for a slowing down of the rate of housing delivery currently being imposed by the Labour Government to a rate that is beneficial to the people and businesses of Milton Keynes.
- 4) Continue to campaign for the people of Milton Keynes to have the final say on the expansion of their city, rather than having those decisions made for them by civil servants at Westminster.
- 5) Give support for regeneration projects which are so desperately needed in some of our older and more run down areas, but only after local consultation and with a bottom up approach, with the parishes concerned being the instigators of such projects by means of the Parish Plan methodology.
- 6) Continue to support a 30% level of affordable housing, but with a much greater emphasis on the concept of shared ownership, the principle so long adopted by the **Conservative** Party of a hand up and not a hand out.
- 7) Welcome and support the proposals for a Waterway Park, including a canal, running through the eastern flank of the new city as a major environmental and leisure amenity.
- 8) Strive to implement the maximum parking standards in all new housing estates to avoid the problems which are caused when standards are allowed to slip.

## **Travel and Transport**

A city and borough like Milton Keynes relies on the ability to travel quickly and freely. That is why it is essential to continue to recognise all that has made Milton Keynes the success that it is, such as the grid road system. **Local Conservatives** have always supported an effective and efficient integrated public transport system to allow travel for those who do not have access to the motor car, but not at the expense of the motorist. After all, Milton Keynes was built and designed around the car. Specifically, a **Conservative** controlled administration will:

- 1) Aspire to deliver an integrated public transport system to ensure that public transport is widely available to all who wish or need to use it.
- 2) Continue to support the motorist, so heavily penalised by previous administrations, by positively promoting the preservation of the entire grid road system, the dualling of specific parts of it, and its extension into the designated expansion areas.
- 3) License the CMK retailers and commercial operators to impose their own city centre parking charges in order to promote the facilities that Milton Keynes has to offer in a positive manner.
- 4) Continuing to press for the dualling of the A421 as a southern relief road for Milton Keynes and the construction of a Junction 13a on the M1 in order to enhance traffic flows and movements.
- 5) Support the proposed east – west rail link, and continue to campaign for more frequent rail links to London and a new direct Euro Star link to Europe.
- 6) Support proper upgrading of Milton Keynes Railway Station in order that it be fit for purpose for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century City.
- 7) Support the extension and proper maintenance of the redway network in order to provide safe passage for those who wish to walk and cycle.

## **Environment**

Milton Keynes has much to boast about with its open spaces and green landscape. But there are many parts of the city and borough which are currently blighted by graffiti, fly tipping and rubbish. A **Conservative** administration will

- 1) Tackle the root causes of the problems of dirty streets and areas by tackling the causes as well as the symptoms. As well as regular deep cleansing and swift clearance of problem areas **Conservatives** will tackle the causes of the problem.
- 2) Promote a regular programme of street cleaning and litter picking, with increases of services in problem areas, in order to promote cleanliness and the inevitable feel good factor which goes with it.
- 3) Retain the weekly collection of both black bag refuse and recycling, but with a greater emphasis on how to expand the current recycling scheme in order to continue to work towards a zero waste policy in Milton Keynes.
- 4) Explore more economically and ecologically sound ways of disposing of our black bag waste than the current landfill methods, but continuing Milton Keynes' adopted policy of opposing incineration.
- 5) Champion the e-government and electronic communication agenda for Milton Keynes.
- 6) Place a much greater emphasis on the role of the Parks Trust (one of MK's greatest assets) in the management and preservation of our open spaces.

## Education

**Conservatives** in Milton Keynes have a vision and determination to see that Milton Keynes has some of the top schools in the country. A **Conservative** Council managed Education Authority will become one of the most effective in the country. The **Conservative** pledge is that all schools will be good schools. We have the policies to meet that pledge across our primary schools by allowing them greater freedoms and less bureaucratic interference from Central Milton Keynes. Allowing staff and parents a greater say on all issues. Some secondary schools across MK will need closer attention but standards of education and the quality of buildings in which our students are taught will be greatly improved. We will strive to ensure that schools that are currently poorly regarded by parents and pupils will become the first choice school for people living closest to them.

We pledge to fund schools to the levels set by the government, and to spend more. We will support innovative new ways of generating investment. We will introduce new behavioural management techniques. Disruption in class will be kept to a minimum through investment in what will be a revamped and strengthened Pupil Referral Unit.

- 1) We commit to **fund our schools properly.**
- 2) We will **motivate all school staff** properly with strong support, proper funding, and a commitment to put right those areas where there are still challenges.
- 3) We will develop and deliver high value **schemes to enhance school buildings.**
- 4) We will protect rural schools (including faith schools) which play such a vital part in the communities in which they serve.
- 5) Pledge to deliver new schools and education facilities **on time and within budget**, learning from the mistakes of our predecessors.

## **Housing and Neighbourhoods**

It is **Conservative** policy to deliver and supply first class local services. In order that this might be delivered it is sometimes necessary for an administration to hold its hands up and admit that it cannot do this without outside help. Proper maintenance and upkeep of Council properties is one such example. Without the input of a third party, the housing stock will continue to fall into worse states of disrepair. For this reason the **Conservative** administration will.

- 1) Face up to the challenges which have been pushed aside by successive administrations in Milton Keynes over past years, and recognise that to carry on as we are is not an option.
- 2) Explore all avenues open to ensure that all Council Properties can reach the decent homes standard by 2009.
- 3) Having carefully considered each option, both at policy development committee and Cabinet level, to write to and inform all tenants of the options open to them, and to subsequently ballot them on the possible ways forward.
- 4) Keep tenants fully appraised at all times of the latest situation and any decisions which will affect their own day to day well being.
- 5) Recognise that it is the tenant and not the budget which is the main concern of the council functions, and we will direct the department in the best way to serve the needs of the tenant.
- 6) Promote and support the concept of Community Responsibility.

## Law and Order

Your local **Conservatives** know all too well of the consequences and difficulties that crime and anti social behaviour bring with them. A **Conservative** led administration will,

- 1) Give a greater priority and standing to the “Community Safety Partnership” which currently acts as the liaison and working group between the police and the council.
- 2) Strengthen the powers of the Traveller Management Unit (TMU) in order that those who follow the traveller life style do so without impinging on the lives of the residents of Milton Keynes.
- 3) Support and promote a fully staffed, 24 hours a day, seven days a week environmental services helpline, which gives citizens the ability to telephone the council 24hrs a day to report problems and disturbances that are not of a criminal nature.
- 4) Local **Conservatives** fully support the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) initiative aimed at promoting community safety, tackling local problems and reducing the fear of crime. We agree to work alongside other key individuals who are representatives of the agencies working in the community together with local people to identify and resolve priority concerns and to further assist with crime prevention and community safety projects.

## Employment, Business and Prosperity

Local **Conservatives** recognise the importance of commerce, business and industry to this new city as well as to the rural areas of the borough. A **Conservative** lead administration will strive to work with local business and business organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce to develop policies which will both enhance our existing businesses and attract new investment, but at all times keeping the needs of local people at the fore front of our thinking. A **Conservative** Council will take the leading role in setting the employment strategy for Milton Keynes, rather than being dictated to by central government or any of its qangoes.

## **Local Conservatives, Working For You!**