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Minutes of the meeting of the CABINET held on TUESDAY 1 FEBRUARY at 6.30pm.

Present: Councillor R Bradburn (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Councillors Carr, Darlington, Middleton, Z Nolan, Trendall and
Wilson-Marklew.

Apologies: Councillors Marland and Townsend.

Officers: M Bracey (Chief Executive), T Aldworth (Deputy Chief Executive),
S Bridglalsingh (Director of Law and Governance), S Richardson
(Director Finance & Resources), P Thomas (Director Planning &
Placemaking), A Rulton (Head of Finance), N Hutchin (Head of
Finance), L Wheaten (Senior Finance Manager, Budget & Financial
Planning) and R Tidman (Committee Services Manager).

Also Present: Councillors Brown, Crooks, D Hopkins, Rankine, Verma and Walker.

C86 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Darlington made an announcement in relation to the Council exceeding housing growth targets.

Councillor R Bradburn made announcements in respect of Milton Keynes being identified as one of the top ten places for new business start-ups and productivity. He also made announcements in respect of Starship Technologies, plans to demolish 'The Point' by the developer of the site, Galliard and news of the robotic surgery assistants at Milton Keynes Hospital.

C87 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14 December 2021 be approved and signed by the Deputy Leader of the Council as a correct record.

C88 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

None.

C89 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None Received.

C90 COUNCILLORS' ITEMS

None received

C91 COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS

None

C92-93 REFERENCES FROM OTHER BODIES

- (a) Referral from the Covid-19 Task and Finish Group

Councillor D Hopkins presented the final report and recommendations of the Covid-19 Task and Finish Group. Councillor R Bradburn complimented Councillor D Hopkins on the work he had carried out not only on this Task and Finish Group but his work over the last few years in chairing a number of others.

RESOLVED:

That the referral and the written response provided, be noted.

- (b) Referral from the Council – 24 November 2021 –Motion: Timely Adoption and Pre-Adoption Maintenance of New Roads

Councillor Verma presented the motion and noted that he appreciated the written response that had been made. He noted that something still needed to be done in the interim with regard to the open cases that were ongoing. Councillor R Bradburn noted that there was additional funding proposed in the Budget to address the issue.

RESOLVED:

That the referral and the written response provided, be noted.

C94 FORECAST OUTTURN FOR QUARTER 3 2021/22: GENERAL FUND REVENUE, HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT, DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Councillor Middleton introduced the item indicating that this was an opportunity for the Cabinet to scrutinise in year the budget monitoring position. The Council was currently forecasting a very small General Fund underspend which meant that the budget for 2022/23 could be approached in a very positive manner. It was noted that there continued to be significant pressures particularly on adult social care and children's services.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That the GFRA forecast outturn of £0.051m underspend be noted, together with the associated management actions.
- 2 That GFRA savings of £4.684m savings are forecast to be achieved (87% of budget) be noted.
- 3 That the forecast outturn on the HRA is break even, after a reduction in the transfer to reserves be noted, together with the associated management actions.
- 4 That the DSG forecast surplus carry forward of £2.800m be noted, together with the associated management actions.

- 5 That the reserves position be noted.
- 6 That the forecast outturn on the Capital Programme of £5.949m underspend for the total project of which £6.331m underspend is in 2021/22 be noted.
- 7 That the forecast outturn position of the 2021/22 tariff programme be noted.
- 8 That the debt position of the Council at the end of quarter 3 be noted.
- 9 That the Write-off of unrecoverable debt that exceeds £20,000 be approved.
- 10 That the Treasury Management report including prudential indicators, be noted.
- 11 That the virements to the original budget be noted.
- 12 That the current position on the Collection Fund be noted.
- 13 That the procurement waiver decisions be noted.
- 14 That the additions and amendments to resource allocation and spend approval for the 2021/22 capital programme be approved.

C95 COUNCIL BUDGET 2022/23

Councillor Middleton introduced the item indicating that the Cabinet had proposed the draft budget in December to allow for a period of public consultation to ensure the views of residents, businesses and organisations across Milton Keynes could be heard. Councillor Middleton noted that they had received a number of responses including the level of Council Tax, the need to tackle litter, climate change, improvements to the public realm and also from providers of adult social care services. The Cabinet valued the work of the Budget Scrutiny Committee who had provided challenge on the draft budget proposals. Councillor Middleton noted that the Cabinet felt it was important to set a below inflation Council Tax increase but they also found themselves in the position of being able to propose a number of Cabinet Investment items due to the strong outturn position and the better than expected settlement from central government.

Councillor Middleton noted that the recommendations should be amended to read that all the recommendations in the report were to be approved by Cabinet and recommended to Council.

Councillor Brown, as Chair of the Budget & Resources Scrutiny Committee, indicated his thanks to officers and Cabinet members for their contribution to the scrutiny of the draft budget and passed on this thanks to the Finance Team for the budget papers which were clear and easy to follow.

Councillor Brown highlighted the key recommendations from scrutiny which related to the smarter working programme, planning enforcement service and one off pressures versus building these into the base budget.

Councillor Middleton indicated that there would be a written response circulated prior to the Council meeting addressing the issues raised in the committee report and thanked Councillor Brown and committee members for their recommendations.

The Cabinet heard from one member of the public in relation to requesting the Cabinet give consideration in the budget to the trial provision of an energy advice scheme. Councillor Darlington indicated that the Cabinet did have ambitious plans to respond to this need which would be highlighted later in the meeting.

Councillor Walker echoed the thanks to officers for their hard work throughout the budget preparation process. Councillor Walker noted that from the Conservative Groups perspective it was considered that detail had disappeared from the budget and the timeframe to approve the budget had been shortened. Conservative Councillors had also identified an error in the New Homes Bonus calculation that led to the recovery of £1.5 million.

Councillor Crooks advised that the item in Annex U that referenced the alleviation of parking issues at Brooklands should have read 'Broughton ward'.

Councillor Crooks further noted that regeneration was primarily seen as a housing issue and it was of course far wider encompassing for example leisure, landscaping and education. Councillor Crooks considered that it would be a valuable exercise to group all of this expenditure under one heading so that all of the funds spent on regeneration could be identified in one place.

The Cabinet then heard from the following Cabinet members who highlighted specific additional proposals to Annex U of the budget as follows:

- Councillor Car noted the additional funding for an energy crisis fund for those in extreme fuel poverty to ensure they do not get into debt and the additional funding that had been made available for mental health support for young people.
- Councillor Wilson-Marklew noted the additional funding for investing in a far reaching programme to assist residents with home insulation and funding to support work with developers to ensure roads were adopted as quickly as possible.
- Councillor Z Nolan highlighted the additional funding for the 'Summer of Play' programme.
- Councillor Darlington highlighted additional funding for footpath repairs, drop kerbs, pothole repairs, landscaping, the dementia friendly initiative and improvements to the Blue Lagoon.
- Councillor Trendall highlighted the additional funding for a dedicated resource in customer services to deal with matters relating to speeding up the time taken to adopt roads.

In summing up, Councillor Middleton welcomed the contributions of the Cabinet members regarding the additional investment proposals contained in the late papers. Councillor Middleton formally proposed the amendment of 'Brooklands' to 'Broughton ward' in Annex U and the additions proposed to Annex U in the late papers.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That the following recommendations be approved by Cabinet and recommended to Council
 - a) That the Revenue Budget 2022/23 totalling £228.096m be approved by Cabinet and recommended to Council.
 - b) That the Council Tax at Band D of £1,520.55 for the Milton Keynes element of the Council Tax, be approved by Cabinet and recommended to Council. This is an increase of 3.75%, consisting of a 1.99% general increase and 1.76% Adult Social Care Precept.
 - c) That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2022/23 (excluding Parish Precepts) of £137.404m, be noted.
 - d) That the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, as adopted by the Council on 24 February 2021, be continued for 2022/23, with amendments that reflect changes to related benefits and to the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations; retaining the delegation to the Director Finance and Resources to make technical legislative changes.
 - e) That the estimated position for the Dedicated Schools Grant of £306.123m and the Schools block funding formula for 2022/23 be noted and the budget and formula allocation for the High Needs and Early Years blocks, be approved.
 - f) That the forecast parking surplus be noted.
 - g) That the Housing Revenue Account Revenue Budget 2022/23 be recommended to Council for adoption.
 - h) That the Housing Revenue Account Dwelling Rent 2022/23, an increase of 4.1%, an average of £3.55 per week, be recommended to Council.
 - i) That the Rent and Service Charge Policy for 2022/23 be approved.
 - j) That the fees and charges for 2022/23 (including those fees and charges which are exceptions to the Income and Collection Policy) be approved by Cabinet and recommended to Council.
 - k) That the Capital Strategy be approved by Cabinet and recommended to Council.
 - l) That the Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2025/26 be approved by Cabinet and recommended to Council.

- m) That the resource allocation for the 2022/23 Tariff programme be approved by Cabinet and recommended to Council.
 - n) That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23 to 2026/27 and the Treasury Policy Statement, including the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, Borrowing Limits be approved by Cabinet and recommended to Council.
 - o) That the financial forecast set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), in relation to both resources and expenditure, be noted.
 - p) That the One Off Investment Proposals be approved.
 - q) That the equalities impact assessments for the Revenue Budget 2022/23, be noted.
- 1.2 That the reference to 'Brooklands' in Annex U be amended to read 'Broughton ward'.
- 1.3 That the Cabinet make the following additions to Annex U Cabinet Investment Proposals provided that the Local Government Finance Settlement confirms that the allocation of New Homes Bonus award is in line with the revised CTB1 return:
- a) Energy crisis fund - £250k. Funding will be provided to help those in extreme fuel poverty to ensure people do not fall into debt that may impact council services e.g homelessness
 - b) Energy efficiency measures - £250k. Funding to assist those in fixed incomes reduce energy use and reduce fuel bills through provision of energy efficiency measure such as insulation.
 - c) Additional pothole repairs - £100k. Further additional funding to boost pothole to over 10,000 additional repairs.
 - d) Bletchley regeneration footpath repairs - £125k. Funding for footpath resurfacing across Bletchley as part of the commitment to regeneration and enhancing town deal improvements.
 - e) Older town footpath repairs - £125k. Funding for footpath resurfacing in older towns Newport Pagnell, Stony Stratford, Wolverton and New Bradwell.
 - f) Renewal estate footpath repairs - £100k. Funding for footpath resurfacing across renewal estates to enhance renewal programme.
 - g) Older New Town estates footpath repairs - £100k. Funding for older new town estate footpath resurfacing (e.g. Hodge Lea, Springfield, Downs Barn)

- h) Mental Health support - £75k additional funding for mental health support for young people to meet additional demand due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- i) Blue Lagoon improvements - £30k. Improvements to Blue Lagoon in Bletchley as part of regeneration and assist in production of prospectus to attract external funding .
- j) Disability public realm improvements - £50k. Funding for adaptations such as dropped kerbs for disabled access
- k) Dementia friendly public realm improvements - £25k. Funding for improvements to the public realm as part of becoming a Dementia Friendly city e.g signage.
- l) Additional street sign funding - £25k
- m) Road adoptions funding - £25k. Funding to enhance the work taking place to adopt roads in new developments more quickly
- n) Additional landscaping - £138k.
- o) Additional Summer of Play - £100k
- p) New Town Heritage Register - £20k. Funding to ensure the production and maintenance of the New Town Heritage Register.

C96 MAKING IMPROVEMENTS TO PLANNING SERVICES IN MILTON KEYNES

Councillor R Bradburn introduced the item noting that the independent investigation into the planning application at 1 Yeomans Drive had concluded, there was ongoing work to finalise an Improvement Plan for the Planning service and there was an upcoming Local Government Association Peer Review.

RESOLVED:

1. That following the Independent Investigation Report into the planning application at 1 Yeomans Drive, Blakelands and the resolution of the Audit Committee on 16 December 2022, the work of the Planning Improvement Board, and ongoing work to develop an Interim Improvement Plan, be noted.
2. That Cabinet note and endorse the upcoming Local Government Association Peer Review.
3. That Cabinet note and endorse the proposal to finalise an Improvement Plan, under the direction of the Planning Improvement Board.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7.34 PM.