



Minutes of the meeting of the CABINET held on TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2017 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Marland (Chair)
Councillors Gifford, Gowans, Legg, Long, Nolan and O'Neill

Officers: C Mills (Chief Executive), M Bracey (Corporate Director - People), D Sharkey (Corporate Director - Place), P Simpson (Corporate Director - Resources), S Bridglasingh (Service Director [Legal and Democratic Services]), T Blackburne-Maze (Service Director [Public Realm]), S Richardson (Service Director [Finance and Resources]), S Hayes (Head of Transport), A Moss (Transport Strategy Consultant), A Rulton (Strategic Finance Business Partner) and D Imbimbo (Committee Manager)

Apologies: Councillor Middleton

Also Present: Councillors Bald, Bint and 12 members of the public

C91 CABINET ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader announced that:

- (a) Wendy Ratcliffe (Senior Lawyer) had been named Legal Professional of the year at the 'Lawyers in Local Government' event and Katrina Hulatt (Senior Lawyer) had been highly commended for her role in Litigation, and that the Cabinet would be passing its congratulations on to those officers;
- (b) 30 additional Council provided emergency placements had been made available in support of other initiatives to provide shelter for homeless rough sleepers; and
- (c) since the last Cabinet meeting a report from the National Infrastructure Commission in respect of the Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Oxford Corridor, published on 17 November 2017, had specifically identified Milton Keynes as a town with significant importance for future growth.

The Leader indicated that he had written to the Government setting out what was required in terms of infrastructure to ensure that the vision of the MK FUTURES project could be delivered. He also indicated that a comprehensive briefing would be prepared for all Councillors as soon as was practical.

C92

MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 November 2017 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to the words 'as village greens' being added to the penultimate paragraph of Minute C80 after the word 'sites' and also the words 'as village greens' being added to the resolution after the word 'as'.

C93

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

None were made.

C94

DEPUTATIONS AND PETITIONS

The Cabinet received a Petition from Mr Bimal Kumar on behalf of Residents of the Whitehouse Estate with reference to the provision of safe road crossing facilities on the H4 Danstead Way at its junction with Randall Avenue.

Councillor Gowans acknowledged the concerns of residents of Whitehouse Estate who sought assurances that a safe crossing for the H4 Danstead Way, at its junction with Randall Avenue, would be provided, and indicated that the Western Expansion Area delivery options and timetable for safe crossings would be considered early in the New Year.

C95

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question from Ms L Arbury to Councillor Gowans (Cabinet Member for Public Realm).

Ms Arbury, referring to the Eastern Expansion Area, City Street and Surrounding Network Review Progress Report, asked Councillor Gowans if he could explain why the Council thought that the residents of Broughton and Brooklands Avenue were content with the road layouts etc. when no one consulted the residents.

In response Councillor Gowans assured the public that he would not make a statement in this regard without first asking and had not made that comment.

Question from Ms A Marlow to Councillor Nolan (Cabinet Member for Children and Families).

Ms A Marlow, noting that 866 children currently claimed short break vouchers and referring to changes to the Short Break Voucher Scheme which would see families means tested; a reduction in the available budget from £62k this year to £30k in 2019; and the likely reduction in children eligible to 250, asked Councillor Nolan if she thought that the changes, which would penalise working low income families and stop many from claiming the £120 a year to give their children a break was fair.

In response Councillor Nolan undertook to research what had been stated in advance of taking the delegated decision and would take account of all information when making the decision.

C96

REFERRAL FROM HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMMITTEE - 13 JULY 2017: THE CARE ACT AND HOW IT IS WORKING IN MILTON KEYNES / LEARNING DISABILITIES SERVICES

The Cabinet received a referral from the Health and Adult Social Care Committee meeting on 13 July 2017 (Minute HASC11) requesting that the Cabinet consider more ways in which personal assistance can be encouraged, such as through the voluntary sector, and that the Cabinet also review the rolling Learning Disabilities Transformation Programme so as to determine how it can be applied to other areas within the 'People' Directorate.

The Chair advised the Cabinet that Councillor Jenkins (Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Committee) was unable to attend the meeting and had extended her apologies for absence.

Councillor Bald, having attended the Committee's meeting spoke on behalf of Councillor Jenkins and stated that it was the view of Health and Adult Social Care Committee that all councillors, irrespective of political affiliation, were in agreement as to the general direction of the policy. The Committee's work had identified significant strengths within the Service which the Committee considered to be essential and should be continued. It was hoped that Cabinet would support the Service. The Health and Adult Social Care Committee had been disappointed at the political response given by Councillor Long to recent questions in respect of ongoing funding for the Service.

Councillor Bald further advised the Cabinet that the Health and Adult Social Care Committee had recognised that colleagues in Planning and the Clinical Commissioning Group had not been aware of ways in which they could influence Health Planning, and the Committee felt that the Cabinet should use its influence to ensure that progress was being made.

Councillor Long, the responsible Cabinet member for Adult Care and Housing, told the Cabinet that a written response had been submitted. He added that he had concerns about the shortfalls in funding resulting from Government policy and austerity which was placing serious threats on service delivery capability.

In response to the referral the Cabinet noted that:

- (a) work was underway to develop a Personal Assistance register, with a planned launch in January 2018, alongside this a recruitment and awareness raising campaign was being planned and the Council was supporting the development of the emerging consortium; and,

- (b) there had been a presentation to all senior managers in the People Directorate on the Learning Disabilities Transformation Programme.

RESOLVED -

That the referral and written response be noted

C97

REFERRAL FROM HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMMITTEE - 27 SEPTEMBER 2017: LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES

The Cabinet received a referral from the Health and Adult Social Care Committee meeting on 27 September 2017 requesting:

- “1. That Cabinet raise the issue of decreased NHS funding for Milton Keynes relative to population, and to work closely with Milton Keynes’s Members of Parliament to raise the issue in Whitehall and Parliament.
2. That Cabinet works closely with Milton Keynes’s Members of Parliament so as to ensure that there is adequate NHS funding for Milton Keynes’s population growth and future needs.
3. That Councillor Long (Cabinet Member- Adult Care & Housing) and senior officers from the Adult Service meet with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to ensure Section 106 funding is used effectively in planning for and meeting the borough’s health population needs.
4. That Cabinet and health bodies assess regeneration areas in Milton Keynes where health services are not available or need to be improved.”

Councillor Long referred to his written response and comments made whilst considering the previous referral.

In response to the referral the Cabinet noted that:

- (a) the Administration was happy to work with the two local MPs to achieve proper levels of funding for social care services and the NHS;
- (b) colleagues meet regularly with the CCG, mostly to plan for new facilities, or to meet the requirements of new development and also the CCG were consulted as lead commissioners, on all planning applications of a scale to warrant s106 contributions, with a view to how any contributions will be used; and
- (c) YourMK was engaging with key representatives from health (and other key services) to ensure regeneration masterplans were strategic aligned and supportive of partner priorities.

RESOLVED -

That the referral and written response be noted.

C98

**REFERRAL FROM SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
OUTCOMES - 11 OCTOBER 2017: REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S
EMERGENCY PLAN**

The Cabinet considered the following referral from the Scrutiny Management Committee meeting held on 11 October 2017:

- "1. That the Cabinet be requested to:
 - (a) consider the Committee's concerns at:
 - (i) the Council's reliance on Council Staff Volunteers to support major emergency planning incidents in Milton Keynes;
 - (ii) the sufficiency of volunteers;
 - (iii) there being no on-call incident support officers and the ability/availability of those officers to respond, particularly at night, weekends and during public holidays;
 - (b) ensure that the Emergency Plan makes provision for relevant and timely communications to be made to the public, and the Councils Political Leaders, Senior Officers, Councillors, Parish and Town Councils and community groups, and
 - (c) ensure that the important roles of the Leader of the Council and then Cabinet are clearly defined in the Council's Emergency Plan.
2. That the Cabinet be asked to consider the provision of an Emergency Operation Centre location available to the Council's Emergency Planning Team at short notice."

The Chair advised the Cabinet that Councillor I McCall was unable to attend the meeting and had extended her apologies for absence.

Councillor O'Neil, Cabinet member for Healthier and Stronger Communities, referred to her written response.

The Cabinet noted that on 21 January 2018 the Emergency Planning Team would be meeting with Town and Parish Councils to ensure that there was a wide understanding of the responsibilities placed on the Council and what support Town and Parish Councils might be able to provide. It was further noted that a protocol had been agreed with the Police and Fire service to ensure that the Council had early notice of an incident.

Councillor O'Neil acknowledged the concerns about the availability of Emergency Planning Officers, indicating that this was a matter that would be addressed as part of the Future Working Programme.

Councillor Bald (Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Management Committee) thanked Councillor O'Neill for the response and told the Cabinet that she would ask the Scrutiny Management Committee to consider in detail the response from Councillor O'Neill and respond as required.

RESOLVED -

1. That the referral and written response be noted
2. That the Scrutiny Management Committee considers the content of the response and reports back with any comments.

C99

DRAFT COUNCIL BUDGET 2018/19 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2018/19 TO 2021/22

The Cabinet considered the Draft Council Budget 2018/19 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2021/22

It was reported that the draft Revenue Budget provided £11.9m of extra money to meet additional demand for critical services which would be used alongside the reshaping and modernisation of services. Particular areas which were to be addressed included:

- (a) additional capacity to continue reducing the costs of homelessness, and the impending implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act;
- (b) the increasing number of assessments, and the size of adult care packages; and
- (c) the increased demand for support across children's social care services.

It was also reported that In addition to this extra demand on critical services, the Council faced a further £4.9m Central Government funding reduction. To offset this, £8.3m of service budget cuts and £2.3m of additional income proposals had been identified in accordance with the Cabinet's key principles of 'smarter', 'sustainable' and 'different' and the Council Plan.

It was further reported that finalisation of the draft budget was also subject to further assessment of the following material known risks which could not at this stage be fully quantified:

- (a) potential delays to the Residual Waste Treatment Facility;
- (b) continued growth in the demand for temporary accommodation; and
- (c) Business Rate fluctuations.

The Cabinet noted that the Capital Programme included significant investment in four new school builds and three school expansions, highways improvement works and contributions to the MK Gallery and health facilities.

The Cabinet also noted that the Housing Revenue Account Budget included the required 1% rent reduction and identified resources for new build housing and regeneration.

Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council) informed the Cabinet that the Council had been required to make in excess of £140m of savings since 2010 due to a combination of austerity measures from Central Government and the rising demand on services such as social care. It was therefore necessary to save £40m in the forthcoming year. In order to meet these challenges the draft Budget for 2018/18 included a Council Tax increase of 1.99% and an additional 3% levy for Social Care. However, there was still a need to identify a number of service reductions to remain within budget.

The Cabinet noted that the Government expected Councils to raise Council tax as part of the ongoing budgeting process.

Councillor Marland referred to a number of positive measures that had been achieved despite the cuts, including maintaining library services and playschool provision at current levels. It was however accepted that there would be a need to see further staff redundancies or redeployments.

Councillor Marland, referring to the level of Council Reserves, commented that the Council held reserves of £170m, but it should be noted that this was a figure representing the position half way through the financial year and therefore the end of year position was likely to be considerably different. Furthermore it was recognised that one off funding from reserves was bad practice as had been demonstrated by other authorities and was not something that the Council would consider.

The Cabinet heard from two members of the public during consideration of this item.

Councillor Marland confirmed that a further 70 Council staff full time equivalent posts were likely to be lost amounting to a total of almost 500 posts since 2010. This reduction in staff had placed a massive strain on remaining staff who were required to deliver the same and often increased service levels with significantly reduced resources. The Cabinet accordingly commended officer colleagues for their continued dedication.

Councillor Bald raised concern in respect of the costs to the Council incurred due to the delayed opening of the Waste Treatment Plant and the cost of interest charges being accrued on the loan used to build the facility. She further highlighted concerns in respect of the parking charges which whilst not intended to be raised were at a level that was placing serious pressures on commuters.

RESOLVED -

1. That the draft Revenue Budget 2018/19 and latest Medium Term Financial Strategy forecast for 2018/19 to 2021/22 be approved as a basis for consultation with the public and stakeholders.
2. That the provisional Council Tax at Band D of £1,328.89 for the Milton Keynes element of the Council Tax be agreed for consultation, being a 4.99% increase on the previous year, including the additional 3% adult social care precept offsetting some of the additional costs arising from the increase in demand for adult social care.
3. That the estimated position for the Dedicated Schools Grant and the planned consultation with schools and the Schools Forum for 2018/19 be noted.
4. That the draft Housing Revenue Account Budget, including the required 1% rent decrease, be approved as a basis for consultation.
5. That, in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, it be noted that the Corporate Director, Resources, is of the view that the draft General Fund Budget and Housing Revenue Account is robust and the forecast reserves are adequate, subject to a further review of risks.
6. That the proposed fees and charges for 2018/19, which are exceptions to the Income and Collection Policy, be noted.
7. That the proposed fees and charges for 2018/19, which are exceptions to the Income and Collection Policy, be noted.
8. That the draft forecast parking surplus be noted.
9. That the draft Capital Programme for 2018/19 to 2021/22 be approved.
10. That the resource allocation for the draft Tariff Programme be noted.

C100

REVISIONS TO CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND SPEND APPROVALS

The Cabinet considered revisions to the Capital Programme and Spend Approvals which were introduced by Councillor Marland, Leader of the Council.

It was reported that the changes outlined in the report resulted in a revised Capital Programme for 2017/18 of £280.31m. Spend approval at £241.15m had been given to enable individual projects in the Programme to commence or continue.

It was also reported that, should the recommendations included in the report be approved, the Milton Keynes Tariff Programme for 2017/18, which forward funded infrastructure in the expansion areas,

would be £40.72m, with the total spend approval for these contributions at £17.62m.

The Cabinet noted the following new Schemes added to the Capital Programme 2017/18:

- (a) Langland Community School – Emergency boiler replacement;
- (b) Priory Common School – Emergency boiler replacement; and
- (c) Additional Housing Advice Software to assist the Council in meeting the requirements of the Homelessness reduction Act 2018.

RESOLVED -

1. That the additions and amendments to resource allocation and spend approval for the 2017/18 capital programme be approved.
2. That the overall funding position for the 2017/18 capital programme be noted.
3. That the amendments to resource allocation and spend approvals for the 2017/18 tariff programme be approved.
4. That the current position of the 2017/18 tariff programme be noted.

C101

MILTON KEYNES MOBILITY STRATEGY CONSULTATION DRAFT FOR APPROVAL

The Cabinet considered the draft Mobility Strategy prior to it being issued for consultation.

Councillor Gifford, Cabinet member for Place, outlined that the draft Mobility Strategy, which was formally called the Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-31), had been reviewed and updated to include changes in both transport practice and technology and to better support the expectations for growth of the city to 2031 as defined in the draft Plan MK and the Council's longer term vision outlined in the MK Futures 2050 programme.

Councillor Gifford reported that the draft Mobility Strategy incorporated the principles of connectivity outlined in the National Infrastructure Commission's final report of November 2017 and set out an implementation plan to ensure that the Milton Keynes transport system was improved to support growth, access to jobs and the quality of life for local communities.

Councillor Gifford also reported that despite current trends to reduce the use of vehicles the Strategy recognised that Milton Keynes had a commitment to the Grid Road system and sought to keep commute times to a minimum, alongside this was a commitment to invest in and improve public transport, thereby providing people with more options.

The Cabinet heard from two members of the public during consideration of this item, who raised concern that the draft Strategy lacked detail in certain respect such as the recent trends in relation to bus services that had seen reduced usage due to longer trips and more congestion on the roads, particularly there were no detailed actions on how to address these issues, and no targets were set within the draft Strategy.

It was further commented that the title including the word 'mobility' could confuse by misleading people into thinking it was a strategy to address issues of mobility for less abled persons. It should include in the title the term 'Local Transport Plan'. It was further commented that there were some deficiencies in the Strategy which should be addressed before it went for consultation, deficiencies such as the concept of cross-ticketing' and the fact that the reduction in Community Transport services had not been taken account of in the Strategy.

Councillor Bint thanked Councillor Gifford for the Strategy which he endorsed for the most part, but he was concerned that there was a lack of details in some cases and that a stakeholder engagement meeting , had not taken place before the draft was finalised.

Councillor Gifford confirmed that the document was a Strategy rather than a detailed plan. Councillor Gifford further commented that available resources and stakeholder engagement would be something relied upon when finalised plans were drawn up to deliver the Strategy.

Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council) commented that he believed it was a difficult time to be drawing up a Transport/Mobility Strategy when there were so many changes and innovative projects emerging, such as driverless vehicles, and that was a reason why a strategy rather than a plan was being progressed at this stage.

RESOLVED -

That the draft Mobility Strategy 2018/2013 be approved for consultation and engagement with the public and key stakeholders.

C102

EASTERN EXPANSION AREA - CITY STREET AND SURROUNDING NETWORK REVIEW

Cabinet considered the regular progress report on the Eastern Expansion Area, City Street and Surrounding Network Review

Councillor Gowans, Cabinet member for Public Realm, referring to the report informed the Cabinet that a great deal of progress had been made in respect of the review. He acknowledged that there remained a need to engage further with the residents and take account of the findings in respect of the speed-watch initiative.

The written comments in response to the report from Councillor Crooks were received and Councillor Gowans confirmed that the issues raised would be considered by the Stakeholder Group.

Councillor Gowans reminded the Cabinet that a sum of £250k had been proposed to be made available in the Budget for 2018/19 to address some of the road improvements required. Work was ongoing to clearly identify the best ways that resource could be used, to progress the improvements.

The Cabinet heard from two members of the public during consideration of this item. It was commented that there had been late notice given that the item was to be considered and therefore the residents who had been conducting research had not been able to collate the information they had to support the assertions made by residents in respect of the safety issues and welcomed the opportunity to address the Cabinet when the matter was next considered. It was further commented that the residents wanted to clarify that the community speed-watch group was not affiliated to any political group as had been inferred in recent correspondence.

Councillor Bint welcomed the submitted written comments from Councillor Crooks and thanked officers and the Cabinet member for having conducted a site visit to see the issues and concerns raised.

Councillor Bint further commented that the report recognised progress on process, but that there had been no work conducted 'on the ground'. In response to comments, Councillor Gowans reminded the Cabinet that he had taken a delegated decision earlier in the year for the Council to formally recognise and support the Community Speed-watch programmes.

RESOLVED -

1. That the progress to date of works and improvements within the Eastern Expansion Area and surrounding network be noted.
2. That the final position of the items related to the delegated decision of April 2015 and move towards a thematic approach to further works be noted.
3. That the proposed allocation of £250k in the capital budget for additional works to be undertaken in the EEA be noted.
4. That the positive work of the Eastern Expansion Area Stakeholder Group be continued
5. That residents be invited to the next meeting of the Stakeholder Group to be convened in January to hear the results of the community speed-watch initiative, and that a representative of Thames Valley Police be invited to that meeting.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7:54 PM