

Minutes of the meeting of the CABINET held on TUESDAY 4 DECEMBER 2018 at 6.30 pm.

- Present:** Councillor Marland (Chair).
Councillors Gowans, Legg, Long, Nolan, Middleton, O'Neill and Priestley
- Officers:** M Bracey (Chief Executive), P Simpson (Corporate Director Resources, M Heath (Acting Director [Children's Services]), V Collins (Acting Director [Social Services]), S Richardson (Service Director [Finance and Resources]), P Cummins (Acting Service Director [Legal and Democratic Services]), E Nickless (Head of Homelessness Prevention and Housing Access), A Rulton (Strategic Finance Business Partner) and S Muir (Committee Manager)
- Also Present:** Councillors Bint, Brackenbury, R Bradburn, Crooks, D Hopkins, Jenkins, Minns, Miles and Walker and 10 members of the public

C112 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Nolan announced that a successful Joint Local Area SEND inspection had taken place in October 2018 with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) within the local area of Milton Keynes. This had judged the effectiveness of the area in implementing the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

Councillor Nolan stated that support from all partners helped the inspection to run smoothly which also evidenced the strong partnership working across Milton Keynes.

Councillor Nolan indicated that the inspection team had now published its report and had identified many strengths and reasons as to why all partners can be proud of what has been achieved to embed the SEND reforms with determination to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Councillor Nolan further indicated that since these inspections had become established there had been an increase in Local Authorities being required to write statements of action, something that had not been necessary for Milton Keynes; 53% of those Local Authorities inspected since March 2017 had needed to produce such a plan.

Councillor Nolan commended those involved in the inspection and referred to her pride in all the work that had taken place across Milton Keynes in supporting children and families with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and the difference it made.

Councillor Nolan also indicated that a copy of the announcement would be made available to all Councillors.

C113

MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6 November 2018 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

C114

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

None disclosed.

C115

PETITIONS

The Cabinet received a petition from Councillor Bint on behalf of circa 200 local residents requesting that the Council introduced some properly enforced short stay parking spaces within Tanfield Square Broughton for the benefit of local traders and their customers. Also that signage be provided on Fen Street to direct traffic towards Ambergate and the Broughton Local Centre.

Councillor Gowans indicated that Highways officer colleagues would be asked to investigate possible solutions.

C116

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(a) Question from Ms Stephen to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Ms Stephen stated, with reference to the recent World Health Organisation listing of processed meat as Class One Carcinogens and all other meat as Class Two Carcinogens, and that animal agriculture was a leading cause of climate change and the advice from climatologists, environmentalists and health organisations was to massively reduce meat consumption, asked that with this change to the understanding of how meat production was affecting the planet and health, why the Council was still feeding meat to children in schools, vulnerable residents in social care and to those in hospital and if the Cabinet agreed that the Council's policy on food should change, so that less meat or no meat was given to children in school meals and those in social care?

Councillor Marland thanked Ms Stephen for her question and indicated that the schools, and not the Council, managed school meals. However, he would ask Councillor Nolan (the Cabinet member for Children and Families) and Councillor O'Neill (the Cabinet member for Health and Wellbeing) to encourage the use of well-produced organic meat and unprocessed foods in schools and council managed social care facilities.

In response to a supplementary question, when Ms Stephen asked if Milton Keynes Council had any influence on where its pension funds were invested as the decision to invest pension funds was under the control of the Finance Director of Buckinghamshire County Council, Councillor Marland stated that it was correct that Milton Keynes Council pension arrangements were managed by Buckinghamshire County Council and that the Council had little influence where its pension funds were invested.



- (b) Question from Ms Bray to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council).

Ms Bray, with reference to some of the reported outcomes of a warmer climate that included food shortages, water shortages and more illness of which the country was completely unprepared for, asked Councillor Marland if the Council was thinking about ways in which it could mitigate some of the effects of climate change, such as turning over existing areas of parkland to community led self-sufficiency projects and also if he agreed that the Council should be re-assessing the use of the land for agricultural use, to work in the best possible way?

Councillor Marland thanked Ms Bray for her question and indicated that as the parkland, ponds and lakes in Milton Keynes provided a carbon sink, amenity and play opportunities for residents which contributed to their health and wellbeing, he did not agree to the land use being re-assessed for agricultural use.

- (c) Question from Mr Beales to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council).

Mr Beales stated that the country had lost a staggering 60% of its wildlife populations over the last 50 years and much of this decline had been within insect populations, with some of them experiencing a 98% decline and gave examples of the use of pesticides and asked Councillor Marland if the Council would therefore prioritise bringing back insect populations within Milton Keynes.

Councillor Marland thanked Mr Beales for his question and indicated that the Council was committed to improving biodiversity in public open spaces, and this was an intrinsic principle of a proposed forthcoming landscape transformation project which it was anticipated would seek to increase ecosystem services above the current baseline by modifying current landscape management practices. The Council had also investigated many methods to increase biodiversity without the need to significantly increase chemical inputs.

(d) Question from Mr Morgan to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Mr Morgan, asked Councillor Marland, with reference to the background of a growing climate emergency, the recent climate report from the IPCC and the UN Climate Change Conference in Poland (COP24) and stated that as Bristol and Manchester had committed to being carbon neutral as cities before 2050, therefore in light of this, was Milton Keynes planning a much more ambitious climate policy, and if not, why not?

Councillor Marland thanked Mr Beales for his question and indicated a report was scheduled to be considered at the 8 January 2019 meeting of the Cabinet; the Sustainability Strategy 2019-2050, which would outline the ambition for Milton Keynes to be the world's greenest and most sustainable city.

Councillor Marland also stated that he would be the only Council Leader attending the COP24 UN Climate Change Conference in Katowice, Poland on 10 December 2018.

(e) Question from Mr C Williams to Councillor Long (Cabinet member for Housing and Regeneration)

Mr C Williams asked Councillor Long, with reference to the response from the Service Director for Housing & Community to a question from a member of the public at the recent Council Community & Housing Scrutiny Committee, when the Service Director for Housing & Community stated that Council tenant rents would rise as a result of regeneration leading to improved housing, but he was unable to determine by how much, and that any increase would be offset by a reduction on the cost of utilities, such as gas and electricity, charges – and, therefore tenants would not be out of pocket, asked for this statement to be put in writing to tenants and tenant groups.

Councillor Long responded that as the rents were linked to the Local Housing Allowance from Government and the information for the future rent amounts had not been made known by the Government, it was not possible make such a statement.

Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council) indicated that it was anticipated that as a result of Regeneration, residents would be helped into better jobs and therefore the rent levels would not seem as onerous. It was also anticipated that better housing conditions for communities would increase health and life chances across a number of areas.

In response to a supplementary question about the website for YourMK still being available, Councillor Long indicated

that he would ask officer colleagues to investigate this as his understanding was that it had been taken down.

C117

COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

- (a) Question from Councillor Hopkins to Councillor O'Neill (Cabinet member for Health and Wellbeing).

Councillor Hopkins thanked Councillor O'Neill for making £74k available in the forthcoming budget for Period Poverty and asked how this money would be spent.

Councillor O'Neill thanked Councillor D Hopkins for his question and indicated that she would be bringing forward a paper to Cabinet that would provide details of how the money would be spent.

In response to a supplementary question Councillor O'Neill accepted Councillor D Hopkin's offer to assist with this.

- (b) Question from Councillor Jenkins to Councillor Gowans (Cabinet member for Public Realm).

Councillor Jenkins asked Councillor Gowans when it would be possible for residents to order further supplies of recycling sacks and receive the supplies within the advertised deadline, as residents in her ward had ordered these several times with no recycling sacks being delivered, therefore no response, and were unable to recycle items.

Councillor Gowans thanked Councillor Jenkins for her question, agreed that it was very frustrating for residents and indicated that he had asked Customer Services officer colleagues to resolve poor response issues with online ordering.

In response to a supplementary question when Councillor Jenkins indicated that Councillors also had the same problems with the Customer Services Help Desk requests, Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council) indicated that he had communicated to senior officer colleagues that the issues must be resolved quickly.

- (c) Question from Councillor R Bradburn to Councillor Middleton (Cabinet member for Resources and Innovation)

Councillor R Bradburn asked Councillor Middleton to write the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and ask that if Milton Keynes Council were in financial difficulties and had to sell an asset, would this be agreed.

Councillor Middleton indicated that as the Council's Cabinet had set a sensible draft budget there would be no need to sell any assets or ask the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for its agreement.

- (d) Question from Councillor Walker to Councillor Priestley (Cabinet member for Economic Growth and Community Partnerships)

Councillor Walker indicated with reference to the recent successful bid to host the UEFA Women's EURO 2021 that was confirmed by the UEFA Executive Committee with StadiumMK, asked Councillor Priestley how Milton Keynes could build on the legacy of this exciting news.

Councillor Priestley thanked Councillor Walker for his question and indicated that she would be meeting with officer colleagues in January 2019 to develop an action plan that would include future development opportunities for Milton Keynes and she would ask that he be notified of the outcomes.

C118

REFERRALS FROM STRATEGIC PLACEMAKING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 OCTOBER 2018

The Cabinet considered referrals from the Strategic Placemaking Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 October 2018.

The referral was present by Councillor Bint who summarised the matters that had been discussed, that included the following:

- (a) Milton Keynes Development Partnership
- (b) Implications of Growth
- (c) Housing Deal

Councillor Middleton, the responsible Cabinet member for Resources and Innovation, thanked Councillor Bint and the Strategic Placemaking Scrutiny Committee for its work.

Councillor Middleton indicated that in respect of the Milton Keynes Development Partnership, the Cabinet planned to refresh the governing framework for Milton Keynes Development Partnership, known as the Accountability Framework, in the very near future. It was anticipated that the refresh would consider what non-commercial (also known as wellbeing) activity the Development Partnership would be required to undertake in the course of its future operations.

Councillor Middleton clarified that, at present, the promotion of placemaking, a non-commercial activity, was limited to CMK sites only. It was anticipated that the Cabinet would also reflect on the cost effectiveness of extending the responsibility to non-CMK sites as part of the upcoming refresh. It should be noted, however, that any such change in policy would need to be balanced against other competing priorities as it would not be a cost neutral measure.

With reference to the implications of Growth and MK Futures 2050, Councillor Marland, Leader of the Council, indicated that regular progress reports were presented to Cabinet at 6 monthly intervals

(the next being on 8 January 2019) and the MK Futures 2050 engagement strategy included events for all members. Individual projects such as MK:U were also reported individually at appropriate meetings and had its own stakeholder engagement arrangements.

Councillor Marland also indicated that discussions about the Housing Deal, that had included the possibility of the Council becoming a Passenger Transport Authority with bus franchising powers, had taken place, but Government was not prepared to progress this.

Councillor Marland also indicated, with reference to the Housing Deal, that this had been paused to allow time for stakeholder discussions. Should it progress, a detailed Implementation Plan would be required to work to a timetable that was yet unspecified. It was intended that the work on the Strategy for 2050 would explore the potential of a range of development delivery mechanisms, including a Locally Controlled New Town Development Corporation.

The Cabinet also heard from a member of the public during consideration of the item.

RESOLVED -

That the referral and actions be noted.

C119

**REFERRAL FROM SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE -
21 NOVEMBER 2018**

The Cabinet considered referral from the Scrutiny Management Committee held on 21 November 2018 that was introduced by Councillor Brackenbury (Chair of the Scrutiny Management Committee).

Councillor Brackenbury indicated that the Scrutiny Management Committee would be recommending to Council the appointment of an additional Scrutiny Committee from May 2019 to scrutinise the Council's Regeneration Programme and the need for sufficient officer support for the current Scrutiny structure including Task and Finish groups, and asked the Cabinet to include in the draft Budget 2019/20 provision for an additional Overview and Scrutiny Officer.

Councillor Marland, Leader of the Council, thanked Councillor Brackenbury and the Scrutiny Management Committee for its work and indicated that the Cabinet was committed to having a successful Scrutiny function. However, the recent Peer Review outcomes with reference to the Council's Scrutiny Committees were currently being worked through and a Scrutiny resource without further financial impact could be included as part of the assessment, as it was not possible to make further funding available for additional officer support in light of the current budget restraints.

RESOLVED -

That the referral and response be noted.

DRAFT COUNCIL BUDGET 2019/20 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2019/20 TO 2022/23

The Cabinet considered the Draft Revenue Budget 2019/20 and latest Medium Term Financial Forecast 2019/20 to 2022/23, the Draft Capital programme for 2019/20 to 2022/23 and the Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget 2019/20 which was presented by Councillor Middleton, the Cabinet member for Resources.

It was reported that the details of the draft Budget had been prepared in accordance with the framework set out in the Medium Term Financial Outlook approved by Cabinet in September 2018 (Minute C88 refers). Included in the recommendation was a 2.99% Council Tax increase, and £4m of extra money in 2019/20. £12m over the medium term had been provided to meet additional demand for the Council's critical services, in particular Housing, Adult Services and Children's Social Care.

It was also reported that at the time of preparing the draft budget there were a number of significant uncertainties which potentially could revise the current view on the adequacy of General Fund reserves. A view on these would be taken as part of the final budget proposals in February 2019.

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 Middleton indicated that £5.2m of service budget cuts were being proposed together with £0.9m additional income proposals, which had been developed in accordance with the Cabinet's key principles of 'being smarter', 'working together' and 'thinking differently' and to reflect the priorities in the Council Plan. The Cabinet was also planning a transformation programme over the next four years.

Councillor Middleton further indicated that the Government Autumn Budget was delivered on 29 October 2018 and that the longer term decisions on overall local government funding would be made in the 2019 Spending Review. However, whilst there were announcements of some short term funding and although these measures were welcome, they were short term and did not address the medium term underlying financial pressures.

Councillor Marland, the Leader of the Council, clarified that the £1 Bus concession for over 65's before 09.30am, was being discontinued and confirmed that the concessionary fare for both young and disabled people would continue to be funded from the surplus of the Parking Account.

Councillor Marland also indicated that the funding for the Lakes Estate that was to be shared between the 7 key estates would be further clarified in a report scheduled to be brought to the 8 January 2019 Cabinet meeting.

With reference to a question from Councillor Walker about the overspend of the Civic Offices Refurbishment project, Councillor Marland stated that the project had not exceeded its budget. However, during the works, issues with the air conditioning plant had been identified as the result of a lack of planned maintenance for about 40 years and a sum of £5m from the Capital Dilapidations Fund had been spent on replacement plant.

Councillor Marland also indicated that the Cabinet had managed to deliver a balanced budget and summarised some of the projects that were going ahead to improve homelessness, travellers issues, play areas in Galley Hill, and road safety in Bletchley.

Councillor Marland also indicated that that he had received requests from Councillors Minns and Crooks for two further items in their Wards:

- St. Leger Drive Great Linford, Safety Petition - £26k for Road Safety Improvements considered at the Cabinet meeting of 6 March 2018 (Minute C134 refers).
- Road Improvements at Brooklands and Broughton (Eastern Expansion Area) – at the Cabinet meeting of 2 January 2018 (Minute C107 refers) a further amount of £230k had been promised from the 2019/20 budget for road improvements in Brooklands and Broughton.

Councillor Marland thanked Councillors Minns and Crooks for their requests and indicated that these had been confirmed as affordable by the Corporate Director Resources.

The Cabinet also heard from Councillors Bint, Bradburn, Jenkins and Walker and 3 members of the public during consideration of the Draft budget.

RESOLVED -

1. The draft Revenue Budget 2019/20 and latest Medium Term Financial Forecast for 2019/20 to 2022/23 be approved as a basis for consultation with the public and stakeholders.
2. That the provisional Council Tax at Band D of £1,381.66 for the Milton Keynes element of the Council Tax be agreed for consultation, a 2.99% increase on the previous year.
3. That the Council's current estimate of the 2019/20 Business Rates Baseline be noted, retaining the delegation to the Corporate Director of Resources to finalise this Baseline, based on the latest data for submission to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in January 2019.
4. That the estimated position for the Dedicated Schools Grant and the planned consultation with schools and the Schools Forum for 2019/20 be noted.

5. That the draft Housing Revenue Account Budget, including the required 1% rent decrease, be approved as a basis for consultation.
6. That, in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, it be noted that the Corporate Director of Resources was of the view that the draft General Fund Budget and Housing Revenue Account was robust, subject to a further review of risks and the forecast reserves were adequate.
7. That the proposed fees and charges for 2019/20, which were exceptions to the Income and Collection Policy be noted.
8. That the equalities impact assessments for the draft Revenue Budget 2019/20, as set out be noted.
9. That the draft forecast parking surplus be noted.
10. That the Capital Strategy be approved.
11. That the draft Capital Programme for 2019/20 to 2022/23 be approved with the following amendments:
 - (a) Great Linford Highway Safety Improvements of £26,000
 The inclusion of an additional item to the capital programme of £26k in 2019/20 only to deliver Highway improvements to improve safety on St Leger Drive, Great Linford
 - (b) Eastern Expansion Area (EEA) - City Street (Capital) of £230,000
 An increase in the provision in the Capital Programme for EEA Highway and Safety Improvements works from the current £250k to £480k.
 To be funded from within the existing resources within the Capital Programme and confirmed as affordable by the Corporate Director Resources.
12. That the resource allocation for the draft Tariff Programme be noted.

C121

CHOICE BASED LETTINGS

Councillor Long, the Cabinet member for Housing and Regeneration, introduced the Choice Based Lettings Scheme and stated that this was in addition to the draft Housing Allocation Scheme consultation that was approved at the Cabinet meeting of 6 November 2018 (Minute C108 refers).

The Cabinet considered the option to do nothing and continue with the current method, which it was considered lacked transparency and choice for customers. The preferred option being to Introduce

Choice Based Lettings, to include the allocation of Council stock and registered provider stock (with the potential to expand into the private sector following consultation with private landlords).

Councillor Long clarified that Choice Based Lettings was a system where all available homes were advertised to those who had been accepted onto the housing register as having a housing need.

Councillor Long indicated that it was anticipated that the implementation of Choice Based Lettings, together with the proposed new allocation policy and housing register, would allow applicants and supporting services to have a clearer and more realistic view of their chances of being allocated social housing.

Councillor Long also indicated that he supported the implementation of Choice Based Lettings in line with the modernisation of the homelessness service including the introduction of a new allocation policy and housing register.

RESOLVED -

That the introduction of Choice Based Lettings, to include the allocation of Council stock and registered provider stock, with the potential to expand into the private sector following consultation with private landlords, be approved.

C121

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MIDYEAR POSITION

The Cabinet considered the Treasury Management midyear position which was introduced by Councillor Middleton (the Cabinet member for Resources and Innovation).

It was reported that the Council was required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce a mid year update on treasury management activities and to meet the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

It was also reported that the guidance recommended that councillors be updated on treasury management activities at least twice a year and the 2018-19 Treasury Management Strategy, approved by Cabinet in February 2018 (Minute C122 refers) identified that councillors would receive a midyear report on treasury management policies, practices and activities.

Councillor Middleton highlighted that the key treasury management headlines were:

- that investment income returns were 0.96% in Quarter 1 and 1% in Quarter 2. This out-performed the benchmark 3 month LIBID (a measure of inter-bank lending rates) by 41 basis points in Quarter 1 and 34 base points in Quarter 2;

- that there had been no new borrowing or debt rescheduling exercises have been undertaken to date this financial year; and
- that the Prudential Indicators had been met.

Councillor Middleton also indicated that he supported the 2018/29 mid-year Treasury Management report.

RESOLVED -

That the 2018/29 mid-year Treasury Management report be noted.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 8.34 PM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. M. M.', is written above two parallel diagonal lines that extend from the bottom left towards the top right of the page.