



Minutes of the special meeting of the POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 19 OCTOBER 1999 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor Long (Chair)
Councillor Miles (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Bristow, Edwards, Fairweather, E Henderson, I Henderson, Hopkins, Lloyd, Mabbutt, Swepston, Tallack, Turnbull, I Wilson and K Wilson

Officers: H Miller (Chief Executive), D Jones (Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services), P Coveney (Strategic Director Resources), J Stansfield (Strategic Director Learning and Development), J Best (Strategic Director Environment), P Timmins (Treasurer), J Moffoot (Head of Corporate Administration), A Colyer (Assistant Treasurer (Corporate Finance)), G Snelson (Corporate Policy Manager) and I Reed (Senior Committee Manager)

Also Present: Councillors O'Sullivan and Saunders

Mr R Jenkins - The Committee noted with regret the recent death of Mr Roy Jenkins, previously Acting Head of Synergy, and agreed to write to Mrs Jenkins to express the Council's condolences.

PR60/00 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Strategic Director (Learning and Development) declared an interest in the Budget Proposals affecting the Music Service. Councillor Miles also declared an interest in this matter as a user of the service, but was subsequently advised that as the service was available for public use, he was not debarred from speaking or voting on the issue.

PR61/00 QUESTION FROM MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Ms D Reid asked the following question:

“What is the relationship between cuts in the MK Music Service Budget and the MK Music Service Standards Funding direct from Government?”

At the request of the Chair, officers gave the following answer:

“The papers before you indicate a reduction of £50,000 in the budget for the next financial year. The Standards Fund the Council has received suggests that even with that reduction we will be better off than the service levels for 1998/99.

It is possible that further funds will be available from the Standards Fund which would alleviate the reductions that are proposed tonight. Further work needs to be done on the impact of the £50,000 reduction and the results of the officers findings would need to be reported to the Community Learning Committee in January 2000 if the results of the Standards Fund Allocation had been received.”

Ms Reid asked a supplementary question.

PR62/00

2000/01 BUDGET CONSULTATION RESULTS

The Committee considered a report which set out the results of the Budget Consultation exercise for the 2000/01 budget. It was reported that the consultation exercise had comprised two main strands; that of a survey questionnaire published in the September edition of Messenger delivered to every household in the Borough and 3 public discussion groups held in September in Bletchley, Wolverton and Central Milton Keynes.

The Committee noted that the survey had revealed that a small majority of respondents were in support of a Council Tax increase of 5% or more. It was also noted that responses had been generally in support of the following service priorities:

Education

Public Transport

Caring for the Elderly

Street Cleaning

RESOLVED -

That the results of the consultation exercise be noted.

PR63/00

2000/01 BUDGET PROPOSALS AND EFFECT ON OTHER YEARS

The Committee considered a report which set out proposals for the 2000/01 Budget and predicted resources and also set out implications for the current year and the two subsequent financial years 2001/02 and 2002/03.

Further to the meeting of the Committee held on 15 September 1999 (Minute PR48/00 refers), the report updated the three year budget forecast and added projections for 2002/03. The Committee noted that the report suggested a Budget funded by a 5% tax increase for the 2000/01 financial year and set out the implications for the two subsequent financial years.

The Committee also noted that there were a number of uncertainties surrounding the projection stemming from the timing of the budget discussion, but that these were offset by the requirement to maximise savings and the desire to set the framework for the service planning process which was now planned to cover a three year period.

It was also noted that the proposals included plans to increase education spend, primarily through additional resources to schools which would have the effect of closing the gap between education budgets and the Standard Spending Assessment over the next three to four years. The proposals would include a series of efficiency measures which would enable the Council to stabilise its budget and reinstate reserves to £3m by the end of the next financial year and to maintain the level over the period under review.

Councillor K Wilson moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor Long:

“That this Committee is recommended:

- (a) to require Service Committees to formulate Service Plans that can be achieved within the indicative budgets and in accordance with the proposals set out at **Annexes A to E**;
- (b) to agree the proposals to match policy objectives and service levels to the available resources for 1999/2000 and 2000/01 and to note the implications on later years as set out in detail at **Annexes B to E**;
- (c) to note that the budget proposals plan to increase Education spend to SSA levels over the next three to four financial years;
- (d) to instruct officers to commence implementation of the proposals, including consultation with staff and trade unions, and to note that the proposals will be implemented under the scheme of delegation where appropriate or, where there are planned changes to policy or service levels, these will be reported to the appropriate Committee at the earliest opportunity;
- (e) to approve a programme of property disposals within the context of the Council wide Asset Management Strategy and to seek authority to dispose of individual sites from the Property Sub-Committee;
- (f) that the Employers side of the Level 3 Joint Negotiating Committee be empowered to initiate and undertake negotiations with the affected recognised Trade Unions in respect of the proposals relating to incremental progression and child care;
- (g) to instruct officers to report back on the implications of the Government’s financial settlement and other significant variances to current proposals in due course but that, otherwise; and
- (h) the Council on 1 March 2000 be recommended to increase Council Tax for its own purposes by 5% from 1 April 2000.”

Councillor I Henderson moved the following amendment, which was seconded by Councillor I Wilson, and on which a recorded vote was requested:

“That a new paragraph ‘(a)’ be inserted, as follows, as the first recommendation and the rest of the paragraphs renumbered:

- (a) to note that the proposals in relation to home/domiciliary care in **Annex D** (Items 22, 23, 26, 27, 28 and 30) would, if implemented, represent a major policy change by this Council and therefore to defer any decision on them, and on savings that may be realised by them, until full reports appraising their implications for service users and their carers have been discussed by the Neighbourhood Services Committee.”

The voting on the amendment was as follows:

FOR: Councillors Fairweather, E Henderson, I Henderson, Hopkins, Mabbutt, Tallack and I Wilson (7)

AGAINST: Councillors Bristow, Edwards, Lloyd, Long, Swepston, Turnbull and K Wilson (7)

The amendment was declared lost on the Chair’s casting vote.

Councillor I Henderson moved the following amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Fairweather:

- “1. That the words ‘and to report back to this Committee on any major implications for services’ be added to the end of paragraph (a).
2. That the words ‘subject to the views of service Committees on any policy changes that may be required’ be added after ‘2000/01’ in paragraph (b).
3. That the words ‘these will be reported to the appropriate Committee at the earliest opportunity’ be deleted from paragraph (d), and replaced by the words ‘following consideration of full reports by the relevant service Committee and report back to this Committee’.
4. That the words ‘subject to the views of service Committees if changes in policy would be implied by the disposals’ be added to the end of paragraph (e).”

On being put to the vote, the amendment was declared lost.

Councillor E Henderson moved the following amendment, seconded by Councillor Mabbutt:

“That an additional paragraph be added, as follows:

‘That the officers be instructed to provide a report to an early meeting on options for realising capital assets and/or saving revenue expenditure by encouraging home working and/or transferring significant numbers of the Council’s staff to office accommodation outside of the City Centre’.”

The amendment was accepted by the mover of the motion. A recorded vote was requested on the substantive motion. The voting was as follows:

FOR: Councillors Bristow, Edwards, Lloyd, Long, Miles, Swepston, Turnbull and K Wilson (8)

AGAINST: Councillors Fairweather, E Henderson, I Henderson, Hopkins, Mabbutt, Tallack and I Wilson (7)

The motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED -

1. That this Committee resolves:
 - (a) to require Service Committees to formulate Service Plans that can be achieved within the indicative budgets and in accordance with the proposals set out at **Annexes A to E**;
 - (b) to agree the proposals to match policy objectives and service levels to the available resources for 1999/2000 and 2000/01 and to note the implications on later years as set out in detail at **Annexes B to E**;
 - (c) to note that the budget proposals plan to increase Education spend to SSA levels over the next three to four financial years;
 - (d) to instruct officers to commence implementation of the proposals, including consultation with staff and trade unions, and to note that the proposals will be implemented under the scheme of delegation where appropriate or, where there are planned changes to policy or service levels, these will be reported to the appropriate Committee at the earliest opportunity;
 - (e) to approve a programme of property disposals within the context of the Council wide Asset Management Strategy and to seek authority to dispose of individual sites from the Property Sub-Committee;
 - (f) that the Employers side of the Level 3 Joint Negotiating Committee be empowered to initiate and undertake negotiations with the affected recognised Trade Unions in respect of the proposals relating to incremental progression and child care;
 - (g) to instruct officers to report back on the implications of the Government's financial settlement and other significant variances to current proposals in due course; and
 - (h) that the officers be instructed to provide a report to an early meeting on options for realising capital assets and/or saving revenue expenditure by encouraging home working and/or transferring significant numbers of the Council's staff to office accommodation outside of the City Centre.
2. That the Council on 1 March 2000 be recommended to increase Council Tax for its own purposes by 5% from 1 April 2000.

PR64/00

REGIONAL PLANNING

At the request of Councillor I Henderson, the Committee considered the implications to the Council arising out of SERPLAN's draft Regional Strategy and the report of the Panel following the examination in public.

Councillor I Henderson moved the following motion, seconded by Councillor Mabbutt, on which a recorded vote was requested:

“That this Committee:

- (a) notes that SERPLAN has now recommended a massive expansion of Milton Keynes to the Secretary of State;
- (b) resolves to seek the views of the people of Milton Keynes as soon as the Secretary of State has made his views known on these recommendations by urgently conducting a referendum;
- (c) agrees that the Council will adopt the outcome of the referendum as the basis for its policy on the future size of Milton Keynes and all representations it makes to other bodies on these matters; and
- (d) that the officers be instructed to make all preparations for the referendum so it can be initiated immediately after the Secretary of State's announcement so that the outcome can be reported to Committee within the consultation period.”

The voting was as follows:

FOR: Councillors Fairweather, E Henderson, I Henderson, Hopkins, Mabbutt, Tallack and I Wilson (7)

AGAINST: Councillors Bristow, Edwards, Lloyd, Long, Miles, Swepston, Turnbull and K Wilson (8)

The motion was declared lost.

Councillor K Wilson moved the following motion, seconded by Councillor Long, on which a recorded vote was requested:

“1. That this Committee notes:

- (a) SERPLAN's draft Regional Strategy;
- (b) the report of the Panel following the examination in public;
- (c) that the Government will produce draft regional planning guidance for consultation - expected early in 2000;
- (d) the regional Economic Strategy produced by SEEDA; and
- (e) the recognition of Milton Keynes and surrounding areas by all concerned as a successful and regionally important town/city and the future role that it can play.

2. That this Committee also notes:

- (a) the continuing success of Milton Keynes in attracting inward investment;
- (b) the growing disparity between employment provision and housing provision in Milton Keynes and the consequent growth of in-commuting, which, if allowed to continue, will result in traffic congestion and environmental degradation;
- (c) escalating house prices in Milton Keynes and the increasing lack of affordable and low cost rental housing;
- (d) the problem that will result in Milton Keynes and surrounding areas if any expansion is unplanned - leading to the spoiling of towns, villages and the city that will inevitably result from rising planning pressures; and
- (e) that there are no legal barriers to stop migration into Milton Keynes and if not provided for in some way, this will only result in many local people being priced out, with growing problems of homelessness and social exclusion.

3. That Milton Keynes Council agrees:

- (a) to promote the development of a locally and democratically accountable development agency similar to that suggested in Stephen Crow's report; and
- (b) to ensure that the following policy objectives are pursued and recognised in the future planning of the City:
 - (i) continued economic growth and rising prosperity;
 - (ii) the continued provision of affordable housing and low cost rental housing to meet local needs and expectations;
 - (iii) the protection of the Milton Keynes environment in its towns and villages and surrounding areas;
 - (iv) the development of good public transport provision - if possible, including light rail/rapid transit systems;
 - (v) the regeneration of older towns and communities;
 - (vi) the provision of excellent Education, Health and other services;
 - (vii) to tackle social exclusion, poverty and inequalities throughout Milton Keynes;
 - (viii) to seek reductions in the need to travel within Milton Keynes and the development of a wide range of local services and facilities throughout Milton Keynes;

- (ix) the continued development of Central Milton Keynes as an important regional and strategic centre; and
 - (x) enhanced provision for arts, entertainment, sporting and cultural facilities including sports stadia, leisure facilities, museums etc.
4. That the Council reaffirms its commitment, once a plan has been developed, to fully consult with the public.
 5. That regular reports be made on this issue to appropriate Committees including the Environment and Policy and Resources Committees.

The voting was as follows:

FOR: Councillors Bristow, Edwards, Lloyd, Long, Miles, Swepston, Turnbull and K Wilson (8)

AGAINST: Councillor Fairweather (1)

ABSTENTIONS: Councillors E Henderson, I Henderson, Mabbutt, Tallack and I Wilson (5)

The motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED -

1. That this Committee notes:
 - (a) SERPLAN's draft Regional Strategy;
 - (b) the report of the Panel following the examination in public;
 - (c) that the Government will produce draft regional planning guidance for consultation - expected early in 2000;
 - (d) the regional Economic Strategy produced by SEEDA; and
 - (e) the recognition of Milton Keynes and surrounding areas by all concerned as a successful and regionally important town/city and the future role that it can play.
2. That this Committee also notes:
 - (a) the continuing success of Milton Keynes in attracting inward investment;
 - (b) the growing disparity between employment provision and housing provision in Milton Keynes and the consequent growth of in-commuting, which, if allowed to continue, will result in traffic congestion and environmental degradation;
 - (c) escalating house prices in Milton Keynes and the increasing lack of affordable and low cost rental housing;

- (d) the problem that will result in Milton Keynes and surrounding areas if any expansion is unplanned - leading to the spoiling of towns, villages and the city that will inevitably result from rising planning pressures; and
 - (e) that there are no legal barriers to stop migration into Milton Keynes and if not provided for in some way, this will only result in many local people being priced out, with growing problems of homelessness and social exclusion.
3. That Milton Keynes Council agrees:
- (a) to promote the development of a locally and democratically accountable development agency similar to that suggested in Stephen Crow's report; and
 - (b) to ensure that the following policy objectives are pursued and recognised in the future planning of the City:
 - (i) continued economic growth and rising prosperity;
 - (ii) the continued provision of affordable housing and low cost rental housing to meet local needs and expectations;
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 - (iv) the development of good public transport provision - if possible, including light rail/rapid transit systems;
 - (v) the regeneration of older towns and communities;
 - (vi) the provision of excellent Education, Health and other services;
 - (vii) to tackle social exclusion, poverty and inequalities throughout Milton Keynes;
 - (viii) to seek reductions in the need to travel within Milton Keynes and the development of a wide range of local services and facilities throughout Milton Keynes;
 - (ix) the continued development of Central Milton Keynes as an important regional and strategic centre; and
 - (x) enhanced provision for arts, entertainment, sporting and cultural facilities including sports stadia, leisure facilities, museums etc.
4. That the Council reaffirms its commitment, once a plan has been developed, to fully consult with the public.

5. That regular reports be made on this issue to appropriate Committees including the Environment and Policy and Resources Committees.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10.45 PM