

Report on the Draft 2021/22 Budget Proposals

January 2021

Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee



Contents

1.	Introduction and Committee Membership	3
2.	Committee Work Programme	5
3.	Acknowledgements	7
4.	Commentary	8
5.	Recommendations	11
	Annex A – Covid-19 Support Funding	17
	Scrutiny – An Explanation	20

Note on the Text

After the first reference, the Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee will be referred to as “the Committee” and Milton Keynes Council will be referred to as “the Council” throughout this report.

1. Introduction and Committee Membership

The Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee was originally established in 2015 as the Budget Scrutiny Committee following a review of the Milton Keynes Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements in 2014-15. Following a Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review of the Council's Scrutiny Function during the autumn of 2017, the Committee had scrutiny of the Council's other resources added to its remit and a name change. It is now known as the Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee provides a dedicated, cross-party consideration of the Council's annual budget, both its medium and long-term finances, and the Council's other resources, such as staffing. For the council year 2020-21, the Committee is composed of Councillors Robin Bradburn (Chair), Shammi Akter, Peter Cannon, Dan Gilbert, Peter Geary, Nigel Long (Vice-Chair), Allan Rankine (Vice-Chair), Paul Williams and Charlie Wilson-Marklew. I would like to thank the whole Committee for its cross-party approach, professionalism and good humour in tackling a very intense period of work.

The Pandemic is mentioned in the next section, the Committee Work Programme, but it cannot go unmentioned here as I would also add that the Committee deserves great credit for working so well under the constantly changing time constraints. This also reflects well on the work of Officers and, in particular, the Finance Team.

Elizabeth Richardson continues to serve as the Overview and Scrutiny Officer with utmost expertise and stamina - which has enabled the Committee to be so flexible in this most difficult year.

The purpose of this report is:

- (i) to outline the work the Committee has carried out to scrutinise the Council's draft 2021/22 budget proposals, including pressures, savings and reductions, the policy context, key changes and the proposed strategies for dealing with these issues; and

- (ii) to present the Committee's recommendations to Cabinet on 2 February 2021 so that they can be considered before full Council formally agrees the 2021/22 budget at its meeting on 24 February 2021.

On behalf of the Committee, I commend this report to the Cabinet and the wider Council.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Bradburn', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Robin Bradburn
Chair, Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee
January 2021

2. Committee Work Programme

The Budget and Resources Committee met on 6, 12, 14, 19 and 26 January 2021 to scrutinise the proposals set out in the Council's draft 2021/22 budget and to discuss these with the relevant Cabinet members, supported by senior council officers.

In previous years the Committee has met in October to discuss the initial draft proposals for the following year's budget with Cabinet members and senior officers, with follow-up sessions in January to review progress and consider further developments and significant changes. However, due to the limitations imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly on the Council's finances, the need by the Finance Team to manage a situation which was changing daily and the lack of information from central government in relation to the 2021 Spending Review or the 2021/22 Local Government Financial Settlement, the Committee was unable to meet in October.

This has meant a more intense period of work during January as the Committee had to consider both identified pressures and reductions in the 2021/22 draft budget, with extra meetings having to be arranged to manage this workload.

Due to the social distancing requirements of the pandemic, all meetings were held remotely via MS Teams, with a live broadcast on the Council's YouTube Channel to fulfil the requirement that meetings should be held in public. Normally, meetings of the Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee attract very little public interest; however the average viewing figure for each meeting is 72 views, although not all of these will have been during the live broadcast.

The published draft 2021/22 budget proposals were agreed by a Delegated Decision taken by Councillor Marland, Leader of the Council, on 22 December 2020. The proposals were also subject to a public consultation from 18 December 2020 to 31 January 2021.

The timetable of meetings, together with a link to the Council's Committee Management Information System (CMIS) is provided on the following page.

Date	Portfolio	Senior Officers	
		Pressures / One-off Pressures	Reductions & Income
6 January	Leader – Cllr Marland	S Bridglalsingh	M Bracey
	Community Safety – Cllr Townsend	S Young T Ricketts J Harrison S Gonsalves S Proffitt	S Proffitt
12 January	Resources – Cllr Middleton	S Richardson	S Richardson S Bridglalsingh S Proffitt S Gonsalves
	Climate & Sustainability – Cllr Wilson-Marklew	S Proffitt P Thomas	S Proffitt P Thomas
14 January	Children & Families – Cllr Nolan	M Heath	M Heath
	Capital Programme	A Rulton	
19 January	Economy & Culture – Cllr Baume	N Sainsbury	----
	Public Realm and Housing Services – Cllr Darlington	S Proffitt N Hannon A Dickinson S Young J Harrison W Rysdale	S Proffitt N Hannon S Rankin J Harrison W Rysdale
	Health & Wellbeing – Cllr O’Neill	V Collins	V Collins
26 January	Review & Report Writing		

The agenda, reports, presentations and minutes for each of these meetings are available on the Council’s website at: [CMIS: Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee](#)

Recordings of all the meetings are available on the Council’s YouTube Channel at: [Milton Keynes Council YouTube](#)

3. Acknowledgements

The Committee would like to thank all Cabinet members and officer colleagues who assisted with the preparation of documents and presentations, for giving up their time to speak at the meetings, and their assistance in supplying supplementary information when requested to do so.

In particular, the Committee is grateful for the continued commitment and service of Elizabeth Richardson in managing the Committee through this intense workload with diligence and patience; to Steve Richardson, Director of Finance and Resources and the Council's Section 151 Officer; the two Heads of Finance, Anna Rulton and Natasha Hutchin, and their colleagues in the Finance Team for developing the draft 2021/22 budget proposals in what has been a difficult time for everyone.

The Committee would like to commend all Finance Staff for their hard work, dedication and expertise in handling the Council's finances during the Covid-19 crisis and for keeping not just the Cabinet and senior officers, but all councillors, up to date with the Council's financial position. They should also be thanked for the clarity of their presentations and reports to the Committee during the year and their helpful explanations in response to questions from the Committee.

Preparing the draft annual budget is a council-wide exercise and the Committee would like to thank the relevant officers from the various council departments for their work to support their colleagues in finance and the Cabinet Members in preparing the draft documents, for attending the various Challenge meetings, answering the Committee's questions with clarity and expertise and for supplying additional information after the meetings when requested to do so.

Finally, the Chair would like to take this opportunity to thank Councillors Nigel Long and Allan Rankine for their vital in-put and support as Vice-Chairs, and all the Committee members for contributing so actively and knowledgeably to the scrutiny of the 2021/22 draft budget proposals. The whole Committee has demonstrated a cross-party approach, professionalism and good humour in tackling what can be some very complex issues.

4. Commentary

During 2020/21 the Council has faced significant cost and income pressures as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and there is no way of knowing at this stage how long the economic recovery will take, both on a national or local level. It is noted that the UK has now technically entered a recession, one which many experts have characterised as the sharpest and deepest in modern history.

The pandemic has placed a huge strain on the finances of Milton Keynes Council, whilst the problems it is causing for local authorities, such as the economic recession, increased unemployment and the extra demand for council services means that there is less money coming in and more going out than was anticipated when the 2020/21 budget was agreed in February 2020, including:

- the extra costs of delivering emergency Covid-19 services and support;
- reduced income from both council tax and business rates;
- an 80% fall in income from car parking;
- an increase in demand for local welfare support; and
- extra costs for adult social care.

During 2020/21 the Government has provided a range of grants and schemes to support local authorities and businesses through the pandemic (See Annex A) whilst the forward-thinking approach by the Finance Team to monitoring the Council's finances since the start of the pandemic has successfully placed the Council in a much better financial position for 2021/22 than might have been the case. The Council has been able to balance its 2020/21 budget which means it is not taking a deficit forward into 2021/21. However, after all the additional costs of Covid-19, increased cost pressures from day to day services and the loss of income is taken into account, the Council has a gap of approximately £15 million over the term of its Medium Term Financial Plan which will need to be managed in future years

Due to the restrictions on both councillors and council staff imposed by the need to social distance during the pandemic, the January Budget Challenge Meetings were all held remotely via MS Teams, with a live broadcast to the Council's YouTube channel. This has made for some interesting meetings, but despite the limitations, the Committee was able to have some robust discussions with Cabinet Members about the pressures, one-off pressures and reductions in their portfolios. Having reviewed the evidence presented in the meetings, the Committee has made a number of

recommendations in relation to the 2021/22 draft budget proposals which are set out in Section 5 of this report.

Once again, the Government set the level of Council Tax increase councils could levy before triggering a local referendum on the proposed rise at 2%. They also added an additional 3% precept to pay for Adult Social Care Services over two years, giving councils the flexibility to decide how it would use the precept over the two years depending on local circumstances.

The Committee expressed various views on the Administration's decision to increase Council Tax by 1.99% (the maximum allowed before a referendum is required) and take 0.51% of the Adult Social Care precept this year, making a total increase of 2.5% in the year 2021/22. In particular, the position of the Adult Services Directorate being identified as a major risk area prompted the comment that not taking the full 3% precept offered by the Government did not perhaps recognise that risk. However, the Leader of the Council gave a robust defence of the position and explained that as the balance of the Adult Social Care precept of 2.49% would be available to take in 2022/23, the opportunity to raise the extra funding would not be lost. Other members of the Committee commented that they understood the reason of keeping any increase as low as possible for the council taxpayers of Milton Keynes at a difficult time.

The Committee further understood the rationale for the Administration's position on using reserves to balance the draft 2021/22 budget as they were there for "a rainy day", noting that the rather graphic phrase "it is pouring down with rain" to describe the present situation would be more appropriate. Circumstances this year are exceptional, which means this is the first time for many years that the Council has had to call on its reserves in order to prepare a balanced draft budget. The hope is that as the strictures of the current pandemic start to ease and a certain amount of normality returns to daily life, the Council will see a marked increase in its income, reducing the need to further dip into its reserves over the medium-term in order to balance future budgets. The Committee plans to monitor both the level of council income and the use of reserves on a regular basis.

The Committee acknowledged the hard work carried out by many officers in passing out special Grant Funding to businesses identified under the Business Rate Register as quickly as possible. It also noted that the Income Recovery scheme used by Central Government to assist in replacing lost council income e.g. car parking income, was welcomed, but were advised that that this only covered 70% of the lost income (see Annex A).

The Committee recognised the good intentions reflected in the items stated in Annex R. Three of the items (Support Xtra, Infrastructure Investment Pipeline and potholes) already have defined projects totalling £1.8m but the other 6 items listed in Annex R currently lack detail as to how the funds set aside will be used. In order to fully test the success of the various items of allocated funds totalling £5.1 million the Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee has recommended that it reviews the expenditure as it occurs during 2021/22.

The Committee expressed concerns that some of the notation in the table headings in Annex D (Fees and Charges) was either incorrect or missing, making initial understanding of the information presented difficult. Once this had been explained and the error noted for correction in subsequent versions of the Annex, no other major points were raised on the listing.

It was noted by the Committee that the further delay in the Business Rate Reset for another year had once again facilitated a less difficult budget setting process than anticipated. This being the case, the Committee expressed the view that this will not be continued so caution should be adopted in dealing with this issue going forward.

The situation caused by the drastic loss of car parking income during lockdown periods was clearly displayed to the Committee and the knock-on effect on other areas of expenditure, such as bus subsidies, was made very evident.

The Committee considered the proposed savings which would be generated from the introduction of a Demand Responsive Travel Service (DRTS), discussing them at some length with the Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainability. The Committee understands the need to improve the quality and reliability of the bus services in Milton Keynes and that the existing model is no longer financially sustainable. However, given that this is a new model of operation, the Committee was concerned that the risk rating given to this saving might be too low as there was a possibility, if the DRTS was not successful, of having to revert to the old model of mass bus subsidies or the decision to withdraw all subsidies, thus reducing transport links to many in Milton Keynes.

Finally, the Committee noted that the Reduction at S039 (a proposed £64,000 saving on legal services) and the One-Off Pressure OP002 (a pressure of £250,000 for Children's legal services) shows the dilemma the authority has in dealing with an area that can bring forward costs which cannot be anticipated in many cases whilst trying to look at ways of using the best of the in-house services.

5. Recommendations

Whilst the Committee welcomes the Administration's work to set a budget that is both affordable to the residents of Milton Keynes, but at the same time sets out the Council's care for local residents by providing the services needed at what is a difficult time for the whole country, it makes the following recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet when the final proposals for the 2021/22 budget are being agreed:

COMMUNITY SAFETY

1. P022-N: Management Plan for Travellers' Sites [Neighbourhood Officer] (£47k)
OP13-N: Management Plan for Travellers' Sites [Improved Environmental Standards] (£43k)

That the Committee supports the appointment of a Gypsy and Traveller Neighbourhood Officer to work with occupiers of the sites at Calverton Lane and Willen Road together with the plans to improve the facilities at both sites and hopes that this will lead to a more positive relationship between the Council and residents on those sites.

RESOURCES

2. P054-N: Investment Interest Income (£906k)

That the Committee, whilst recognising the difficulties in the financial markets, asks that the Treasury Management Team uses its best endeavours to maximise income in line with the current regulatory constraints.

3. P052-N: Sponsorship Income (£260k)

That the Committee recommends the Council explores opportunities to maximise the use of advertising space available on roundabout signs and bus shelters by considering a reduced rate to businesses during 2021/22 in anticipation of business picking up again in 2022/23, or even a zero rate for businesses currently struggling financially, and which would produce some income to mitigate against this pressure.

4. S056-L: Digital Transformation and Customer Services (-£93k)
S065-N: Facilities Rationalisation (-£250k)

That the Committee considered, given the possible need to further enhance the Civic Offices in view of the eventual relocation of staff from satellite offices and changes to home working patterns, that these savings may be too ambitious for 2021/22. Due to possible additional costs needed to facilitate the proposed

changes in ways of working, delivering services and maintaining the productivity of home working, the level of any possible savings was an unknown quantity, requiring regular monitoring by senior management at the Council.

CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY

5. S061-L: Closure of the Theatre Car Park (£71k)

That the Committee notes the closure of the Theatre Car Park was agreed last year as a saving and that this sum is dealing with the cost of the rateable position of the facility. However, the Committee urges the Council to make every effort to dispose of the building as quickly and as prudently as possible to minimise the potential for it to become an eyesore and a community safety issue.

6. S020-N: Introduction of Demand Responsive Travel Service (-£789k)

a) That as this is a new, pioneering initiative, without a proven track record locally, the Committee wonders whether the most appropriate risk rating has been allocated to this proposal.

b) That the Committee further recommends that the scheme is regularly monitored to maintain the correct risk level in place in order to ensure the potential of the scheme can be realised as the Committee is concerned not just for the financial impact of the scheme failing but also the social impact on residents who need to rely on bus services to move round the borough.

7. Flooding

That the Committee considers, in light of the localised flooding during the Christmas 2020 period and the severe weather warnings for Storm Christophe which were in place during the third week of January, the Council must seriously consider, as a matter of urgency, carrying out flood defence plans which have already been agreed, but not yet implemented, as well as work to review the causes of a number of recent flooding incidents in the borough and assessing what further flood defence work may need to be carried out.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

8. OP001-N: Supplementary Schools and Gypsy, Roma Traveller (£39k)

That consideration be given to using some of the funding set out in Annex R (One-off Additional Items) of the budget papers to cover this pressure.

9. S010-N: School Improvement Service (-£200k)

That while understanding the rationale of developing a new way of schools sharing good practice and applauding the concentration of the service on Milton Keynes, the Committee would like to put on record that it considers there is still a level of risk, albeit low, which could jeopardise the aim that all schools in MK are graded as good.

10. S009-N: Youth Offending Team (-£74k)

That following discussion at the meeting, the Committee recognised that this saving was the result of new ways of working, that achieving the proposed saving was possible with little impact on the services provided and that an effective Youth Offending Team could be maintained.

11. S011-N: Children's Services Management Changes (-£248k)

That the Committee was encouraged by the robust response of the Cabinet Member to its concerns about the possible effects of this reduction on the level of service delivery and good management practice across the whole of Children's Services. The Committee suggests that future monitoring of the effects of these changes be referred to the Scrutiny Management Committee for allocation into the 2021/22 Scrutiny Work Programme.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

12. That the Capital Programme is regularly monitored to ensure that where approved schemes have been removed from the schedule in-year, they can be re-instated when necessary so that delays to important works such as the flood defences referred to in Recommendation 7 can be avoided in future.

ECONOMY AND CULTURE

13. OP005-L: Women's European Football Championships (£25k)

That the Committee commends the work done to secure Milton Keynes as one of the venues for the Women's European Football Championships and looks forward to the success of this event.

PUBLIC REALM AND HOUSING SERVICES

14. P032-L: Demographic Growth (Landscaping) (£32k)

That the Committee requests that it receives a report during 2021 (and in time for the preparation of the 2022/23 draft budget) setting out the level of commuted sums the Council receives or holds for landscape maintenance and how this money

is allocated and spent so that it has a better understanding of why this is recurring pressure each year.

15. P040-N: Contamination of Recycling at the MRF (£240k)

- a) That the Cabinet notes that some members of the Committee considered this may be a contractual issue that required further investigation.
- b) That in addition, the Committee recommends the Council develops a thorough education campaign for the residents of Milton Keynes on how to recycle appropriate items correctly using all possible means, such as direct contact, social media etc, and including any lessons learned from the current waste bin pilot on how contamination of recycling can be reduced.

16. P046-N: Gully Emptying (£50k)

OP011N: Gully Emptying (£100k)

That the Committee welcomes the investment in developing an intelligence led approach to gully cleansing that takes into account the varying risk profiles of individual gullies.

17. OP14-Pest Control Maintenance and Management (£50k)

That whilst acknowledging the particularly severe problem of rat infestation in Central Milton Keynes and the so-called “doughnut” estates, this work is expanded and becomes a base budget item to enable the Council to future proof its ability to offer a workable, borough-wide solution, to the infestations occurring at many local centres beyond the immediate central area. The Committee considered that it was important to maintain the impetus of this project by incorporating it into the Council’s regular scheme of neighbourhood maintenance so as to prevent the problem of infestations escalating again, giving rise to the necessity to find one-off funding in future years.

18. HP07: Maintenance and Upkeep of Local Areas (£275k)

That the Committee welcomed the news that funding had also been allocated within this Housing Revenue Account budget to tackle the issue of pest control on council estates.

19. S068-N: Booking System at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) (-£150k)

S017-N: Charging for Non-Household Waste at HWRCs (-£50k)

That the Committee welcomes the proposed savings by permanently extending the on-line booking system introduced 2020/21 as part Covid-19 social distancing measures and is pleased to learn that feedback on the use of the booking system has been generally positive.

Whilst the Committee was pleased that the vast majority of residents were successfully using the new appointment system to dispose of their household waste properly, it remained concerned that a small number of individuals might use the new system as a reason to engage in illegal fly-tipping, the costs of which could negate any savings.

The Committee was also concerned that the introduction of charges for non-household waste being deposited at the HWRCs could also exacerbate the issue of fly-tipping.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

20. P009-N: Learning Disability (Covid-19) (£941K)

P010-N: Internal Day Care Income (Covid-19) (£315k)

P011-N: Care Home Market Sustainability (Covid-19) (£388k)

That in the event of lockdown measures easing, which enables the resumption of these services, any changes to the above listed pressures are reported to the Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee for further scrutiny.

21. OP003-L: Domestic Abuse Co-ordination Officer (£50k)

That consideration be given to making this a permanent role and base-budget item in view of the evidence that the Council is receiving up to 21 referrals a month requiring such expert assistance.

FUTURE WORK BY THE BUDGET AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22. “Annex R” Progress Reporting

That the Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee receives an information item at each meeting during 2021/22 tracking progress against various projects outlined in “Annex R”.

23. S039-N: Legal Services (-£64k)

That the Director of Law and Governance brings a report to a meeting of the Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee during 2021/22 illustrating that the savings envisaged from the reduction in the use of external legal services are being made and that they are on track to meet or even exceed the predicted £64k saving.

24. P032-L: Demographic Growth (Landscaping) (£32k)

That the Committee receives, at its September 2021 meeting, a report on the work requested in Recommendation 14 on why demographic growth in relation to landscaping work is a perennial pressure in the Council’s annual budget.

25. P009-N: Learning Disability (Covid-19) (£941K)

P010-N: Internal Day Care Income (Covid-19) (£315k)

P011-N: Care Home Market Sustainability (Covid-19) (£388k)

That the Committee receives an update on these pressures, at an appropriate meeting during 2021/22, if the situation in relation to the above changes.

26. S068-N: Booking System at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) (-£150k)

S017-N: Charging for Non-Household Waste at HWRCs (-£50k)

That once the emergency, pandemic measures have been lifted, the Committee receives a report on progress after 6 months of normal operation at the HWRCs on whether or not these savings are being achieved and the benefits of the booking system being maintained.

PROCEDURAL

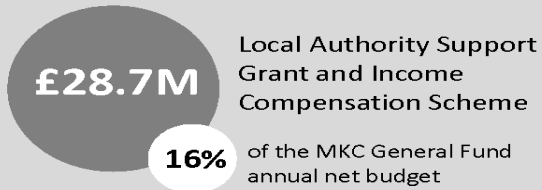
27. Best Practice

That Councillor Nolan and the staff in Children's Services be congratulated for their excellent Business Case for OP001. The Committee recommends that this particular Business Case should be used as an exemplar of good practice by all directorates in the future.

Annex A: Covid-19 Support Funding

MKC COVID-19 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT
2 NOVEMBER 2020

Funding for general purposes



Being used to offset the impact of COVID-19 on the General Fund budget including loss of parking income, mitigating the impact on our council tax and business rates collection fund, increased expenditure in social care support, PPE, rough sleeping, increased waste tonnages and so on.

- £6.0M** Tranche 1 (March)
Fully committed and reported
- £7.4M** Tranche 2 (May)
Fully committed and reported
- £2.2M** Tranche 3 (July)
Fully committed and reported
- £4.7M** Tranche 4 (Expected November)
Not yet committed or reported
- £8.4M** Local Government Income Compensation Scheme (Current forecast based on actual losses)

Funding for specific purposes

- £1M** **Test and Trace Grant (June)**
Expenditure for mitigation against and management of local outbreaks
£630k allocated (health protection, campaigns, communications)
- £239K** **Reopening High Streets Safely Fund (June)**
To support the safe reopening of high streets and other commercial areas
Fully allocated and spent on measures to re-opening high streets
- £228K** **Emergency Active Travel Fund (June)**
To support safe walking and cycling interventions
Fully allocated in the capital programme
- £267K** **Food and Essential Supplies (July)**
To help those who are struggling to afford food and other essentials
Fully committed to Foodbank Xtra and support community food groups
- £245K** **Home to School Transport (September)**
To boost transport capacity for dedicated school and college services
Fully committed funding transport capacity on Home to School Transport
- £134K** **Local Authority Compliance and Enforcement Grant (October)**
Covid-19 related compliance and enforcement activities
Not yet committed
- £270K** **Contain Outbreak Management Fund**
To support proactive containment and intervention measures
Not yet committed

Passported Funding	£2.3M	Hardship Fund	£49.3M
	£40.2M	Business Support Grant	
	£1.3M	Discretionary Fund	
	£4.1M	Social Care Infection Control (two tranches)	
	£1.1M	Schools support	
	£0.2M	Low income self isolation support payment	
	£0.1M	Bus Services Support	

Funding for general purposes

£28.7M

Previously Advised
 Local Authority Support
 Grant and Income
 Compensation Scheme

16%

of the MKC General Fund
 annual net budget

Passported Funding

£49.3m

Previously advised

New Funding since 2 November

£5.4M

Additional Restrictions Grant
 Additional funding for businesses
Being distributed

£3.5M

Grants for businesses required to close due to restrictions
Being distributed

Funding for specific purposes

£2.4M

Previously advised

New Funding since 2 November

£1.9M

Contain Outbreak Management Fund – Tranche 2 (November lockdown)
 To support proactive containment and intervention measures
Not yet committed

£539K

Contain Outbreak Management Fund – Tranche 3 (December)
 To support proactive containment and intervention measures
Funding per month whilst in Tier 2 restrictions (£2 per head)
Not yet committed

£207K

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable
 To support people in need in this formal category
Not yet committed

£90K

Rough Sleepers – Cold Weather Fund
 To help provide COVID-secure accommodation until March 2021
In progress

£1M

Next Steps Accommodation
 Purchase of up to 30 one bed flats for rough sleepers
In progress

£722K

Winter Grant Scheme (Called ‘COVID Holiday Help’ in MK)
 Support to ensure families do not go hungry over winter
In progress

Funding for general purposes

£28.7M

Previously Advised
 Local Authority Support
 Grant and Income
 Compensation Scheme

Passported Funding

£58.2m

Previously advised

New Funding since 1 December

£559k

Additional Restrictions Grant
 Discretionary funding is to be provided to support businesses affected by the restrictions Period 4th Dec - 19 Dec
Being distributed

£70k

Christmas Support -Wet led Pubs
 Funding to those wet pubs affected by the Local Restrictions in Tier 2.
Being distributed

£2.4m

Additional Restrictions Grant
 Discretionary funding is to be provided to support businesses affected by the restrictions 5th Jan – 9th Feb
Being distributed

£15.9m

Grants to support closed business during national lockdown
Being distributed

Funding for specific purposes

£6.8M

Previously advised

New Funding since 1 December

£211k

Contain Outbreak Management Fund
 To support proactive containment and intervention measures
 Funding to 2 - 29 December (Paid together with £539k from tier 2)
Not yet committed

£548K

Active Travel (capital funding)
 Capital grant relating to the bid submitted for specific active travel scheme - mkc scheme is development of redways, and improvement of links

£137K

Active Travel (revenue funding)
 Revenue element of active travel

£76K

Additional Restrictions – new burdens funding
 Un ringfenced revenue funding to support additional costs incurred passporting additional restrictions grants to businesses.

Scrutiny – An Explanation

As Milton Keynes Council has a Cabinet (Executive) system it is required by law to have a Scrutiny function to support and scrutinise its executive decision-making arrangements.

Scrutiny committees and scrutiny task and finish groups are not “decision making” bodies but are bodies which monitor and influence the decision makers. The committees and task and finish groups are made up of non-Cabinet members, and are designed to support the work of the Council in the following ways:

- assisting the executive in research, policy review and development and thus helping drive improvements in public services;
- reviewing and scrutinising decisions to be taken, or ones which have been taken by the Cabinet and officers, also known as acting as a “critical friend”, challenging policy and decision makers;
- considering the Council’s performance;
- reviewing the work of external organisations operating in the Borough to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working; and
- enabling the voice and concerns of the public to be heard and listened to.

Each scrutiny committee or task and finish group has its own terms of reference. The scrutiny committees / task and finish groups consider issues by receiving information in a number of ways including by receiving presentations and taking evidence from councillors, Council officers and external witnesses or partners to develop an understanding of proposals or practices. As scrutiny committees and scrutiny task and finish groups have no decision-making powers they can present their recommendations to the Cabinet, full Council, Council officers, or external partners. The committees will often request a formal response and progress report on the implementation of recommendations that they have provided to various parties.

Attending Meetings of Scrutiny Committees / Task and Finish Groups

Meetings of scrutiny committees and task and finish groups are held in public and are generally open for everyone to attend. Due to the current Covid-19 Pandemic it is not possible for members of the public to attend meetings in person. Meetings which would normally have been held in public are now being conducted remotely, via MS Teams and live streamed on the Council’s own YouTube website.

However, if you would like to make a representation to councillors on behalf of yourself or others on one or more the items on the agenda, let us know you wish to speak before the meeting so that the Chair can be advised in advance, either by calling 01908

691691 (ask for the Scrutiny Team in Democratic Services) or by emailing meetings@milton-keynes.gov.uk . A link to join the meeting via MS Teams will be sent to you before the meeting.

The Chair of the meeting will try and make the meeting as informal as possible, but, by their nature, local authority meetings must retain a degree of formality, with the meeting being controlled by the Chair.

If you are to speak on an agenda item, you will be able to speak when the item is considered. The Chair of the meeting will call out your name when it's your turn if you have given prior notice.

When asked to speak, please give your name and let us know if you are representing any organisation or speaking in your own right.

The maximum time you will have to speak is 3 minutes. If there are lots of people wanting to speak, then the Chair might reduce the time per person to one or two minutes to enable everyone to have their say. Please try not to repeat what has been said before.

If you have been invited to give evidence to the scrutiny committee or task and finish group as a witness you will have been contacted by one of the Council's scrutiny officers who will have briefed you on what the committee or task and finish group would like you give evidence and what to expect at the meeting. You will be allowed sufficient time to speak to give your evidence. You will not be limited to 3 minutes.

On occasion there may be specific issues that the meeting must consider in private so all but members of the committee / task and finish group and key officers will be asked to leave.

If you want to speak on a matter that is not scheduled to be discussed by a scrutiny committee or task and finish group then please either call or email the address above and we will contact you to discuss how best to take this forward.

Dates for the Council's public meetings, together with the papers for the meetings, are available on the Council's website at:

<http://milton-keynes.cmis.uk.com/milton-keynes/Committees.aspx>

If you have any questions about the scrutiny process please send them either to: meetings@milton-keynes.gov.uk or The Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Milton Keynes Council, Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ. Alternatively call 01908 691691 and ask for the Scrutiny Team in Democratic Services.



Democratic Services
Milton Keynes Council
Civic Offices
1 Saxon Gate East
Central Milton Keynes
MK9 3EJ

Elizabeth Richardson
Overview & Scrutiny Officer

T: 01908 01908 252629

E: meetings@milton-keynes.gov.uk