

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 6 February 2024 at 18:30

Present: Councillors R Bradburn (Chair), J Carr, Darlington, Mahendran, Nolan, Townsend and Wilson-Marklew

Apologies: Councillors Marland and Trendall

Officers: M Bracey (Chief Executive), S Bridglalsingh (Director of Law and Governance), T Aldworth (Deputy Chief Executive), S Proffitt (Director Environment and Property), P Thomas (Director Planning and Placemaking), S Richardson (Director Finance and Resources), N Hutchin (Assistant Director - Finance), A Rulton (Assistant Director - Finance), N Allen (Head of Regulatory Services), P Brown (Head of Democratic Services) and A Melia (Senior Governance Officer)

**C51 Cabinet Announcements**

Councillor Nolan made an announcement in respect of the recent Ofsted inspection of Westminster House.

**C52 Disclosures of Interest**

None received.

**C53 Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 December 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**C54 Questions from Members of the Public**

None received.

**C55 Councillors' Items**

None received.

**C56 Councillors' Questions**

None received.

**C57 The Adoption of Highways and Public Spaces on Estates in Milton Keynes Task and Finish Group**

Councillor Crooks introduced the referral, noting his thanks to other members of the task and finish group and to those officers who assisted the group. Councillor Crooks noted that there were fourteen recommendations to Cabinet and highlighted a number of key points from the report.

Councillor Wilson-Marklew noted her thanks to the committee and indicated that the recommendations were accepted in principle and a written response would be provided.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the recommendations accepted in principle, with a written response to be provided.

**C58 Public Realm and Environment Scrutiny Committee - 10 January 2024**

Councillor K Bradburn introduced the referral, noting her thanks to officers for the work on this subject and for the response from the Cabinet member.

Councillor Wilson-Marklew thanked the committee for their work on this item and noted she was happy to accept the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That the referral and the response be noted.

**C59 Owners' Advisory Group - 25 January 2024**

Councillor Townsend provided a verbal update noting that this was the first meeting of the Owner's Advisory Group. The Cabinet member confirmed that it was the opinion of the Cabinet that there would not be any flexibility regarding dividend payment going forward. A written response would be provided to the other questions raised by MKDP.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal update provided by the Cabinet member be noted.

**C60 Quarter 3 2023/24 Forecast Outturn, General Fund Revenue, Housing Revenue Account, Dedicated Schools Grant and Capital Programme 2023/24**

Councillor Townsend introduced the report noting that there was still around £1 million overspend but this amount had decreased since the last quarter. This was a good position given the context of the national picture with regard to the impact of inflationary pressures and demand pressures particularly in children and adult services and temporary accommodation.

RESOLVED:

1.1 That the GFRA forecast outturn of £1.091m against budget be noted, together with the management actions set out at Annex A of this report.

- 1.2 That GFRA savings of £7.886m savings are forecast to be achieved (93% of budget) be noted, which is set out in Annex B of this report.
- 1.3 That the forecast outturn for the HRA is an underspend of (£1.908m), which has been offset through an increase in the transfer to reserves be noted, together with the management actions set out at Annex C of this report.
- 1.4 That the DSG forecast surplus carry forward of £6.133m be noted, together with the management actions set out at Annex D of this report.
- 1.5 That the reserves position as detailed in Annex E are noted.
- 1.6 That the forecast outturn on the 2023/24 Capital Programme is an overspend of £4.151m after proposed slippage of £41.345m and acceleration of budget of £27.199m as detailed in Annex F of this report be noted.
- 1.7 That the forecast outturn position of the 2023/24 tariff programme as detailed in Annex G be noted.
- 1.8 That the debt position of the Council at the end of quarter 3 as detailed in Annex H are noted.
- 1.9 That the Write-off of three debts that are an unrecoverable which exceed £50,000 as detailed in Annex H are approved.
- 1.10 That the Treasury Management report including prudential indicators, as detailed in Annex I are noted.
- 1.11 That the virements to the original budget as detailed in Annex J are approved.
- 1.12 That the current position on the Collection Fund as detailed in Annex K are noted.
- 1.13 That the procurement waiver decisions as detailed in Annex L are noted.
- 1.14 Cabinet approves the new budget allocations and approves the release of funding totalling £0.073m for new Capital Schemes set out in Annex M.
- 1.15 That the additions and amendments to the Tariff Programme are detailed in Annex N be approved.

## **C61 Council Budget 2024/25**

Councillor Townsend introduced the report noting that there was an addendum to the Council Budget report which included an update on the Local Government Finance Settlement and an updated Annex I and the consultation on minimum revenue provision. It was noted that the budget reflected the immense pressures the Council was facing however, it was a balanced budget that did not include any cuts to services.

Councillor Hume presented the Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee report on the draft budget.

The Cabinet heard from Councillor D Hopkins on this item.

Councillor Nolan noted that while the Government had provided additional grant funding of £1.829m this was against a net increase in the adult social care budget of £15.979 million and children's social care of £9 million. It was further noted that the cost of meeting the needs of children in care was an increasingly eye-watering amount.

RESOLVED:

1.1 Cabinet is asked to note and support the following recommendations to Council:

- (a) The Council has consulted on its draft budget proposals and a summary of these responses are included at Annex A for Cabinet to consider before agreeing its recommendations to Council (to follow).
- (b) Cabinet notes the report and recommendations from the Budget and Resources Scrutiny Committee at Annex B and considers these as part of its final recommendations to Council (to follow).
- (c) That the Revenue Budget for 2024/25 totalling £256.114m be approved (Annex I).
- (d) That the Council Tax Band D of £1,676.09 for the Milton Keynes element of Council Tax, be approved. This is an increase of 4.99% increase on the previous year (2.99% plus a 2.00% Adult Social Care Precept);
- (e) That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding parish precepts) of £162.908m, be noted.
- (f) That the position for the Dedicated Schools Grant of £367.347m and the Schools funding block for 2024/25 be noted and the budget and formula allocations for the High Needs Block and Early Years Block be approved (section 3.29 – 3.32).
- (g) That the forecast parking surplus be noted (Annex J).
- (h) That the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2024/25 be approved (section 3.29 to 3.32 and Annex K).
- (i) That increases to housing rents are set at 7.7% for tenants (an average increase of £7.50 per week) and 7% for shared owners (an average increase of £3.92 per week), the maximum level allowable under the Rent Standard (CPI + 1%) (para 3.26) at Annex K be approved.
- (j) That following consultation with tenants and leaseholders, changes to Housing Revenue Account service charges be approved and implemented from 1 April 2024 (section 3.27, Annex K3).
- (k) The Housing Rent Affordability and Market Context Report be noted (Annex K2).
- (l) That the fees and charges for 2023/24 (including those fees and charges which are exceptions to the Income and Collection Policy) be approved (Annex F).
- (m) That the Capital Strategy be approved (Annex L).
- (n) That the Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29 be approved (Annex M).

- (o) That the resource allocation for the 2024/25 Tariff Programme be noted and approved (Annex N).
- (p) That the Treasury Management Strategy for the 2024/25 to 2027/28 and the Treasury Policy Statement, including the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, Borrowing Limits be approved (including the Half Year Report) (Annex O)
- (q) That the financial forecast set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), in relation to both the resources and expenditure, be noted. (Annex T).
- (r) That the equalities impact assessments for the Budget Reduction proposals, as set out in Section 4 be noted.
- (s) That the final 2024/25 Business Rates Baseline estimate as reported in the NNDR1 return and detailed in Table 3.0 is noted.

## **C62 Update on the Sustainability Strategy Action Plan**

Councillor Mahendran introduced the report noting that this was an update report and included some of the work the Council had been doing to make the Council Net Zero by 2030.

The Cabinet heard from Councillor D Hopkins and one member of the public on this item.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That Cabinet acknowledges the progress to date and continues to support the direction of travel set out within this update.
- 1.2 That yearly progress updates continue to be brought to Cabinet, targeting Q4 of 2024/25 for the next update, in line with the Cabinet meeting for that period.

## **C63 Update on Delivery of the Council Plan**

Councillor R Bradburn introduced the report noting that this was the third year of the Alliance's Council Plan and the current version included seventy eight actions to be delivered and it was thanks to officers and members for the delivery of these.

RESOLVED:

That the progress being made on the Delivery Plan for 2023/24 be noted.

## **C64 Cabinet Procedure Rules**

Councillor R Bradburn introduced the report noting that the purpose of this report was to bring consistency to the Cabinet Procedure Rules.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That, subject to the adoption of revised Council Procedure Rules on 21 February 2024, revised Cabinet Procedure Rules (shown with track changes at Annex A), be agreed to take affect from 1 March 2024.

- 1.2 That authority be delegated to the Director of Law and Governance to make any minor typographical or presentation amendments to Cabinet Procedure Rules, in consultation with the Leader of the council.

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.16 pm