



Central Milton Keynes Town Council

Budget Meeting held on 26th January 2023

At Centrecom Meeting Place

Present:

David Stabler (Chair)
Rebecca Kurth
Peter Lightfoot
Philip Murphy
Andrew Thomas
Paul Cranfield (Clerk)

Absent:

Andre Brady

Apologies: Mary Moore

In attendance: None

23/001 – Apologies

Councillor Moore extended her apologies.

23/002– Declarations of Interest

None.

23/003 – Co-option

It was unanimously agreed that Anurag Jain should be co-opted to the town council at the next meeting, following a 3 month period where he was an observer at meetings.

23/004 – Newsletter

The paper, as previously circulated, was noted.

The following was agreed:-

- The continued use of Samantha Carmichael to compile the newsletter.
- A bonus of £200 be paid to Samantha for her work during 2022.
- An increase in her remuneration for each issue to £600.

- Continued use of Eagle Graphics.
- Continued use of Royal Mail for distribution.
- The dates by which the draft text is submitted to Eagle Graphics.

22/005 – 2022/23 Third Quarter Budget/Actuals Report

The paper, as previously circulated, was noted.

A further column on the spreadsheet was requested to show the variation of budget to amended actual.

22/006 – Budget and Precept Proposals 2023/24 and to Agree Precept

The papers, as previously circulated, were noted.

i) Proposed Operating Budget

The following amendments to the operating budget as outlined were agreed subsequent to discussion and votes:-

- Strategic Town Council Planning- line to be removed
- Sundries related to councillors- increase in year 2023/24 of £1500 to facilitate the purchase of a laptop for the Chair
- Legal & professional fees- line to be removed
- Residents survey- £10,000 budgeted for year 2023/24
 - It was agreed that this exercise could be undertaken in two parts- a demographic survey (primarily desktop), followed by a resident survey which would involve door knocking to ensure that sample bias is smoothed.
- Staffing for special projects- line to be sub-divided as follows:
 - Community Development Officer- £9,000
 - Social Media- £6,000
- Theatre MSCP- line to be removed
- Establish CMK Event- line to be removed
- Grants- increase to £5,000
- CMKAP Scoping- budget removed for 2023/24, retained subsequently
- Parking management scoping- line to be removed

ii) Proposed Reserves and Precept

Reference was made to papers outlining options for precept and indicating the impact of decisions on the town council's finances going forward.

The growth of Band D equivalent properties and the impact upon precept in the next few years was discussed.

There followed a lengthy debate considering the implications of a number of precept options.

It was noted that the town council has significant reserves which will be sufficient to accommodate any activity agreed upon during the forthcoming year.

It was also agreed that the town council needs to provide value for the public purse in the way it manages its finances and commitments.

After much debate regarding whether to reduce the precept, retain it at present levels or increase it slightly a vote was proposed by the Chair. Councillor Thomas requested a recorded vote.

The substantive motion, proposed by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Thomas, was that the precept should be reduced from the current figure of £77.97 to £60.00 per Band D equivalent.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Kurth and seconded by Councillor Murphy that the precept should be maintained at current levels.

A vote on the amendment was duly taken. The voting was as follows:-

For the amendment: Councillors Kurth, Murphy and Lightfoot
Against the amendment: Councillors Stabler and Thomas.

The amendment was duly agreed, which resulted in the substantive motion falling.

The Chair summarised by noting that the decision taken would result in a significant increase in the town council reserves at the year end.

He also called for a Strategic Review of the direction of travel of the town council. It was agreed that this could be in the form of one or two facilitated closed meetings involving all councillors.

A comment was made that a 'nil' increase at the time of high inflation would be welcomed as a real term reduction.

The amended operating budget and precept document is appended to the minutes.

In summary, the Town Council voted to request a zero increase in precept for the year 2023-24 (precept of £218,238).

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

The next scheduled monthly meeting will be held on Thursday 2 February 2023 at Centrecom Meeting Place