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CABINET

Meeting - 9 February 2015

Present: Mr Busby, Mr Reed, Mrs Cranmer, Mr Naylor, Mr D Smith and Mrs Woolveridge

31. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 25 November 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Leader.

32. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Cabinet received a copy of the 28 day Notice prepared in accordance with Regulation 9 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 setting out the key (and non-key) decisions the Cabinet was intending to make at public and private meetings.

The Cabinet also received a copy of the 28 day Notice setting out the key (and non-key) decisions the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee were intending to make at public and private meetings.

RESOLVED that the 28 day Notices be noted.

33. BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX REPORT 2015/16

The Cabinet considered a report of the Leader of the Council which brought together the information affecting the Council's revenue budget for 2015/16 in order for recommendations to be made to the Council on 24 February 2015 regarding the Council's budget and council tax for 2015/16.

The report was divided into 5 Sections as follows:

Section A - Financial Context and Base Budget Position
Section B - Investment Income & Grants
Section C - Budget Requirement and Council Tax Issues
Section D - Medium Term Financial Strategy Update
Section E - Advice of Director of Resources

The following appendices were also attached to the report:

Appendix A – Financial Forecast
Appendix B – Chief Financial Officer
Appendix C - Farnham Park Trust Budgets.

Section A of the report reminded the Cabinet of the approach they had agreed to budget making in the light of the funding position facing the Council in the coming years. The following table in this section showed the key figures for 2015/16:

	2014/15	2015/16
	£'000	£'000

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Business Rate Baseline	11,701	11,925
Business Rate Tariff	-10,716	-10,921
Baseline Need	985	1,004
Revenue Support Grant	1,161	871
Settlement Funding Assessment	2,146	1,875
Year on Year Change (£k)	-272	-271
Year on Year Change (%)	-11%	-13%

Section B explained that the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16 made provision for planned investment income of £400k which is £150K less than the budget for the current year, reflecting the view that low level of interest rates will continue in 2015/16. The report also went on to explain that, if the district element of the Council Tax was to be frozen in 2015/16, it would receive a grant of £48k which is equivalent to a 1% increase in Council Tax. To achieve a freeze the Council's budget requirement would need to be £7,651k and the Cabinet's view was that a majority of members would wish to continue the council tax at its current level.

A table in Section C of the report provided a summary of the build-up of the budget including the use of earmarked reserves as follows:

- Local Development Document Reserve £98k
- Funding for the May District elections £70k
- Transformation Reserve for supporting joint working £62K
- Government Funding Change Reserve £76k

The budget also proposed to use £80k of the additional New Homes Grant to add to reserves.

In connection with Section D the Cabinet's attention was drawn to:

- The key principles of the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- The key challenges facing the Council in the medium term was likely to face in the coming year;
- The major expenditure pressures; and
- The main financial risks in the medium term

The Cabinet's attention was drawn to the comments made on the Budget Proposals by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 January 2015 as set out in an extract from the minutes.

The Cabinet also noted the separate budgets proposed for the Farnham Budgets as set out in Appendix C.

After considering the advice of the Director of Resources as set out in detail in Section E which also set out the key strategic risks facing the Council the Cabinet:

RECOMMENDED to Council that

- 1 the Revenue budget for 2015/16 as summarised in the table in para 5.11 of the report be agreed.
- 2 the following use of earmarked reserves for 2015/16 be agreed
 - a) Local Development Plan, £98k
 - b) Transformation Reserve, £62k
 - c) Change in Government Funding Reserve, £76k

d) General Fund - District Elections, £70k

- 3 the establishment of an earmarked reserve of £80,000 for the impact of major national infrastructure projects be agreed.
- 4 a budgetary requirement of £7,651k which will result in a District Council tax of £143.00 for a Band D property be agreed.
- 5 level of fees and charges for 2015/16 already considered by the Portfolio Holders as part of the information underpinning their budgets be confirmed.
- 6 the advice of the Director of Resources as set out in Appendix B be noted.
- 7 the Members Allowances Scheme for 2015/16 be updated in line with the change of officers pay, prior to a review of the Scheme during 2015.
- 8 the comments in the report of the Council's financial position in respect of the years following 2015/16 be noted.
- 9 the revenue and capital budgets 2015/16 for the Farnham Park Trust as set out in Appendix C be agreed.

AND

RESOLVED that the report of the Leader of the Council be made available to all Members of the Council in advance of the Council Tax setting meeting on 24 February 2015 and a final report be produced for the Council meeting incorporating the information from preceptors, and the final decisions of the Cabinet on the budget.

34. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16 TO 2018/19**

Each year the Council reviews its Capital Expenditure Programme as part of the overall budget setting process and the Cabinet considered a report setting out a proposed programme for next year and a provisional programme for the next three financial years as detailed in Appendix A.

After noting the effect of the proposed programme on the Council's capital resources, the Cabinet agreed that the programme for 2015/16 was the minimum level of expenditure required to maintain the Council's key assets, meet its obligations to provide housing grants, and to support investment in ICT, part of which is funded by Government grant, which will support the improvement of services and reduce costs.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the proposed Capital Programme for 2015/16 as set out in Appendix A of the report be approved.

35. **INTRODUCTION OF PAPERLESS WORKING FOR MEMBERS**

The Cabinet considered a report setting out a proposal to provide members with Apple iPads at a cost of £14,000 as part of a strategy to introduce paperless working for members following the District Elections in May 2015.

During the discussion an assurance was give that wireless printing would be made available at the Council Offices.

After noting the volume of pages printed for agenda papers and reports and the payback period of a little over a year and the roll out/ support process to ensure the iPads were operational from Annual Council the Cabinet supported the proposal and accordingly

RECOMMENDED to Council that

1. the project to provide Apple iPads to members following the District Elections in May 2015 as outlined above be agreed as part of a wider strategy to introduce paperless working within the Council
2. a sum of £14,000 be allocated from reserves to meet the cost of purchasing the Apple iPads.
3. approval by Management Team to an exemption from obtaining competitive tenders for the purchase of tablet devices in accordance with A6, Paragraph 17 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules be noted.

36. **COMMUNITY**

The Cabinet received the minutes of the Community Policy Advisory Group held on 4 December 2014 and the following was the subject of a recommendation from the Portfolio Holder:

Minute 20 - Draft Chiltern and South Bucks Community and Wellbeing Plan 2015-18

The PAG considered a report setting out a proposal to develop a Joint Community and Well Being Plan with Chiltern District Council.

The purpose of the plan would enable the joint team to:

- Deliver a service that understands and meets the current and future needs and expectations of the community.
- Create a visible and resilient team that has clear roles and responsibilities but is able to be flexible to changing needs and to maximise opportunities
- Work in partnership with others to maximise delivery and minimise duplication.
- Create a service that can maximise the quality and benefits associated with the leisure management contract.
- Create a service that enables the most vulnerable and hard to reach, to be supported (helping them to access services that will enhance their lives).

A consultation in 2012, with partners on the current Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Strategic Partnership, revealed six themes as detailed in the report.

The PAG agreed that such a plan would benefit communities to access funding and resources available, but were concerned that the needs of South Bucks residents may not be identified under a joint plan, therefore, at this stage proposed that separate wellbeing plans be developed for each authority.

Members also requested that a further report be brought back to the PAG once community themes had been set to consider the benefits if any, of a joint well- being plan.

After considering the advice of the Portfolio Holder the Cabinet:

RESOLVED that a separate community and wellbeing plan be developed at this stage with a view to considering at a later stage a joint community and wellbeing plan with Chiltern.

And further

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Policy Advisory Group held on 4 December 2014 be noted.

37. **ENVIRONMENT**

The Cabinet received the Part I minutes of the Environment Policy Advisory Group held on 3 December 2014 and the following was the subject of a recommendation from the Portfolio Holder:

Minute 19 – Garden Waste Service Charges 2015/16

The PAG received a report asking Members to advise the Portfolio Holder on what the charges should be for the Garden Waste Collection Service for the year 2015/16.

The options for charging regimes were set out in section 3 of the report and having considered all the options, the PAG were of the opinion that, due to the uncertainty associated with an increase in charges, charges should remain the same for 2015/16 as the previous year and that more promotional work should be carried out to encourage residents to sign up to the scheme.

After considering the advice of the Portfolio Holder the Cabinet:

RESOLVED that

1. the charge rate of £45 for the full year service be set and a £10 discount be applied for those who sign up to the early bird scheme.
2. delegated authority be given to the Head of Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to decide on whether a discount for a part-year subscription should be applied.

And further

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment Policy Advisory group held on 3 December 2014 be noted.

38. **RESOURCES**

- A. The Cabinet received the Part 1 minutes of the Resources Advisory Group held on 11 December 2014 and the following were the subject of a recommendation from the Portfolio Holder:

Minute 17 – Plant Maintenance Contract Tender

The PAG received a report explaining the procurement process which was to be carried out jointly with Chiltern District Council for a joint plant maintenance contract.

The contract would be for an initial period of 4 years with two possible extensions, at the Councils' discretion, each of 2 years, making an overall potential of 8 years.

The PAG were advised that separate specifications were being prepared for each council based on their particular requirements but with common terms and conditions of contract.

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An Evaluation Panel will evaluate the tenders and propose which supplier should be awarded the contract.

After considering the advice of the Portfolio Holder the Cabinet:

RESOLVED that authority to award the Plant Maintenance Contract be delegated to the Head of Environment and the Director of Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources, following the evaluation stage.

And further

RESOLVED that the Part 1 minutes of the Resources Advisory Group held on 11 December 2014 be noted.

- B. The Cabinet received the Part 1 minutes of the e-Resources Advisory Group held on 28 January 2015 and the following was the subject of a recommendation from the Portfolio Holder.

Minute 20 – Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16

Members of the PAG were invited to comment, via email, on a report which attached the following:

- Treasury Management Strategy Document 2015/16
- Appendix A - Annual Investment Strategy
- Appendix B - Economic Background
- Appendix C - Prudential Code and Indicators Statement
- Appendix D - Minimum Reserve Provision

The report, after explaining the various legal requirements under the Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Government Finance Act 1992, advised the PAG that the budget set for investment interest for 2014/15 of £550,000 was likely to be under-achieved by at least £100,000 by the end of the year.

The report went on to set a target for investment returns for 2015/16 of £400,000, This target was based upon a core level of balances of £14m for 2015/16, the latest forecasts for interest rates and the assumption that the Council wished to remain debt free.

Having considered the advice of the Portfolio Holder the Cabinet

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16 be approved such approval to include:

1. approving the Appendices to the Strategy covering:
 - the Annual Investment Strategy
 - Prudential Indicators, including the borrowing limits
 - Minimum Revenue Provision
2. confirming that the authority will continue to remain debt free.

AND

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the e-Resources Policy Advisory Group held on 28 January 2015 be noted

39. **HEALTH AND HOUSING**

The Cabinet received the minutes of the Health and Housing Policy Advisory Group held 10 December 2014 and the following were the subject of a recommendation from the Portfolio Holder:

Minute 25 – Health and Safety Enforcement Plan

Local authorities are expected to draw up a Health and Safety delivery plan which sets out the authority's commitment to the national priorities and to target interventions to areas of greatest risk. The Council's Health and Safety Enforcement Plan 2014/2016 considered by the PAG had been drawn up in a similar format to previous plans and set out the commitment to providing a comprehensive health and safety advice and enforcement service.

Minute 28 – Food Delivery Plan 2014 -16

A major requirement of the Food Standards Agency's Framework Agreement is for every local authority to draw up a Food Service Delivery Plan in a common format and the PAG considered the Council's Food Service Delivery Plan 2014/2016. The Plan had been drawn up in the format required by the Framework Agreement and set down the Council's commitment to providing a comprehensive food advice and inspection service.

After considering the advice of the Portfolio Holder the Cabinet:

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Health and Safety Enforcement Plan 2014/2016 be adopted.
- 2 the Food Safety Delivery Plan 2014/2016 be adopted.

And further

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Health and Housing Policy Advisory Group held on 10 December 2014 be noted.

40. **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

- A. The Cabinet received the Part 1 minutes of the Sustainable Policy Advisory Group held on 27 November 2014.

RESOLVED that the Part I minutes of the Sustainable Policy Advisory Group held on 27 November 2014 be noted.

- B. The Cabinet received the minutes of the Sustainable Policy Advisory Group held on 22 January 2015 and the following was the subject of a recommendation from the Portfolio Holder:

Minute 18 – Local Development Scheme 2015 to 2019 and any Associated Decisions

The PAG received a report which asked Members to consider revising the Council's Local Development Scheme 2013-16 (approved in July 2013) taking into account new

national planning policy and guidance, changed circumstances, the outcome of the Shared Service Planning Policy Review and recent and emerging issues under the Duty to Co-operate.

The Local Development Scheme will be subject to on-going discussions with other authorities under the Duty to Co-operate and the outcome of on-going work such as in defining Strategic Housing Market Areas (SHMA) and Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMA) affecting South Bucks. In relation to the SHMA, the PAG were informed that the emerging position was that South Bucks would be included within the Reading and Slough SHMA and that the FEMA should match the SHMA.

Having considered the advice of the Portfolio Holder and the further advice of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services that issues relating to the Local Development Scheme were Council functions the Cabinet

RECOMMENDED to Council

To proceed with Option 2 to prepare a new Local Plan to replace the Core Strategy and saved parts of the Local Plan and to approve the draft Local Development Scheme as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

AND

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Development Policy Advisory Group held on 22 January 2015 be noted.

41. CHANGES TO THE NATIONAL PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

The Cabinet received a report setting out the implications of changes to the National Planning Practice Guidance and the accompanying Ministerial Statement relating to housing proposal of 10 or less dwellings.

The main changes to the NPPG are:

- a) For schemes of 10-units or less and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of less than 1,000 square metres, affordable housing and tariff style contributions should not be sought.
- b) In areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and designated rural areas under Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985, authorities may choose to apply a lower threshold of 5-units or less for obligations.
- c) If a lower than 10 threshold is set for these areas, then payment of affordable housing and tariff style contributions on developments between 6 and 10 should be sought as a cash payment only and be commuted until after completion of units within the development.
- d) Affordable housing and tariff style contributions should not be sought from any development which only comprises the construction of a residential annex or extension to an existing home
- e) The changes do not apply to rural exception sites, save that such contributions should not be sought in the case of residential annexes or extensions.

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As a result of these changes there was now a difference between national guidance in the NPPG and the Development Plan for South Bucks for housing proposals between 5 and 11 dwellings and for schemes on 0.16 hectares or above where the proposal is for less than 11 dwellings.

The report went on to set out proposals to respond to the changes which the Cabinet endorsed following which it was

RESOLVED that

- 1 The changes to the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and implications for the Council's Development Plan policies be noted.
- 2 for the purpose of applying the NPPG the Council adopts the lower threshold of five units in designated rural areas, meaning that contributions for affordable housing will be sought for developments of six units or more.
- 3 When calculating floorspace in association with National Planning Practice Guidance, Planning Obligations, Paragraph: 012 in South Bucks, the floorspace will be derived by:
 - a) taking external building measurements
 - b) including all built functional spaces forming part of the development, for example including basements, integral or attached garages and all detached buildings such as free standing garages or outbuildings.

AND RECOMMENDED to Council

- 4 In circumstances where the Head of Sustainable Development recommends that the provisions of the National Planning Practice Guidance, and taking into account all other relevant material considerations, outweighs the Development Plan Core Strategy Policy 3 on affordable housing, that the decision is not carried out under delegated authority but the decision be referred to the Planning Committee.

42. **CHILTERN AND SOUTH BUCKS JOINT COMMITTEE**

The Cabinet received for information the minutes of the meeting of the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee held on 16 October 2014.

RESOLVED the minutes be noted.

43. **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2015/2016**

The Cabinet considered a report recommending that the Council Tax Support Scheme for the financial year 2015/2016 remain unchanged other than the annual uprating of premiums, allowances, non-dependant deductions and any changes to the national pension age scheme that need to be reflected in the Council's Scheme

In supporting this recommendation the Cabinet noted that the scheme has operated well since it was introduced in April 2013 and that keeping it unchanged will bring some stability for current recipients of Council Tax Support as they will know approximately how much Council Tax they will have to pay.

After also noting that the scheme, together with collection performance, would be monitored throughout 2015/16 to assess whether any changes would be required from April 2016 onwards the Cabinet

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/16 remains unchanged apart from the annual uprating requirements.

44. **SERVICE PLAN SUMMARIES**

The Cabinet received a report attaching summaries of the service plans produced by service areas within the Council.

RESOLVED that the service plans be noted.

45. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**

“that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1974 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act “

The Paragraph number is given in each heading.

**Minutes of Resources PAG held on 11 December 2014
(paragraph 3)**

The Cabinet agreed the recommendation in respect of Station Road, car park, Gerrards Cross.

**Minutes of Sustainable Development PAG held on 27 November 2014
(paragraph 5)**

The Cabinet agreed the recommendation relating to HS 2 Update.

The meeting terminated at 6.32 pm