Message from Leader of the Council

Please find enclosed your Council Tax summary for the 2019/20 financial year.

Since 2010 Milton Keynes Council has had to make over £150m in cuts as the funding we receive directly from central government to help pay for services has decreased. As a resident and taxpayer myself, I understand this is never a popular letter to receive. However, the council tax you pay is increasingly important to the funding we need to deliver services.

Council funding 2010/11

- Formula Grant (£102.6m)
- Dedicated Schools Grant (£160.2m)
- Council Tax (£36.1m)

What do I get for my money?

How the budget is spent (£185.5m excluding parish precepts)

Many years of financial prudence means that despite cuts, Milton Keynes Council remains able to deliver many services other councils have had to stop or reduce, such as keeping open all our children’s centres. We’ve also not closed a single library and have maintained weekly bin collections.

Our Housing First scheme guarantees support for people living on the streets, and since its launch last year has helped over 100 homeless rough-sleepers into long term accommodation. Extra funding for road repairs means we’re on track to fix 20,000 potholes. Many of our children’s services and adult social care services have been rated good or outstanding.

Your additional council tax will mean in 2019/20 we will also:

- Invest nearly £500,000 extra in getting the basics right by tackling litter, stamping out fly-tipping, and improving landscaping and weed-killing.
- End period poverty for young women by providing free sanitary products to those who need them.
- Improve access to children’s mental health services.
- Clamp down, and provide a long-term solution, to unauthorised encampments.

continued overleaf...
Why can’t you just spend your reserves to run services?

I know many people want to know why we don’t spend the money we keep in reserve rather than increasing council tax.

We hold funds in reserve for two main reasons, to protect the council from unexpected expenditure and to hold funding that has been earmarked for specific projects.

Our reserves have fallen by around 9% in the last year and will continue to fall over the next few years as long-term projects such as the £15m new NHS cancer centre at MK Hospital are completed, as we start a £165m upgrade of our existing council housing stock and begin the first of our exciting regeneration schemes on Serpentine Court and the Lakes Estate in Bletchley.

Over the past few years many other councils have spent their reserves on running their day-to-day services, and they now face financial disaster as the money has run out. We will not let that happen in Milton Keynes. Spending reserves to run services is not a sustainable solution to the difficulties we face.

Milton Keynes should be an affordable place, a healthy place and a place of opportunity for everyone who chooses to call it home. Your council takes that responsibility very seriously. We’ll continue to invest in preventative services and in areas you tell us are important, and we’ll continue to support our most vulnerable people, as local people deserve a stable and competent council that delivers value for money services.

If you’d like to hear more about the ways we’re improving Milton Keynes, please follow us on social media or subscribe to our email alerts. Find out more at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/stayintouch

Councillor Pete Marland
Leader of the Council