

MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL

9 JANUARY 2007

ITEM 5(a)(ii) – POLICE AUTHORITY QUESTIONS

ITEM 5(b) – NOTICE OF MOTIONS

5(a) Questions to the Police Authority Representative

1. Question from Councillor Butler-Ellis:

“In relation to the Police Officer Strength data provided at the Full Council in November 2006, can the Police Authority tell us whether the respective figures are inclusive of Police Community Support Officers, Officers on ‘Light Duties’ and those who are on sick leave? if so, can the Authority give specific numbers for each group? If necessary, please use average figures over a 12 month period and provide officer numbers, rather than hours lost.

It is of course a great concern to see that the abstraction level of officers in Walton Park Ward is high and I hope that this is not indicative of such poor resource across the borough, is this one of the reasons why the Police Authority feel that it is reasonable to charge the citizens of Milton Keynes twice for their police? Firstly through a direct contribution from the Council Tax, and secondly by asking for more money from the Parish Councils, who receive their precept from the Council Tax?”

2. Question from Councillor Eastman:

With the implementation of the new Licensing Act some premises in Central Milton Keynes have been granted extended trading hours. Has this resulted in Thames Valley Police having to spend additional hours policing Milton Keynes City Centre, especially at weekends?

If so:

- (a) how many additional hours?
- (b) what police activity has been reduced to cover the extra hours policing the Milton Keynes City Centre at weekends?
- (c) has this caused any reduction in neighbourhood policing hours ?”

3. Question from Councillor Eastman:

“At a recent meeting of Milton Keynes Council’s Performance Review Panel the Panel was informed that there should be 77

neighbourhood police officers, but only 51 officers were in post, and these can be called away for other operations.

- (a) Of the 51 officers in post are any currently on long-term sick leave? If so, how many?
- (b) how often are officers called away to perform other operations ?
- (d) when can the residents of Milton Keynes, who pay for policing through the precept, expect the Establishment of 71 officers to be brought up to full strength?"

4. Question from Councillor Eastman:

"At recent meetings it has emerged that the Community Policing team covering the east side of Middleton Ward was 40% to 80% understaffed due to long term sickness and other commitments for much of the last year. In addition at least one estate in that area is marked as 'causing concern' by the Police due to rising levels of anti-social behaviour and other crime.

Can the Police Authority explain:

- (a) the frequency with which staff allocation to cover such severe drops is reviewed?
- (b) the criteria on which they would reallocate staff to such an area?
- (c) why no additional staff were allocated to cover the shortfall?"

5. Question from Councillor Mabbott:

"What performance standards do Thames Valley Police have for responding to members of the public who contact them by phone, post, e-mail or in person? Is there a specific set timescale within which people can expect an acknowledgement, then another one within which they can expect a further substantive response?

Do the performance standards set out above apply only to matters formally reported to police stations and via police control room and given a Unique Reference Number? How does direct communication with individual police officers, such as the Chief Constable, or a sector inspector fit into the scenario?

How can a member of the public progress matters where there has been a limited or unsatisfactory response to direct communication with individual officers? What redress can be sought by a member of the public in the event of the nature of the enquiry or the quality of the response being disputed?"

5(b) Notices of Motions

(i) Funding of NHS Services in Milton Keynes

Councillor I Henderson – 13 December 2006

"That this Council:

1. notes that the Government is funding the NHS in Milton Keynes at only 95% of what the Government itself says is Milton Keynes' fair funding share;
2. deplores the cuts that are being forced on both hospital and community health services in Milton Keynes as a result of this unfair funding; and
3. resolves to convey to the Strategic Health Authority and to Government that Milton Keynes's growing population needs more health services, not less."

This is a statement of belief (based on the evidence available to this meeting) and a request to the Cabinet to take this matter forward and have regard to this opinion in doing so.

(ii) Olney Campus of Ousedale School

Councillor Brock – 14 December 2006

"That this Council:

1. notes with concern the continued delays to the Olney Campus of Ousedale School that are forcing students to either travel to a temporary school at Oakgrove or to be educated in less than satisfactory temporary classrooms at the Ousedale Campus in Newport Pagnell.;
2. apologises to the parents of the affected students for the disturbance and disruption this has caused them and their children, and for the ineffective communication that has come from this Council during this time.;
3. requests the Audit Committee to appoint an experienced, independent person / company to investigate the Olney Campus project with the investigation looking into the whole scheme from conception to completion, paying particular attention to:
 - (a) the efficiency of the acquisition of the land on which the campus is being built.;
 - (b) the design and planning process and the efficiency with which these were undertaken.;
 - (c) the awarding of contracts for the design and construction phase of the project;

- (d) the monitoring of external contractors at all stages by this Council; and
- (e) who the Council can/should pursue for damages with a view to the Audit Committee receiving a full report no later than its meeting scheduled to be held in September / October 2007.

This is a statement of belief (based on the evidence available to this meeting) and a request to the Audit Committee to take this matter forward and have regard to this opinion in doing so.

(iii) Growth of Milton Keynes

Councillor I McCall – 21 December 2006

"That this Council:

1. is committed to securing growth that is advantageous for Milton Keynes, subject to the provision of timely infrastructure;
2. regrets the separate proposals of Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council to:
 - (a) target the area East of the M1 for future development;
 - (b) propose a doubling of the number of houses within the current city, above that originally proposed in the growth strategy; and
3. affirms its belief that the area to the South West of Milton Keynes affords the best rationale for an urban extension in support of sustainable development and cross-regional linkages."

This is a statement of belief (based on the evidence available to this meeting).

(iv) New Equality Duties

Councillor Long – 24 December 2006

- "1. That this Council welcomes the new duties placed on local authorities as a result of the passing of the Equality Act 2006 and in particular:
 - (a) the new Disability Equality Duty that came into force in December 2006;
 - (b) the pending commencement of the Gender Equality Duty that comes into force in March 2007;
 - (c) that these new duties build upon the Race Equality Duty introduced by the 2001 Race Relations Act;
 - (d) that all three duties require local authorities to:

- (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination in the defined areas of race, disability and gender; and
 - (ii) promote equality of opportunity in the defined areas of race, disability and gender.
- 2. That the Council further welcomes the publication by this Council of its Disability Equality Scheme.
- 3. That the Council agrees to ask the Cabinet to:
 - (a) bring forward proposals setting out how the new duty on gender will be implemented; and
 - (b) publish for Members and the public progress in meeting the Race Equality Duty.”

This is a statement of belief (based on the evidence available to this meeting) and a request to the Cabinet to take this matter forward and have regard to this opinion in doing so.

(v) Community Cohesion

Councillor Long – 24 December 2006

- "1. That this Council notes:
 - (a) that in many areas there is a growing challenge of diversity and often a need to face challenges of deprivation, poor housing and social exclusion;
 - (b) the importance of strong inclusive communities that value all residents;
 - (c) that many communities across Milton Keynes are becoming more diverse and that this offers an opportunity to tackle deprivation and poor estate conditions; and
 - (d) that the development of cohesive communities requires action at both a strategic and a local level.
- 2. That this Council agrees to ask the Cabinet to:
 - (a) review, with representatives of the city's ethnic minority communities and parish and town councils, how community cohesion will be achieved in all major strategic plans and strategies;
 - (b) consider, with representatives of the city's ethnic minority communities and parish and town councils, how planning policy can be used to promote community cohesion;

- (c) establish local plans, with representatives of the city's ethnic minority communities and parish and town councils, to promote community cohesion in all areas of Milton Keynes commencing with the most deprived areas first; and
- (d) allocate £150,000 a year, beginning in the 2007/08 budget for three years to commence this work. ”

This is a statement of belief (based on the evidence available to this meeting) and a request to the Cabinet to take this matter forward and have regard to this opinion in doing so.

(vi) Council Submission to the Cave Review of Social Housing Regulation

Councillor Long – 24 December 2006

“That this Council agrees to ask the Cabinet to make a submission to the recently announced review and to promote within the submission support for:

1. social housing regulation to pass from the Housing Corporation to local authorities; and
2. the transfer of social housing investment from the Housing Corporation to local authorities along the same lines as the new London Mayoral role on investment.”

This is a statement of belief (based on the evidence available to this meeting) and a request to the Cabinet to take this matter forward and have regard to this opinion in doing so.

(vii) Ward Member Involvement

Councillor Mabbott – 27 December 2006

“1. That this Council notes:

- (a) The provisions in the Local Government Act 2000 and the proposals in the Local Government White Paper for increased involvement of ward councillors in decision making and in 'community leadership'; and
- (b) Milton Keynes Council's longstanding position at the forefront of innovation in the evolution of democratic structures, particularly over the development of parishes and effective partnership arrangements.

2. That this Council believes that:

- (a) to continue to be at the forefront of democratic renewal, Milton Keynes Council needs to constantly review its way of working and, where necessary, make changes; and

- (b) to complete the democratic circle, work needs to be done to strengthen the role of individual ward members, in line with the national context and local priorities.
3. That this Council resolves that:
- (a) in future, the Council fully involves Ward Members both in decisions affecting their Wards made internally, and in decisions where the Council is involved through partnership organisations;
 - (b) creative steps be taken to ensure that Ward Members are fully involved in spending decisions affecting their Ward, including the provision of budgets for Ward Members to match fund other initiatives, such as environmental improvements;
 - (c) the Council ensures that Ward Members receive all the information necessary to represent their constituents, both internally and from partner bodies; and
 - (d) where the Council enters into arrangements with partner bodies to provide financial or other support, that this is dependent at all times upon a reciprocal agreement to ensure full compliance with legislation on freedom of information, data protection and good conduct, and the principles of open government and the key role of Ward Members in community capacity building.”

This is a statement of belief (based on the evidence available to this meeting).