

MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL
THAMES VALLEY POLICE AUTHORITY QUESTIONS

Reply by Councillor Crooks to the question from Councillor C Morris

“As Members know the Thames Valley Police Authority does not carry responsibility for operational matters concerning the Thames Valley Police Force – these fall strictly within the remit of the Chief Constable with the exception of those for which the Home Secretary is responsible.

For this reason a new procedure concerning operational issues was introduced into Milton Keynes earlier this year following a question about speed limit checks in Olney. Essentially – where their concerns are operational - Members are invited to address their questions directly to Chief Superintendent Baldwin who will reply on behalf of the Force. If Members wish to place their question and the reply in the public domain that is fully acceptable. I think my suggestion at the time was that we could circulate it with Weekly News.

The Police Authority’s powers are as follows:

- to secure the maintenance of an efficient and effective police service - in part through regular performance monitoring
- in consultation with the Chief Constable, to produce a three year rolling strategy and delivery plan
- to approve an annual budget
- to set the police element of the council tax and to levy a precept upon billing authorities in the Force area
- to approve the annual accounts
- to monitor and review budget performance
- to appoint and dismiss the Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable and Assistant Chief Constables
- to ensure that arrangements are in hand for consultation with local communities regarding the policing of their areas and to monitor its effectiveness
- to monitor the implementation of the Force and the Authority Equality and Diversity Schemes
- to monitor the police use of Stop and Search and Stop and Account powers and to help publicise an individuals rights to receive a written record if they are stopped
- to work co-operatively with partner bodies who are also working to reduce crime, disorder and deliver safer communities
- to oversee arrangements for independent custody visiting ensuring that detainees are treated properly

- to keep itself informed on Force investigations of complaints by the public about members of the Force - and to be responsible for determining the outcome of complaints against senior police officers
- to produce a policing summary and annual report

Questions about any of the powers above are dealt with, not by the Chief Superintendent, but by the Authority under the Section 20 (of the Police Act 1996) procedure that appears on our agenda.

In respect of Councillor Morris' question I have two suggestions as to a way forward:

1. With her permission I'll place a copy of Chief Superintendent Baldwin's reply to her original mail in this Friday's Weekly News
2. I understand that the Chief Constable will be appearing before the Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee on either 3 February or 30 March and the concerns that Councillor Morris expresses in the closing paragraph of her question would be an appropriate matter to take up with the Chief Constable at that meeting.)

Reply from Chief Inspector O'Ryan to complaint from Councillor C Morris

"Dear Councillor Morris,

Thank you for taking the time to discuss the incident of 16th October with me.

Having looked into it I have found that based on the information available to the radio operator at the time, the incident was graded appropriately. Factors involved in coming to that assessment were:

- The person assaulted was in order and there were no visible injuries.
- He had been offered an ambulance and had declined it and he was in order standing and speaking with people in the vicinity.
- The apparent offender had left the scene (he had gone to the Midsummer Police Office and called us separately). As such the risk of further violence was minimised.

This is the type of event that we endeavour to attend promptly. The reason we did not attend as quickly as I would have liked, was that there were other incidents which required a more urgent police intervention ongoing at the time. What should have happened is that you were given a realistic idea of when to expect us, and when that changed you should have been phoned and told. I'm sorry that side of things didn't work as I would wish and I will look at ways to put that right for the future.

We spoke about the use of the mounted officers who passed by. You understand that there problems with mounted officers leaving such a large animal in order to deal with this type of incident.

I'm grateful that you took the trouble to raise your concerns. This kind of opportunity to look at our response helps us to us to identify ways to improve our service. If there are operational matters that cause you concern, please feel free to contact me direct and I'll do my best to help."