

Democratic Services

# Draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16



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## Introduction

### Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16

#### What is Overview and Scrutiny?

All local authorities operating a Cabinet and Scrutiny model have a Cabinet made up of the Leader of the Council and up to nine other members. All executive decisions (i.e. those needed to implement the Policy Framework and Budget approved by the County Council) are taken by the Cabinet.

Overview and Scrutiny bodies are not “decision making” bodies but are bodies which monitor and influence those that are. The Overview and Scrutiny role, carried out by non-Cabinet members, is designed to support the work of the Council in the following ways:

- Reviewing and scrutinising decisions taken by the Cabinet, also known as acting as a “critical friend”;
- Considering aspects of the Council’s performance;
- Assisting in research, policy review and development;
- Involving itself with external organisations operating in the Borough to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working;

- Providing a means of involving the community in the Council’s work.

#### Scrutiny at Milton Keynes Council

Milton Keynes has 4 main Scrutiny Committees:

##### Scrutiny Management Committee

This Committee manages the scrutiny work programme and acts as the Council’s Statutory Scrutiny Committee in respect of flood and water risk management, crime and community safety and the Councillor Call for Action.

##### Budget Scrutiny Committee

The Budget Scrutiny Committee provides cross-party scrutiny of the Council’s budget and financial processes.

##### Children and Young People Committee

The Children and Young People Committee scrutinises the provision of services, the achievement of targets and the provision of resources to support the creation of positive outcomes for the children and young people of Milton Keynes.

##### Health and Adult Social Care Committee

The Health and Adult Social Care Committee Scrutinises the provision of health and adult social care services in Milton Keynes, the achievement of

targets and the provision of resources to help improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Milton Keynes.

##### Task and Finish Groups

Other Scrutiny work is undertaken by a range of Task and Finish Groups, made up of a small number of members (usually 6) which are appointed to look in depth at particular issues. Their recommendations, which may suggest a change in policy or service provision, are usually presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee before presentation to the Cabinet.

During 2015/16 Task and Finish Groups have undertaken reviews of CCTV Provision in Milton Keynes, the Council’s Housing Allocations Scheme, Homelessness, Landscape Maintenance, Transport Innovation and the Provision of GP Services in Milton Keynes.

## **Forward from the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Committee**

2015/16 saw considerable change in the Council's scrutiny arrangements. Following a far reaching review carried out during 2014/15 the Council decided to move away from a model dominated by formal select committees, which by-and-large, were not equipped to conduct in-depth reviews, to a model based around four key committees, which largely mirrored the Council's statutory responsibilities, and a range of Task and Finish Groups able to deal with cross cutting issues, take time to probe specific issues and come forward with detailed recommendations.

Another new innovation was for the Council to base the overall scrutiny work programme around a central theme. For 2015/16 the theme agreed by the Management Committee was 'Growth', as it was seen as the issue which impacted on all areas of the Council's work and that of partners.

The report which follows picks out the highlights from the work of each of the committees.

I would like to thank not only the Chairs and members of the committees and the Task and Finish Groups, but also the vast array of witnesses and members of the public who have freely given up their valuable time to help scrutiny to have the positive impact it has.

The theme of 'Growth' will be continued into 2016/17 and in order that the move into 2016/17 is as seamless as possible the Children and Young People and Health and Adult Social Care Committees have already identified provisional work programmes.

The Children and Young People Committee has identified the accountability of schools, the school build programme, examination attainment and school waiting lists and in-year transfers as important school related topics for scrutiny. The Committee also plans, amongst other things, to review the Children's Safeguarding Board's Business Plan and review the work of the Milton Keynes Family Drug and Alcohol Court.

Apart from its continued monitoring of the progress of the Milton Keynes and Bedfordshire Health Care Review, the Health and Adult Social Care Committee is planning to scrutinise why maternity services at Milton Keynes University Hospital appear to be failing, a review of the implementation of and impact on service users of the 2016/17 budget proposals in relation to adult social care services, and an analysis of the results of the 2015 Cancer Patient Experience Survey in order to see if the improvements in patient care and outcomes promised after the poor showing of Milton Keynes in the 2014 survey have been implemented.

The Budget Scrutiny Committee will again be carrying out the key task of scrutinising and challenging future budget proposals, as setting a viable budget becomes increasingly difficult as the Council's spending contracts. The Committee will also continue its ongoing monitoring of the Council's performance against the current budget.

The Management Committee, while continuing to ensure the committees have a focussed work programme, will continue to deal with key cross cutting issues as they arise. The Committee has already agreed to establish Task and Finish Groups to scrutinise the Waste Strategy and the Council's consultation arrangements.



**Councillor David Hopkins**

## **Key work undertaken during 2015/16 by the Scrutiny Committees**

### **Scrutiny Management Committee**

The Management Committee, as well as appointing the Task and Finish Groups and managing the overall scrutiny work programme has also undertaken a number of major pieces of scrutiny work in its own right. Also, through its Planning Group, the Council's overall performance has been monitored giving the Planning Group the opportunity to bring forward any matters of major concern for either detailed scrutiny, or report to the Cabinet.

### **Milton Keynes Service Partnership Review**

The Committee reviewed the proposal to internalise the non-trading services that were provided for the Council by the Milton Keynes Service Partnership, which was largely supported by the Committee, particularly as it believed that the revised arrangements would allow a greater emphasis to be given to the development of commercial / trading activities.

### **Staffing Structures**

The Committee had the opportunity to comment on the Chief Executive's review of senior management and made a number of suggestions as to principles

that might be applied to guide the restructuring.

### **Flood and Water Management Strategy**

The Management Committee, being the Council's statutory committee for flood and water risk management, reviewed the draft Flood and Water Risk Management Strategy, supporting the both approach being adopted to manage the risks of flooding and to partnership working. The Committee also took the opportunity to review progress on flood alleviation schemes which were currently under construction.

### **East / West Rail**

The progress of the construction of the planned East / West rail link was scrutinised, with the Committee recognising the importance of the link to the future growth and economic success of Milton Keynes. The Committee, as a result of its scrutiny, made representations to both the Government and Network Rail on the need for certainty around the timetabling of the project and a commitment to its completion.

### **RegenerationMK**

The Committee scrutinised, what was one of the most significant decisions the Council would be making in its recent history, which was to put in place arrangements for the regeneration and investment in many of its most deprived housing estates. The principles behind the project were supported with a number of risk areas being highlighted to the Council's Cabinet.

### **Central Milton Keynes Transport and Parking Strategy**

One of the more contentious issues dealt with by the Committee was the Central Milton Keynes Transport and Parking Strategy. While recognising the amount of work that had gone into preparing the document the Committee came to the conclusion that the document was not fit for purpose as a strategy and instead that it should be treated as a 'statement of intent' which would inform the next Local Transport Plan.

### **Local Government Shared Services**

The last major piece of work undertaken by the Committee in 2015/16 was the review of the proposal for the Council to join the shared services partnership with

Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire County Councils before the proposal was considered by the Council.

The benefits of sharing a number of 'back office' functions were recognised and welcomed, but it was suggested, amongst other things, that the Council should programme a number of reviews of the arrangements to ensure the shared service arrangements continued to meet the Council's needs.

### **Budget Scrutiny Committee**

The Budget Scrutiny Committee provides a dedicated, cross-party consideration of the Council's annual budget and finances. With the continued need to make significant savings each year, effective scrutiny of the Council's finances, future budget proposals and the processes involved, is one of the most important pieces of work undertaken by the Council's Scrutiny function.

As part of its general remit, the Committee has undertaken regular monitoring of the Council's 2015/16 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan. Synchronising the meetings of the Budget Scrutiny Committee to follow on from Cabinet meetings has been beneficial in that it enabled members of

### **2016/17 Draft Budget Proposals**

Following on from the significant savings made in recent years, the Council needs to save a further £24.3m during 2016/17. The Committee therefore carried out two major pieces of very intensive work, in October 2015 and January 2016, on the Council's 2016/17 budget proposals.

During October 2015 the Committee held a series of focussed meetings with Cabinet Members and the Council's senior budget holders to review, scrutinise, and consider the financial environment as part of the development of the draft 2016/17 budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Although all councils are facing substantial funding reductions, the Committee noted that in Milton Keynes the greatest challenges were in demand pressures on services, due to the growth of the borough and the extra demand for key statutory services this was causing.

The Committee took a strategic approach to the issues it reviewed, considering the most significant pressures affecting each service area, both by value and also by public impact. It became clear that the three areas where the demand pressures dwarfed all others were Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and Homelessness. This concern was reflected in the Committee's report to Cabinet on 9 November 2015.

The Committee was pleased to note the Cabinet's very positive reception of the report, producing a detailed response to each of the recommendations, which the Committee discussed with the Cabinet Member for Resources and Commercialism at its December meeting.

In January the Committee considered the detailed savings proposals for 2016/17, receiving presentations from Cabinet Members and the Council's senior budget holders to inform its discussions, as well as taking evidence from members of the public.

The Committee considered how achievable the budget proposals were, the expected impact of each proposal, whether the savings could create costs elsewhere (including outside organisations such as the NHS) whether the risks involved in each saving were being addressed and how closely the proposals aligned with the Administration's overall strategy (and service area strategies where applicable).

The Committee's report on its work and findings presented 20 recommendations on the budget proposals to Cabinet on 8 February 2016.

the Committee to scrutinise financial reports in the same time frame as the Cabinet and reduced the workload for officers in that they did not have to produce separate, interim reports

Other work undertaken by the Committee has included significant scrutiny of the costs associated with the provision of the Home to School Transport Service, pressures on social care budgets, the Customer Service Improvement Programme, the Housing Revenue Account and whether the income from car parking charges in Central Milton Keynes which had been anticipated in the 2015/16 was on course for being achieved.

## **Children and Young People Committee**



This has had a busy year and has dealt with an extensive and important work programme.

The Committee has been well served by both the knowledge of its witnesses and

their willingness to give evidence. Members of the Youth Cabinet have also played an important and active part in the work of the Committee.

## **Post 16 Options for Continued Learning in Milton Keynes**

The Committee believed that the Council had a key role to play as a facilitator.

The Council was encouraged to develop an understanding between employers and the education sector to ensure that personnel with the necessary skills were available to support the city as it grew. The Council, both itself and by working with partners, needed to ensure that Milton Keynes was an appealing place which attracted people with the right skills and retained the talent already here, whether this be to work or study.

A high quality university which was committed to Milton Keynes and wanted to become an integral part of the City's vision and future was seen as key.

## **Safeguarding**

The Committee reviewed the work of the Safeguarding Children Board during 2014/15 to assure itself that the Board was adequately fulfilling its role. As a result, a number of areas were identified for further investigation, particularly issues around Child Sexual Exploitation.

Later in the year the Committee heard from the new Chair of the Safeguarding Children Board on the continuing work of the Board and were able to review her plans for developing the role and functions of the Board following her self-diagnosis of the Board's strengths and weaknesses.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation**

The Committee took the opportunity to review the various procedures and arrangements that were in place to protect against, identify and deal with child sexual exploitation, particularly the work that was being carried out in respect of vulnerable groups and individuals. Partnership working was a particular focus for the Committee as it sought to reassure itself both that there was no evidence of large scale / organised child sexual exploitation in Milton Keynes and that adequate arrangements were in place to identify, as far as possible, cases of child sexual exploitation. The need for early identification and intervention was recognised.

The Committee was clearly of the view that all agencies needed to remain vigilant and continue to promote awareness so persons in all settings were able to help identify child sexual exploitation.

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing for Children and Young People**

The Committee addressed the various issues relating to maintaining positive mental health and wellbeing for children and young people recognising the need for accessible, well funded and resourced services which received the same recognition and priority as physical health services.

The importance of early assessment and intervention was recognised, as was the importance of active involvement of all stakeholders across all disciplines. Once the need for treatment was identified there needed to be clear treatment pathways with better integration between services for young people and adults.

The Committee identified strong leadership by the Council as a key element if the problems being experienced, which included resource availability and recruitment and retention, were to be successfully tackled.

## **Annual Events**

The Committee received the annual report from the responsible Cabinet member and a presentation from representatives of the Youth Cabinet which addressed its work and campaigns

and their visions for Milton Keynes as it moved towards 2050.

## **Recommendations to Cabinet**

The Committee made a number of recommendations to the Cabinet around the importance of providing an adequate budget for children's social care and as a result of its consideration of post 16 options for continued learning it asked the Cabinet to take measures to address the skills shortages that were facing Milton Keynes. The Cabinet indicated that many of the issues highlighted by the Committee, such as a Skills Strategy, and Local Area Economic Assessment, were already being progressed, but that resources were not available to address all of the concerns identified by the Committee.

## **Health and Adult Social Care Committee**

As a unitary authority the Council has the power to review and scrutinise matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the area, including the finances of healthcare providers; require information to be provided by certain NHS bodies about the planning, provision and operation of health services that is reasonably needed to carry out health scrutiny and require

employees including non-executive directors of certain NHS bodies to attend before them to answer questions.

This function is carried out on behalf of the Council by the Health and Adult Social Care Committee.

## **Milton Keynes and Bedfordshire Healthcare Review**

The most substantial piece of work undertaken by the Committee in 2015/16 has been the continuous monitoring of the on-going Milton Keynes and Bedfordshire Healthcare Review. Although being led by the Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) the Review also involves the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, the NHS England Area Team, Monitor and the NHS Trust Development Authority. Representatives from the Milton Keynes CCG and the NHS England Area Team have been invited to update the Committee on progress at its meetings held on 6 October 2015, 5 January 2016 and 15 March 2016. It is a mark of the Committee's concern about the progress, and possible outcomes from the Review, that following the meeting in January, monitoring of the Review has been added as a standing item to the Committee's agenda until such time as the Review is complete.



Linked to the Review is the issue of NHS service planning and how the NHS England Area Team is calculating future healthcare provision in the borough, given the current rapid expansion of Milton Keynes. Councillors are of the view that there is a definite mismatch between the growth projection data being used by the NHS and that used by the Council the Council and work needs to be done to bring this in line so that the necessary healthcare provision for an expanding city can be put in place. The Committee welcomes the appointment of the Council's Infrastructure Coordination and Delivery Manager as the liaison between the Council, Milton Keynes CCG and NHS England for planning and growth matters. It hopes that the recommendations made at the January meeting on both the Review and NHS Service Planning will be taken on board by all parties in order to deliver improvements.

Running alongside the monitoring of the progress of the Healthcare Review and the issues around NHS service planning is the work being done by the Task and Finish Group on Access to GP Services. The Task and Finish Group was established following the publication of the 2014 Patient Satisfaction Survey, when Milton Keynes came 208 out of a

list of 211 CCG areas. The main point of dissatisfaction was the inability of residents to get either an emergency appointment with their GP on the day they needed it, or the ability to book a routine appointment at time / date that was convenient to them. The Task and Finish Group has been collecting evidence from a wide range of sources and will be presenting its report and recommendations during the summer.



### **Learning Disability Service**

During the autumn of 2015 the Council's Joint Commissioning Team carried out a public consultation on changes to the Learning Disability Service with service users, family carers, staff, stakeholders and possible future users. This coincided with the Committee's October meeting, allowing it to scrutinise the proposals and feed into the consultation, making seven recommendations to Cabinet on the issue. This item attracted a lot of attention, with at least 35 people, mainly service users and their carers, in the public gallery. The Committee appreciated this level of interest and the

views expressed by the public enabled them to make recommendations which reflected the concerns of those who would be most impacted by the changes.

### **Adult Social Care in 2016/17**

At the January meeting the Committee also had an in-depth discussion with Councillor Nigel Long, the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing about his draft proposals in the 2016/17 budget. In order for the Committee to understand the strategic direction of travel in the provision of social care services Councillor Long gave an overview of the pressures facing the service, the proposed savings and how these will be quantified and managed. The Committee agreed to pick this up again during the autumn of 2016 and review the impact of these measures on service users.

### **Update from CNWL-MK**

Other work carried out by the Committee includes a presentation from the Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL), which is responsible for the provision of community health services in Milton Keynes, on how they provide mental health services in Milton Keynes. This followed a review of the healthcare services provided by CNWL by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The healthcare services provided by CNWL are no longer confined to its north west London base; it now provides services in several geographically disparate areas. However, at present CQC inspection reports do not take this into account, just producing an overall rating for the healthcare provider in question. This means that a good rating for one part of a service was balanced out by poor ratings for other services in different areas. The Committee considered that this not helpful for local residents and wrote the CQC expressing its concerns. The Committee was also supported in this by the local MPs. The CQC have acknowledged the Committee's concerns and will be reviewing their reporting mechanism.

### **Public Health and Preventative Healthcare**

The Committee also heard from the Council's Public Health Team on its approach to preventative healthcare in Milton Keynes, how effective the local prevention programmes are and how quantifiable and measurable are the outcomes of those programmes.

This item highlighted to the Committee the poor level Public Health funding from central government in Milton Keynes compared to other local authorities of

comparable size. The Committee wrote to both MPs for Milton Keynes expressing its concern about the low level of funding for what is one of the fastest growth areas in the country. Both MPs are supportive of the Committee's concerns and have written to the Secretary of State for Health requesting that the Public Health funding allocation for Milton Keynes be reviewed.

### **Urgent Care Walk-in Service**

At its March meeting the Committee will be considering the Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group's proposals to close the Urgent Care Walk-in Service currently provided at the Broughton Gate Health Centre. The proposal is currently the subject of a 12 week (8 February to 25 April 2016) public consultation. Representatives of the CCG will be attending the meeting and have been asked to address the following points: why is this move being considered; the impact on numbers attending both the Urgent care Centre at the Hospital and A&E; cost savings; effect on the extended hours GP Hubs; impact on rural areas; the future of walk-in urgent care.

### **Delayed Transfer of Care**

Also at its March meeting the Committee will receive and discuss a presentation from the Council's Assistant Director (Adult Social Care) explaining the current

operating model for Adult Social Care in relation to discharge from hospital, looking at what the Council does currently, what can lead to delays with the process and what is being done to limit any such delays.



### **Quality Accounts Panel**

Finally, during May 2015, the Quality Accounts Panel, on behalf of the Committee, undertook its annual review of the Quality Accounts (a report by healthcare providers about the quality of services they deliver) submitted to the Council for review. The Panel was gratified to note that comments it had made previously to one of the healthcare providers about how their report could be improved had been taken on board and acted upon, producing a much enhanced document in 2015.

### **Task and Finish Groups**

The Scrutiny Management Committee established a number of Task and Finish Groups during the year which addressed issues such as housing allocations, CCTV, homelessness, GP provision, landscaping and transport innovations.

The recommendations from the CCTV Group were referred to the SaferMK Partnership to be addressed as part of its consideration of CCTV provision. The Housing Allocations Group reported to the Cabinet in September and the reports from the remaining groups will be considered by the Committee in March or early in the new Council year.



Democratic Services

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