



Minutes of the meeting of the PERFORMANCE REVIEW PANEL held on TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2006 at 7.30 pm and the reconvened meeting held on FRIDAY 15 DECEMBER 2006 at 6.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor Wilson (Chair [5 December 2006 ]  
Councillors Carruthers, Eastman, Morris (Vice-Chair in the Chair [15 December 2006]) and Tunney

**Officers:** J Boothroyde (Overview and Scrutiny Manager [5 December 2006]) and S Parker (Senior Committee Manager)

**Also Present:** Councillors Coventry (5 December 2006), Crooks (5 December 2006), Fraser and I Henderson, R Solly (Community Safety Manager [Milton Keynes Council]), S Greig (Enforcement Officer [Milton Keynes Council]), Superintendent S Blake (Thames Valley Police), Councillor T Fraser (Campbell Park Parish Council), M Galloway (Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council), Councillor L Rodriguez (West Bletchley Council [5 December 2006]), A Ansell (Community Officer [Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council (5 December 2006)]), S Cohen (Offender Management Service [5 December 2006]) and P Walford (5 December 2006)

**Apologies:** Councillors Barry and Long

**PR13 MINUTES**

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Performance Review Panel held on 25 October 2006, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**PR14 PARK AND RIDE UPDATE**

Further to Minute PR08(3), the Panel received an update on short term Park and Ride improvements.

**CRIME REDUCTION**

The Panel considered the Council's contribution to crime reduction and actions at the local level, with a variety of witnesses.

The following was noted through evidence sessions:

(a) Offender Management Service Evidence Session

(Witnesses - Stan Cohen and Paul Walford)

- Crime is a means to support drug dependency, for example, by shoplifting and stealing from cars.
- Drug users are often not concerned about the consequences of being caught and regard prison as an 'occupational hazard'.
- Rehabilitation is the best preventative measure but requires funding.
- The profile of drug users and suppliers has changed over the past ten years. Numbers of drug users are increasing and are getting younger. Dealer are now more likely to be from out of town.
- More facilities are required for helping people with drug dependency and there is a need for a venue for the voluntary self-help Narcotics Anonymous Group.
- Partnerships against crime like that operating in Central Milton Keynes can reduce crime levels and should be more widespread.

(b) Parish Council Representatives Evidence Session

(Witnesses - Councillor S Coventry and Councillor L Rodriguez [West Bletchley Council])

- Campbell Park Parish Council (CPPC) has pioneered a number of initiatives from re-siting telephone boxes to funding a Parish Community Safety Officer. CPPC gives the Police £5,000 a year for special operations and it is very pleased with the results. CPPC also sponsors 'your neighbourhood' meetings, inviting different agencies to address local issues.
- A large proportion of the work of Community Officers is involved in dealing with 'environmental crime'. The operations that the Council's Enforcement Team carry out to combat offences are good, but the team is only small and needs more funding.
- The public has concern with crime, such as theft from gardens, petty damage, graffiti and anti-social crime.

These are areas where an impact could be made. There is a need for wardens in every parish.

- The need for a better response by the Police and the Council to information provided by Parish Community Safety Officers.

(c) Councillor I Henderson (Cabinet Member) Evidence Session

- The Community Safety Partnership helps to facilitate (with the Police, Milton Keynes Council and the Parishes) crime reduction and a reduction in the fear of crime, and it is involved in fixing policy with the agencies which make up the Partnership.
- The Council is also active in supporting re-integration.
- Given more resources, Councillor I Henderson felt that intensive support to those known individuals / families largely responsible for anti-social behaviour should be provided.
- Combating alcohol misuse has no source of funding.
- The Council's Housing Policy states that if damage is self inflicted by the tenant to Council property, it is for the tenant to pay. If damage is caused by a criminal act, then the Council will pay for the repairs.
- The Council and the Police should work together to identify situations where tenants repeatedly approach the Council to repair their properties, when it is likely that the damage is self inflicted.

The Police representative pointed out the difficulties in proving how damage was caused and the pressure on Police resources.

(d) Superintendent Simon Blake (Thames Valley Police) Evidence Session

Superintendent Blake reported the following:

- Theoretically there should be 77 neighbourhood officers but, in reality, there are often only 51. Neighbourhood officers often get called away for operations to support reactive policing. With the rollout of neighbourhood policing, 24 neighbourhood officers will be ring-fenced to avoid this.
- Main areas of crime involve theft of and from vehicles (particularly Satellite Navigation Units) and criminal damage.

There is 'joined up' working through Joint Area Tasking and Co-ordination (JATAC), although parishes do not have a seat on this.

- Resources doesn't always mean more money, it may mean using resources differently.
  - The Police can't do it all alone and it is imperative to get the Community Safety Plan right if Milton Keynes is to avoid following, for example, Nottingham.
  - Neighbourhood policing is about solving local problems quickly and efficiently. Meetings are a by product and should not 'eat into' enforcement time.
  - Empirical research shows that the environment is one of the biggest factors influencing criminal behaviour.
  - The Council can exert influence by facilitating faster delegated decision-making.
  - There is a need to bring pressure to bear on the Primary Care Trust in respect of funding.
  - There is a need for more resources for the Community Safety Team to fully carry out its co-ordinating and implementation role.
  - There is a need to ensure that a common community safety thread is embedded throughout all service areas (Superintendent Blake has never seen, for example, a Youth Offending Team Plan to address the rise in recorded crime).
  - There is a need to provide dedicated analytical support to the Community Safety Partnership.
  - On the positive side, there is excellent support from elected Members and Council officers.
  - There is a willingness to pool resources and a common understanding of problems.
- (e) Shaun Greig (Safer Communities Unit) Evidence Session
- Activities of the Unit include addressing the problems created by abandoned vehicles, anti-social behaviour, fly tipping and litter.
  - The Unit includes the mobile CCTV Unit and deploys seven Safer Community Wardens.
  - The Unit assists the Police in targeting areas / enforcement action.
  - Clean up of areas. Operation Ricky in the Lakes Estate was a multi agency operation (including the Fire

Services, Police, Cory's and DVLA) targeting issues such as fly tipping, rubbish, litter, dog fouling and abandoned vehicles. Young offenders 'litter picked' local parks and Cory's cleaned up fly tipping areas. It was not possible to identify whether this had reduced crime.

- 'Deep cleaning' an area involved educating and enforcement action.
  - The Housing Directorate was the main driving force for the action to 'deep clean' an area. The action required a lot of planning. Other areas to receive attention would include Great Linford (a 'mini job' which would look at dog fouling and fly tipping) and Netherfield.
  - The Council had received full support from other agencies in carrying out the 'deep clean'.
  - The Safer Communities Unit has also been involved in 'Operation Rebound', which involved helping the Police in their evening patrols.
  - The Safer Communities Unit was also involved in the work of the Travellers Management Unit.
  - It was possible to see a gradual improvement in the Lakes Estate following the 'deep clean' exercise.
  - There are resource implications in continually striving to keep areas clean.
  - The co-operation of the local press was important in publicising / promoting the work of the Safer Communities Unit.
- (f) Richard Solly (Community Safety Manager) Evidence Session
- The Community Safety Team has statutory responsibility through the Community Safety Plan to reduce crime and disorder and the fear of crime.
  - The Community Safety Team has additional statutory responsibility following the Crime and Justice Act to reduce anti-social behaviour and damage, and will also include the following:
    - The need to produce an audit every three years.
    - From 2008, there will be a need to produce an Annual Rolling 3 Year Strategy revised every year. There will be a need to maintain close contact with the public, and report to the public every six months updating them with regard to crime in the Borough.

- There will be a need to demonstrate that the Council is getting out and speaking to people, particularly those 'hard to reach', including the elderly, disabled and ethnic groups.
- There will be two stages to the public consultation, as follows:
  - \* What information is disseminated?
  - \* The information that is returned (how it is returned; what the Council does with it; and how it is assessed)?
- There will be a specific scrutiny committee to deal with Community Safety.
- The role of Members on the Community Safety Partnership is to be enhanced, although the role of Members on the Partnership in Milton Keynes is fairly endemic already.
- Drug Action Teams (DAT's) are to be merged with Community Safety Partnerships. (This would cause concern amongst partners in Milton Keynes because of the substantial deficit of the Milton Keynes DAT.)
- Partnership working with the Police, Fire, Health, Parish Councils and the business community will be assessed.
- A Fire Service Partnership Manager has been appointed who will work closely with the Community Safety Team.
- Over the years, the Community Safety Team has spawned a number of initiatives:
  - Safer Community Unit.
  - Lighthouse Project for Domestic Violence.
  - Parenting.
  - Racial incidents agenda.

The difficulty is to sustain funding after Government funding has ended.
- The Council has a target to raise the number of reported racial incidents.
- The Council can identify racial incidents on an estate by estate basis.
- CCTV is a primary crime reduction tool, therefore, it needs to be maintained. By 2010, the system will be

antiquated. A system for making CCTV self-funding in the next five years is being looked at, so it will be fit for purpose by 2015/2020.

The following was also noted about CCTV in Milton Keynes:

- CCTV systems in Milton Keynes 'talk to each other' and are monitored from the Police Station.
  - Trees which block 'lines of sight' of CCTV cameras require attention.
  - Cost of cameras is an issue; area covered; images need to be seen; 'off the shelf' cameras versus more expensive ones.
- There is a need to make car parks secure.
  - There is a need to address with English Partnerships the need for 'secure by design' build, especially car parks, to ensure that problems are not created for the future.
  - There is increasing crime in car parks, such as Kingston Centre and Westcroft. Patrols would deter crime to an extent.
  - Every Community Safety Partnership has to produce a tension report every month. The Police and the Fire Authority also produce similar reports but no feedback has been received from the Home Office.
  - The Safer Neighbourhood Initiative will be important in the coming eighteen months in tackling the problem of anti-social behaviour.
  - Changes to the funding of the Local Strategic Partnership.

RESOLVED –

That Democratic Services officers draw up a set of recommendations based on the evidence received from both sessions.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7.50 PM