

**CABINET RESPONSE TO REFERRALS FROM HOUSING AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE**

**14 JULY 2016**

*Responses, in italics, from Councillor Long reported to Cabinet on 6 September 2016 as Item 9b*

1. That the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supports the plans for the regeneration of the YMCA in Central Milton Keynes.

*The overall development will be supported, including the provision of 30% Affordable Housing.*

2. That the Committee requests the Cabinet to reconsider the cost of the land it is proposing to sell to the YMCA, as a lower charge for the cost of the land would mean that the YMCA would have sufficient funds to complete the project in its entirety.

*This is a decision for the Cabinet. There is a legal power [allowing the Council] to dispose at less than the market value in certain circumstances*

3. That the Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member and the Acting Service Director (Housing and Community) urgently examine the list of empty buildings recently supplied by Milton Keynes People's Assembly in order to ascertain whether or not any of them might be suitable for conversion to temporary accommodation for the homeless.

*[The Cabinet has] already commented on this list. Very few of these sites are within the Housing Revenue Account. One, 66-70 High Street, Two Mile Ash, has already been brought back into the Housing Stock (in February this year); other Housing Revenue Account sites are not suitable. For those sites that are covered by the General Fund, Property Services has been asked to give a view on whether they could be released for housing.*

4. That the Committee, recognising that the Cabinet is currently undertaking a review of the role of the Milton Keynes Development Partnership (MKDP), recommends that consideration be given, in certain circumstances, to MKDP selling land at below market value in order to provide land for the development of social housing at an affordable level.

*This is a matter for the Council members of the MKDP Board.*

5. That the Committee welcomes the Council's plans to develop a Rough Sleepers Strategy, but is concerned that a completion date of March 2017 may endanger the lives of local rough sleepers by not providing assistance soon enough and therefore suggests a completion date of 31 December 2016 as providing a realistic timescale in which this work can be done, and at the same time avoiding the worst of the winter weather.

*The "MEETING THE NEEDS OF NON-STATUTORY HOMELESS PEOPLE" Cabinet report (Item 11 on the Agenda - 06/09/16) at paragraph 2.7 points out that the Delivery Plan calls for the "...development and implementation of a rough sleeper action plan by November 2016."*

6. That the Committee encourages the Cabinet, in partnership with other groups assisting the homeless, to consider an awareness campaign to raise the understanding of local homelessness issues, the problems involved, and what people could do to assist in the donation of time, goods or funds.

*This will follow on from the establishment of the Homelessness Partnership proposed in the “MEETING THE NEEDS OF NON-STATUTORY HOMELESS PEOPLE” Cabinet report. [The Council] currently works alongside a range of partners; a draft provision of wider and available services has been produced and will be discussed with partners in September 2016.*

7. That in light of the comments made by many of the organisations present at the meeting, the Cabinet be requested to clarify what constitutes “vulnerability” in homelessness terms and to provide a standardised definition for use by officers and councillors endeavouring to assist those who do find themselves in a homeless situation.

*Annex A to the “MEETING THE NEEDS OF NON-STATUTORY HOMELESS PEOPLE” sets out the statutory definitions of Homelessness and Priority Need, which are the Council’s reference points. The **Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities** sets out (starting at para 10.12) factors to be taken into account in assessing vulnerability, notably “It is a matter of judgement whether the applicant’s circumstances make him or her vulnerable. When determining whether an applicant ... is vulnerable, the local authority should consider whether, when homeless, the applicant would be less able to fend for him/herself than an ordinary homeless person so that he or she would suffer injury or detriment, in circumstances where a less vulnerable person would be able to cope without harmful effects”. Assessment of vulnerability against a standardised definition would be susceptible to challenge.*

8. That the Committee recommends that the Cabinet, having agreed a standard definition of vulnerability in a homelessness context, considers developing a policy for dealing with such people.

*The report “MEETING THE NEEDS OF NON-STATUTORY HOMELESS PEOPLE” deals with the policy issues in addressing the needs of non-statutory homeless people, alongside the (draft) Statutory Homelessness Strategy.*

## **23 AUGUST 2016**

Prior to discussion on 6 September 2016, Cabinet requested the Housing and Community Committee to scrutinise the draft proposals set out in *Meeting the Needs of Non-Statutory Homeless People*. The Committee made the following recommendations to Cabinet:

1. That the Committee welcomed the report, which was the first time a Cabinet had produced a positive strategy for dealing with the issues of non-statutory homeless people in Milton Keynes and accepted the principles and purposes set out in the report.
2. That, despite references to the Council Plan, the Committee was disappointed to note that there was no firm commitment in the report to adhere to the timescales set out in the Council Plan and requests that the Cabinet includes a timescale for implementation in the final version of the strategy.

3. That the Committee is concerned about the current lack of an emergency night shelter (formerly provided by the YMCA) and requests that the Cabinet seeks ways of funding the reinstatement of this facility as soon as possible and certainly by no later than the onset of winter 2016, rather than winter 2017 as suggested in the report.
4. That once agreed, the Cabinet be asked to expedite the proposals in the report as soon as possible in order to improve the public's perception of the Council's willingness to assist the homeless when in need and to minimise any public health issues caused by not providing sufficient assistance to the homeless.

Having discussed the draft strategy at its meeting on 6 September, the Cabinet made the following resolutions:

### **CS51 MEETING THE NEEDS OF NON-STATUTORY HOMELESS PEOPLE**

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council lead on bringing together a range of partners with professional expertise in the homelessness and support sector to form the MK Homelessness Partnership (the Partnership), to work together to prevent and alleviate homelessness for non-statutory homeless people.
2. That the Partnership be required to ensure that an evidence driven and professional approach is taken to tackle housing and homelessness issues and the support required in this area.
3. That the Partnership be required to lead and co-ordinate services for non-statutory homeless people including advice, information and assistance; bringing together help and support into a 'One Stop Shop' style of delivery.
4. That the Council facilitate, assist and support the Partnership in its endeavours.
5. That the Partnership in the first three months ensure:-
  - (i) That the Terms of Reference are agreed;
  - (ii) Clarity of working and delivery arrangements
  - (iii) That a Homelessness Charter that will set out how all organisations will work together to tackle homelessness in Milton Keynes is agreed;
  - (iv) That an analysis of any gaps in provision to meet the needs of non-statutory homeless people is undertaken; and
  - (v) An initial, costed proposal is brought forward for consideration by the Cabinet in December 2016 detailing how best to support the aims of supporting non-statutory homeless people.
6. That the Council explore the options for the provision of emergency support for those without accommodation including sanitary facilities and an outreach assessment service.
7. That the Council explore the options for the provision of emergency short term shelter for those in crisis and requiring immediate support.