

CABINET

5 JUNE 2018

Responses to Petition, Questions and Referrals (Items 5, 8 and 9)

5. Deputations and Petitions - Petition: Speed Limit between Wolverton and Stony Stratford

Response from Councillor Gowans (Cabinet member for Public Realm):

“Thank you for bringing this issue to Cabinet. Road safety will be my priority for as long as I am in this role and welcome the community coming forward with concerns so we can make the places we live nicer.

To ensure this gets investigate fully, I am asking officers to bring back a paper for delegated decision with the options investigated and suitable recommendations made by the end of August.”

8. Councillor Questions

Response to Questions submitted by Councillor D Hopkins:

(a) Collection of Domestic Waste Cardboard Boxes

Response from Councillor Gowans (Cabinet member for Public Realm):

“I’d like to thank Councillor D Hopkins for the question.

The current policy is not new and dates from the commencement of the contract in 2009 and subsequently extensions.

I believe most households, including the inference in the question, have been under the impression that larger cardboard left for collection at kerbside was being collected and recycled.

Unfortunately large pieces of cardboard cannot fit in the recycling compartment of the OnePass vehicles and can make the mechanism jam and break. As such, until recently, most cardboard not placed in recycling bags was therefore being collected in the larger residual collection compartment.

The machinery at the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) which separates different recyclates cannot handle oversized materials and will reject such materials. This is regarded as contamination.

If loose cardboard has been broken small enough to fit in the recycling compartment of the collections vehicle and made it through the sorting machinery, if it has been presented loose, any moisture may have made the cardboard too wet to recycle. This is regarded as contamination.

The issue has recently required action due to the high level of reported contamination rates at the MRF with non-recyclables being placed in recycling, which along with cardboard has also included items such as cat litter and disposable nappies. Due to these levels of contamination the contractor recently indicated they would seek to police the issue more vigorously and served notice they would seek to implement financial penalties that exist within the contract for contamination and this would place a financial pressure of the budget of Milton Keynes Council.

In order to reduce and mitigate the possible issues MK Council has recently stepped up our monitoring of contaminated recycling and undertaken a public engagement exercise to increase education and awareness of what can, and what cannot, be placed in recycling sacks in line with our waste collection contract.

In my experience the residents of Milton Keynes are on the whole keen to ensure that they play their part in recycling and most would not have known that not breaking down cardboard and placing it into recycling bags was, in fact, not resulting in the cardboard being recycled and actually had the possibility of placing a financial burden on MK Council.

Obviously it will take time for this greater emphasis on reducing recycling contamination to become custom and practice, and I will raise the issue of further public engage with the Head of Communications. I have also asked our Head of Environment to monitor the impact of the issue on litter and community impact.

Sadly, however, I am unable to recommend, due to the reasons outlined, that we return to collecting loose cardboard as this is neither an environmentally nor financially sustainable option.

I would also very much welcome any thoughts and ideas on how we can improve our communications of the issues I have highlighted and how to imbed good practice with our residents.”

- (b) Costings for the employment of a full time and/or part time traffic warden dedicated to patrolling only in Woburn Sands

Response from Councillor Gowans (Cabinet member for Public Realm):

“The Working Locally Framework identifies parking enforcement as a baseline item with the ability for town and parish councils to influence the service or enhance/top up. The headline figure for a parking enforcement officer is currently around £15 per hour but should Woburn Sands or any other local council wish to look into this further, I would encourage them to get in touch to discuss what those arrangements may look like by contacting Sarah Gonsalves (Acting Director of Policy, Insight and Communications) - sarah.gonsalves@milton-keynes.gov.uk.”

9. References from other Bodies

- (a) Children and Young People Committee – 10 January 2018

Early Parenting (Minute CYP43)

Response from Councillor Nolan (Cabinet member responsible for Children and Families):

“The parenting programmes, for example Incredible Years, offered by our children’s centre team are international evidence-based interventions. In the case of Incredible Years this programme has been described as one of the most carefully evaluated group-based parenting programmes available (Taylor et al, 1998) and is backed by research literature, with many randomised control trials (RCT) showing its efficacy (Webster-Stratton et al, 2009). Given we have now moved away from local programmes to greater use of evidence-based programme investing resources in undertaking our own longitudinal study is not necessary.”

- (b) Health and Adult Social Care Committee - 12 March 2018

Adult Safeguarding Referrals

Response from Councillor O’Neill (Cabinet member responsible for Health and Wellbeing):

“The MK Safeguarding Board has confirmed that developing the safeguarding referral process as a business plan priority for 2018. The Adult Programme Board has formed a multi-agency group to carry out this work. This will be monitored by the MK Safeguarding Board.”

(c) Budget Scrutiny Committee - 13 March 2018

(i) Residual Waste Treatment Facility (Minute BS40)

Response from Councillor Gowans (Cabinet member for Public Realm):

“This report has recently been completed and it is attached as an **Annex**. We have collated the report so that it can be used as a foundation document for any potential future design, build and operation contracts (such as the Anaerobic Digestion Plant). Any comments will be circulated through the most appropriate channels.”

(ii) Allocation and Use of S106 Money (Minute BS41)

Response from Councillor Legg / Middleton (Cabinet member for Customer Services / Resources and Innovation):

“Officer colleagues are in the process of considering how we capture the information relating to Section 106 and Tariff contributions and ensuring that the contributions are used for the purpose identified. The work streams are as follows:

- Moving from a reactive to a proactive approach from the Obligations Team to project delivery from S106 receipts;
- Making information on obligations more easily accessible and understandable to all;
- Implementing a new process on negotiating S106 agreements; and
- Measuring performance on the s106 process.

There is to be a future Cabinet decision on having a Community Infrastructure Levy rather than s106. Whilst a Community Infrastructure Levy was considered previously by the Council rather than Section 106 contributions, at that time the decision was that it would be more beneficial to continue with S106. The evidence and viability case for a Community Infrastructure Levy is being assessed again to ensure this is still the case. There will be a future Cabinet decision on this. ”

(d) Regulatory Committee - 14 March 2018

- (i) Response to issues raised with reference to Registered Town and Village Greens.

Response from Councillor Legg (Cabinet member for Customer Services):

This matter was dealt with via a Delegated Decision on 27 March 2018. The decision was taken to voluntarily register all the identified sites. The decision was made clear that significant protection already exists for sites and this will be reinforced in PlanMK. The Portfolio Holder at the time did not agree that there was any need to implement a voluntary village registration procedure.

- (ii) Change in Taxi Application Process (online services) and Safeguarding and Child Sexual Exploitation Training

Response from Councillor Legg (Cabinet member for Customer Services):

“These items will be considered in a report to Cabinet on 10 July 2018.”

- (iii) Proposals to Deal with Excessive Levels of Cross-Border Hiring and its Impact on Milton Keynes Residents and Taxi Licensing.

Response from Councillor Legg (Cabinet member for Customer Services):

“These items will be considered in a report to Cabinet on 10 July 2018.”

(e) Audit Committee – 15 March 2018

- (i) Annual Audit Plan 2018/19 (Minute AC37)

Response from Councillor Middleton (Cabinet member for Resources and Innovation):

“The Corporate Director of Resources has completed a full analysis of the key issues raised in the Northamptonshire County Council Best Value Inspection report, and how the Council’s arrangements compare to the recommendations made. This report will be shared in full at the first meeting of the Audit Committee, and members will be invited to determine whether they feel any changes to the existing Internal Audit Plan are necessary.

In addition, CIPFA are likely to incorporate into its ‘Statement on Audit Committees in Local Government’, a recommendation that committees have at least one independent member. It is therefore important to

acknowledge that Milton Keynes is already “ahead of the game” in this regard, given 3 of its Audit Committee members are independent.”

(ii) Draft Internal Audit Strategy and Charter (Minute AC39)

“That the relevant Cabinet member be recommended to review the contract management processes to ensure that they are robust and that proper process exists for redress where a service fails an individual or an organisation.”

Response from Councillor Middleton (Cabinet member for Resources and Innovation):

“A new Contract Management Review Group has recently been established. The Group includes key stakeholders across the Council, and is chaired by the Service Director (Finance and Resources). Initially it will meet bi-monthly and its purpose is to review existing contracts across the council and provide peer challenge to ensure that contracts are being effectively managed in line with best practice and existing Council guidance. Part of the Groups remit will be to ensure contractor performance meets the requisite standards and where necessary ensure appropriate action to mitigate poor performance and poor outcomes for customers.”

(iii) Future Working Programme Audit (Minute AC42)

“That the Cabinet be recommended to reflect on the level of resources provided to provide the scrutiny function across the Council.”

Response from Councillor Middleton (Cabinet member for Resources and Innovation):

“In light of the new Scrutiny Committee arrangements, consideration will be given to this as part of the 2019/20 Budget process.”

(f) Council – 21 March 2018

Eaton Mill Nursery Petition

Response from Councillor Nolan (Cabinet member for children and Families):

“Eaton Mill Nursery is a private day nursery located in the grounds of the Premier Academy. It is not a school, but a setting which is important when following national guidance about funding. We use Government funding to fund free places at the setting for two, three and four year olds. When a setting becomes inadequate national guidance states that we must "withdraw funding as soon as is practicable".

Eaton Mill Nursery was inspected on 20 December 2017 and on 3 February 2018 the report was published stating that the setting had been graded as inadequate. At this point we thought very carefully about how we should respond, taking into account the serious nature of some of the issues identified in the report, the ability for the setting to address them, the numbers of children involved, the ability for these children to be able to access new places and also the time needed for that transition to happen successfully if that was what parents wanted.

As a result we agreed not to withdraw the funding immediately on 3 February (as can sometimes be appropriate), but instead wrote to the Eaton Mill on 7 February advising that we would continue funding them until 31 March in order to give the setting time to address the issues and the parents time to consider whether they wished to access a new place, as is their right.

In the meantime, as the petition rightly points out, the setting addressed the issues identified during the inspection and Ofsted were able to go back and carry out a re-inspection (on 26 March), before the funding was withdrawn. I am delighted to say that the setting was then graded 'Good'.

In conclusion I am happy to report that the decision to continue to fund this setting for a period following the inadequate judgement has resulted in continuity of education for these children and that both the setting and the children have continued to benefit from the funding. Congratulations to Eaton Mill Nursery for having addressed the concerns so quickly and we wish them well for the future."

(g) Housing and Community Committee - 27 March 2018

Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
(Minute HAC34)

Response from Councillor Legg (Cabinet member for Customer Services):

"The Committee's suggested textual changes to the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document in paragraphs (1) and (2) are noted and will be taken into consideration when the final version of the document is produced.

In relation to paragraph (3), officer colleagues engaged actively on this matter with Sir Oliver Letwin, chairman of the Government's independent review panel on tackling barriers to housebuilding, during his visit to Milton Keynes on 10 May.

The Committee's request in paragraph (4) is noted."

(h) Scrutiny Management Committee - 28 March 2018

The Council's Emergency Plan

Response from Councillor O'Neill (Cabinet member responsible for Health and Wellbeing)

"We recognise the importance of the Leader of the Council and Cabinet members and recognise the vital part that they play in engaging with and reassuring communities. Officer colleagues are in the process of reviewing the overall response to emergencies and have introduced an Emergency Planning Management Group meeting. This will examine the corporate response which will include learning from the recent flood events and how we can improve and ensure swift and accurate briefings to members."