



Mr Jason Thellwell  
 Chief Fire Officer  
 Public Safety Plan  
 Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Headquarters  
 Stocklake  
 Aylesbury  
 HP20 1BD

**Carole Mills**  
**Chief Executive**

3 November 2015

**Our Ref:** CM/BL

**Your Ref:**

**Reply To:** Carole Mills

**Direct Line:** (01908) 252200

**E-mail:** [carole.mills@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:carole.mills@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

Dear Jason

### **NEW WEST ASHLAND FIRE SERVICE AND POLICE STATION FACILITY**

In response to the Fire Authority's consultation on the above matter, the Council, at its meeting on 21 October 2015 resolved to oppose the closure of Great Holm Fire Station. The Council's specific concerns relate to:

- (a) the significant impact it will have on fire cover in the North, West and CMK areas of Milton Keynes;
- (b) the impact it will have on Milton Keynes as it grows, in particular the Western Expansion Area where several thousand new households are planned, and whether the proposals take into account the future growth of Milton Keynes;
- (c) the impact on the area of Stony Stratford, particularly the historic timber framed buildings in the town; and
- (d) Fire Service response times from a facility in West Ashland to the areas of Wolverton, Stony Stratford, Two Mile Ash and Loughton, noting the reliance on the A5 to reach those areas quickly.

The Council also has some more general concerns relating to the overall proposal and these were:

- (a) the future use of the land currently occupied by the three facilities (Bletchley Police and Fire Stations and Great Holm Fire Station) if they close, in particular Great Holm;
- (b) that the proposal to close Bletchley Police Station would leave the area of Bletchley with no visible police facility;
- (c) that little or no public consultation had been evident on the closure of Bletchley Police Station; and



- (d) that a joint location for the police and fire services would impact on the ability of the Fire Service to maintain its highly regarded status with the public as independent of law enforcement, and would therefore have possible implications for the Fire Service's ability to carry out its duties.

The Council also asks the Fire Authority to advise the Council of its future plans for the land currently occupied by Bletchley and Great Holm Fire Stations if the proposal was to go ahead.

I trust that the Council's comments will be taken into account by the Authority when making its decision on the new West Ashland Fire Service and Police Station facility and I look forward to your response in due course.

A copy of the Council's full resolution is attached.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carole Mills', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Carole Mills  
Chief Executive

### **New West Ashland Fire Service and Police Station Facility**

1. That the Council notes the proposal to build a new co-located police and fire service facility in West Ashland currently under consultation and that the proposal will merge the current fire station located in Bletchley, the current fire station located at Great Holm and the police facility located in Bletchley into one single facility.
2. That the Council notes the benefits a new facility would have, in particular upgrading the current Bletchley Fire Station, and the cost savings that a new single facility would bring. This Council also notes that due to excellent preventative work and better regulation, call-out demand on the Fire Service has reduced considerably over recent years, and that increasing joint working between public services has the potential to greatly improve service delivery and reduce cost in the future, if done correctly.
3. That the Council, however, notes a number of concerns about the current proposal including:
  - (a) that the closure of Great Holm Fire Station will have a significant impact on fire cover in the North, West and CMK areas of Milton Keynes;
  - (b) the impact of the closure of Great Holm Fire Station on Milton Keynes as it grows, in particular the Western Expansion Area with several thousand new households planned, and concerns the proposals do not take into account the future growth of Milton Keynes;
  - (c) the impact of the closure of Great Holm Fire Station on the area of Stony Stratford and in particular the historic timber framed buildings in the town;
  - (d) Fire Service response times from a facility in West Ashland to the areas of Wolverton, Stony Stratford, Two Mile Ash and Loughton, noting the reliance on the A5 of such a facility to reach those areas quickly;
  - (e) the future use of the land currently occupied by all three facilities if they close, in particular Great Holm;
  - (f) that the proposal to close Bletchley Police Station would leave the area of Bletchley with no visible police facility;
  - (g) that little or no public consultation has been evident on the closure of Bletchley Police Station; and
  - (h) that concerns have been raised that a joint location for the police and fire services will impact the ability of the fire service to maintain its

highly regarded status with the public as independent of law enforcement, and would therefore have possible implications for the Fire Service's ability to carry out their duties.

4. That the Council therefore resolves to:
- W(a) oppose the closure of Great Holm Fire Station;
  - (b) call on all Milton Keynes Council representatives on the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority to oppose any proposed closure of Great Holm Fire Station;
  - (c) ask the Chief Executive to make representations to the current ongoing consultation on behalf of Milton Keynes Council noting the opposition of the Council to the possible closure of Great Holm Fire Station and highlighting other concerns noted within this motion;
  - (d) ask the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley to advise Milton Keynes Council of their future plans for the land currently occupied by their services if the proposals were to go ahead;
  - (e) to work with Thames Valley Police to establish a community facility in Central Bletchley, highlighting possible links with the Community and Cultural Services Review; and
  - (f) advise all Parish and Town Councils of this motion and ask them to make representations to the consultation supporting the Council's agreed position.

**From:** Gifford, Liz  
**Sent:** 26/10/2015 15:16  
**To:** Gowanlock, Stuart  
**Subject:** Great Holm Fire Station

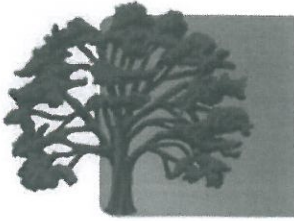
I have completed the on-line questionnaire and am now taking advantage of the offer to send a message as well. While I can see the advantages of the blue light services sharing premises the Ashland location is a bit out of the way and would need to be supplemented by other localities for the following reasons: access for the public; access for volunteer fire fighters; community profile. These need not all be conventional police stations or fire stations.

In terms of being able to respond to emergencies in an ever more crowded urban setting, many in the communities on the west flank do not see Ashland as a suitable alternative to Great Holm. A great deal more explaining about how the fire service is deployed day to day and overnight and how many routes from Ashland have been tested under what conditions might help but it remains the case that a settlement the size of Newport Pagnell is being added to the existing west flank. If there is a case that the distribution is equitable and will work that case is not yet made, a huge area of MK senses that it will be deprived of an essential, life saving service.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Best Wishes

Liz Gifford  
Labour and Co-operative Councillor for the Stony Stratford ward.



Campbell  
Park  
Parish  
Council  
Caring within  
the community

**Campbell Park Parish Council**

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Public Safety Plan  
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service  
Brigade Headquarters  
Stocklake  
Aylesbury  
HP20 1BD

4<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Dear Sirs

The Parish Council having considered the proposals as outlined in your consultation document, resolved to support the proposal to the merger of two fire stations in Milton Keynes (Great Holm and Bletchley) into a new blue light hub facility at a new location in West Ashland.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Webb'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elaine Webb  
Clerk to Committee



## Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council

c/o 17, Mossdale, Heelands, Milton Keynes, MK13 7NE

Telephone: 07779261364 Email: [parish.clerk@loughtonandgreatholm-pc.gov.uk](mailto:parish.clerk@loughtonandgreatholm-pc.gov.uk)

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Jason Thelwell  
Chief Fire Officer  
Public Safety Plan,  
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service HQ  
Stocklake  
Aylesbury  
HP20 1BD

Dear Mr Thelwell

### **Re: Public Consultation on the proposal to merge Bletchley and Great Holm Fire Stations and to create a blue-light hub at West Ashland**

Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council is writing in response to the Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service public consultation, on the proposal to merge Bletchley and Great Holm Fire Stations in Milton Keynes and create a blue-light hub station at West Ashland.

#### **Great Holm Fire Station**

Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council believes that the Fire Station is not only an excellent asset to residents of our Parish but also to adjacent areas and the expanding Western Flank and therefore should remain fully operational on the present site.

This site is well placed:

- 1) On the rapidly expanding western side of the city.
- 2) Very close to the A5 for quick access to many other areas of Milton Keynes.
- 3) Conveniently placed for attending to any house fires in Loughton Stony Stratford and Wolverton, which are more vulnerable to fires due to the age and methods of construction of many of the properties there.
- 4) Close to Central Milton Keynes in case of a major incident there.

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## **Response times to incidents**

The Parish Council is concerned that by merging the Bletchley and Great Holm Fire Stations to a blue light station in West Ashland, this would seriously affect the response times to incidents that may occur in the parish, and would be very noticeable to the local residents.

The Western Expansion Area (WEA) site nearby to Great Holm will also put pressure on response times, with the significant amount of properties planned to be constructed.

Often the A5 is very busy with traffic queues at peak times, which would make it very difficult for fire appliances to attend to incidents in the parish in a reasonable amount of time, especially if events are taking place at the National Bowl.

Taking into account if the blue light hub station was to be situated in West Ashland, conversely response times to incidents in the Bletchley area, could be affected by traffic when events are taking place at the Stadium MK.

## **Staffing & Fire Crews & Appliances**

The Parish Council also seeks assurances from the Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, that the proposal to merge Bletchley and Great Holm Fire Stations and to create a blue-light station at West Ashland, will not affect the current staffing levels and the number of Fire Crews and appliances.

The Parish Council would like to know if consideration has been given to staff on call, and the additional time it will take for those living on Loughton and Great Holm, to reach West Ashland, especially during times of bad weather, or when events are on at the National Bowl and the Stadium MK, trying to get through the increased amounts of traffic.

## **Proposal to create a blue-light station at West Ashland**

The Parish Council believes that the proposal to create a blue light station at West Ashland, will not be of any benefit to the residents of the Parish, and with the potential loss of the Great Holm Fire Station, is not sustainable when there is a substantial amount of dwellings planned to be constructed in the nearby Western Expansion Area (WEA). If Great Holm Fire Station is closed there will be no fire stations in the western side of Milton Keynes at all. Response times to this substantial area **must** suffer.

The Parish Council seeks assurances that it will be fully kept informed of future consultations on this matter by the Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service.

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## Conclusions

- Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council are against the potential loss of the Great Holm Fire Station to the local community.
- Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council are not convinced that there would be any cost efficiencies and savings from this proposal.
- Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council are concerned about the effect of response times to incidents if the proposal was to go ahead.
- Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council seeks assurances that the proposal will not affect the current level of staffing and the number of Fire Crews and appliances.
- Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council seeks assurances that if the Great Holm Fire station were to close, that the site would be kept for community use and that the Parish Council would be fully consulted.

Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council requests that the Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service takes on board the comments and areas of concern, concerning the proposal to merge Bletchley and Great Holm Fire Stations and to create a blue-light station at West Ashland.

Yours Sincerely



Brian Barton  
Parish Clerk

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