

Parliamentary News

Phyllis Starkey MP's Report to Constituents

January 2006

Your local Member of Parliament, representing Milton Keynes South West

Massive Government Investment in Milton Keynes

The expansion of Milton Keynes continues to bring massive investment by the Labour government in services for the people of our city. Recently we have had new schools, new hospital facilities and clinics and more low-cost housing. Improvements to Wolverton and MK Central Station are on the way. Infrastructure is accompanying expansion. Growth and government money are working well for Milton Keynes.

Labour Government Spending in Milton Keynes

Totals since 2001 unless stated

Education	£694 million
School Buildings / Refurbishments	£129 million
Healthcare (since 2003)	£561 million
Money from John Prescott's Department	£865 million
Transport	£18.5 million
Sport and Culture	£24 million
Local Community Safety and Drug Reduction Programmes (since 2003)	£5.3 million
Regeneration and Economic Partnership	£3.4 million

Better School Meals for Milton Keynes



Dr Starkey with Sophie Grigson at the launch of the Children's Food Bill.

The Bill would impose strict nutritional standards on school meals and ban the advertising of junk food to children.

I launched a campaign in the summer to assess the quality of school meals in Milton Keynes, visiting schools and handing out questionnaires to parents.

The results show that school meals vary considerably in quality – some are excellent, whilst others are poor. A third of schools have no hot meal provision and 77% of children in the city rely on packed lunches. I was also very disappointed to find that new primary schools are still being built without kitchens though government guidelines say kitchens should be included.

The Government has provided an extra £220m for school meals over the next three years and has banned junk food from school vending machines. I am pressing Milton Keynes Council to take seriously our children's need for healthy food.



Dr Starkey meets Palestinian women in Gaza, shortly after the Israeli withdrawal, on a visit to the area in September.

Phyllis listens to MK on Pensions

I believe there needs to be more support for people in retirement, especially for women, who have lower pensions because caring responsibilities reduce earnings during their working lives. In November I organised a debate in Milton Keynes to discuss future pensions provision for women. The discussions produced a number of positive suggestions, which I have subsequently reported to the House of Commons.

The Pensions Commission has now published its suggestions on the future of pensions. Proposals such as a more generous state pension based on residency so that everyone will get at least the basic state pension will massively benefit future pensioners.

I am glad of the extra support the Government has given to current pensioners over the past eight years, through the Pension Credit, the increased Winter Fuel Allowance and Council Tax rebate. But there is a broad consensus that we must do more to protect pensioners in the future.

Environment, Fair Trade, Animal Welfare

Since the election I have received letters and emails from constituents on a variety of issues but your top concerns have been the Environment, the Make Poverty History-Trade Justice campaign, and Animal Welfare.

On the Environment, Britain is on course to meet the targets for carbon dioxide reduction set out in the Kyoto Protocol, but it is clear that a lot more needs to be done to tackle global warming - both by us and other industrial countries.

In Britain we need to invest in renewable technologies to generate more clean power in the future. A new one-year Energy Review has been launched to look at all the options for future provision. Personally I have supported new laws to improve the standards of energy efficiency for new buildings and encourage micro-generation

generating power at home- by making it easier for people to install solar panels or mini-wind turbines on their properties.

Fair international trade has been high on the agenda with the WTO talks in Hong Kong this December and the discussions on the EU Budget. The British Government is pushing for fairer terms of trade to help support the economies of developing countries and tackle global poverty. We particularly need to cut agricultural export subsidies, like the Common Agricultural Policy, that prevent farmers in developing countries from selling their produce to developed countries.

On 2nd November I met supporters of the Make Poverty History campaign from Milton Keynes to discuss trade justice and assure them of my support.



Phyllis Starkey supporting the RSPCA's Freedom Food Week campaign.

The Government has recently published the Animal Welfare Bill that will strengthen and simplify the laws protecting both pets and farm animals. It will reduce animal suffering by enabling preventive action to be taken before suffering occurs, introduce a duty on those responsible for animals, strengthen penalties for animal cruelty, and ban mutilations of animals. I fully support this legislation, as does the RSPCA.

...Newsflash...

The new Licensing Laws that came into effect in November give more powers to local residents and the police to tackle alcohol-related anti-social behaviour.

If you want to know more about this, or tell me what your experiences have been so far of the new legislation, please write to me at the address below.

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