



Milton Keynes Community Safety Partnership

Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) Discussion Paper

Subject: Future Support to SaferMK

Reason for report

To report on discussions held within Milton Keynes Council during the summer of 2012 concerning the Council's options for supporting the SaferMK Partnership following the election of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and the retirement of the Head of Service Community Safety on 30 November 2012.

Items for consideration

1. Partners are asked to note the arrangements being made by the Council as set out below.
2. Partners are invited to suggest ways of developing the plan outlined below.

Background

1. Since 1999/2000 the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in Milton Keynes has enjoyed a number of successes and has built a strong national and international reputation. It has also benefited from a degree of stability in terms of leadership and management that has helped it to respond to the many challenges it has faced. But the partnership is about to enter a period of change and uncertainty resulting from a number of both local and national drivers. Specifically, there are two events of particular importance occurring within the next three months.
2. On 15 November elections take place for the first Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The full impact of this new office is as yet unknown but it will be influential at local level not least because the grant funded budgets associated with community safety will come under the control of the PCC from April 2013.

3. On 30 November the current Head of Community Safety, Richard Solly will retire. At the RAG on 22 June 2012 the Council was asked what would be happening when this took place acknowledging the pivotal role he has held for over a decade.
4. The Head of Community Safety and his immediate staff are employed and paid for by Milton Keynes Council but they also have responsibilities to the partnership. Over the summer period the Council asked the Heads of Community Safety and Youth Justice to consider its options for providing continued support to the partnership taking into account the significant changes outlined above as well as the impact of the Council's own financial and organisational challenges. The results of this internal discussion were reported to senior officers on 3 September. It is acknowledged that this has left little time for consultation prior to this meeting but some feedback has been received and has been taken into account in the arrangements set out below.
5. The landscape for community safety (and youth justice) will change in response to the PCC, the potential impact of the Localism Act and new legislation due for implementation in the next year or so. For example it is likely that 'the market' will be opened up to a wider range of providers. This indicates the need for SaferMK and other local partnerships to carry out in depth analysis and review in order to maximise the positive effects of these changes and minimise any negative potential. For SaferMK the forthcoming revised strategic assessment will be important but beyond that there may be a need to consider new ways of delivering the strategy including further commissioning of services.
6. Alongside this medium to longer term strategic activity the partnership will also wish to be re-assured that business carries on as usual as far as possible and that the strategy continues to be delivered effectively at an operational level.
7. The Council's financial and organisational position has constrained the options it has for continuing to support this complex range of activity and after careful consideration has concluded that it is not in a position to re-appoint to the role of Head of Service Community Safety when Mr Solly retires. Council officers also felt that finding 'a replacement' with the right level of knowledge, skills and local contacts to be operating effectively within the timescales imposed by the challenges ahead was unlikely.
8. Taking into account the feedback received the conclusion reached was that a distinction could and should be made between those aspects of the role concerned with day to day operational/tactical delivery and the broader strategic functions including the development of the relationship with the PCC. This would be an interim set of arrangements to take the partnership forward over the next critical 12-18 months with the future being subject to the outcomes of the strategic review outlined above.

9. At the operational/tactical level the partnership benefits from having established the role of a deputy to the Head of Service (Colin Wilderspin) who already carries out or contributes to many of the key functions associated with this aspect of the role. He has a detailed understanding of the strategy and its delivery mechanisms and will be asked to take up the remaining tasks to enable him to be the immediate point of contact for day to day issues and activity.
10. In terms of the wider strategic element the Council's Organisational Transformation Programme has created the opportunity for the current Head of Service Youth Justice (Lee Westlake) to further broaden his reach and it has asked him to be its lead for supporting the partnership through the next phase of development and to be its first point of contact for the PCC.
11. Further work is required to develop the details of the new arrangements and ensure a smooth transition prior to 30 November and partners will be consulted as this work progresses.
12. Ultimately the Partnership may wish to commission some or all of its support functions out, although it would need to maintain central control and liaison of these activities. For this reason partners will be consulted extensively during the period December to February in order to determine the ultimate direction of the SaferMK Support service.

Conclusions

1. After the retirement of the Head of Community Safety on 30 November the Head of Youth Offending will take over his strategic responsibilities for an interim period.
2. The Deputy Head of Community Safety will take responsibility for ensuring delivery of the partnership support and maintenance tasks.
3. These responsibilities and tasks are set out in the attached paper.
4. This arrangement will produce savings by the removal of a head of service post. Some of these savings will be used to cover the additional responsibilities of the Deputy Head of Community Safety.
5. The statutory functions that must be covered are the annual revision and implementation of the three year crime and disorder reduction plan, the annual strategic assessment, consultation with stakeholders and the public, and the commissioning of domestic homicide reviews.
6. Essential supporting functions include the co-ordination of the performance group and strategy delivery mechanisms, the supervision and maintenance of multi-agency tasking, and effective communications across and within partnership agencies.

7. During the next year a full consultation will take place within SaferMK to consider the ultimate nature and direction of the partnership in the light of the changing political and economic landscape.
8. Permanent arrangements will be made by the SaferMK Partnership after this consultation period.

Attachments

Responsibilities of the Head of Community Safety (Annex).

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