

December 2009



Working Together

Report of an inquiry into the relationship of the Third Sector and Public Service Authorities in Milton Keynes



PREFACE

'We would like to place on record our sincere thanks to everyone who so willingly gave of their time and expertise in contributing evidence to this Report. We were greatly encouraged by the free frank and honest comments given to us in written and oral evidence and through the focus group programme and we would like to particularly thank those who appeared before the Commission and subjected themselves to some very direct questioning.

It was heartening to enjoy the advantage of reading and hearing all the evidence from a diverse and comprehensive range of witnesses and participants and to note the almost universal consistency of comment and expressions of enthusiasm to embrace ways of working in the future which will enhance the interface between the Third, Public and Private sectors for the good of Milton Keynes and those who live and/or work here.

Our eyes were opened by the careful thought and consideration which had gone into the evidence and the inventive, albeit in some cases challenging, ideas which we received. We hope you will find the contents of this Report helpful and interesting. Indeed the contents present a challenge to achieve change from which everyone can benefit. We totally accept, however, that any error in reporting or misunderstanding of the evidence presented is ours and ours alone and we apologise in advance if some aspect has been overlooked or misinterpreted but we hope that you will forgive any such errors and embrace the opportunity which we believe exists for the Report to hopefully 'make a difference' to Milton Keynes'.

Ruth Stone

Chair: Third Sector Review

Andrew Peck

Chair: Working Together Commission

CONTENTS

	Page	
Section 1	Executive Summary	11
Section 2	Background	13
	National Context	13
	Local Context	13
	MK Third Sector Review: Objectives	14
Section 3	Methodology	15
Section 4	Membership of Steering Group & Working Together Commission	16
Section 5	The Themes	18
	Role	18
	Identity	19
	Capability	19
	Complexity	20
	Willingness	20
	Support and resources	21
Section 6	Celebration and Challenge	22
	Firm Foundations on which to build	22
	Third Sector – quality and leadership	23
	Engagement	23
	Localism – or lack of it	24
	Public Sector Myopia	24
	Bureaucracy and process	24
Section 7	Key Insights and Recommendations	25
Section 8	Action Plan	27
Section 9	Appendices	www.vcsmk.org.uk/ThirdSectorReview
	1. Facts and figures	
	2. Shared concerns	
	3. Analysis of participants	
	4. Oral Evidence	
	5. Focus Group evidence	
	6. Research	
	7. Information on MKCLIP	
	8. Glossary	

SECTION 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2009 the Milton Keynes Local Strategic Partnership Executive (LSPE) commissioned a review of the relationship between the Third Sector (TS) and the Public Sector (PS) in Milton Keynes.

The objectives of the review were agreed as being to:

- Establish what are the key functions that Milton Keynes needs of its TS
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current TS arrangements in fulfilling those functions and make recommendations for change where necessary.
- Identify and make recommendations for resourcing the core TS infrastructure arrangements necessary to support a thriving TS.
- Explore the Council's commissioning process to identify where, if possible, further efficiencies and effectiveness could be made with regard to commissioning the TS in the partnership arena.
- Establish a district wide definition of the TS and its engagement/ involvement in the Local Strategic Partnership arrangements.
- Explore the use of the Compact as a tool for creating more effective TS arrangements and relationships with PS bodies.

The process was overseen by a cross sector steering group chaired by Ruth Stone, MK LSPE, with the majority of the evidence collected through the establishment of the 'Working Together Commission' membership of which included representatives of GOSE, the Open University, local business and the Third Sector under the independent chairmanship of Andrew Peck (see Section 4 for further details)

This Report provides an overview of the evidence collected from a range of sources, in a variety of ways between April and November 2009. In Section 5 the evidence has been grouped thematically with a summary of celebratory and challenging issues in Section 6. These then inform the key insights and recommendations in Section 7.

The recommendations and accompanying action plan (Section 7 & 8) are designed to be challenging but realistic, building on firm foundations and harnessing a shared passion for moving things forward in Milton Keynes. Our aspiration is that by March 2011 Milton Keynes will be in a position to challenge local authorities such as Birmingham for Beacon Council Status¹ as regards its relationship between the PS and the TS.

¹ www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/psdnetwork

The overwhelming majority of the evidence collected demonstrated that the TS is an equal partner in the well-being, growth and development of Milton Keynes; it is an important part of the economy and contributes social, human, economic, physical and cultural capital.

The Third Sector is not synonymous with just the Voluntary and Community Sector; it also includes Social Enterprises, Community Interest Companies, Co-operatives, Mutuels, faith groups and much more.

In Milton Keynes Third Sector organisations (TSO's) and groups are independent organisations; values driven, with missions founded upon charitable objectives and a commitment to social justice. They are not agents of the state and do not exist simply to manage public service contracts. Although where they do, that management is values-based and consequently the emerging focus by the PS on outcomes was positively welcomed by many contributors.

Local TSOs bring considerable benefits to the community in which they are based. There is, for example, evidence of a considerable multiplier effect and added value associated with locally based activities that build social capital and address multiple needs. They also retain resources in the area, helping to build the local social and economic fabric in contrast to the potentially detrimental economic and social impact of 'parachuted-in' services, with the consequent leaching of resources out of the area.

There is evidence that in Milton Keynes the PS often acts as if the TS is there to deliver the PS agenda with little appreciation that TSOs are independent with their own agenda and have deep roots in communities. This misperception exemplified the strongest theme of the Review; an urgent need to improve communications, share understanding and build relationships.

In conclusion, voluntary action is by its very nature local; not many people care about a park in another town, but, when it is round the corner, it matters. The greatest strength that the TS brings is the value of local solutions. There is excellent evidence in Milton Keynes of a thriving TS that is providing the essential glue for developing sustainable communities; to continue their work in the future, to adapt to a changing funding environment and respond to the needs of a growing community they need effective support services and an effective working relationship with the Public and Private Sectors.

SECTION 2 BACKGROUND

2. National Context

- 2.1 At a time of great opportunities and challenges for supporting people and organisations to be active and enterprising in civic life key Public and Third Sector bodies need to provide a coherent and positive response to the emerging agenda; local consideration of the national agenda has been the driving force behind the Third Sector Review in Milton Keynes
- 2.2 The Local Government White Paper emphasises the role of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and the need for Councils to ensure their relationships and practices are 'fit for purpose'.
- 2.3 The Government is transforming the public policy context of the Third Sector. The July 2008 Treasury and Cabinet Office report, 'The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration', identifies four major areas of common interest between the Third Sector and Government:
- enabling greater voice and campaigning
 - strengthening communities
 - transforming public services
 - encouraging social enterprise
- 2.4 The Government is also reviewing and transforming the funding and commissioning frameworks between Government and the TS and there is a requirement that this is mirrored at a local level as public services are commissioned to meet outcomes rather than outputs.
- 2.5 In July 2009 the Government launched a consultation on the revised version of the Compact. The Government and the TS use the Compact as a framework for partnership working because it recognises and supports the contribution each partner can make to better services, facilities and opportunities for individuals and communities.

2.2 Local Context

- 2.2.1 Local priorities rely on community engagement and participation. The TS needs support and funds if they are to play their part in tackling these. But often the value of their activities is not explicit in local delivery plans. The relationship between the TS and the PS is not currently based within a strategic framework. Some parts have excellent working relationships whilst for others it is more challenging.

- 2.2.2 In order for us to look for better ways to work together to meet local priorities the Milton Keynes Community Local Infrastructure Partnership (MKCLIP) established a Task group and invited officers of the Council to be represented. Each of the Council's Directorates were represented on the Task Group.
- 2.2.3 Whilst MKCLIP had immediate concerns about the procurement of services from the TS, it also identified the other roles in advocacy, campaigning and civil society that the sector plays.
- 2.2.4 The TS and Council representatives on the Task Group were each asked to identify the issues they felt needed to be addressed. It was interesting to note there was a fair degree on commonality between the two lists (Appendix 2).
- 2.2.5 The Task group's deliberations resulted in a recommendation to the LSPE on 14th January 2009 that a Third Sector Review be undertaken. The LSPE supported this recommendation and nominated Ruth Stone (MKCVO) to lead the review on its behalf. The Council's Corporate Leadership Team nominated David Moore (Head of Commissioning and Customer Care) to be the Council's lead officer for this review.

2.3 Milton Keynes Third Sector Review: Objectives

- Establish the key functions Milton Keynes needs of its TS
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current TS arrangements in fulfilling those functions and make recommendations for change where necessary.
- Identify and make recommendations for resourcing the core TS infrastructure arrangements necessary to support a thriving TS.
- Explore the Council's commissioning process to identify where, if possible, further efficiencies and effectiveness could be made with regard to commissioning the TS in the partnership arena.
- Establish a district wide definition of the TS and its engagement/ involvement in the Local Strategic Partnership arrangements.
- Explore the use of the Compact as a tool for creating more effective TS arrangements and relationships with PS bodies.

SECTION 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Starting at the end of April 2009 and under the direction of an Interagency Steering group (see Section 4 for membership) the review process completed Desk Research to explore the national and local policy contexts (see Appendix 6), held two open meetings to clarify the issues and had lively discussion at meetings of the steering group as well as making an interim report to MK Council's Corporate Policy Development Committee.

3.2 In mid July, after consideration of the emerging issues and of how best to move forward in an inclusive way it was decided to set up the Working Together Commission to ask some key questions:

1. What is life like for TS organisations in MK today? How will this change in the future?
2. What are the key functions that Milton Keynes needs of its TS, both now and in the future?
3. How can the TS be involved as a significant provider of services and activities?
4. How can we build support for the TS to be a full partner in local decision making?
5. Is the draft of the refreshed national Compact relevant and applicable as a framework for partnership working in Milton Keynes?

3.3 How did the Working Together Commission Work?

- Research – the Commission used the recently completed research and a library of best practice examples as a resource
- Submissions –people were encouraged to submit their views in writing, electronically or verbally.
- Commission meetings considered written evidence and heard presentations and verbal submissions
- There was a programme of seven focus groups

3.4 Engagement in the process (see Appendix 3) for breakdown of organisations)

126 groups were involved in the process – many more than once

25 organisations submitted written evidence

17 organisations gave oral evidence

SECTION 4 MEMBERSHIP OF STEERING GROUP AND WORKING TOGETHER COMMISSION

Members of the Steering group

Ruth Stone Chair, LSPE

By nomination	By Invitation	Public Services
Andy Grout (MK Play Association)	LSP Community Rep to MK Partnership Committee – Wendy Lehmann (CAB)	Thames Valley Police – Nikki Ross
Mike Nussbaum (Volunteer Centre MK)	Chair Community Development Strategy group – Stephen Norrish (Christian Foundation)	MK Council – David Moore and Amanda Farr
John Cove (MK Dons Sports and Education Trust)	MKCVO and Communications adviser – Gavin Anderson (Trustee)	NHS MK – Gill Prager
		MK Partnership – Cheryl Montgomery

Members of the Working Together Commission

Andrew Peck Independent Chair

Andrew is a solicitor and Consultant member of Borneos LLP and holds a number of voluntary and charitable based appointments including; member of the Council of the Open University, member of the Thames Valley Police Milton Keynes Police Committee, independent co-opted member of the Audit Committee of MKC, Deputy Chair of MKPC, trustee of the Safety Centre (Hazard Alley)

Chris Knight

Principal solicitor and Head of the Charity Division of Hewitsons LLP; Chris has advised all kinds of charities and TS organisations for many years and is also trustee and governance advisor to charities working both locally and overseas

Geoff Peters

Professor of Systems Strategy at the Open University with a key role in the Public Leadership and Social Enterprise Centre (PULSE). He leads the OU's course on

Current Issues in Public Management and Social Enterprise in its Master of Public Administration (MPA). He has chaired and been director of several PS bodies.

Andy Grout

Director, MK Play Association. Andy has been involved in the TS for over 20 years in a variety of paid and voluntary roles. He recently chaired an ACEVO (the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations) conference on Commissioning and Procurement

Mike Nussbaum

Chair Volunteer Centre MK and very recently retired Chair of Volunteering England. Mike spent his working life in Community Development and in 2003, he steered the merger of three national voluntary organisations to form a single national focus for volunteering and helped to establish national quality standards for volunteer centers and for volunteer management.

John Cove

Chief Executive, MK Dons Sports and Education Trust. After many years with Milton Keynes Council, John has returned to his voluntary sector roots. When he first arrived in Milton Keynes he was Director of MK Play Association and has been chair of other local voluntary groups. He is currently Vice Chair of 4 Children, the national Children's charity for children and young people

Lesley Nicholas

TS Policy and Development Manager, Government Office for the South East. Lesley provides support and leadership on the integration of Office of the TS policy and delivery in the region. Her work includes the Local Performance framework, Regional Compact, volunteering and social enterprise

SECTION 5 THE THEMES

Throughout the range of evidence that has been collected from PS and ('TS') representatives a number of themes have emerged which are discussed below. Linking those themes is a 'golden thread' running through all the dialogue with all types and sizes of organisations focused on issues and concerns about:

- **Identity** – PS representatives found the lack of a single voice for the TS frustrating
- **Respect** and recognition – many TS reps expressed disappointment at the lack of respect and recognition for their knowledge, skills and experience
- The untapped **capability** of the TS – there is evidence that Milton Keynes is currently handicapped in some areas e.g. community engagement, by the weakness of the links between PS and TS
- **Willingness** – PS representatives demonstrated variable levels of willingness in considering the role of TSOs in contributing to public life in Milton Keynes
- Chaos / **complexity** / variety – both PS and TS representatives referred to this for their own and the other sector.

The issues which emerged most strongly i.e. those discussed by a majority of our sources and illustrated in Appendices 4 and 5 include:

5.1 Role

5.1.1 The importance of the role of the TS in creating strong, active and empowered local communities. A vibrant, diverse and independent TS is a vital part of a fair and enterprising society. It can, and does, help communities to be more cohesive and inclusive and helps individuals to have more say over issues that affect them.

5.1.2 There were sharply differing views expressed on democracy and accountability

'Some people feel that non-elected self appointed bodies should not help with decision making – they could help with the background'

'The Third Sector is probably in touch with more people than vote in local elections and is structured, linking neatly to key interest groups, so it can play a central role in engagement and consultation and could assist in addressing issues around citizenship and democratic deficit'

5.1.3 There was apathy and scepticism about the Local Strategic Partnership ('LSP') ('it's limping along'). However, there was acknowledgement that it

has the potential to be much more effective and influential under the impetus of an independent chair.

5.2 Identity

- 5.2.1 The TS needs to communicate its existence and what it does much more effectively than at present.
- 5.2.2 Concern was expressed about the shift from PS and TS working together to TS being tasked as service providers to deliver outputs rather than outcomes.
- 5.2.3 The lack of recognition for the contribution made by TS organisations (ranging from a village craft group, through faith groups to contracted services) to the quality of life in Milton Keynes was a frustration expressed many times.

'We are always the last bullet point on the slide'

'This sense of being in third place is reinforced by the way the Public Sector falls over itself to engage with the Private Sector'

- 5.2.3 There is much work to be done on developing relationships across the broad front of services and capabilities with a need to embed the understanding of what the TS can offer. It is vitally important to invest time in relationship building to underpin collaboration on shared projects with shared responsibilities. If TS capabilities are better understood we can work together to have a greater impact.

'We need space to discuss principles and values as locally owned services tend to strengthen communities. Lack of discussion on this represents a failure of both local political leadership and of public policy'

5.3 Capability

- 5.3.1 Organisational logic: are the right organisations (TS and PS) doing the right things in the right places? What are the opportunities for collaborative working / mergers to make more effective use of the available funding, knowledge and skills? It needs to be acknowledged that some TSOs have expended much effort on collaborative working with PS departments (i.e. co-location) where there has been no benefit for the sector. Related to this theme were discussions about avoiding negative competition and maturity of purpose.

- 5.3.2 The PS sees the TS as a route to engage communities but needs to understand, and have reasonable expectations of, what the TS can deliver and at what cost.
- 5.3.3 A recurring theme for TS commissioned services was the high turnover of personnel in PS Agencies – there was immense frustration that new staff appeared to have no handover notes - it's constantly back to square one.
- 5.3.4 There is a need for better internal regulation and governance for the TS as the Charity Commission sharpens up on monitoring the way organisations run their affairs, particularly in terms of proving the impact of public benefit.

5.4 Complexity

- 5.4.1 Streamlining representational / consultation conduits. Both the PS and TS expressed a desire for a single point of contact with each other. However, there was recognition that this approach runs the risk of missing more than is gained; the TS is a collective of different interests and very different capacities whilst PS Agencies are complex organisations with a multitude of agendas, each with a different focus. To add to the complexity of this issue there are clearly three roles for the TS which are equally valid; representational, contributory (well-informed expert opinion) and an authoritative voice
- 5.4.2 There is a strong perception from TS groups that there is a lack of appreciation from the PS about the fragility and turbulence of their service delivery caused by the funding regime; many TS organisations, like small private businesses, operate on very tight margins where the impact of annual funding agreements and delayed payments are immediately devastating

5.5 Willingness

- 5.5.1 There was some evidence about the need to embrace demonstrable best practice and frustration about a perceived lack of willingness to use the local knowledge, experience and skills of people in the TS, particularly those who are running contracts beyond Milton Keynes and would like to bring best practice from elsewhere to MK for the benefit of local residents.
- 5.5.2 There was a lot of evidence about 'mixed practice' i.e. some good rhetoric, some examples of joined up working within and across sectors but quite a gap in the evidence about life on the ground. The challenge now is to focus on key areas for action so that both together and separately TSOs and the PS can do better.

5.5.3 The importance of trust, openness and mutual respect were emphasised as essential ingredients for any partnership to develop and prosper. There was recognition that respect and reciprocity would benefit everyone's efforts.

5.5.4 Urgent need for clarity in commissioning processes was clearly demonstrated. The rhetoric around willingness to move ahead on this we heard from PS bodies was not always consistent and there was a marked mismatch with some accounts of the experience on the ground.

5.6 Support and Resources

5.6.1 Community Foundation grants were highly valued, particularly by small community groups – small amounts of funding making a huge difference.

5.6.2 Oral evidence on funding sources supported the conclusions drawn from the National Survey of TS organisations (Appendix 6).

5.6.3 Community assets were referred to in a range of ways; the need for affordable, accessible venues for community groups through to the potential for a proactive development of Community Reserve sites to support the development of the sector.

5.6.4 There was support for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support to enable TS groups of all sizes to be more effective alongside a desire to make more effective use of resources through collaboration, merger and dissolution.

5.6.5 Opportunities for joint learning across the TS, PS and Private Businesses were mentioned on numerous occasions including

- Shadowing / mentoring / secondment
- Networking
- Developing links with the private sector
- Skills / service sharing, inter and intra sector
- Corporate social responsibility
- Pro bono services

SECTION 6 CELEBRATION and CHALLENGE

Throughout the evidence gathering (see Appendices 4 &5) we were interested to note issues of both celebration and challenge the consideration of which has helped to formulate the recommendations in Section 7.

6.1 Celebration: firm foundations on which to build

- The Commission heard about a lot of good work but particularly noted that there were three examples where recent cross sector work had produced the sort of added value in cross sector working that Milton Keynes should aspire to: Routes to Success, LINKS Action Learning and the Economic Task Group
- The TS is actively seeking to work in a more co-ordinated way, particularly through existing networks e.g. MKCLIP (see Appendix 8) – this could be improved if resources were made available. TSO's are well positioned to be fleet of foot in response to the rapidly changing landscape in Milton Keynes; there are good TS networks and infrastructure. The TS can help build community and social infrastructure which otherwise won't exist and it engages with layers of the community that are otherwise unheard
- The PS has identified waste in its systems, comprising either **over**, **inappropriate** or **under** use of services, these together represent waste and need to be addressed;
- It was clear from some of the evidence that new people at Milton Keynes Council ('MKC') and NHS:MK are beginning to recognise that they have a role in building the capacity of the TS e.g. there is evidence that MKC are beginning to recognise the importance of arts and heritage and in the 'care' context there is a realisation that if they can help people to be independent longer that produces a more efficient use of resources;
- The 'Health' PS wants to engage with the TS in planning the future within a window of opportunity (around 9 months) during which new ideas must be embraced before severe financial constraints are imposed. It is a real opportunity to do things in different ways;

There is recognition that longer term contracts are needed to support TS investment in service delivery alongside investment in infrastructure support to facilitate the involvement and engagement of a broader range of groups and organisations;

6.2 Challenge

6.2.1 TS –quality and leadership

- ‘The TS needs to regulate sector activity itself or risk it being done to it; there needs to be far more transparency and accountability of how PS money is spent and used in TSO’s’;
- Just as in the Private and PSs poor leadership (and by implication poor governance) in TSO’s can cause them to fail in delivery and can hamper other organisations by association;
- There is a danger of the TS becoming over-reliant upon contract funding resulting in mission drift and ‘homogenisation’ of the sector;
- ‘Competition and sovereignty are barriers to collaborative working with infrastructure organisations being in competition with their members by delivering services.’ There is a dichotomy in being a champion of the sector and also becoming a provider;
- ‘The TS doesn’t appreciate the resources it has within it and how to harness these to work together for the benefit of all’ e.g. the Community Property Company could be supported by both the TS and PS to proactively develop Community Reserve sites;

6.2.2 Engagement

- There is a PS tendency to ‘want them, need them, dump them’ in its engagement with the TS -- with many of the same figures appearing on a range of committees;
- There are no clear lines of communication into the TS ‘we just don’t know where to start’;
- ‘Consultation is often claimed but seldom proven’;
- There is a need to share consultations in a fashion that enables accessibility – ‘a 300 page document just won’t do!’
- ‘Policy and strategy development are sometimes driven by political short term gain and it can be very difficult to find the space for decent engagement’;

The TS is constantly asked to attend meetings – often by paid council officers – ‘we are not (paid), and usually they don’t even offer expenses, but if we don’t turn up we are accused of being difficult / apathetic

6.2.3 Localism – or lack of it

- ‘PS organisations bring in external consultants at great expense, who deliver average outputs with little local value – why aren’t we using local folk who will be more accountable and much more aware of local issues?’
- TS organisations can be territorial and protectionist;
- Bids fall to large providers, sometimes with little or no connection to the Milton Keynes community – there is no intelligent commissioning;

6.2.4 Public Sector Myopia

- ‘The PS does not really have the TS on its radar’;
- Elected members need a greater understanding of the TS and greater awareness that TSO’s contain large numbers of local citizens whose views they could help articulate;

6.2.5 Bureaucracy and process

- The most common complaints were: complex and bureaucratic tendering; poorly managed processes for issuing tender information and subsequently informing bidders of the results of a tender and issuing contracts after a successful bid; lack of experience among commissioners and providers of tendering and bidding services; and a general sense that the procurement process focuses on reducing costs, at the expense of quality;
- ‘MKC processes are long and bureaucratic’ (lots of strong feelings about this);
- Each MKC directorate works in a different way when liaising with the TS; there is very little cross over or indeed similar standards between directorates;
- ‘The Compact has no teeth’; it is currently not applied in Milton Keynes
- ‘The LSP limps along’; there is some urgency to grow the LSP into the forum where the public, private and TS meet around issues of common concern;

SECTION 7 KEY INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Talking to the right people at the right time; improving shared intelligence and communications

To harness the underdeveloped potential of ever more effective TS engagement with the PS that supports the development of diverse, strong communities and enhances the quality of life for MK residents in an effective and efficient way, there needs to be urgent action (by March 2010) to improve shared intelligence and communication. Civil governance structures should welcome a high level of local activity and build capacity for it to be well informed.

The objectives required to achieve this outcome through a programme of improvement include:

- a) Developing shared understanding of the principles and values underpinning localism and local governance, civic engagement, volunteering, leadership, partnership and accountability
- b) Embedding the agreed understanding within TS and PS organisations
- c) Developing an inter and intra sector communications strategy
- d) Streamlining representational conduits by investing in the development of MKCLIP as a portal for TS engagement
- e) The LSP collectively and individually driving forward development of cross sector community leadership for Milton Keynes including development of outcomes and targets for the benefit of Milton Keynes

2. Knowledge and simplicity aids accessibility: improving Commissioning

Better results for end users (be that members of the Wolverton Light Orchestra, CAB clients or members of the Cardiac Group) is the common ground between the TS and PS; focusing on this we recommend that there should be a Milton Keynes wide strategic framework for Intelligent Commissioning agreed and monitored by the LSP.

The objectives required to achieve this outcome include:

- a) An explicit agreement and understanding that commissioning is not synonymous with contracting; its about developing outcomes that will make a difference for the people of Milton Keynes which can be achieved through a mixed economy of funding and support
- b) Adopting and robustly implementing the eight principles of Commissioning² (see action plan for details)
- c) Developing an understanding of Social Return on Investment so that it can be incorporated into the development of service specification

² www.idea.gov.uk

- d) Becoming an example of best practice in intelligent commissioning and effective contracting and delivery

3. United we stand, divided we fall

TSO's in Milton Keynes need to recognise and act upon the maxim; united we stand, divided we fall. In order to work collaboratively for the benefit of MK, TSOs need to focus on performance, supported by Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIOs) e.g MKCVO and the Volunteer Centre.

The objectives required to achieve this outcome include:

- a) Putting performance improvement on the local agenda
- b) Building the capacity of the local sector to improve their performance, be that as contracted service providers, campaigners and influencers or as contributors to their local communities.
- c) Promoting strategic planning and sustainability to include exploration of the opportunities for shared services and social enterprise
- d) Improving monitoring and reporting arrangements, especially by ensuring they are proportionate and include consideration of social return on investment (SROI)
- e) Encouraging the sharing of learning between TSOs, and between TSOs and the Public and Private Sector
- f) Supporting the implementation of appropriate quality assurance systems.

SECTION 8: ACTION PLAN

This plan elaborates the recommendations and begins to specify the actions needed to achieve the objectives. To bring quick success, a single point of accountability (SPA) needs to be nominated who will be responsible for driving the actions to completion. The plan identifies the nominator but cannot, at this time, identify the SPA for each action.

1. Talking to the right people at the right time; improving shared intelligence and communications

In order to harness the underdeveloped potential of effective TS engagement by the PS to support the development of diverse, strong communities and enhance the quality of life for residents there needs to be urgent action (by March 2010) to improve shared intelligence and communication

The objectives required to achieve this outcome include:

Objective	Action	Nominator	SPA	When	Outcome / Output
a) Developing shared understanding of the principles and values underpinning localism and local governance, civic engagement, volunteering, leadership, partnership and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared Understanding Summit – convene a meeting of senior representatives from each of the Council's directorates, other PS agencies with senior reps from the TS 	LSPE	?	Feb 2010	Increased cross-sector understanding of ... and to guide thinking on what might and might not be achievable There will be a written statement summarising the agreed understanding of the principles and values
b) Embedding the agreed understanding within TS and PS organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BVSC Lets Get Together Programme (arranging for presentation to 14th Jan LSP) Programme of exchange visits & presentations for all council members to be engaged in from June to December 2010 Develop an on going programme for Cross- 	LSP LSP		April 2010 onwards Dec 2010	Better working relationships with shared perspectives leading to practical solutions to problems enshrined in the development of a Local Compact for Milton Keynes that is rigorously implemented (who would monitor this and with what sanctions?) to ensure the TS and PS work effectively together to support the development of diverse, strong communities and enhance the quality of life

	<p>sector secondment and induction days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 9 months develop a protocol for each PS agency's engagement with the TS on each major element of the relationship: Strategy and Policy development, commissioning, contracting 	LSPE		Sept 2010	
c) Developing an inter and intra sector communications strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a brief to commission development of a communications strategy • Establish a Task and Finish group consisting of PS and TS communications staff to undertake the strategy work 	LSPE		March 31 st 2010	Clear communications will underpin the framework for relations between the TS and PS agencies
		LSPE	Task Group	April 2010	
d) Streamlining representational conduits by investing in the development of MKCLIP as a portal for TS engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand MKCLIP membership to be fully representative of TS (see diag) • Establish MKCLIP as the strategic interface between PS and TS with David Hill as Chair for 2010 • Review the appropriateness & 	MKCLIP		Feb 2010	Local TSOs are enabled to establish an effective and proactive voice in response to the needs and interests of local communities with a robust consultative process for dialogue on local service development
		LSPE		Ongoing	

	<p>effectiveness of the range of partnerships that currently exist, with a view to reducing their number by merging some and terminating others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships that continue to exist, and any new ones created, will be explicit about their role and purpose, the nature of any TS involvement and the strategy they will adopt for communicating with both local communities and other orgs 				Production of a series of questions that specify the accountability of TS participants
e) LSP collectively and individually driving forward development of cross sector community leadership for Milton Keynes including development of outcomes and targets for the benefit of Milton Keynes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Engagement Framework 	LSP		Quarterly	Set in place a mechanism for regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the LSP against SMART objectives

2. Knowledge and simplicity aids accessibility: Improving Commissioning

Better results for end users (be that members of the Wolverton Light Orchestra, CAB clients or members of the Cardiac Group) is the common ground between the TS and PS; focusing on this we recommend that there should be a Milton Keynes wide strategic framework for Intelligent Commissioning.

The objectives required to achieve this outcome include:

Objective	Action	Nominator	SPA	When	Outcome / Output
a) An explicit agreement and understanding that commissioning is not synonymous with contracting; its about developing outcomes that will make a difference for the people of Milton Keynes which can be achieved through a mixed economy of funding and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion at LSP 	LSP		Jan 2010	Develop a statement that is agreed at and communicated by the LSP using the good practice examples of others such as Camden, Croydon and Birmingham
b) Adopting and robustly implementing the eight principles of Commissioning ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and publication of appropriate protocols and standards that define those services that are subject to commissioning and describe in detail the commissioning process, including the contracting, funding and monitoring arrangements 	LSPE		Sept 2010	The creation of greater clarity, transparency and consistency in commissioning processes so that commissioning is related effectively to the provision of services based on priority, capacity to

³ www.idea.gov.uk

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold 4 cross sector seminars/workshops on the principles, protocols and standards 			Oct 2010	deliver, services specification and agreed quality standards
c) TSOs developing their understanding and then effectively communicating the full value of their organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme of Workshops for TSOs developing their approach to Social Marketing • Seek ways of celebrating the sector as a communication vehicle (i.e. Celebr8 or expanded Pride awards or a separate Chamber like evening, What's the Big Idea awards)) 	MKCLIP		April	TSOs better understand and appreciate the different ways in which they can create value for the development of the MK community
d) Developing an understanding of Social Return on Investment (SROI) so that it can be incorporated into development of service specification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek SROI champions in each of the PS agencies (maybe at department level) charged with implementing this methodology into specifications within a set timescale • Roll out the current programme of master classes in social accounting 	LSPE MK CE		Sept 2010 April 2010	Embed commissioning for outcomes
e) Becoming an example of best practice in the practice of intelligent commissioning and effective contracting and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonise application processes, monitoring and quality control • Develop and agree a set of minimum standards for participation in competitive tendering • Establish a bidding support team within MK CVO to offer support and training • Develop a database of TS funding provided by PS agencies 	LSPE		June 2010	TSOs who wish to bid for contracts will have had an opportunity to participate in a pre-qualification validation process Build up a picture of how PS is currently working with TS; help PS see the range of orgs being funded and to see where 2 or more directorates are funding the same organisation

3. United we stand, divided we fall

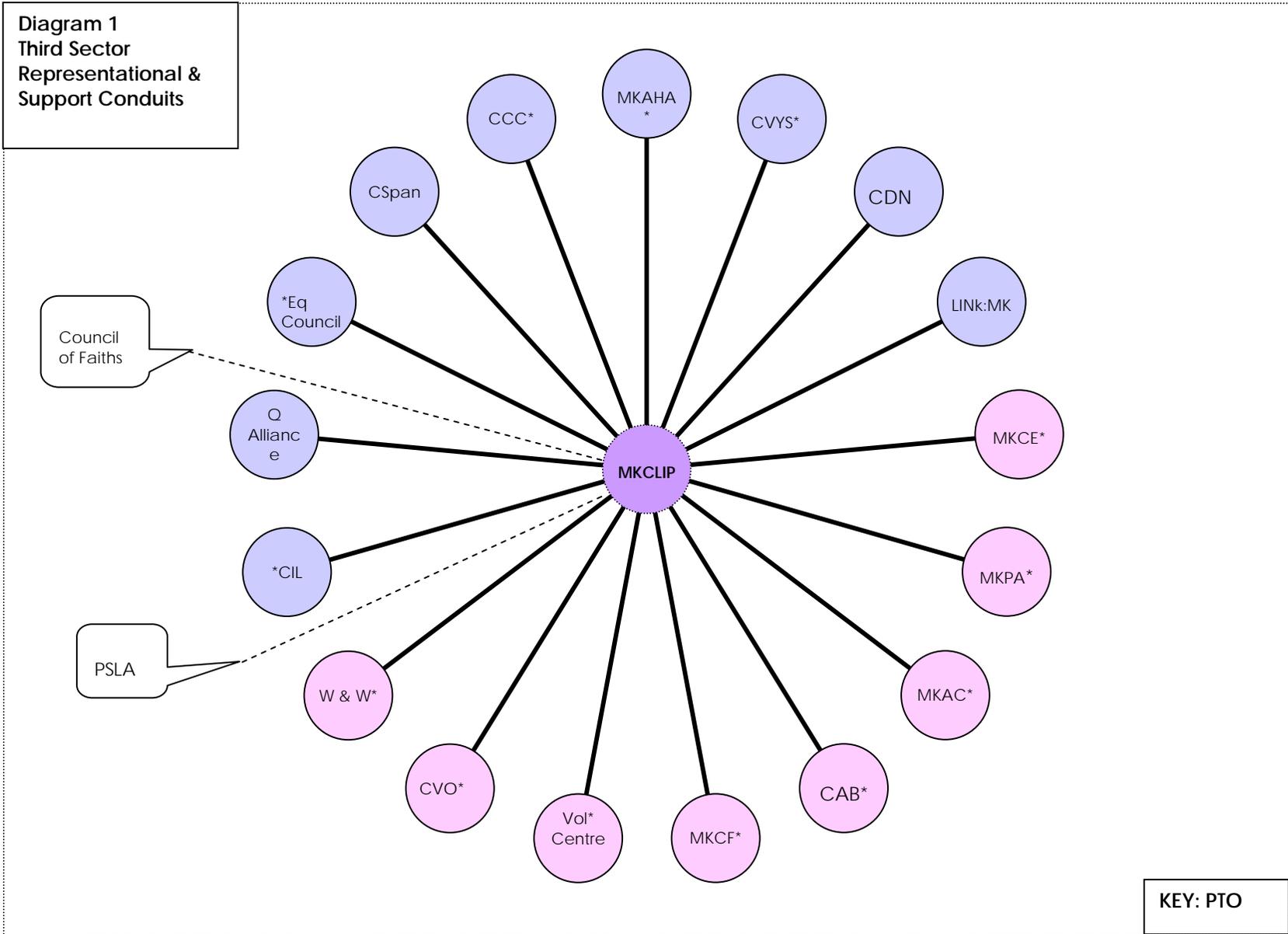
TS organisations in Milton Keynes need to recognise and act upon the maxim; united we stand, divided we fall. In order to work collaboratively for the benefit of MK TSOs need to be supported by Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIOs) e.g MKCVO and the Volunteer Centre, to focus on performance.

The objectives required to achieve this outcome include:

Objective	Action	Nominator	SPA	When	Outcome / Output
a) Putting performance improvement at the heart of the local agenda for TSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a needs analysis of 400 groups to inform the development of a workshop programme to address emerging issues around performance to include collaboration and merger • Focusing the work of the Trustee network to address Performance Improvement issues 	MKCLIP		Jan - Dec 2010	Increase effective collaborative and strategic working between TSOs on policy, information and services
b) Building the capacity of the local sector to improve their performance be that as contracted service providers, campaigners & influencers or as contributors to their local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a sustainable funding plan post March 2011 to ensure that the local TS continues to have access to expertise, knowledge and information when it needs them – includes funding advice, access to community assets HR, legal advice, IT support, training etc 	LSPE		Sept 2010	Effective support provided to all local groups particularly those working with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people
c) Promoting strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training programme for senior staff / Trustees – funded for Jan 2010 – Jan 2011 with 12 participants in the pilot to March 2010 but then roll out to further groups 	Peer to peer project		Jan 2010 to Jan 2011	Increased capacity and focus

d) Improving monitoring and reporting arrangements, especially by ensuring they are proportionate & include SROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a joint protocol that sets limits for reporting in much the same way that the Charity Commission require in finance reporting and proof of Public benefit terms 	LSPE		Oct 2010	Clarity of reporting requirements an assurance
e) Encouraging the sharing of learning between TSOs, between TSOs and the Public and Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold regular best practice seminars building on local and national experiences (develop links with Beacon Authorities) 	Peer to peer project		Jan 2010 to Jan 2011	Developing capacity, flexibility and innovative solutions to respond to the growth and development of Milton Keynes
f) Supporting the implementation of appropriate quality assurance systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify quality schemes as appropriate for different parts of the sector eventually embedding them in contract specifications where appropriate and proportionate promoting self assessment to smaller groups 	MKCLIP		April – Sept 2010	Promoting self assessment as an organisation to examine if its possible to do things better

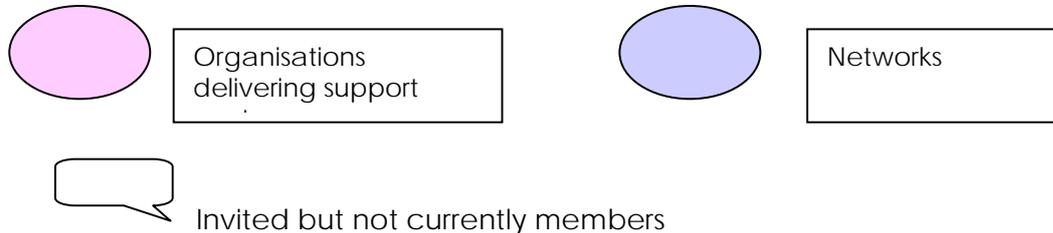
**Diagram 1
Third Sector
Representational &
Support Conduits**



KEY: PTO

KEY

*Current members of MKCLIP



MKAHA Milton Keynes Arts and Heritage Alliance: Forum of **26** organisations seeking to raise the profile and value of culture in Milton Keynes and to establish the city as a cultural centre of regional and national importance

CVYS Council for Voluntary Youth Service: Forum of **61** organisations that work with children and young people aged 0 – 19 years

CDN Community Development Network:

LINK:MK MK Local Involvement Network: A network of 200 people and groups which provides the opportunity for the community of Milton Keynes to say what they think about local Health and Social Care services.

MKCE Milton Keynes Community Enterprise: offers support, information and resources to individuals and groups that have a business idea that improves the quality of life in the community

MKPA Milton Keynes Play Association: provides help, advice, information, guidance and practical resources to organisations working with children and young people in the area, as well as direct service provision to children and young people living in areas of deprivation

MKAC Milton Keynes Age Concern: represents the needs and provides a voice and support for older people, their groups and associations in the city and rural areas of Milton Keynes

CAB Citizens Advice Bureau: offers advice and information on legal issues to voluntary groups particularly in the area of human resources and employment law

MKCF Milton Keynes Community Foundation: gives grant aid to community groups and projects and has extensive knowledge and experience in managing community and commercial properties

Vol Centre	Volunteer Centre: helps people into volunteering and supports voluntary organisations in the recruitment, retention and training of volunteers
CVO	Milton Keynes Council of Voluntary Organisations: with a membership of 475 groups it provides training, advice, funding and networking information and events to promote and develop voluntary activity across Milton Keynes
W & W	Women and Work: provides a range of services targeted at unemployed women and women in low paid / low skilled jobs who want to gain or update their skills
CIL	Centre for Integrated Living: a drop-in enquiry service on disability benefits, employment, equipment, local and national services, support groups and much more
CCC	City Counselling Centre: offers counselling and support to individuals and organisations and manages a number of projects from training to specialist services
Q Alliance	Provides and enables information, support, representation and fun for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people who live, work and play in Milton Keynes
Eq Council	Equality Council: formerly known as the REC., it works to promote issues covering the six strands of equality and diversity and combat discrimination and hate
CSpan	Community Sports Network (to be launched early 2010): drawing together partners to become more co-ordinated and cross cutting in order to be able to deliver sport for 'sports sake' and also sport for 'social change'