



Safer Neighbourhoods Discussion Report December 2016



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Safer Neighbourhoods in Milton Keynes – Discussion Report – December 2016

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This paper outlines the current opportunities available in Milton Keynes and areas to be explored by the Safer Neighbourhood Group. The report and any proposals will be presented to the SaferMK Partnership in July 2017, with an interim report provided in April 2017.

The paper is designed to provide a platform for discussion and exploration of opportunities and develop proposals to provide a sustainable approach for communities and partners in preventing crime and improving community safety issues across Milton Keynes.

The document proposes 6 actions for the Safer Neighbourhoods Group to develop.

Overview

Milton Keynes SaferMK Partnership works with many agencies to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and other community safety issues. The statutory bodies include Milton Keynes Council, both the National and the Community Rehabilitation Company for Probation, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Authority, Thames Valley Police and the Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group, the Partnership includes partners in the community and voluntary sector who play an important role in its activities.

We continue to go through a period of sustained budget pressures which has resulted in workforce challenges for partners, in order to meet increasing demand of residents and businesses across the Borough. Partnership organisations and decisions have an impact on the way services are delivered in local neighbourhoods. With this in mind, it is important that we respond effectively and adapt our processes to meet the needs of local residents.

However it is our local residents who are pivotal in making their area safer. It is also these local residents that partners work with to address the need most important to them to make them feel safer. It is important that at a local level SaferMK partners provide a process of enabling the participation of residents and communities in crime and community safety at their chosen level, ranging from providing information and reassurance, to engage with them to identify and implement solutions to local problems and influence strategic priorities and decisions.

The Safer Neighbourhoods Group will be responsible on behalf of the SaferMK Partnership to ensure appropriate coordination of activities deemed to be part of improving neighbourhoods and escalating issues to the SaferMK Partnership Board via the SaferMK Business Management Group.

The final proposals and action plan will be presented to the SaferMK Partnership at the April 2017 meeting.

Introduction

Residents want to live in a place where they feel safe. Crime and the fear of crime along with a number of other ASB issues are still of concern for a lot of people. Although reported crime in Milton Keynes is comparable to other areas of a similar size, there is still a lot of crime and ASB related concerns for the residents of Milton Keynes, and communities themselves can play a vital role in helping to address these problems to make their local neighbourhoods feel safer.

The way we encourage resident engagement and promote the use of public space can play a vital role in reducing criminal or anti-social behaviour and improving residents' health and wellbeing. Schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch, Safer Places, various environmental and community initiative days can deter crime and help people to feel safe. The way we educate, involve and communicate issues about crime are also an important and effective way in its prevention.

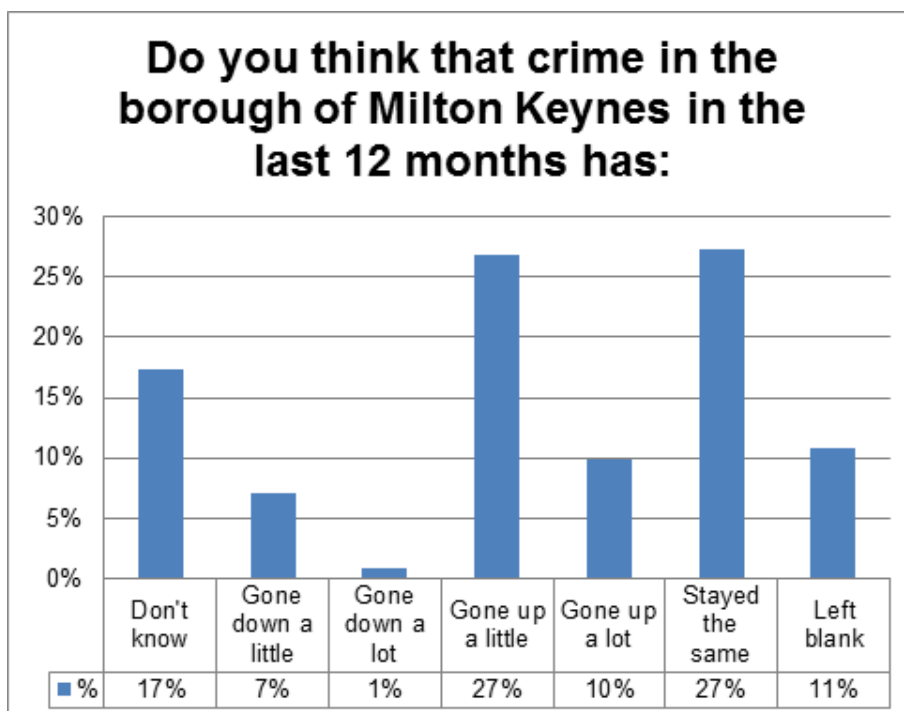
Sustainable communities are places that we all would like to live in. Safe and secure neighbourhoods are an essential component to achieving this. By working in partnership with local authorities and the police and other partners; communities can greatly reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and community safety concerns; whilst making their neighbourhoods a nicer place to live for everyone.

SaferMK Survey Results

Between May and August 2016 SaferMK conducted a public survey, during this time there were 864 respondents

An overview summary of the report can be found on this link: [SaferMK 2016 survey overview report](#). A further full analysis is currently being developed.

Perception of crime remains higher than the actual rate of crime, the below chart shows a significant belief that in the last year crime has increased, despite reported crime remaining static in recent years.



In order to allow individuals to voice their opinions in an open-ended manner, respondents were provided with a free-text box and asked “So that SaferMK can prioritise our work, please tell us: What (if any), are the issues in your neighbourhood or the area where you work that cause you concern?” The below word-cloud represents the most frequently occurring words and phrases used. The frequency of use of a word/ phrase corresponds to the font size.



SaferMK Safer Neighbourhood Group and Pledge:

A review of Membership and the role of the Safer Neighbourhoods Group with SaferMK has recently been undertaken and a revised Terms of Reference has been drafted. A revised group will meet in November 2016 to work towards an action plan and exploring proposals for delivering a safer neighbourhoods plan.

SaferMK Partnership endorsed a Safer Neighbourhood Pledge in January 2016 which states:

“To support the coordination of the responsibility for addressing anti-social behaviour, crime, and community safety issues by working together and through supporting our communities”

To provide community leaders, groups, private sector partners, and any community organisations, with information and support on crime prevention that will enable them to create safer, more secure, and more vibrant communities”

“To ensure that any group or organisation wanting to make a positive contribution to crime reduction and tackling community safety concerns is provided with the right support and guidance”.

Milton Keynes Definitions:

Crime prevention: Refers to the range of strategies that are implemented by individuals, communities, businesses, non-government organisations and all levels of government to target the various social and environmental factors that increase the risk of crime, disorder and victimisation.

There are a variety of different approaches to crime prevention that differ in terms of the focus of the intervention, the types of activities that are delivered, the theory behind how those activities are designed to bring about the desired results and the mechanisms that are applied.

Safer Neighbourhoods: Refers to working with local people and businesses and community safety partners to identify and tackle issues of concern in their neighbourhood with the aim of reducing crime and improving community safety concerns.

Neighbourhood policing: refers to the role Thames Valley Police carry out via their Neighbourhood Officers in local areas.

Current set up:

Current local provision in Milton Keynes for coordinating a collaborative community approach to crime reduction and tackling community safety issues is no longer fit for purpose. Following agreement by the SaferMK Partnership a review will take place to explore options on how best to engage with communities and encourage them to be part of a mechanism for delivering a safer neighbourhood in their area.

Below is a selection of current local safer neighbourhood approaches that are currently available to residents in Milton Keynes:

- Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) were part of National legislation and were launched in Milton Keynes in 2008, at the point of implementation there were 28 NAGs across Milton Keynes. A recent review highlighted that there were 18 NAGs that were still in operation with 13 of those being active and meeting regularly. In some instances NAG areas have amalgamated. Thames Valley Police has remained committed to attending as many NAGs as possible. In 2014 Milton Keynes Council removed the commitment to regularly attend NAGs, but would provide relevant support to meetings if requested in advance to specific issues.

As part of this process Milton Keynes Council promoted the online reporting system, and this was seen as providing the opportunity for residents to report the issues in a timely manner and be provided an update on reports.

Since 2013 NAGs were no longer considered a statutory requirement and in Milton Keynes we have seen a steady decline of operational NAGs in Milton Keynes. However it is notable that in the majority of areas across the Borough where absence of NAGs has occurred there is often a strong presence of an alternative community structure such as Resident Associations. These groups provide an alternative opportunity for NAG issues to be discussed.

Further information on NAGs can be found through the Thames Valley Police website <http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/yournh/yournh-nag.htm>

- Neighbourhood Watch (including other watch schemes) is coordinated through Thames Valley Police via a group of volunteers.

A review of the local provision of Neighbourhood Watch and similar schemes is currently being conducted. The review includes an audit of coordinators and locations. The outcome of this review will be used to inform Safer Neighbourhood Group proposals.

Further information on Neighbourhood Watch can be found through the Thames Valley website <http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/neighbourhood-watch>. The Milton Keynes Neighbourhood Watch Association can be found online <http://www.mknhwa.org.uk/>.

- The Community Trigger is the term applied to the response to complaints section of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2014 and enables victims to require agencies to carry out a review of their response to the anti-social behaviour they reported where they feel they did not get a satisfactory response. Further information regarding the Act can be found on the SaferMK website <http://www.safermk.com/safer-themes/antisocial-behaviour/>. Residents can request a Community Trigger through the following link: <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/housing/anti-social-behaviour-social-housing-fraud/community-trigger>.

The Community Trigger process has been agreed and is monitored through the SaferMK Partnership.

- There are two key pilot projects which partners are looking to implement in 2017:
 - Locally Identified Solutions and Practices (LISP) is based on academic research by Northampton University. The pilot is currently being explored by Thames Valley Police as to how this could be implemented and sustained locally. The research describes the design and development of a specific methodology of using intensive engagement in vulnerable localities to create the conditions for co-produced community resilience and improvement.
 - Safe Places The Safer Places scheme is part of a wider “Respect me” campaign which aims to improve the experience of people in the community who have a learning disability, physical disability, mental health condition, sensory impairment, or an older person who may have memory loss, however this scheme is designed to be inclusive to anyone in Milton Keynes.

This has already been rolled out in places such as Oxford, Eastleigh and Cumbria, and we are looking to do the same in Milton Keynes.

Safe Places provides members of the public with a safe place to go if they have been bullied or harassed or feel vulnerable or afraid.

The original plan was that this scheme was due to be implemented in 2016, however this has been delayed until 2017.

The next steps:

The Safer Neighbourhoods Group will have three key themes it will address:

- Community engagement
- Community participation and involvement
- Sustainable community support

Community Engagement:

Community engagement is vital for partners to understand and work with communities and individuals and their concerns:

The below table summarises the methods we may use to engage with communities dependent on what the objectives are to any given issue:

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Forward Together
Community engagement aim	To provide communities with balanced and objective information	To obtain feedback on ideas, options or decisions	To work directly with communities and partners to ensure their concerns and aspirations are understood and considered	To encourage and support local communities to develop their own solutions to local crime and disorder issues
Commitment to communities	We will provide information to the public	We will provide Information to the public, listen and provide feedback on how public input has influenced decisions	We will work with communities and partners to ensure their concerns and aspirations are included in options and provide feedback on how this has influenced decisions	We will look to communities and partner agencies for ideas for developing solutions and work with them to incorporate their recommendations and decisions, empowering communities and stakeholders to be part of and lead on the solution
Ways to engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Email • Social media • Press releases • Reports • Presentations • Newsletters • Personal visits and contacts • Existing networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partnership • public meetings • Focus groups • Surveys • Website • Email • Social media • Personal visits and contacts • Existing networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events and Conferences • Workshops • Research • Developing and implementation of strategies • Community, partnership, and public meetings • Existing networks including Parish and Town Councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task and Finish Groups • Community, partnership, and public meetings • Existing Networks • Community groups • Develop a toolkit to promote community opportunities

Action 1 – The Safer Neighbourhoods Group to develop an action plan on how it will engage on behalf of the SaferMK Partnership.

- To consider how best to communicate and engage with communities in MK.
- A regular forum for organisations and groups to attend.

Activity Areas for Community Engagement:

- Providing a strong voice for our communities through coordinated mechanisms to understand the needs and fears of MK residents.
- Providing suitable crime prevention communication and adopting an annual crime trend communication plan
- Coordinate strategic engagement events.
- Engage and provide suitable and appropriate support when requested.

Community participation and involvement:

There are already a number of current activities that are currently in place and others that will need some further development:

Action 2: The Safer Neighbourhood Group to review the support currently available for community groups how it can be sustained moving forward including Neighbourhood Action Groups, Resident Associations and Community Groups in general.

Action 3: To provide strategic support for community involvement activities including the local delivery and promotion of various watch schemes including Neighbourhood Watch.

Action 4: The Safer Neighbourhood Group will support and develop appropriate solutions and actions to tackle multi-agency community safety with partners' involvement as required.

Activity Areas for participation and involvement:

- To support the local delivery of the LISP (Locally Identified Solutions and Practices) pilot project with the police where appropriate.
- To strongly involve Parish and Town Councils is a crucial part of the Safer Neighbourhoods process and councillors have the opportunity to feed into Neighbourhood Groups.
- Develop a process/toolkit for community task and finish groups on managing particular issues that are of concern to them working with relevant partners.
- Explore how community groups can be involved in Partnership coordinated activities and link in with JATAC (Joint Agency Tasking and Coordination).

Action 5: To explore other opportunities such as:

Restorative Justice, Making Milton Keynes a Restorative City: A restorative city is a city where residents are offered, and have access to, opportunities to address crime and conflict through safe, secure and effective restorative practice.

Restorative practice employs various methods of bringing those harmed by crime or conflict and those responsible for harm into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward (Restorative Justice Council, 2015).

Identify and utilise pre-existing organisations or groups who could act as key stakeholders for communities.

Sustainable Community Support

Activity Areas for sustaining community support:

- Explore the use of EVA's (Environment Vision Audits) on a wider level and encourage reporting of location issues – which we recognise the reporting system is not working to potential
- Support and have oversight of Watch schemes in MK
- Offering support for local neighbourhood activities to improve community safety and provide reassurance
- Provide crime prevention information and promotional material to community groups to highlight crime prevention techniques
- Provide support and guidance on new crime prevention activities or reduction project ideas

Action 6: To develop a multi-agency sustainable model to deliver a Safer Neighbourhoods Plan for 2017-20 to commence April 2017.

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