

**REVISED MILTON KEYNES COMMUNITY VOLUNTARY SECTOR STRATEGY**

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**1. Purpose**

1.1 To agree the revised Milton Keynes Community Voluntary Sector Strategy

**2. Summary**

2.1 The Milton Keynes Voluntary Sector Strategy (see the attached **Annex**) is a working, evolving document between partners who provide wide-ranging services and life long learning opportunities that contribute to the health and social well-being of service users and volunteers.

**3. Recommendations**

3.1 The Committee is recommended to approve the revised Milton Keynes Community Voluntary Sector Strategy.

#### 4. **Background**

- 4.1 Milton Keynes Voluntary Sector Strategy was the first strategic document to be approved by Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 21 May 1996 (Minute PR10/97 refers).
- 4.2 Paragraph 3.6.2 of the Strategy states:  
  
‘Statutory Agencies will ..... iii. Review this Corporate Strategy at the end of the first year of operation and every three years thereafter.’
- 4.3 The time scale for review has slipped. It has been overtaken by the demands of establishing the new Authority and the significant, wide-ranging national agenda resulting in many changes and requirements. The Milton Keynes Council of Voluntary Organisations has informed community and voluntary bodies of progress on the document, through its newsletter and distributing draft copies for comment.
- 4.4 In addition, the Strategy has now been extended to embrace the partnership that the Buckinghamshire Health Authority has with voluntary organisations and community groups in Milton Keynes.
- 4.5 The work of revising the Strategy has been undertaken by the Milton Keynes Voluntary Sector Liaison Group. Originally this group emerged from the Local Government Re-organisation consultation forum. Its subsequent programme of work was reported to and determined by the External Affairs Committee on 18 March 1998. It has now been confirmed as the Voluntary Sector Consultative Assembly (Minute PR8(b)/00 refers), with Member lead representation. In a spirit of partnership, its new Chairperson will come from the Voluntary Section.
- 4.6 Membership consists, at present, of one Member (Councillor Brian Barton), appropriate Council officers (Cathy Bland, Tina Butterwick, Chris Chapman, John Cove, Lesley Kendrick, Pat Scrimshaw) together with five voluntary sector representatives, the City Counselling Centre, MK Community Foundation Ltd (formerly the MK Community Trust), MK Council of Voluntary Organisations, Relate MK and the Pre-School Learning Alliance. The Buckinghamshire Health Authority receives the Minutes and its officer representative attends when appropriate.
- 4.7 The group meets four to six times a year. Its main aim is ‘to act as a central reference discussion and development forum for issues relating to the partnership inter-face between the Voluntary Sector, Milton Keynes Council and the Buckinghamshire Health Authority’. It played a significant contribution to the seamless transfer of voluntary sector issues from Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Borough Council to Milton Keynes Council.
- 4.8 Some recent agenda items have covered: voluntary sector accommodation in Milton Keynes, both administrative and service settings; the impact of the Council’s MK Property Strategy; the nature of voluntary sector partnerships - a discussion led by Ken Dixon, Chair of MK Mind. The next meeting on Tuesday 28 September 1999 is a

discussion on volunteering in Milton Keynes, led by the chief officer of Volunteer Connections.

## 5. **Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 The Grant Aid Committee will have a lead role in monitoring implementation of, and updating as necessary, the Milton Keynes Community Voluntary Sector Strategy.
- 5.2 It has been very important to engage the Buckinghamshire Health Authority's participation in this document. It will be submitted to the Health Authority Board for approval.
- 5.3 A dialogue now needs to be conducted with the Primary Care Group, in preparation for its administration of health funds from April 2000 onwards.

## 6. **Implications**

### 6.1 Environmental

The involvement of the voluntary sector was instrumental in the preparation of the adopted Milton Keynes Local Agenda 21. The involvement continues to be a major feature of the ongoing work to achieve environmental sustainability and improve the quality of people's lives in Milton Keynes.

### 6.2 Equalities

The Milton Keynes Racial Equality Council was instrumental in encouraging the Council to adopt the Equality Standard and will continue to participate in monitoring its implementation.

### 6.3 Financial

The Strategy contains a section on finances with agreed undertakings by all the partners.

It is most important that the Health funding of the voluntary sector is safeguarded, together with avenues of negotiation, in the transfer from Buckinghamshire Health Authority to the Milton Keynes Primary Care Group.

### 6.4 Legal

The Strategy also contains a section on legal issues with agreed undertakings by all the partners.

### 6.5 Staff and Accommodation:

Staffing by volunteers, together with voluntary sector accommodation, are both current agenda items of the Voluntary Sector Consultative Assembly.

### 6.6 Cultural

The Strategy has a section devoted to culture in its broadest sense, with shared and individual commitments.

## 7. **Conclusions**

- 7.1 Voluntary organisations and community groups in all their rich variety make a major contribution to the life and well-being of Milton Keynes. Such a contribution is recognised nationally, and partnerships between them and statutory agencies are stressed and required in most of the recent Government policy guidelines.
- 7.2 The Milton Keynes Community Voluntary Sector Strategy underpins such partnerships by stating a joint commitment to shared values and beliefs. It also indicates the responsibilities each partner brings to the relationship.

Background Papers: 'Racial Equality Means Quality, A Standard for Racial Equality for Local Government

Milton Keynes First Local Agenda 21

Milton Keynes Arts Strategy

"COMPACT" getting it right together" (compact on relations between the Government and the Voluntary and Community sectors in England - a Home Office paper)