



SaferMK Partnership Discussion and Decision Report

Subject: Open University Community Safety Research Partnership

Report Author:

Steve Conway (Senior Community Analyst and Research Officer),
Tel: (01908 257910)

1. Purpose of report

SaferMK is supporting partners in developing intelligence and research led activities to support future strategic priorities and policies for crime reduction and improving community safety issues. Over the last 18 months the SaferMK support team have delivered a number of research based reports providing recommendations for future work in specific areas.

The current climate provides us an opportunity on exploring new ways of working whilst enhancing our current capacity to deliver future work.

The SaferMK Support Team has been in talks with academics from the Department of Social Science at the Open University, with the intention of forming a collaborative research partnership.

This is an item for discussion and to decide if the concept is supported and should be explored further.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the concept of the proposed relationship being explored further be supported and endorsed.
- 2.2 That consideration be given to future benefits and potential exploration areas.
- 2.3 That the item be discussed at the next Partnership meeting.

3. Comments from the Scrutiny Management Committee

This item has not been discussed at this Committee.

4. Background

Due to budgetary requirements, over the last year SaferMK has moved to an intelligence and research led operational model. Work generated by this new approach has included the 'Exploratory Impacts of the Welfare Reforms' and 'Understanding the Absence of Gangs' papers provided to this group.

The SaferMK support team and the Business Management Group hope to supplement this approach through a research department with the Open University. A collaborative partnership is proposed where the strategic priorities of the Community Safety Partnership and the research interests of the academics at the Open University overlap. Such a relationship is conceived to enhance the quality and scope of research carried out by SaferMK, and to maximise the use of time, human and financial resources.

The Open University are engaged with this process, and it is hoped that the relationship may be formed which will be of mutual benefit to both parties.

A provisional seminar will take place at the Open University on the 24 September 2015, in which the potential approaches will be explored; and research themes/ interests of the academic faculty will be discussed in order to highlight areas of overlap. Outcomes of this meeting will be presented for discussion at the SaferMK Partnership.

5. Implications to SaferMK Partnership

The proposed collaborative research partnership would have the positive benefits of maximising resources; increasing quality and scope of resources for SaferMK; and increasing the reputation of the Community Safety Partnership.

There could provide an opportunity for extending this provision to other Community Safety Partnerships and partners.

Each research project will fall under the Partnership information sharing protocol. However each project will contain its own terms of reference.

It is not expected to impact partners financially, although staff contribution will be required. The partnership agreement will be expected to source its funding which would not be available to statutory partners.

6. Other considerations / Key Partnership Involvement

Although the key partner will be the Open University, there could be scope in the future to extend the model into the form of a regional research hub, providing a research facility for crime and community safety issues for other Partnerships.

In concert with the Open University, the SaferMK support team are currently exploring various grant funding options. However, there will be a need to commit human resources and information to support the research strands and agreed projects.

7. Attachments/Background Papers

None