



Proposal for Voluntary and Community Sector Representation at Safer MK

Prepared by: Clare Walton, Chief Executive, Community Action:MK
Date: October 2019

Introduction

Safer MK has co-opted a VCS representative, the Chief Executive of Community Action: MK onto its board. Community Action: MK welcome the involvement of the sector within the board, however we are of the view that there needs to be a strategic approach to representation. A precedent was set with the nomination and appointment of a VCS Representative to the Health and Wellbeing Board. Community Action: MK requests that the Safer MK board adopts a similar representative recruitment model.

Role of the VCS Representative

The role of VCS sector representatives on multi-agency strategic partnerships is likely to include the following features:

- Raising the profile of the voluntary and community sector to highlight the value, diversity and contribution the sector brings to that partnership area.
- Being a voice for the sector and reflecting a range of views and experiences held by the sector.
- Influencing and, where necessary, challenging the thinking and decisions making processes of the partnership e.g. to ensure practices don't lead to the discrimination and exclusion of marginalised groups
- Contributing to the overall development and operation of the partnership to ensure it fulfils its purpose.

Role of Community Action: MK

Community Action: MK is a Council for Voluntary Service providing infrastructure services to groups and organisations in Milton Keynes. A 'Council for Voluntary Service' (CVS) is the generic name given to the local independent organisations supporting the voluntary sector. Part of our role is to support and facilitate the development and representation of the sector at a local level. We do this to strengthen the contribution that local voluntary organisations make to the socio-economic and cultural development of their communities and provide a bridge between the voluntary sector and key public agencies at a local level.

We see our role as supporting the representatives in practical ways: providing opportunities to network with other organisations to gather views on pertinent issues from the sector, to support with communications, to develop peer support networks for representatives, and support the sector be an effective and respected partner in strategic planning for Milton Keynes.

Key considerations

1. What is the partnership's understanding of the role played by VCS representatives?
2. What skills, experience and support will be required by representatives to play these roles?
3. The VCS representative will work to the best of their ability to act as a representative. This will have an impact on their organisation, as time in this role is time away from their day job. Ideally, resources will be identified to support their involvement and enable them to bring value to the Strategic Partnership whilst ensuring their organisations are not unduly impacted.

Proposed Process

1. Safer MK approve the recommendation to recruit a representative.
2. Safer MK design a role description for the VCS Representative which sets out clearly what the skills, experience and knowledge of the representative will be.
3. Community Action: MK will initiate a process to recruit a Representative to the Safer MK Board that includes: advertising the role, receiving nominations, processing applications and holding interviews if necessary.
4. Community Action: MK will liaise with a member of Safer MK to recommend a Representative to the Board.
5. Safer MK Board respond to the recommendation.