

Quality of Life Unit

Options Paper

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Introduction

This paper proposes the creation of a new unit aimed at promoting quality of life in the community. Its starting point is the Community Safety Strategy 2002-5, which has set targets for tackling Anti Social Behaviour, vandalism and abandoned vehicles. These targets differ from those set by the Local Strategic Partnership under its Quality of Life Indicators.

Many components of the proposed unit are already in existence. Others are in the planning stage. As the unit develops, it may be possible to tackle other issues that are currently beyond reach.

The unit should operate across existing agency boundaries, involving staff and resources from Milton Keynes Council and Thames Valley Police in the first instance. As the service develops, other agencies may also wish to contribute.

This is an options paper, designed for discussion and debate amongst members of the Crime & Community Safety Partnership.

Aims of Service

To promote quality of life in Milton Keynes by tackling all forms of anti social behaviour, developing close co-operation between the community and the various bodies and agencies committed to community safety.

Objectives

- (a) To deliver the targets on anti-social behaviour, anti-graffiti and abandoned vehicles in the Community Safety Strategy 2002-5
- (b) To support the work of other units and teams that are responsible for reducing anti social behaviour
- (c) To develop multi-agency partnership work in Milton Keynes

(a) *Delivery of quality of life targets*

The Community Safety Strategy 2002-5 sets out the following objectives:

Tackling Anti Social Behaviour

- 1. TO REDUCE REPEAT REFERRALS TO THE ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR TEAM BY 20% BY 31 MARCH 2005. (A REPEAT REFERRAL OCCURS WHEN A SIMILAR INCIDENT IS REPORTED WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF THE ORIGINAL REFERRAL)**
- 2. TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF REFERRALS TO THE MEDIATION SERVICE BY 15% BY 31 MARCH 2005**
 - Thames Valley Police has appointed a full time co-ordinator to develop this area of work
 - The Co-ordinator will set up a multi-agency database to ensure that referrals are dealt with rapidly and effectively
 - The Co-ordinator will meet regularly with a team consisting of Police, Housing, Environmental, Health, Social Services and Education officers in order to tackle referrals of anti social behaviour
 - Whenever appropriate, early referrals will be made to the Community Mediation Service in order to resolve disputes
 - The team will be committed to prompt and effective action
 - The team will develop the use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, and will, where necessary, apply for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Tackling Vandalism

- 3. TO REDUCE RECORDED CRIMINAL DAMAGE THROUGHOUT MILTON KEYNES BY 15% PER 1000 POPULATION BY 31 MARCH 2005**
- 4. TO REDUCE THE AVERAGE TIME THAT IT TAKES TO REMOVE GRAFFITI BY 40% BY 31 MARCH 2005**
 - The Environment Directorate has set up an anti-graffiti squad
 - This will link closely with local community safety teams and Parish Councils in order to improve detection and repairs of criminal damage
 - The new mobile CCTV scheme for Milton Keynes will target areas of high criminal damage

- The service will work closely with the Youth Offending Team and the Community Service branch of the National Probation Department, so that convicted offenders may offer reparation by carrying out community projects including repair of damage
- It is proposed to increase the number of Wardens in Milton Keynes. At present, there is only one warden on Fullers Slade. The scheme has proved successful in sustaining a reduction in crime and in cleansing costs. The Partnership is considering extending and co-ordinating this service, so that it covers areas of high crime throughout the Council area
- The Warden service will be developed in conjunction with parish councils and the business community
- Encourage the reporting of criminal damage by setting up reporting centres on the estates
-

Abandoned Vehicles

5. TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF REPORTED ABANDONED VEHICLES BY 50% PER 1000 POPULATION BY 31 MARCH 2005

- The Abandoned Vehicle Unit has been set up within the Environment Directorate, and has already started to make a significant impact in this area. It works closely with Police and the Vehicle Licensing Authority
- The Unit aims to remove vehicles from grid roads within 24 hours of referral.
- The Unit will work closely with other teams and units across the Quality of Life group

School Alert Schemes

6. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL ALERT SCHEMES IN MILTON KEYNES SO THAT 50% OF ALL SCHOOLS RECEIVE THE SERVICE BY 2005

- Thames Valley Police have developed a highly successful service that has so far been piloted in 5 schools in Milton Keynes. This has reduced incidents including crime by up to 80% in these schools
- The aim is to offer this service more widely, until all schools have the opportunity to take part

Support and advice for parents

7. ESTABLISH PARENTING SCHEMES ON THE 8 HOUSING ESTATES THAT DISPLAY HIGHEST LEVELS OF RECORDED CRIME

- The Parenting Forum aims to set up parenting support courses in areas of need
- These courses will enable parents to offer support to others in the area. The courses will therefore develop a support network on the estates
- The objective of the scheme is to identify and support people in need before the situation deteriorates. It is considered to be preferable to the use of Parenting Orders, which can be imposed by the courts to those parents whose children have been convicted of an offence

Some of these targets may become the direct responsibility of the proposed unit. Others may be more suitably led elsewhere. To be discussed.

(b) Supporting the work of other teams and units

The unit will deliver certain services in its own right, as detailed above. It will also supplement and support the work of Housing Officers, Environmental Health, Police Officers, Parish Council Officers and others where necessary, but should not replace these services in any way.

The unit may therefore respond operationally to needs identified by front-line services, according to mutually agreed protocols.

(c) To develop multi-agency work

The unit will consist of officers from several different organisations and disciplines. As it evolves, the service is likely to transcend existing single agency structures, stimulating the growth of partnership working.

The service will be established according to best-value principles, ensuring value for money. Realistic and achievable targets will be set, and the success of the service will be monitored by contributing agencies and through the Crime and Community Safety Partnership.

Title

The title of the unit is worth detailed consideration. Suggestions have been:

- Quality of Life
- Anti Social Behaviour
- Safer Streets
- Safer Communities
- Best Behaviour
- Environmental Support
- Environmental Safety
- Responsible Citizenship

The challenge is to find a title that denotes the purpose of the unit without sounding too vague (Quality of Life), too negative (Anti Social Behaviour) or too narrow (Safer Streets).

It is recommended that Quality of Life be used temporarily, pending the development of a more suitable title.

Possible Components

The following are suggested as initial components of the unit (alphabetical order)

- Abandoned Vehicles
- Anti Graffiti
- Anti Social Behaviour
- Litter enforcement (including fly tipping)
- Mobile CCTV
- Neighbourhood (Street) Wardens
- Traveller Management Unit

The following may also be considered for inclusion:

- Criminal damage
- Fly posting

On balance, it is likely that the Unit will be able to expand its activities into these areas as it develops. It will, in particular, be able to form robust links with local community safety teams in the parishes.

Current resources are as follows

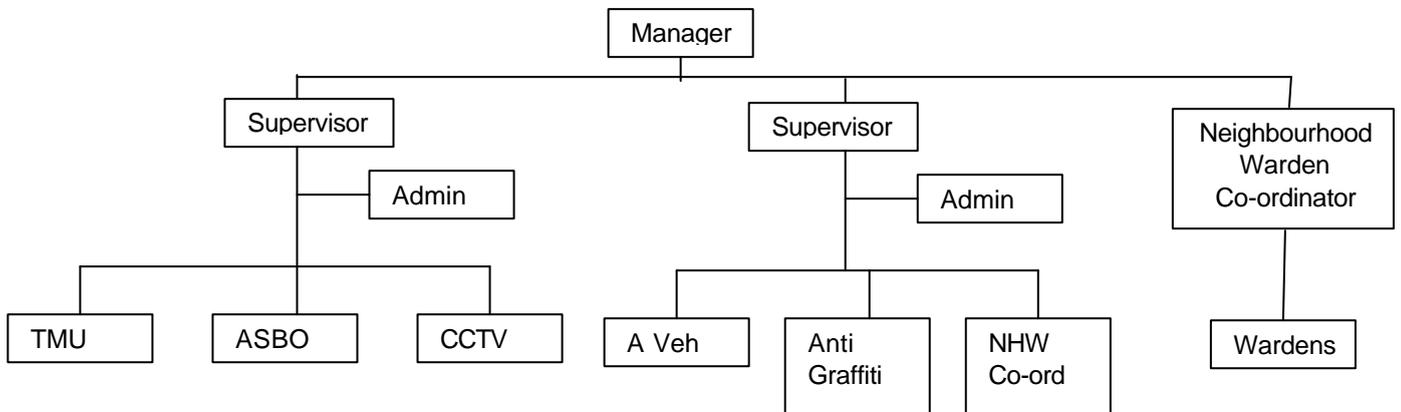
• Abandoned Vehicles	Manager (shared) 1 Police 1 MKC 1 Admin (part time) Van supplied by Fire Service
• Anti Graffiti	Manager (shared)
• Anti Social Behaviour	1 Co-ordinator (Police)
• Litter Enforcement	1 Enforcement Officer
• Mobile CCTV	1 Co-ordinator /manager 2 part time operators(or 1 full time equivalent) - Under development 1 van and mobile CCTV equipment
• Neighbourhood Wardens	1 Co-ordinator 8 Wardens. Under development
• Traveller Management Unit	Police Inspector 2 officers (MKC) 1 part time Health Visitor (funded by MKC)

The unit will link with the following stakeholders:

- Parish Community Safety Teams (currently 3 in existence)
- Parish and Town Councils
- Thames Valley Police
- Milton Keynes Council
- Probation/Community Service
- Youth Offending Team
- English Partnerships
- The Parks Trust
- Bucks Fire & Rescue Service
- MK Primary Care Trust
- Milton Keynes Community Mediation Service
- Network Rail

Suggested Models

Model 1



This divides the unit into 3 components.

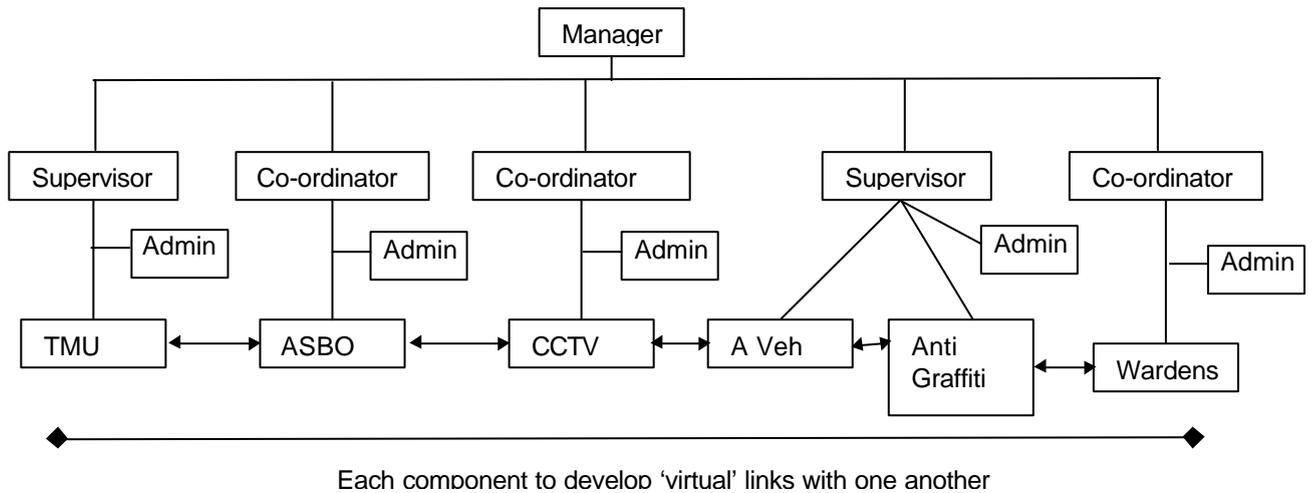
Strengths

- Recognises current resource split
- Will not demand a significant increase in immediate resources

Weaknesses

- Structure limits further development
- Perpetuates current division between units

Model 2



A functional model that allows each unit to work separately, developing virtual links with one another.

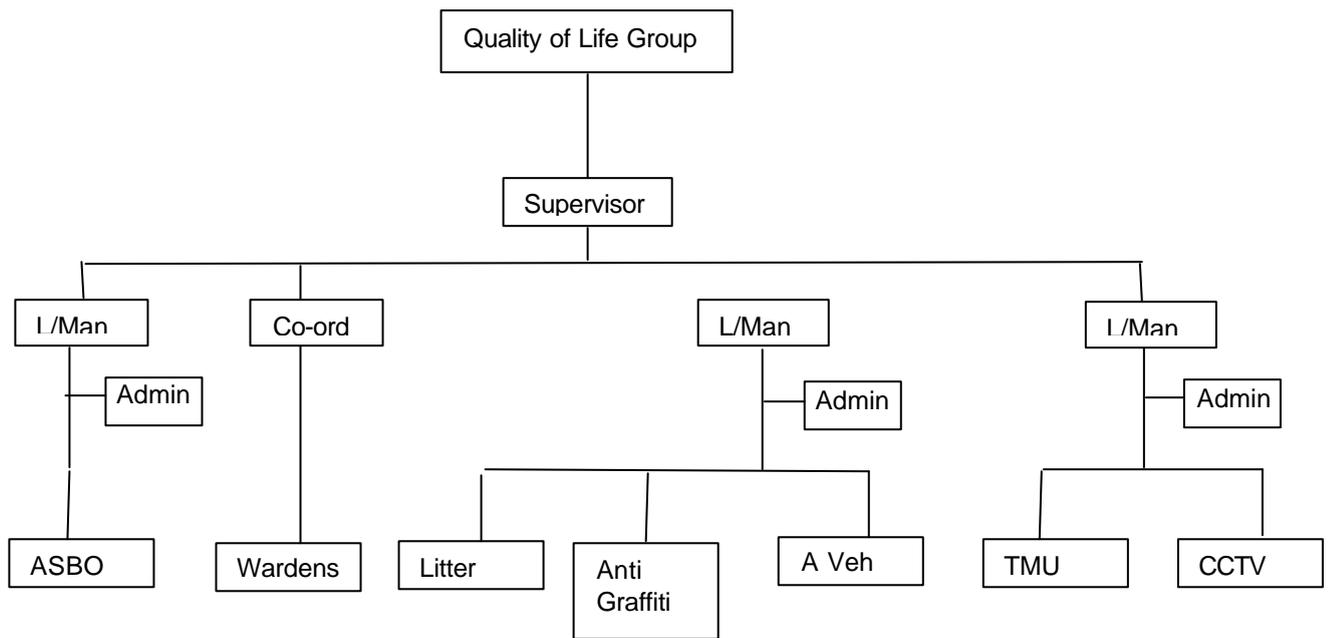
Strengths

- Enable each function to be pursued separately
- Allows a 'virtual' team to be formed with minimum disruption to existing services
- Easier to put in place

Weaknesses

- Difficult to share information or develop a common database
- Requires significant administrative resources
- Mitigates against service development
- Likely to be expensive to maintain

Model 3



This divides the unit into 4 components.

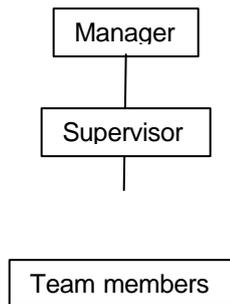
Strengths

- Flexibility
- Allows unit to operate in separate sites
- Plenty of scope for development

Weaknesses

- Likely to be relatively expensive
- Difficult to develop shared database (although not as difficult as Model 2)
- Tends to fragment unit

Model 4



This is the most flexible of the models, and allows for each team member and supervisor to cover all disciplines.

Strengths

- Very flexible
- Allows for rapid targeting on area of need
- Speed of prioritisation and response

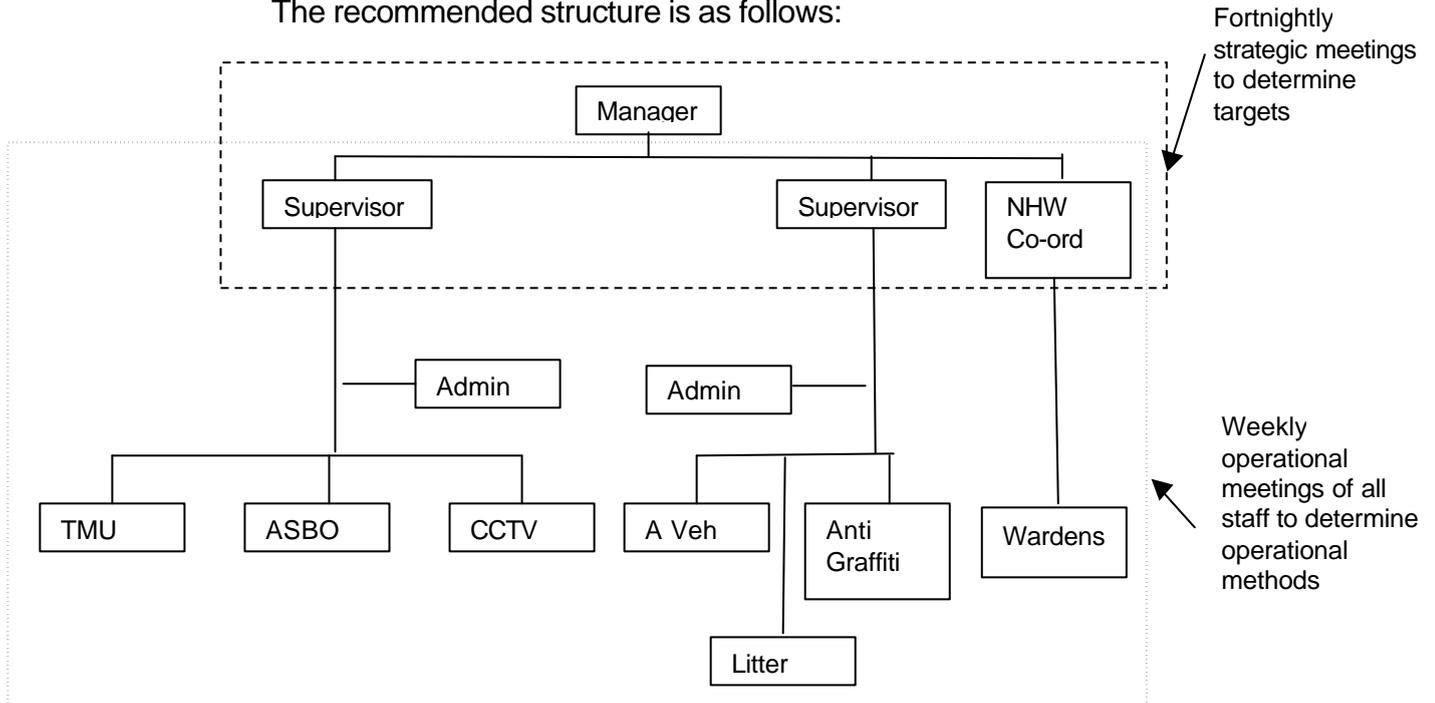
Weaknesses

- Difficult to develop specialist skills
- Uncertain line management arrangements
- Difficult to focus on routine tasks

Initial Recommendations

Following the first round of discussions, a structure is recommended that combines the flexibility of model 4 with the clear management structure of model 1. The unit should allow for specialist officers to work together in a way that generates novel solutions to specific problems.

The recommended structure is as follows:



Additional components may be added as required.

It is also recommended that the unit should:

- Have a common training and development programme
- Use a common database
- Be co-located in one place (eg Council, Parks Trust, Thames Valley Police)

Functions of Unit

The unit should be:

1. Sensitive to the needs of local communities
2. Responsive to first class information
3. Solution focused

1. Sensitivity to local needs:

The unit will link closely with local community safety teams in the parishes, and in particular with Parish Community Safety Officers. It will therefore relate to Parish Councils as a major partner.

Neighbourhood Wardens are to be full members of local teams. These teams will be under the operational direction of the police sergeant. Wardens will co-located with the teams, and the Co-ordinator, based in the Quality of Life Unit, will be their line manager. In this way, the local teams are to have a close link with the work of the Unit.

Other activities of the Unit can be deployed to meet needs that have been identified by local community safety teams. Mobile CCTV, for instance, can be used in conjunction with other parts of the service to target specific outbreaks of criminal damage and anti-social behaviour.

2. Responsiveness to information

The team database, once it is fully developed, should generate a very full picture of all forms of anti-social behaviour in Milton Keynes. Reports should be generated before each meeting of the Unit Management Group and should be considered in conjunction with additional data from local community safety teams (see above). The Unit should therefore be able to deploy resources to areas of greatest need.

3. *Solution focused approach*

The Unit contains various specialist staff, but none of them should work in isolation. Instead the Unit should adopt a solution-oriented approach, adopting the following method:

- Collect information (see above)
- Management group to define problems and solutions.
- Unit meetings (weekly?) to determine course of action including resource deployment
- Action to be carried out in conjunction with local community safety teams wherever appropriate
- Monitoring and evaluation by management group.

Costings

Most of the components of the Unit already exist, and are paid for by Thames Valley Police , Milton Keynes Council or through Government grants. This is demonstrated in the table below:

Component	Approximate Cost	Funded By
Abandoned Vehicles	£80,000	MKC and TVP secondment (some costs recovered)
Anti Graffiti	£200,000	MKC. Minimal costs recovered
Anti Social Behaviour	£60,000	TVP, Home Office and MKC (legal costs)
Litter enforcement	£40,000	Some MKC. Income generation through fining
Mobile CCTV	£80,000	Home Office set up. TVP and MKC running costs. Some cost recovery
Neighbourhood Wardens	£250,000	Office of Deputy Prime Minister (until 5 April 2005)
Traveller Management Unit	£80,000	TVP and MKC
Total	£790,000	

Recommendation

That the paper be considered in depth, with a view to establishing the Unit as soon as possible.