COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Draft and Final Distribution -
  Corporate Director, Environment
  Community Safety Manager
  Partnership Finance and Admin Officer
  Partnership Senior Data Analyst
  Partnership Consultant
  Community Safety Officer

Final Only Distribution -
  Chair of Responsible Authorities Group
  Director of Finance
  Corporate Director – Neighbourhood
  Section 151 Officer

Lynda Baker – Audit Services Manager
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Community Safety Partnership was established over 10 years ago and represents organisations working with the community to reduce crime, the fear of crime, anti-social behaviour and to combat the misuse of drugs. The Partnership is made up of five key partners, or Responsible Authorities, who provide strategic direction and are accountable to the public: Milton Keynes Council (MKC); Thames Valley Police Authority (TVPA); Thames Valley Police (TVP); Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority and Milton Keynes Primary Care Trust (MKPCT). Thames Valley Probation Service is set to join the Partnership, as a result of legislation that is to be placed before Parliament in April 2010, bringing the total of Responsible Authorities to six.

The Partnership works alongside parish councils, businesses and voluntary organisations. This co-ordinated approach enables a wide range of crime, anti-social behaviour, drugs and alcohol to be tackled depending on the particular initiative.

Funding in the form of specific grants is received from a variety of sources including the Home Office, Government of the South East (GOSE), Department for Communities & Local Government (CLG), TVP, TVPA, MKC and MKPCT. TVP and Bucks Fire and Rescue Authority also fund their own staff to work alongside MKC staff within the council’s offices. A percentage of the salaries of some of the MKC staff are also partly funded by some of the other Responsible Authorities.

The Council Plan for 2008 had 10 priorities. Priority 8 was “To reduce crime and the fear of crime”. The revised Plan for 2009 lists 6 priorities none of which relate to safety or crime reduction. However, the Performance Framework for Local Authorities lists 198 National Indicators, 35 of which relate to Community Safety.

1.2 Volume Indicators – for the year 2009/10

The following indicators have been supplied by the Community Safety Team:

- Direct funding £ 0.78m
- Grants (including substance misuse funding) £ 3.40m
1.3 Objectives and Scope

The objectives of the audit were to ensure that:

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<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Income is accurately recorded and complete. Expenditure is appropriate and compliant with legislation. Budget monitoring is effective and timely. Posts are sustainable when specific funding is withdrawn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>The governance of the Partnership complies with relevant legislation. Legislation is complied with when collating and recording data.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Data received, recorded and reported by MKC is accurate and consistent to allow comparison and evaluation. Data is used to determine how funding is applied and ensure that it is cost effective.</td>
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<td>d)</td>
<td>Systems and controls are in place to enable objectives and targets to be met. The audit also attempted to determine the effect of resources in kind being withdrawn and the value of the non-financial assistance given to the partnership.</td>
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Key: 1 = Poor, 3 = Good

The audit covered the financial year 2008-09 and was limited to the work of Milton Keynes Council within the Partnership.

2 AUDIT OPINION

Limited Assurance - Controls exist but inconsistency in application. Risk of loss, fraud, impropriety or damage to reputation.
3 CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Cross agency working of the Partnership results in a more cohesive approach to current problems.

3.2 Positive results have been achieved through successful initiatives including the late night taxi-marshalling. Results showed that crime had fallen by 1% overall.

3.3 5 main priorities were identified for 2008-09 but only 2 were met in full. Funding may be withdrawn if targets are not met.

3.4 Comprehensive budget information is not yet available which could lead to overspending.

3.5 Some salaried posts are reliant on grant funding. There is no guarantee that the post will be sustainable if/when the funding ceases or is withdrawn.

3.6 The Terms of Reference for the RAG comply with the Crime and Disorder Regulations 2007 with one exception. Lack of clear governance arrangements may lead to unnecessary disputes.

3.7 There is no formal agreement within the Partnership as to which partner should act as ‘Treasurer’. Funds may not be managed in an agreed manner.

3.8 The Risk Management strategy for the Partnership has yet to be completed. Risks may not be identified and/or reduced.

4 WAY FORWARD

4.1 All recommendations are in the Management Action Plan (Page 7). The Findings Summary, including positive findings, is in section 5, overleaf.

4.2 Finance

The Community Safety Manager should contact Strategic Finance to arrange a meeting to commence work on drafting a comprehensive budget for the Partnership.

The Community Safety Manager should liaise with finance support to explore the possibility of generating a report that would show the overall financial position of the Partnership funds held by MKC.

4.3 Law

The Terms of Reference for the Partnership should be reviewed to include a section that clarifies responsibility for finance.

4.4 Risk

The Responsible Authorities Group should formulate a risk management plan in conjunction with the council’s Risk Management section.
5 FINDINGS SUMMARY

5.1 Service Delivery

5.1.1 All the key partners are represented on The Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) which is responsible for formulating and implementing strategies and providing strategic and executive accountability, direction and decision-making. Several other groups report directly to RAG or indirectly via the Performance Group. The current reporting system is effective.

5.1.2 The Partnership Plan for 2008-2009 had five main priorities:

- Reduce violence in public places
- Tackle the effects of alcohol and drug misuse
- Tackle anti-social behaviour (including deliberate fire setting)
- Reduce repeat domestic violence
- Continue To Reduce Acquisitive Crime (Burglary, Theft, Robbery and Vehicle Crime)

Results published for 2008/9 showed that targets for tackling anti-social behaviour and the benchmarked targets for alcohol and drug misuse had been met whilst those for domestic violence and acquisitive crime were not met. Public Place Violence results showed that the number of assaults with less injury increased, whilst the number of serious violent offences decreased.

5.2 FINANCE

5.2.1 There is no formal agreement as to which partner should act as ‘Treasurer’. MKC receives the grants and other income that sustains the Partnership, however there is nothing within the Partnership’s Terms of Reference that states who is responsible for maintaining, controlling and monitoring this funding.

5.2.2 MKC holds funding for a number of specific projects and initiatives. Each project is separately accounted for within SAP but, currently, there is no report that shows the overall financial position of the Partnership funds held by MKC.

5.2.3 Accurate budget planning is difficult due to the nature of the Partnership’s work. The funds need to be flexible to enable the Partnership to respond to situations as and when they arise. However, budget plans should be prepared to avoid the risk of overspending.

5.2.4 Some salaried posts are reliant on grant funding. If the funding is only for a specified period there is no guarantee that the post will be sustainable if/when the funding ceases or is withdrawn. (This was a main risk identified by the Partnership in their meeting with the council’s Risk Management Officers.)
5.3 **LAW**

5.3.1 The basis of the Partnership is determined by The Crime and Disorder Regulations 2007 and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Review of the Terms of Reference for the various committees showed that the RAG Terms of Reference do not specify the term of office or grounds for removal of the Chair as required by section 3.4 of The Crime and Disorder Regulations 2007.

5.4 **DATA**

5.4.1 Statistics reported to the RAG and Performance Group are taken from live databases. Each reporting authority is responsible for the validity of these statistics. Due to the nature of the statistics being reported, there is occasionally a data lag and some figures may be subject to change.

5.5 **RISK**

5.5.1 Partnership intelligence is reported every two weeks to the Joint Agency Tasking and Co-ordination Group (JATAC). This enables action to be taken quickly when/if required. The Performance Group monitors the work of the Partnership. On a monthly basis they receive an updated report listing the various targets. Higher instances of a particular crime tend to be reported by the general public when their awareness of it is heightened by a specific initiative or they are more confident in coming forward to report the crime. This may distort the reported figures as the increase may be as a result of increased reporting rather than an increase in the incident itself e.g. domestic abuse incidents and racially and religiously aggravated crime.

5.5.2 It has not been possible for the audit to determine the total value of resources in kind to the partnership as many people give their time willingly. However, work in this area is included in the Resource Overview currently being finalised by the Partnership Consultant.

5.5.3 The cost effectiveness of most projects cannot be evaluated over the short term. For example it would be impossible to state that the level of assaults and other related crime had been reduced following one event to tackle a specific initiative. The taxi-marshalling (After8) initiative is an example of where an ongoing initiative has been successful.

5.6 **POSITIVE FINDINGS**

- 33 Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGS) were set up by the deadline of 31 March 2008.

- The Tattenhoe and Shenley Lodge area in Milton Keynes is one of 12 areas across the country identified by the Home Office as an exemplar in recognition of its neighbourhood policing and ‘can do’ attitude.
- Cross agency working, eg through JATAC, has resulted in partners working together to assist each other to achieve improvements in the lives of MK citizens. An example of this is the joint working of TVP and MKC’s Environmental Health department to reduce noise nuisance.

- A Public Service Agreement reward grant in excess of £0.75m was awarded to the Partnership in recognition of the work it had undertaken which had resulted in various targets being met.

- The Community Safety website is informative and split into the various strands being tackled by the Partnership.

- The public’s awareness of the work of the Partnership is heightened by media coverage of specific initiatives.

- The Data Analyst performs a ‘sensibility’ check on the data provided by the various authorities to ensure the reasonableness of reported figures.

- Following initial grant funding, some initiatives become self-funding, for example anti-social behaviour training, where the Partnership now provides the training courses which are funded by the people who wish to attend.

- The Partnership has set up projects, such as the Lighthouse Project. Now called MKACT, this deals with domestic violence and has been commissioned to a voluntary organisation to run.
# MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

The recommendations are categorised on the following basis:

- **Essential** - Implementation is required with immediate effect to address a weakness that fundamentally undermines the control/objective of that system.
- **Important** - Implementation is required within a short period of time to address weaknesses that seriously undermines the control/objective of that system.
- **Standard** - Management need to take recommended action within a reasonable period to address weaknesses that may undermine controls/objectives.

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<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Risk/ Implication</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Management Comments</th>
<th>Manager Responsible &amp; Target Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LAW</td>
<td>Funds may not be managed in an agreed manner.</td>
<td><strong>Important</strong> The Terms of Reference should be amended to state who is responsible for monitoring and controlling the Partnership’s funds.</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>Community Safety Manager 31 July 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LAW</td>
<td>Disputes may not be resolved promptly.</td>
<td><strong>Important</strong> The Terms of Reference should be amended to include the required information contained in The Crime and Disorder Regulations 2007 regarding the term of office and grounds for removal of the Chair. A clear process for agreeing and reviewing the chair is included in the implementation checklist of the 2007 Home Office guidance on effective partnership working.</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>Community Safety Manager 31 July 2009</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>LAW</td>
<td>Decisions may be made by a minority and not be agreed or honoured by those not present when the decision was made.</td>
<td><strong>Important</strong> Terms of Reference for committees should include the Membership of the committee, the quorum and the frequency of meetings.</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>Community Safety Manager 31 July 2009</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>FINANCE</td>
<td>Spending may not be adequately controlled</td>
<td><strong>Important</strong> A budget plan showing the total value of the Partnership should be drawn up which should be regularly updated and monitored.</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>Community Safety Manager 31 July 2009</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>FINANCE</td>
<td>Accurate determination of the effectiveness and efficiency of the partnership work may not be possible. Overspending may occur.</td>
<td><strong>Important</strong> The Community Safety Manager should contact Strategic Finance to request their assistance in developing comprehensive budget information.</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>Community Safety Manager 31 July 2009</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>RISK</td>
<td>Objectives may not be met if appropriate strategies to deal with risk are not in place</td>
<td><strong>Important</strong> The Partnership should adopt an appropriate risk management methodology to enable the identification of risks and the allocation of responsibility for management of each risk. The Chair of the RAG should liaise with the council’s Risk Management Officers.</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>Already commenced work with Risk Management team 31 December 2009</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>FINANCE</td>
<td>Duplication of work. Misreporting in the transfer of figures.</td>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>The Partnership’s finance officer should liaise with finance support to generate reports directly from the data held on SAP. Bespoke reports should be created, if necessary.</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
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NB Any cost implications arising from implementation of the recommendations by Mouchel must be agreed in advance with the appropriate Client Officer and the Partnership Delivery Manager