

GLOUCESTERSHIRE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD
Meeting Notes
27th July 2010, Shire Hall

Present:

Cllr. Chas Fellows, Chair
Tony Childs, Glos County Council
Dafydd Evans, Environment Agency
David Hagg, Gloucestershire District Councils (Stroud District Council)
Daniel Judges, Economic Partnership
Martin Lane, Rural LSP Representative
Catrin Maby, NBE Block Champion
Gill Morris, Urban LSP Representative Deputy (Cheltenham Borough Council)
Sue Oppenheimer, Voluntary and Community Sector
Sally Pearson, Health and Wellbeing Partnership
Nigel Riglar, Transport Sub-Partnership
Colin Studholme, Voluntary and Community Sector (Glos Wildlife Trust)
Kierson Wise, Severn Wye Energy Agency

In attendance:

Sheila Corkett, Road Safety Partnership, Glos County Council
Alison Dearden, Road Safety Partnership, Glos County Council
Richard Gillingham, Transport Planning & Highways DC Unit, Glos County Council
Nichola Hughes, Glos County Council
John Mallows, Cycle Cheltenham
John Seddon, Transport Planning & Highways DC Unit, Glos County Council

Apologies:

Simon Pickering, Glos Biodiversity Partnership

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chas Fellows (CF) introduced himself and welcomed Board members, speakers and observers to the meeting.

2. Notes of the last meeting: 18th May 2010

Notes of last meeting agreed.

3. Matters Arising

Sue Oppenheimer (SO) provided feedback from the VCS strategic group on the GEP Communications Plan, describing the plan as being quite passive and top-down in its approach. The plan should explain why it is there, what its purpose is and be linked more clearly to the objectives of the group. The comments from the VCS were

circulated at the meeting and will be made available on the GEP website, along with all papers and presentations from the meeting.

Catrin Maby (CM) explained that the draft plan was to kick start discussion on stakeholder engagement and communications as there was a general lack of interest on the subject.

SO commented that the VCS would like to be more active in supporting the development of such a plan and while they did not have the capacity to lead on it, suggested that those leading on it invite a small group of volunteers to contribute to the writing of the plan.

CF suggested that a small task group be formed to develop a more inclusive plan as soon as possible, if this is not possible ensure there is a framework for clear communications between all interested parties.

Action: Kierson Wise (KW) to arrange for a working group including the VCS to look at the current plan and make improvements

GEP budget – Update and Proposals

Tony Childs (TC) gave a brief overview of the Young Energy People (YEP!) Programme. Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA) has worked with 6 schools in Gloucestershire to develop and pilot a programme where schools and local businesses have cooperated in implementing energy saving measures. The school building has been used as a case study for pupils to develop skills in energy auditing, basic energy management and initiating an efficiency campaign. Following their training students have been given the opportunity to transfer their skills to a local workplace initiating energy savings there. This is now being rolled out to a further 15 schools for the second phase of this project. TC proposed to use the £19,000 of GEP money along with other funding to roll this out to the remaining 21 secondary schools and also link in to primary schools. There was also a proposal to use some of the remaining GEP funding on the Total Energy Project, presented at the last GEP meeting. At this stage however, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) are still working out the costs.

Nigel Riglar (NR) added that Glos County Council did a presentation on the Total Energy concept at the Community Strategy Executive Board (CSEB) and CESB were in support of GCC carrying out a feasibility study. NR confirmed that the money going into the feasibility study would ultimately help the organisations' strategic procurement and energy management teams develop a joint framework for buying renewable technologies. NR asked the Board for agreement 'offline' and suggested that if the board were not happy with the proposal, to bring forward any comments at the next GEP Board meeting.

David Hagg (DH) enquired whether this initiative would contribute to Public Sector Organisations' 10:10 commitments and whether there was any scope to level this into other NI186 projects such as YEP! TC confirmed that this was the case.

4. Introduction to the Draft Local Transport Plan (LTP 3)

Richard Gillingham (RG) gave an overview of the draft LTP 3 (2011-2026). RG reminded the group that LTP3 is still a statutory requirement and that it is an opportunity to set a transport blueprint for the next 15 years. LTP 3 is policy based with a flexible action plan within it to allow for further funding cuts. Full presentation attached.

The LTP3 process is currently at the Full Public Consultation stage, July-October 2010. Members of the Board were given copies of the LTP3 summary guide as well as a questionnaire for feedback. Feedback can be also be provided by filling in the online questionnaire at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/LTP3.

Comments and questions:

CM asked whether CO₂ reduction targets were being addressed in the plan. RG responded by saying that the task group were reluctant to set specific targets due to the indefinite future of the National Indicator set, planning system and future funding. After the consultation they hope to be in a place to set more definitive targets and would like to use Vantage Point software, recently procured by GCC, to inform the target setting process.

Dafydd Evans (DE) asked whether the proposed transport system took into account resilience, i.e. resilience to a changing climate as well as a changing economy. RG replied by saying the Transport Asset Management Plan does take resilience into account but agreed LTP3 should also include this issue.

DE also added the comment that any such plan should be looking at and addressing what is actually fundamentally the driving force behind current transport trends in order to understand and predict, for example, if there will be an increase in demand for rural transport.

Sally Pearson (SP) highlighted that aspects of sustainability and resilience could be achieved collaboratively in the Public Sector through aligned models of service. John Seddon (JS) added that while GCC leads on the development of the LTP3 and the policy within it, all of the partner agencies and Public Sector Organisation included, are responsible for its delivery.

SO spoke on behalf of Graham Stanley (GS) from Transport 21 who felt that the VCS were unable to contribute to the development of the LTP 3. The transport sub-group has not been very successful of late and that because of lack of funding, there appears to be a conflict between economic development and the green agenda in the plan. There could be a synergy here however it is not very clear from the plan, GS suggested more lateral thinking. The VCS Strategy group looked at community transport recently and the suggestion was that community transport is potentially a big partner to be considered in LTP 3. Better use of and co-ordination of these existing services could help improve local transport without needing extra funding.

The VCS Strategy Group invited RG to speak about LTP 3 at their next meeting in October. They also asked for an extension on the October deadline so that the group can provide more detailed feedback on the Plan.

RG explained that there were disappointing numbers on the LTP3 subgroups which is why they had to use GEP as a consultation board instead.

CF asked the Board to decide how best to feedback comments to the LTP3 task group.

SWEA felt that Local Authorities should adopt a more forward thinking and ambitious position on LTP 3 regarding CO₂ reduction targets. CM suggested GEP ask the LTP 3 task group to set a target and advised the group to be transparent about the difficulty in getting funding to achieve all of the targets.

John Mallows (JM) welcomed the re-emphasis on utility cycling but felt that the plan appeared to promote cycling too much on the basis that it solves other problems (CO₂ emissions, health benefits, air quality, traffic congestion) rather than promote it simply because it is enjoyable. JM also felt that the consultation questionnaire was a little prohibitive and would have preferred a more personalised feedback system for example the ability to add detailed feedback rather than just tick a box. RG reminded JM that this is possible on the online form. JM also felt that aims like 'encourage people to use cycling facilities' were too explicit.

On behalf of the Districts DH said Districts would be happy to support the Plan in terms of community engagement.

CF suggested that a member of the Board attend the next Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and feedback comments on behalf of the group. CF asked that GEP receive headline messages from the Consultation.

Actions:

- JS/RG to send GEP headline messages from the Consultation.
- CF asked for a representative from GEP to attend the next Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and feedback comments on behalf of the group
- RG to bring the issue of target setting back to the Board after the consultation process the CAA spending review.
- KW to collate any GEP Board feedback on the LTP 3 consultation.

5. Strategic Biodiversity Action Planning for Gloucestershire

Colin Studholme (CS) gave a brief overview of the new landscape scale delivery approach to the Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The new plan is based around 'Nature Map' and Simon Pickering will present the new BAP at a future GEP Board meeting.

The focus of Colin's presentation was the State of Environment Report and what it will include in terms of biodiversity. CS demonstrated how digitised maps showing

changes in land use/habitat type for a small pilot study area are potentially very useful. See attached presentation.

Comments and questions:

DE commented on the report noting it is very terrestrial based at the minute. The Environment Agency would be willing to provide information to fill the aquatic knowledge gaps. DE asked whether invasive species were being considered in the report, CS assured the Board that invasive were being studied and reported on.

DE also recommended that understanding the value of biodiversity to the country, to the economy, to tourism, to food production etc would be invaluable. CS responded by saying it is notoriously difficult to know the financial value of the environment. Current estimates are largely based on agri-environment schemes and the value of assets etc but agreed that this represents a knowledge gap for GEP.

The Board suggested that Gloucestershire County Council as a significant land holder review the results of the pilot study (digitised maps) to see habitat changes.

Action:

- KW to check if the old CSSI unit did an environment valuation study for the Cotswolds.

6. Climate Change Adaptation

NR briefed the Board on the Gloucestershire Councils progress on NI 188 'Planning to adapt to climate change.' The report summarised the suggested Level 3 approach. Climate Change Adaptation must be embedded into local authority operations and partnerships. The councils are on track to achieve level 3 by March 2011. As the LAA period comes to an end we need implementation of levels 3 and 4 to lie with Councils and the local strategic partnerships. NR referred the GEP Board to the recommendations on page two of the attached report. NR asked the Board to consider these recommendations, endorse the proposed approach and progress through CSEB.

Comments and questions:

SO reminded the Board that LSPs are under resourced and may struggle to deliver - there needs to be accountability for some of the actions that will arise from Level 3 and the associated Adaptation Strategy & Action Plan. NR highlighted recommendation 4 which was around scrutiny arrangements.

All agreed to support recommendations to CSEB.

7. Updates

GEP Risk Register

KW described the key risks as outlined in the register and updated the board on outstanding items. These were very few but included the issue of securing resources for delivery of GEP outcomes and developing a communications plan (as discussed earlier). KW will report back on mitigating actions and include key risks in quarterly reporting to Performance team at GCC.

Community Strategy Executive Board

CM reported that CSEB has set up a small project board to take forward the Total Energy proposal and feasibility studies. CM also reported that the draft compact had been approved.

Budget cut update

Area Based Grant: NR discussed the national deficit and reminded the Board that Gloucestershire County Council's share of the deficit is £6 million and this will affect the Area Based Grant. There will be a £3 million cut in the Children and Young People budget. As a result there will be no more school travel plans, which could impact on the transport element of the Gloucestershire Environment Partnership Plan. At present all but 10 secondary schools in Gloucestershire have a school travel plan. When the work finishes in the autumn, all those schools who wanted a plan will have one. The aspiration was to help deliver, implement and monitor these plans but we no longer have the resources to do so. The £92k for the school travel plan work originally came through GEP however it will conclude in September 2010 and school travel plans will no longer be delivered by Local Authorities.

Reward Grant: There was a reward grant for the two LAA stretch targets. It is now clear that only half of the expected reward grant will be available to claim. Partners should be aware of this. The Government want to have reward grants paid by December 2010 - where there are no results yet, accountable managers will need to predict outturn figures. The allocation of the reward grant to partners was decided at a previous GEP meeting. CM added that SWEA would be putting their share of the reward grant back into CO2 reduction/fuel poverty projects and reminded the Board that they would need to consider the implications of these cuts to next year's round of projects.

Progress on NI185/NI186 carbon reduction targets

TC gave an update on Public Sector Task Group progress and a description of their 2010/11 delivery plan. Full report attached. TC noted that unfortunately at the time the report was pulled together several organisations were unable to provide their 2009/10 emissions outturn. The Board noted that there were some irregularities in the tables and often the financial and emission savings were 'not known' for many of the organisations' planned projects. SO said it would be helpful to know which projects are secured financially. DH felt that the seriousness of the issue – CRC financial liability /public sector expenditure on energy - is not resonating strongly

enough with CSEB. GM added that in Cheltenham Borough Council's case, their gas and electricity consumption had gone down this year but their emissions from transport had risen and she felt it would be useful to capture this in the revised report. CM felt that the Public Sector activity needed to be more transparent. We are half way through the LAA period, Public Sector Organisations should be able to monitor emissions and quantify their projects better.

Action:

- TC to bring revised and updated report back to the next GEP board meeting.

KW gave a brief update on the Domestic Sector Task Group. See Domestic and Business Monitoring Plan, attached. Of the measurable targets, Gloucestershire is on track or ahead of target in most cases. Business Sector progress - though a few projects started late, most targets are on track.

8. Key messages for Gloucestershire Conference Bulletin

Agreed that the following key messages:

- LTP 3 is out for consultation
- State of the Environment Report is providing useful data for monitoring land use change and biodiversity
- That NI188 level 2 has been achieved and level 3 will need a much broader engagement across the Conference
- Public Sector Task Group progress report: 2008/9 data now available for all public sector organisations and 2009/10 outturns available soon.

9. A.O.B

VCS correspondence on spending cuts was circulated at the meeting and read out by SO.

10. Dates of next meeting

Tuesday 2nd November 2010

At 2.00pm – 4.00pm, Members' Room, Shire Hall, Gloucester