

Glos Environment Partnership
Minutes of Interim Steering Group Meeting
Held on Tuesday Nov 6th 2007 At Glos Wildlife Trust

Present

Peter Wiggins (Glos County Council - GCC)
Sally Pickering (Partnership and Participation Project)
Simon Pickering (Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) Environment Strategy Group)
Michael Heap (Chair, VCS Assembly)
Kaye Welfare (Local Area Agreement, Natural & Built Environment Block Lead)
Gordon McGlone (Interim NBE rep on the Community Strategy Executive Board)
Barry Wyatt (Stroud District Council)

1. Apologies

Nigel Riglar (Stroud District Council), - represented by Barry Wyatt instead.

Michael Heap chaired the meeting.

2. LAA Update

Kaye presented an update of progress so far on the refresh process.

The Natural & Built Environment (NBE) Block has looked at the new national performance indicator set to check which are already included in the existing Local Area Agreement (LAA) outcomes, and will be working, over the next few weeks, to put together a business case for each PI to remain in the LAA. 8 PIs from the NBE block will need to be selected for the refreshed LAA. All existing PIs are in the new indicator set, but there may be new issues that need to be included in the refreshed LAA as well such as transport.

As far as the 2nd quarter monitoring goes, most actions were on target but a few are behind. This is probably due to the targets having been set unrealistically and Kaye is confident the targets will be met by the end of the year.

Actions Agreed

Peter to circulate the LAA refresh timetable

Peter and Kaye to work on draft outline proposals to be submitted by Nov 22nd and email rest of group for comments as required.

3. Launch Event Report (attached)

Sally presented the summary report of the Launch Event and said that a write-up of all the comments received from the display post-its, evaluation forms and the workshop notes was also available.

Generally there was positive feedback from the conference, with the speakers and workshops rated highly, but some complaints about the venue re environmental sustainability. The meeting noted that this partnership needs to set an example around such issues and to give this more thought in the future, although it also noted that there are no "Green" venues in the county that could have been used instead.

Regarding the proposals put to the conference, there was general endorsement of them all, and all comments had been considered and incorporated into the recommendations in the report

4. The Role of the Partnership

The meeting agreed that:

The role of the Partnership should be:

- To take a **strategic** lead on environmental issues.
- To provide **advice** and help set targets for Gloucestershire Conference partners to assist in co-ordinating work across the county.
- To make decisions where appropriate, particularly in matters relating to the Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA).

5. Priorities of the Partnership

It was agreed that, whilst there were several comments from the conference that the Climate Change priority was over-arching, they needed to remain as three separate priorities. This was because, although transport and waste contributed to climate change, climate change did not necessarily contribute to transport or to waste.

Peter said that transport is being treated nationally as an economic issue and that there was debate locally as to whether transport should be managed by the Economic Development & Enterprise (EDE) Partnership (Glos 1st) or the Environment Partnership. He said that the County Council proposes that transport be managed by the Environment Partnership in the short-term, and be reviewed once the outcome of the sub-national review of governmental arrangements had been finalised.

The meeting therefore agreed that:

The initial priorities for the Partnership will be:

- Climate change
- Transport
- Waste

6. Governance of the Partnership

The meeting agreed that the governance of the Partnership will be:

- The Partnership will be open to all organisations and individuals.
- The Partnership will be managed by a Board.
- Existing issue-based/ thematic environmental partnerships will feed into the Board.
- The Partnership will be supported by a Partnership Manager and administrative assistant.

Peter presented the attached paper outlining the proposed membership of the Board which, he hoped, would meet both the needs of GCC and of the wider Partnership. This

differed slightly to the proposals put to the conference to take account of comments made by delegates. The changes were as follows:

- Place for a “Water” partnership had been removed because there was no obvious lead agency for water other than the Environment Agency, who would be on the Board anyway.
- GCC are very keen that they chair the Partnership because they have the responsibility for delivering on the key priority areas of waste and transport.
- A place has been added for Glos 1st, in order to include the business sector.
- The “climate change and energy” place would become just Energy because there is no one agency that leads on climate change as it is an issue that is included in all the other issues .
- English Heritage had been added to take account of the need to include the built environment
- Natural England had been added to take account of this request from several delegates at the conference. They would be the specialists on land issues.
- GOSW have been added as the “local face of DEFRA”
- Neither the transport or waste issue currently has a thematic sub partnership, and these would also need setting up.

There was some discussion around the request by GCC to chair the partnership and a concern that there needed to remain a good balance between the public, private and voluntary sectors. This was partly to maintain the engagement of wider partners but also to recognise the fact that individuals from these other sectors were often experts in the relevant issues. It was agreed that the Chair’s role should not be political and that the partnership must not be seen as a GCC structure, but that this can be ensured by having a clear job description for the Chair and all Board members.

It was also noted that the Board will be accountable to the wider Partnership and that ensuring that their wider views are included will be crucial to this

The role of Partnership Manager was discussed and whether there was any conflict of interest if this was the same person as the block lead. It was agreed that it made sense for the manager to be employed by SWEA so that they were closely linked into the work of the Block Lead but that it was likely to be a separate job and that this person could potentially work from Shire Hall some of the time to ensure links with officers there as well. This is similar to the arrangement for the Director of Glos First.

Peter said that GCC were keen to point out that they had a responsibility for delivering an action plan on household waste and could not be distracted from that by any other priorities. The meeting acknowledged this and that all partners would have such priorities and that this was not a problem.

Michael said that he had asked Julie Girling if the Partnership Manager could be resourced using money from Severn Trent (£50k) and Peter confirmed that this proposal had been sent to Severn Trent and a reply was awaited. It was noted that, given that the Board recognised the importance of engaging with the “grass roots”, it

would be important to ensure that VCS engagement co-ordinated by the Partnership and Participation Project, was resourced. Other partnerships did this by resourcing a thematic VCS Strategy Group, from which the VCS reps could gain the views of, and engage with, the wider community sector.

The meeting agreed:

- The Board membership as attached
- That Gloucestershire County Council should Chair the Board and that this should be reviewed after two years.
- That the Board will nominate a representative to the Community Strategy Executive Board (CSEB).
- That the Board will include at least 2 members of the VCS, including one designated VCS place.
- The Board will be supported by support officers who may accompany Board members to meetings as advisors.
- That the Partnership will require a Partnership Manager, and administrator, in order to be effective and that finding funding for this is a priority.
- That Terms of Reference and a Job description for Board members will need to be developed as a priority, which will include a requirement to be knowledgeable in their area and to represent their sector be developed.
- That sub partnerships be set up for Waste and Transport as per attached proposals.

Actions:

Peter to draft job description, and terms of reference.

Peter to continue to set up sub partnerships for waste and transport.

7. Securing Partnership Approval

The agreements made today had altered slightly from those endorsed by the Conference and the wider Partnership needed to endorse these decisions. However, this could not be done before moving forward to set up the first Board meeting. **It was agreed** that Michael would check that the various parts of the Glos conference were satisfied with the structure when he met with the Chairs next week. It was also agreed that the wider Partnership does, however, need to see that things are moving on and to see how their comments have been taken on board, so the conference report and agreements made today need to be circulated asap

Actions agreed

Peter to ensure that a letter be sent, by end of November, from Julie Girling and David Hagg, who have both already indicated their willingness to be on the Board, to invite the relevant people to join the Board and invite them to the first meeting in January.

Michael to run the proposals past Peter Bungard and Jackie Hall next week.

Sally to circulate the conference attendance list, conference report and agreements made today, with info about how to keep in touch with developments via the Glos conference website and date for next VCS Strategy Group meeting.

8. Interim Arrangements

Peter pointed out the template for an agreement which would need to be drawn up and signed for the County Council (attached) It was agreed that we should copy the format from an existing partnership and adapt to this partnership's needs, to approve at the next Board meeting.

Action: Peter to draft the Partnership Agreement

The interim arrangements proposed to the conference **were agreed** with the addition of Nigel Riglar to the Interim Steering Group. This was in his role as representing the local authorities on the NBE Block and also because of his expertise, having been involved in the early days of setting up the LAA.

The Interim Steering group was therefore **agreed as**

- Gloucestershire County Council (Peter Wiggins)
- LAA Natural and Built Environment Block Lead (Kaye Welfare)
- Chair of VCS Assembly (Michael Heap)
- Chair of VCS Environment Strategy Group (Simon Pickering)
- Interim representative on the CSEB (Gordon McGlone: Glos Wildlife Trust)
- Admin support from the Partnership and Participation Project
- District Council (Nigel Riglar)

9. Future Issues

Peter pointed out that the Partnership will need to draw up a Risk Register, both for the LAA and for the management of the partnership, and that there was a toolkit available to do this, which he had circulated previously. The meeting noted that toolkit and agreed that this would be the job of the Partnership Manager once in post. This issue highlighted the importance of this role and the fact that the Partnership won't work effectively without it.

Michael said that another issue which would be a real challenge to the Partnership would be how to engage its whole membership, who were very keen to be actively involved. Barry pointed out that many small community groups were the people actually delivering on many environmental issues and that they were from the very communities that the Partnership existed to serve.

Sally said that this engagement in other Partnerships was ensured through the VCS structures such as the strategy groups. It was also noted that a Partnership Manger working within a VCO??? would hopefully have a more community focussed approach to this role and it would be his/ her role to ensure the engagement of the full partnership.

10. Future Meetings

Interim Steering Group – Monday 3rd December 10am – 12 noon at Stroud District Council (to be confirmed)

Full Board Meetings – January and March 2008 – dates to be confirmed by Peter

Full Partnership meeting – late spring 2008o