

# Minutes of VCSE Strategic Partnership Meeting

Held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023

At Barnwood Trust, Overton House

<b>In Attendance:</b>
Kobe Francis (KF) – The Music Works
Chris Brown (CB) – Forest Voluntary Action Forum
Pippa Jones (PJ) – Create Gloucestershire
Matt Lennard (ML) – Gloucestershire VCS Alliance
Indigo Redfern (IR) – GL11
Sally Byng (SB) – Barnwood Trust
Vicci Livingstone-Thompson (VL-T) – Inclusion Gloucestershire – MEETING CHAIR

<b>Apologies:</b>
Nicola Simpson (NS) – Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Tom Beasley (TB) – Active Gloucestershire
William North (WN) – The Long Table (via Teams)

<b>Guests:</b>
Jill Parker (JP/Chair) – Gloucestershire VCS Alliance

<b>Minutes by:</b>
Jen Smith (JS) – Freelance EA

The meeting commenced at 13:40.

<b>93. Welcome, introductions and apologies</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<p>Apologies had been received from NS and TB.</p> <p>Apologies were accepted.</p>	
<b>94. Declarations of interest</b>	
<p>There were no new interests declared.</p>	
<b>95. Minutes of the last meeting (Mon 4<sup>th</sup> Sept 2023)</b>	
<p>The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
<b>96. Review of Action Tracker</b>	
<p>ML confirmed GREAG would join the November meeting, but the director preferred to do it online because of childcare. The group agreed it would be better to hold the meeting in person, so suggested bringing the meeting forward by half an hour and reimbursing childcare costs if required. ML would discuss with the director of GREAG and confirm back.</p> <p>JP updated the group on the recent ILP Reps meeting, advising that when both the ILP Reps and Strategic Partnership get together in November, the Reps wanted to know about the practical things the Strategic Partnership was doing, its priorities, workstreams and how these were identified. The Reps were also keen to have shared priorities with the Strategic Partnership that they could feed into ILPs and asked whether a member of the group could attend their quarterly ILP Reps meetings, with a different person in attendance each time to share the time burden. If there was a suitable shared topic, the Reps were also keen to attend an SP meeting on occasion.</p> <p>CiC research proposal was yet to be sent to Gloucestershire Funders; it was agreed JP would send this on ML's behalf.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>JP</p>

	<p>JP advised that the infrastructure work had stalled and she had a meeting next week with the ICB to get it going again; it was a bigger piece of work than anticipated and a proposal would be forward in March. Mary Hutton has said funding will be dependent on whether there is money left at year end. This meant that there was no indicative budget to work towards.</p> <p>It was agreed it was better to get the thinking and ideas right before looking at the funding amount; it was complex work and needed the foundations in place first; a well thought through plan was more important. SB suggested that the group should be confident and assertive in their proposal, as if there was a large sum for this work. SB also suggested that if a barrier to creating this proposal was time, could the capacity be funded by Gloucestershire Funders or the ICB?</p> <p>The group agreed to submit a bid to Glos Funders to research and produce an options appraisal for future VCSE infrastructure.</p> <p>The ICB was doing something similar to this for March, but it was very much through an NHS lens; there needed to be a focus on what the VCS needed, but the work could be done alongside the NHS. SB and PJ thought the bid should be shared with HCT.</p> <p>It was agreed IR would create the draft bid for Glos Funders and would share with the group for comment.</p> <p>JP asked for a contribution from one of the group members for the Strategic Partnership newsletter which would be published once every 3 months. KF volunteered to produce something, JP and KF would discuss.</p> <p>All other actions were complete or on the agenda for discussion.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b>  <b>All – One member to attend each quarterly ILP Rep meeting</b>  <b>JP – Submit the CiC research proposal to Gloucestershire Funders</b>  <b>IR – Draft a Gloucestershire Funders bid for the VCS infrastructure work and share with the group for comment.</b>  <b>KF/JP – Discuss contribution to the newsletter.</b></p>	<p>IR</p> <p>KB/JP</p>
<p><b>97.</b></p>	<p><b>Review of VCSE Strategic Partnership</b></p> <p>JP advised that at the last meeting facilitated by Anne Brinkhoff, it was agreed that the group would identify and work on a small number of priorities. 2 key areas of work had been agreed: CiC research and Infrastructure of the VCS. It was agreed that influencing commissioning would form a third priority. KF also thought there was something about communication and connection within the sector which was important for the group to look at.</p> <p>CB commented that 'the identification of opportunities for VCSE' and 'understanding and responding to barriers experienced by VCSE' were missing from the ToR. JP to amend ToR.</p> <p>JP shared the reviewed delivery plan. VLT suggested that future meeting topics were planned in advance and aligned to the delivery plan. PJ suggested it was called a learning and delivery plan as a lot of what the Strategic Partnership were doing was about capturing learning and sharing.</p> <p>In reference to the influencing and commissioning piece, ML commented that the purpose of the group was to implement the MOU and this was totally connected to commissioning. There was a discussion around relationships improving, but commissioning practices and processes not.</p>	<p>JP</p> <p>JP</p>

	<p>JP reflected that this was 3 large pieces of work for the group with the comms piece throughout it all. There was a need to be realistic about what this group could achieve.</p> <p>The group agreed that the Community Wellbeing Services contract would be a good one to try and influence how it was commissioned; conversations needed to start now ready for March 2024.</p> <p>The group discussed the frequency and timing of their monthly meetings, with suggestions such as alternating face to face and digital and rotating the host venue. It was agreed meeting less wasn't suitable. SB talked about the HCT meetings; they met weekly online first thing on the same day to keep the mind focused, then met in person once a month. The chair took brief notes from the weekly meetings and shared them informally via email so those who could not make it were kept up to date and this meant that the monthly in person meetings were a better use of time. The group agreed to try this for 3 months from January on a Tuesday morning to see if it worked for them.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b>  <b>JP – Amend ToR.</b>  <b>JP – Add the delivery and learning plan to future meeting agendas for discussion</b>  <b>All/JP – Meet online weekly from January onwards, Tuesday mornings. JP to schedule the meetings.</b></p>	All/JP
<b>98.</b>	<b>Tender Opportunities</b>	
	<p>The group had been asked to bring any tender opportunities they heard about to the meetings.</p> <p>The CALMHS mental health contract (£700K) was coming up; it was currently owned by The Independence Trust.</p> <p>Another contract coming up for tender was for CASA, this was £100k for the entire county.</p> <p>The Family Hubs contract and the Youth Support contracts were also available for tender. These were tight contracts that were likely to operate at a deficit. Views on this from the sector had been shared with the Child Services team, and they simply didn't respond. The research undertaken into creating a children's plan for the county was poor. Although the big nationals could take the risk with these contracts, they had no accountability to the county. The group discussed role and level of influence of the Child Friendly Coalition.</p> <p>In reference to the Social Prescribing contract, PJ explained that Create Glos, Active Glos and Glos Wildlife Trust received development funding to look at social prescribing in a more diverse way (eg arts and outside spaces) and the learnings from this work were being fed into the creation of the Social Prescribing contract.</p> <p>It was agreed to start a conversation with Hannah Gorf regarding the forthcoming Community Wellbeing services tender.</p> <p><b>Action: JP to invite Hannah Gorf to the next meeting.</b></p>	JP
<b>99.</b>	<b>Issues Facing the Sector</b>	
	<p>An example was shared of extremely poor contracting and contract management which was putting a VCSE organisation at risk. This included no uplift, lack of clarity about penalties for non-compliance and no communication. The MOU needed to be used here to rectify the issues. It was queried whether this was something the Strategic Partnership could pick up on the organisation's behalf.</p>	

	<p>The group strongly agreed to support the VCSE organisation with this. ML would write to Deb Lee the Chief Officer for the hospitals on the group's behalf.</p> <p>PJ queried how this aligned with the groups Terms of Reference; the group needed to be clear on what the criteria were when they stepped in to support an organisation. Following earlier comments about relationships improving but practices and processes not, SB suggested that a simple, one side of A4 annual report was produced reflecting back on the first year of the MoU, being honest and direct and raising all the issues that are still being faced; this would enable clearer support for organisations that were negatively impacted by this. The group liked this idea, commenting that it would also show externally what the Strategic Partnership were doing. SB would create the structure of the report and share with the group to add in examples.</p> <p>CB talked to other issues he'd heard raised in the sector which included lack of access to community buildings, lots of requests for legal support and digital funding support appearing to be coming to an end.</p> <p>The group also noted the unexpected closure of GL1.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b>  <b>ML – Write to Deb Lee on behalf of the group.</b>  <b>SB/All – SB to draft structure of annual report on MOU to share with the group to input examples.</b></p>	<p>ML</p> <p>SB/All</p>
100.	<b>Updates</b>	
	<p>TB was confirmed for another year as the VCSE Strategic Partnership rep on Glos Health and Care Partnership.</p> <p>IR was attending the Clinical Programmes Board. No update.</p> <p>PJ left the meeting at 15.28</p>	
101.	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
	<p>JP queried inviting GREAG to the November Strategic Partnership meeting when during this meeting the group had decided to include other substantial items on the agenda. ML suggested they were invited to the December meeting instead.</p> <p>As not enough time was given to discuss issues being faced by the sector, it was agreed to add this to the November meeting agenda.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b>  <b>ML – Speak with GREAG about coming to the December meeting instead.</b>  <b>JP – Add Issues Facing the Sector to the November meeting.</b></p>	<p>ML</p> <p>JP</p>
	<p>The meeting concluded at 15:30.</p> <p>The date and venue of the next meeting is:</p> <p><b>1:30 – 3:30pm – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023, venue Barnwood Trust, Overton House.</b></p>	

<b>Acronym Key</b>	
ICP	Integrated Care Partnership (also known as the "One Glos Health and Wellbeing Partnership")
CASA	Community Autism Support & Advice
ILP	Integrated Locality Partnerships
VCSE	Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise sector