

Minutes of VCSE Strategic Partnership Meeting

Held on Monday 4th September 2023

At The Music Works

In Attendance:
William North (WN) – The Long Table (via Teams)
Chris Brown (CB) – Forest Voluntary Action Forum
Nicola Simpson (NS) – Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Matt Lennard (ML) – Gloucestershire VCS Alliance
Indigo Redfern (IR) – GL11

Apologies:
Kobe Francis (KF) – The Music Works
Pippa Jones (PJ) – Create Gloucestershire
Sally Byng (SB) – Barnwood Trust
Vicci Livingstone-Thompson (VL-T) – Inclusion Gloucestershire
Tom Beasley (TB) – Active Gloucestershire

Guests:
Jill Parker (JP/Chair) – Gloucestershire VCS Alliance
Anne Brinkhoff (AB) – Discussion Facilitator

Minutes by:
Jen Smith (JS) – Freelance EA

The meeting commenced at 13:40.

85. Welcome, introductions and apologies	ACTION
<p>Apologies had been received from SB, VLT, PJ and TB who had conflicting appointments.</p> <p>KF attempted to join the meeting from Turkey but could not connect.</p> <p>Introductions were made to and from JS and AB.</p> <p>Apologies were accepted.</p>	
86. Declarations of interest	
<p>There were no new interests declared.</p>	
87. Review of the VCSE Strategic Partnership	
<p>AB asked the group to consider where they thought the partnership currently was on its journey, to talk briefly about this and to raise any issues about the partnership they wished to discuss today.</p> <p>ML placed the group at the crossroads, he felt that there was huge potential for the group but it was getting stuck in the forming stage; strong opinions and characters trying to do this complex piece of work made it difficult to agree on any actual actions. ML wanted to agree the scope of the work of the group so it could then be delivered.</p> <p>NS also placed the group at the crossroads and commented that she was not clear on the remit of the group still. NS thought that the group had good discussions, but that action was lacking, and suggested that some easy wins would perhaps get this moving. NS thought that the relationship with the ICB was also at a crossroads, it felt like positive change was happening.</p>	

<p>CB thought that the group had achieved some good work so far and was at the point of assessing where it was and choosing what to do next.</p> <p>IR felt that the group were at the crossroads and commented on the enormity of the work for the group. People in the sector had been asking what the group were doing and it had been disempowering to not be able to share any actions. IR thought there was a need for an actions priority list and also raised a concern about several members regularly not attending the monthly meetings.</p> <p>WN thought that the group were unsure what it was doing. There was lots of energy, but lots of differing opinions and approaches which made it hard to move to action.</p> <p>JP commented on the lack of action as well, noting that as Chair, in 12-18 months time she would start to have conversations with people about new membership of the group and was concerned that people would query what the group had actually achieved.</p> <p>ML highlighted that from the system perspective, the group had a good reputation and people wanted and needed the group to work.</p> <p>Agreed themes, concerns and ways forward: How the group represented the sector, attendance of meetings, agree easy wins, agree the group's scope and delivery and how the group communicates all of this to the sector.</p> <p>The group discussed the current Terms of Reference, and agreed it was too broad and complex, there was not enough time for them to continue the work outside of the meetings alongside their regular roles. The remit of the group needed to be reframed and prioritised to make the work realistic and achievable.</p> <p>ML thought that the coordination of representation of the sector was being done, but that encouraging behaviour change in the system was not, commenting that commitment to the MoU had not been pressure tested. There was a discussion about poor behaviours when it came to funding, CB raised that some of the sector would bow to poor behavioural pressures because they needed the funding.</p> <p>AB asked members what good looked like for the group? ML replied that good looked like contracts of appropriate size for the VCS which were co-designed and co-delivered. NS suggested inviting the ICB to a monthly meeting.</p> <p>The group discussed the issue of the Local Authority not being signed up to the MoU with no intention of doing so either, and queried whether this was a tangible piece of work for the group to push forward with. The relationship with the ICB appeared to be growing, the real problems were with the LA.</p> <p>There was also a discussion about enabling a joined-up response from the sector to contracts and funding.</p> <p>JP highlighted that the monthly meetings took time out of member's 'normal' roles, and members had minimal time outside of these meetings to progress the work, so it was important to hone down what was within the group's remit. It felt right to prioritise the research on CICs and also the potential funding from Mary Hutton to support VCS infrastructure. The group had previously had conversations about specific problems in the sector, but the group was not there to solve everything, looking at these problems made the group's task impossible. JP also wanted to focus on comms with the VCSE sector so people know what the group is doing.</p> <p>AB asked what the hopes were for the partnership and engagement from ICB. ML replied that working together on tender opportunities for the sector, honesty and</p>
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	<p>trust were his hope. NS hoped that preventative work could be done to address issues before they become problems.</p> <p>CB commented that decisions were made before anyone in the VCS could share their input on how something would best work.</p> <p>The group discussed and teased out what their focus should be;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we support infrastructure for the sector to leverage more funding into the county. • CiC research proposal, to show people the importance of them. They were a significant part of the sector with roughly 300 registered in the county at present. • Creating agreement about what the partnership will do in the upcoming months, and it's aims. <p>AB summarised the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTION: Before the October meeting the partnership needed to find out the likely funding amount from Mary Hutton; it would be impossible to put a proposal together for the infrastructure support without knowing this information. JP to find out what information is available regarding this. • ACTION: Pull together a pipeline of contracts so conversations could start earlier. It was agreed to have this as a standing agenda item at the meetings and it was everyone's responsibility to bring contracts. • ACTION: Refine the group's purpose and then share this externally. <p>AB highlighted that the work of the partnership crossed over with HCT and EAC&I.</p> <p>It was agreed that only if there was an issue from the sector that was actually connected to any of the agreed work would it then be discussed. Other issues would have to be signposted elsewhere as the group could not resolve all problems for all people.</p> <p>JP confirmed there was a possibility for the VCS Alliance to publish a 3 monthly newsletter on behalf of the VCSE Strategic Partnership; the group agreed to use this slot.</p> <p>ACTION: Introduce 3-monthly newsletter.</p> <p>ACTION: It was agreed JP would redraft the group's terms of reference, which would be reviewed at the next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: It was agreed that the group's action plan would be updated and reviewed at the next meeting.</p> <p>AB left the meeting at 15:10.</p>	<p>JP</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>JP</p> <p>JP</p> <p>JP</p>
<p>88.</p>	<p>Reflections on the CPG Event</p>	
	<p>ML shared that the event had gone well with 120 people attending. Positive feedback had been received and both the VCS and CPG's had wanted to be kept updated with each other's work etc. CB and NS discussed that constant meetings were becoming exhausting for the sector and more fluid networking sessions seemed to work well. It was noted that access could have been better at the event.</p>	

89.	Tewkesbury Integrated Locality Partnership	
	The group approved Matt Fellows as the Tewkesbury Integrated Locality Partnership representative. ACTION: JP to inform nominee of his appointment as Tewkesbury ILP Rep.	JP
90.	Minutes of Previous Meeting (3rd July 2023)	
	The minutes were approved as a true account of the meeting.	
91.	Review of action tracker	
	ML would arrange for GREAG to attend the November partnership meeting. ML would submit the application to Gloucestershire Funders that week for the CiC research proposal. It was agreed to discuss frequency and timing of meetings at the October meeting. NS sent her apologies for the next meeting, flagging that once per quarter on the first Monday of every month she had an all staff meeting so would struggle to come to all of the partnership meetings.	ML ML All
92.	Any Other Business	
	There was no other business.	
	The meeting concluded at 15:20. The date and venue of the next meeting is: 1:30 – 3:30pm – 2nd October 2023, venue Barnwood Trust, Overton House.	

Acronym Key	
ICP	Integrated Care Partnership (also known as the “One Glos Health and Wellbeing Partnership”)
ILP	Integrated Locality Partnerships
VCSE	Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise sector