

Minutes of VCSE Strategic Partnership Meeting

Held on Monday 8th April 2024

At Robinswood Hill Country Park, Gloucester

In Attendance:

Chris Brown (CB) – Forest Voluntary Action Forum
Pippa Jones (PJ) – Create Gloucestershire
Nicola Simpson (NS) – Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Matt Lennard (ML) – Gloucestershire VCS Alliance
Indigo Redfern (IR) – GL11
Nicola Simpson (NS) – Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Vicci Livingstone-Thompson (VL-T) – Inclusion Gloucestershire
Tom Beasley (TB) – Active Gloucestershire

Apologies:

Kobe Francis (KF) – The Music Works
Sally Byng (SB) – Barnwood Trust

Guests:

Jill Parker (JP/Chair) – Gloucestershire VCS Alliance
Benedict Leigh (BL) – Director of Integrated Commissioning for the GCC

Minutes by:

Wendy Kewley (WK) – Gloucestershire VCS Alliance
--

The meeting commenced at 14:30.

127.	Welcome, introductions and apologies	ACTION
	<p>JP welcomed everyone to the meeting, including guest Benedict Leigh (BL), Director of Integrated Commissioning for Gloucestershire County Council and NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board.</p> <p>Apologies were received from SB and KF.</p>	
128	Declarations of interest	
	JP reminded people to return their Register of Interest forms by 22 April.	All
129.	Developing a dialogue between the VCSE sector and Glos County Council	
	<p>ML introduced the discussion with BL, providing context and reinforcing the importance of building relationships between the voluntary sector and public sector.</p> <p>BL talked about the scope of his role. In terms of integrated commissioning, his role sits across the County Council and the ICB. Glos has a significant opportunity because the ICB and the local authority are coterminous. This is not the case everywhere. He added that the county is quite good at doing lots of 'test and learn' projects, but it's not so good at scaling them up.</p> <p>BL described different models for grant-giving:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding given to one organisation to distribute with strategic outcomes attached. 2. Building long-term strategic partnerships where local authorities step away 	

	<p>from decisions about which individual organisations get money. BL said he prefers this approach.</p> <p>A general discussion followed around district-based grant decisions and the pros and cons of being outcome-focussed or activity-focussed.</p> <p>BL shared his view on the commissioning challenges over the next 10 years, outlining the issues as he saw them.</p> <p>BL shared two areas where the VCS could provide support: 1 – Offering a robust challenge to the way the GCC works and providing a clear articulation about the strategic purpose of the sector. 2 – Shared leadership development and investing in leadership capacity to manage change.</p> <p>There was a discussion around the pros and cons of commissioning using a standard ‘McDonald’s’ basic style of service which is widely available, as opposed to high-quality or bespoke delivery.</p> <p>Thoughts were shared on how small local groups can achieve the coverage to connect with everyone in Glos rather than just in their locality. The merits of a good digital offer were discussed.</p> <p>Tom Beasley joined 15.23.</p> <p>BL shared that one of the challenges for commissioners is being realistic. To this end, he is looking to manage the bid process differently to involve more senior commissioners earlier on because they have a greater understanding of the ‘art of the possible’.</p> <p>ML thanked BL for his honest and insightful contributions and for taking time out to join the meeting.</p>	
<p>130.</p>	<p>Managing transition</p>	
	<p>JP postponed the discussion on this section for a future meeting.</p>	
<p>131.</p>	<p>Priorities for 2024/25</p>	
	<p>JP had written a plan for 2024/25 based on objectives which had already been published, but it had been pointed out at an online meeting that there was no input from the sector, so there was a need to step back and to have this conversation. There had been talk about having a sector event to inform the plan for 2024/25, so she asked for people’s thoughts.</p> <p>A discussion followed around event formats and reaching target audiences, with suggestions including holding an open space event, a series of mini events with different groups and involving the Know Your Patch networks.</p> <p>Having a questionnaire was also suggested as a way of gauging feedback because this was far less time intensive than attending an event. There was a discussion around the questions that could be asked, including the challenges facing VCS organisations in their delivery.</p> <p>There was a reminder that the challenges raised by BL earlier might be reflected in the GCC commissioning at a later date, so the need for the partnership to bear this in mind and be strategic was raised.</p>	

	<p>It was also suggested that holding a series of round tables with selected people might be a good way to elicit genuine feedback while also making participants feel valued and showing that we want to listen.</p> <p>Each Strategic Partnership member could host one round table of 10 guests enabling a wide selection of participants with different communities of interest from Glos to be invited.</p> <p>This idea was favoured for taking forward.</p> <p><u>Decision:</u></p> <p>Round table idea to be explored further at next online Strategic Partnership Meeting.</p> <p><u>Action:</u></p> <p>Questions to be drawn up for round tables and potential representation that we could get at next online Strategic Partnership Meeting.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p>
132.	Updates	
	<p>Glos Health and Care Partnership – TB</p> <p>TB shared thoughts on how relationships generally seem stronger and how the voice of the community sector is now expected in the room.</p> <p>The challenges are that attendance at the meeting has dropped and the risk is that the meeting is more of an echo chamber.</p> <p>Concerns were also raised about the absence of representation from the Local Enterprise Partnership, particularly in relation to Tewkesbury where there will be a big population increase, leading to pressure on community services.</p> <p>Clinical Programmes Board – IR</p> <p>IR reported that the last meeting was on alcoholic liver disease and was particularly interesting because it highlighted the lack of connectivity between the NHS and the community.</p> <p>For example, Alcoholics Anonymous groups are not linked into the NHS. IR observed that if they were better connected, this could make a big impact for a relatively minor amount of money and there would be proper referral routes.</p>	
133.	Minutes of Previous Meeting (4th March 2024)	
	<p>The minutes were approved as an accurate recording of the meeting.</p>	<p>All</p>
134.	Any Other Business	
	<p>EAC&I board representation</p>	

	<p>PJ and JP raised the question of representation on the EAC&I board as this is now meeting again from May 2024 onwards. JP was nominated as the VCS representative.</p> <p><u>Decision</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JP to be VCS Strategic Partnership representative. • PJ to be potential VCS second representative, if an arts and culture rep required. 	
	<p>The meeting concluded at 16:40.</p> <p>The date and venue of the next meeting is: 2.30pm 13 May 2024, at the Gloucester Growth Hub.</p> <p>Tuesday morning meetings: 9-10am on 16, 23 and 30 April and 7 May.</p>	

Acronym Key	
ICB	Integrated Care Board
EAC&I	Enabling Active Communities and Individuals
VCSE	Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise sector
ICP	Integrated Care Partnership (also known as the “One Glos Health and Wellbeing Partnership”)