

**Gloucestershire VCS Alliance  
Strategic Board Meeting  
Monday 18 June 2018 2.00-3.15pm  
CCP, Royal Crescent, Cheltenham**

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

Tracy Clark	Young Gloucestershire	(TC)
David Owen	GFirst LEP	(DO)
Cordell Ray (Chair)	CCP	(CR)

**Apologies:**

Maz Jennings	YMCA and FRP	(MJ)
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**In attendance:**

Mike Brain	(MB)
Matt Lennard	(ML)
Jem Sweet	(JS)
Susan West	(SW)

**1. Appointment of Chief Executive Officer**

CR congratulated MB on his appointment as Chief Executive Officer. He reported there had been several good quality applicants. He was confident the Board had made the right decision and that the Alliance is in safe hands. MB had an induction on his first day and on the morning before this Trustees' meeting.

**2. Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the Strategic Board meeting on 26 March 2018 were approved.

- ML has produced a detailed action plan for the VCSE strategy. This has been circulated to trustees. ML is now responsible for its delivery whilst MB produces a staff capacity plan based on all our confirmed work.
- The Alliance's proposal to the OPCC for funding had been rejected and MB is discussing further options with the OPCC.
- The discussion on staff resourcing is ongoing.  
**ACTION:** TC and MB to report back at the September Board meeting.
- ML reported he had completed the actions on Gloucestershire 2050. The Alliance has been encouraging people to respond to the main Gloucestershire 2050 survey but there had only been one response to our VCS-specific survey. Gloucestershire 2050 is not proving to be popular as the VCS are more concerned with what is happening now. TC reported that young people from Young Gloucestershire have been involved. CR believed the Alliance has done as much as it can and should report back to the sector on what has happened. The Board understands there has not been a high level of overall involvement in the county and it would be useful to know what the response has been. It was agreed the Alliance should ensure the VCS is involved in any future developments.

**ACTION:** MB to consider whether the Alliance needs to do anything further before the survey closes in July.

**ACTION:** ML to find out what the level of engagement has been

- ML and TC had met the Gloucestershire Community Foundation about the #iwill campaign. Young Gloucestershire has submitted a bid for a social action project for young women as part of a national bid and the #iwill agenda. There is a possibility of funding for the Alliance to report on social action by young people to be posted on its website.

### **3. Alliance Finances and Charity Commission return**

SW reported that Nick Bishop from PGT had prepared a draft set of accounts for circulation to the trustees. It was agreed to ask PGT to invoice us for this work and then start on the 2017-18 accounts, asking for them to be completed by the end of July.

**ACTION:** SW to progress with Nick Bishop.

MB reported that the bank account has a healthy balance of over £87,000. Gloucestershire County Council has paid for all the CARMA project in advance. He was projecting an income of £137,500 without any funding from the OPCC. This figure includes the SLA from Gloucestershire County Council and the CCG, money for the funding bulletin and CARMA project from the County Council, and £6,000 secured by ML for the VCS conference.

MB is forecasting expenditure at a maximum of £144,890. This is higher than the projected income but includes an allowance for redundancy, an HR retainer, high estimates for accountancy fees and employer's liability insurance, and all the expenditure for CARMA. MB is expecting the expenditure to be lower than forecast. He reported that the cash flow is now easier to manage with more payments being made in advance. The Alliance is in a stronger financial position than it has been for some time.

### **4. Policies and procedures**

Rachel Brain is continuing to work on the Alliance policies. She has produced draft contracts of employment, job descriptions and an objective and review process. ML and MB are reviewing these before discussion with individual team members and ratification by the Board. Rachel will then produce policies covering: Annual Leave and Sickness; Pay and Expenses; Probation; Capacity, Disciplinary and Grievance; Whistleblowing; Health and Safety; Environmental; Equal Opportunity; Retirement; Data Protection. As part of the final handover Rachel will also produce a 'Phase 2' list of further policies that we will need to develop internally.

The Board has sent a deadline of the end of July for completion and aims to ratify all the policies at its next meeting in September.

### **5. VCSE Strategy for 2018-19**

ML reported that the Enabling Active Communities Board (EAC) adopted the strategy and action plan in April. MB had given a presentation at the CCG's Governing Board, who had also approved the strategy and plan. MB and ML are meeting the stakeholders to update them every other month between EAC Board meetings.

ML reported implementation is going well apart from an issue with the CCG over partnership working. The CCG had asked the Alliance to encourage partnerships to come together to bid for tenders but they have now asked us to stop. MB is meeting the procurement team to

try and resolve this issue. The Board agreed the VCS needs to be involved at the pre-tender stage rather than on the tender itself.

MB explained any work for the OPCC may sit both inside and outside the strategy. MB will discuss with the OPCC exactly what they would like the Alliance to do.

There will be a fuller update at the next Board meeting.

## **6. Current Projects**

### **a) Community Transport (CARMA)**

ML reported that there had been an initial meeting on CARMA with only limited attendance. The project is divided into four sections: safeguarding, volunteering, technical requirements and marketing. The Alliance has already received the funding (item 3). ML is meeting Philip Williams and discussing the technical requirements with Anna Edwards. He is working with Cotswold Friends on the volunteering offer. It was agreed the main community transport providers need to be more involved and it should be emphasised that this is a pre-feasibility study.

### **b) Digital e-learning and training**

ML reported that the funding application to Voltech had not been successful. The e-learning aspect of the project could be done separately, although he does not know where the funding would come from. TC expressed concern about the quality of training offered and it was agreed a quality accredited partner would need to be involved.

The aspect of the proposal to stream meetings and record training sessions could be part of a shared back office function (see item 7b).

### **c) Crowdsolving**

ML had met Fair Shares who he believes are the best fit for this work. They had expressed interest but he has not heard anything further. He had also met Volunteering Gloucestershire and it was agreed they might be interested if Fair Shares are not.

CR felt there is an opportunity to bring together organisations that offer volunteering to look at duplication and make improvements for the whole sector. TC suggested holding an event for anyone who might be interested to explain the concept.

MB agreed the outputs under the SLA focus on the public sector and not enough is known about happens in the voluntary sector. CR said that Volunteering Gloucestershire already has links with Tewkesbury Borough Council and other partnerships may exist. The Alliance should try and create synergy for the benefit of the whole county. TC recommended taking a step back to identify the real issue before trying to solve the problem.

**ACTION:** ML to progress

### **d) Social Impact project**

ML reported that Creative Sustainability are carrying out a similar piece of work and he has handed this project to them.

### **e) VCS conference 2018**

ML reported that funding is now available from four organisations: the University, 2gether Trust, CCG, and OPCC. It is due to be held on 10 October at Forest Green Rovers Football Club. The format is different to what was originally envisaged. It will now be a showcase for the VCS to demonstrate what it can offer to the public sector through an exhibition and a series of TED-style talks, ending with a panel discussion. He reported that the Operational Board had wanted a different type of event and were concerned that the funders were controlling the agenda.

MB highlighted the need to produce and agree an event specification before funding is secured for future events.

## **7. New Projects**

### **a) Business simulation**

The University of Gloucestershire is creating a business simulation for the voluntary sector. They are looking for input into what it might look like and ML had suggested they use the GEM project. He reported that the simulation is likely to be complex but could be useful as a training exercise.

### **b) Back office**

MB reported this is an aspirational initiative to create a VCS hub. The aim is to bring more VCS organisations together and minimise costs for smaller groups. The intention is to use an existing building, learn from City Works or secure capital funding for a purpose-built complex. It could include shared functions such as training, strategic development and policies as well as an Air BnB model for renting office space or hiring meeting rooms. There will be an initial meeting to define the parameters and see if the project might be viable. CR suggested looking at a development for business start-ups being developed in containers behind Cheltenham Library.

## **8. Information updates**

### **a) Operational Board**

MB reported that the Operational Board had expressed concern on the lack of their involvement in recruitment for the Chief Executive Officer. The Board had concerns about its role and their individual contributions. CR agreed that communication with the Operational Board should have been better.

**ACTION:** MB to set up a meeting with MJ and CR to discuss the Board's concerns and agreed the way forward.

### **b) Head of Operations and Health and Wellbeing Officer**

The Board thanked ML and JS for their reports which had already been circulated.

## **9. Any Other Business**

MB said it is not good use of time for all Alliance staff to attend all Board meetings particularly if they provide reports in advance. He suggested inviting team members from time to time to report on specific activities. DO agreed that would be valuable in increasing the Board's understanding.

**ACTION:** MB to create a suggested plan.

## 10. **Next meeting**

The next meeting will be on Monday 24 September, 10am-12pm at GFirstLEP, The Growth Hub in Gloucester.