

Improving partnership structures for Cheltenham

In 2011 senior officers and practitioners within the public sector and the voluntary and community sector, participated in the Partnership Improvement Programme (PIP) which met three times between March and May 2011. In sessions one and two, participants spent time discussing the strengths of partnership working in Cheltenham and areas where they would like to do further work to build on those strengths as part of a commitment to continuous improvement to meet local needs in the light of changing legislation.

Strengths of partnership working in Cheltenham

Partnerships between the public and voluntary and community sectors work well, because of the enthusiasm, commitment and competencies of the individuals involved in them. These qualities among the people that get involved mean that ideas developed in cross-sector partnership meetings are taken up and implemented. Representation of the voluntary and community sector is strong and well supported and understood in the public sector. There are several strong and successful partnerships from which to learn and develop cross-sector partnership working further, for example, Inspiring Families. Participants see the current spending cuts as an opportunity to create leaner partnerships that focus on meeting local needs and can deliver value for money.

A partnership structure for Cheltenham

During the final PIP session, the group began looking specifically at alternative models for a new partnership structure in Cheltenham. The group discussed a number of reasons why the partnership structures need to be reviewed:

- The current partnership structures are resource intensive and more elaborate than is necessary in the new operating environment; governance can now be simplified with an emphasis on outcomes and action.
- The thematic partnerships have worked well and the individuals involved in them have a lot to offer future partnerships but the structure of partnerships could usefully change to reflect current and future priorities as set out in the Cheltenham Community Needs Analysis.

A draft structure was proposed and was agreed by all participants. It has fewer partnerships and simplified governance arrangements; it appears to be flexible, outcomes focussed and has the potential to engage diverse groups.

The draft structure was consulted on over the summer and the final proposals will be considered by the CSP on 29 September and CBC's Cabinet on 18 October.

Some questions still to be resolved:

- Where does Arts and Culture representation sit?
- Ensuring effective representation from businesses?
- Do we need a place for the University/GlosCol?

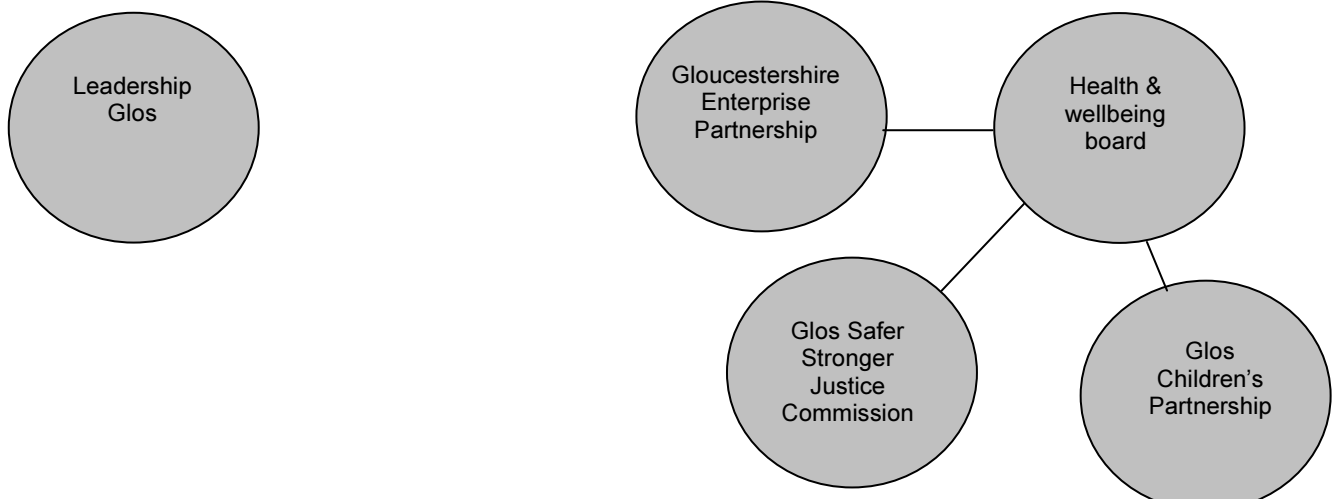
Our vision and objectives

Our vision is for a simplified partnership structure that is easy to understand and keeps partners focussed on working together to meet local need, while making the best use of reduced resources.

The objectives to deliver this vision are:

- To achieve well-governed and relevant partnership structures to deliver outcomes
- To develop better focused partnerships that deliver shared outcomes informed by needs analysis
- To build better, relevant engagement, not just more engagement.

A structure for partnership working in Cheltenham



Positive Participation Partnership

What will the Positive Participation Partnership do?

- It will build stronger and resilient communities that can influence public service design and delivery
- It will produce a regular needs analyses to support the Strategic Leadership Group in commissioning better public services

How will the Positive Participation Partnership do this?

The partnership will support partner's commissioning processes by bringing together those groups/agencies that have a particular remit to work with specific communities, whether these are communities with shared needs or interests, or geographic areas. The expectation would be that partnership members would:

- Ensure that there is effective coordination of consultation and engagement activities between service providers and communities across Cheltenham, identifying and plugging gaps where appropriate.
- Collate data and information from communities (and other sources including crime and disorder statistics) to ensure that their needs and priorities are used to develop regular needs analyses.
- Share data with other partners in line with agreed information-sharing protocols.
- Support public bodies understand the role that their assets can play in supporting communities in light of the Government's Localism Bill.
- Support capacity building activities with communities so that they are stronger and more resilient
- Work with service providers and communities to identify opportunities for community-owned solutions in line with the needs and outcomes framework.
- Work with commissioners of public services to ensure that there is an effective process for managing community budgets in line with government's expectations
- Ensure that communities understand constraints and limitations and why they can't always have everything they need.
- Support task and finish groups to address specific issues.

How will the Positive Participation Partnership be held to account?

The partnership will report both on progress and on updates to the needs analysis to the Strategic Leadership Group on a 6-monthly basis and will report as appropriate to county partnership structures.

The partnership will also be held accountable through the democratic processes of the partner organisations, particularly through Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham's voluntary sector forum.

The Positive Participation Partnership will also be accountable for commissioning small community-focused pots of funding.

Who will sit on the Positive Participation Partnership? (suggestions from the task and finish group)

Area-based

- 1 x representative from the Neighbourhood Coordination Chairs' Group
- 3 x regeneration partnerships
- 1 x Transition Town Cheltenham
- 1 x representative from the Tenant and resident associations
- 1 x representative from the C5 group (Parish Councils)

Communities of interest

- Representation from CHAMPS network
- Glos Older People's Association
- Cheltenham Inter-faith
- Third Sector Services – representing volunteers
- Discussions to be had with VCS Forum and CHAMPS network to work out how to represent those communities of interest that are not covered by the above representation.

Organisations

- 2 x VCS representation
- NHS Gloucestershire – Public Health Manager
- Gloucestershire Police Local Police C/Insp
- Cheltenham Borough Council – Cabinet Member / Strategic Director
- Cheltenham Borough Homes – regeneration manager
- Gloucestershire County Council – elected member plus relevant officer

How often will the Positive Participation Partnership meet?

Proposed to be every 2 months.

Positive Lives Partnership

What will the Positive Lives Partnership do?

- It will translate the needs analyses and Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) priorities into a partnership delivery framework with appropriate resources to make things happen
- It will tackle SLG priorities and achieve positive outcomes for communities by commissioning specific, time-limited task and finish groups or specific pieces of work.

How will the Positive Lives Partnership do this?

The positive lives partnership brings together the people who have the ability, resources and commitment to make things happen. It will drive the partnership commissioning process through its understanding of data, evidence, intelligence, needs, resources, priorities and outcomes. It will mobilise, align and deploy all available resources to deliver priorities and look to community-based preventative solutions wherever possible together with the positive participation partnership.

It will also identify where gaps in service provision exists and how these could be addressed and bring forward new ways of working to overcome long-standing or complex problems.

How will the Positive Lives Partnership be held to account?

The partnership will report to the Strategic Leadership Group on a 6-monthly basis and will report as appropriate to county partnership structures.

The partnership will also be held to account through the democratic processes of the partner organisations, particularly through Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham's voluntary sector forum.

The Positive Lives Partnership will be accountable for all partnership funding allocated by partners to support the delivery of partnership projects.

Who will sit on the Positive Lives Partnership? (suggestions from the task and finish group)

Gloucestershire Care Services - Locality Manager
GCC - Cheltenham Locality Action Group Manager
GCC - Area Manager, Targeted Youth Service
GCC – Adult Services
Cheltenham Borough Homes
Cheltenham Borough Council – cabinet member, strategic director plus commissioning director
Gloucestershire Police Local Police Area Sup't / C/Insp
NHS Glos – Public Health Manager plus locality commissioning director
Schools – Primary and Secondary representation
Children's Centres representative
2 x VCS representation
Jobcentre Plus

How often will the Positive Lives Partnership meet?

Proposed to be every 2 months.

Strategic Leadership Group

What will the Strategic Leadership Group do?

- It will set out how quality of life in Cheltenham can be improved through improved partnership working and lead the process of aligning organisational priorities to deliver priority outcomes.
- It will ensure that there are effective working relationships between all elements of the public sector and VCS and that partnership structures are focused on delivering the vision and priority outcomes and that blockages are removed.
- It will ensure that the public sector is moving to a better understanding of the collective resources available (staff, finance, property, expertise etc) to deliver the vision and priority outcomes

How will the Strategic Leadership Group do this?

The Strategic Leadership Group will provide strategic co-ordination, ensuring linkages with their own organisational plans and priorities, plus other plans and bodies established at national, county and local level and agreeing a vision and priority outcomes for the area and gaining consensus about the way forward.

It will develop and drive the effective delivery of the vision and priority outcomes through effective performance management and holding delivery partners to account.

It will own the needs analysis and any associated strategic assessments.

It will be responsible for monitoring/evaluating partnership work in Cheltenham.

How will the Strategic Leadership Group be held to account?

The Strategic Leadership Group will be held accountable through the democratic processes of the partner organisations, particularly through Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham's voluntary and community sector forum

Who will sit on the Strategic Leadership Group? (suggestions from the task and finish group)

- Gloucestershire County Council - nominated county councillor and commissioning director)
- Cheltenham Borough Council - Leader of the Council and Chief Executive)
- Gloucestershire Police Local Police Area Superintendent
- NHS Gloucestershire– Locality Commissioning Director, plus Public Health Consultant
- 1 x VCS representation
- Representation from business
- Chairs of Positive Participation and Positive Lives Partnerships
- Chair – Low Carbon Partnership to represent climate change agenda.
- Fire and Rescue
- Gloucestershire Probation
- Gloucestershire Police Authority
- Cheltenham MPs

How often will the Strategic Leadership Group meet?

Proposed to be every 4 months for the first year but then 6 monthly thereafter.

Positive Development Group

What will the Positive Development Group do?

It will ensure that there is clear link between the development and growth of Cheltenham and the aspirations and priorities of the Strategic Leadership Group.

It will ensure that there is improved coordination between the key agendas of economic regeneration, climate change, health and wellbeing, travel and transport.

How will the Positive Development Group do this?

To explore how best to accommodate SLG priorities within the three key programmes of work:

- Joint Core Strategy
- Cheltenham Development Task Force
- Low Carbon Partnership

For representatives of these three programmes of work to share their short, medium and longer-term plans.

For representatives of these three programmes of work to reflect the overall vision and direction for Cheltenham and the priority outcomes within their policies and work programmes.

How will the Positive Development Group be held to account?

The partnership will also be held accountable through the democratic processes of the partner organisations, particularly through Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham's voluntary sector forum.

The three key programme areas will report annually to the SLG

Who will sit on the Positive Development Group? (suggestions from the task and finish group)

- CBC Leader and Chief Exec (JCS role)
- Development Task Force Chair and Chief Exec
- Chair Low Carbon Partnership
- Chair Cheltenham Business and Economic Partnership
- VCS representation

How often will the Positive Development Group meet?

The group might not meet and instead be a virtual group.

Task and Finish groups

Definition of a task and finish group

A key element of this new structure of partnership working is the ability to establish task and finish groups only as required to focus on the priorities for our communities. A working definition is as follows:

- The group has a clear remit to tackle a specific priority issue;
- The group is made up only of the right partners needed to tackle the issue;
- The group involves only the people from those partner organisations with appropriate expertise or authority;
- The group acknowledges which organisation has formal responsibility for delivery;
- The group is accountable to one of the four parts of the partnership structure;
- The group is time limited.

A draft philosophy of partnership working

What do we want out of partnership working?

In terms of shaping our future ambitions for partnership working in the current climate, there are two significant drivers; using whatever money is available in the most effective way, and building up the capacity of local people to be more influential in shaping service delivery. Therefore, our partnership structures need to be robust in the following areas:

- Understanding existing public sector and VCS investment in Cheltenham and ensuring a return on this investment in terms of economic and community prosperity.
- Strengthening how money is spent to get the best possible outcomes for the people of Cheltenham.
- Understanding community needs from information sources as well as robust community engagement.
- Maximising the potential to commission and deliver services in partnership with others using place-based commissioning as a model.
- Ensuring that commissioning drives up performance and creates stronger and more economically prosperous communities.
- Ensuring that what we do does not knowingly undermine or duplicate the work of others, but that where change is needed, we use our partnerships to challenge existing service delivery models and use data and customer experiences to design and commission more effective solutions.
- Ensuring that the services and projects that we commission build the capacity and capabilities of communities to release innovation and resource to define and build their own futures.

How do we want our partnerships to work?

- They will be clear about geographies and ensure partnership working happens at the lowest possible level.
- They will be clear about our collective priorities and where partnership working can make the most difference and that these are then set out in our community strategy.
- They will be clear about accountability both to the communities that we serve and the organisations that constitute the partnership.
- They will challenge existing ways of delivering services and work to design new ways of working that meet local needs.
- They will use the commissioning processes to ensure that we collectively deliver better outcomes at lower cost.
- They will develop new relationships with communities that moves away from supply-led solutions and reactive interventions to a focus on early intervention that is proven to save money in the long-run.

What we will do to support partnership working

- We will commit fully to working in partnership to deliver improved quality of life in Cheltenham
- We will commit to ensuring that the right people are at the table who are able to influence and secure change.
- We will ensure that all partners are seen as equals and we will build up trust and a shared commitment to our priorities.
- We will use data, intelligence and evidence to inform and underpin decision making about how we collectively use our organisations' resources to improve quality of life.
- We will commit to working together to generate ideas and solutions to deliver these plans.
- We will not be constrained by existing structures and processes. Instead we will put the customer at the heart of what we do, so that we can collectively design services around their needs.
- We will be open to new ways of working and new types of partnership models/service providers.
- We will support and encourage a healthy range of suitable service providers in Cheltenham.

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