

Climate Leadership Gloucestershire Meeting #13 21/11/2023, Meeting Notes

Climate Leadership Gloucestershire

Notes and actions of the meeting

Attendance

The following partners were in attendance:

Partner organisation	Attendees	Apologies
Cheltenham Borough Council		Cllr Alisha Lewis
Cotswold District Council	Cllr Mike McKeown	Rob Weaver
Forest of Dean District Council	Cllr Chris McFarling Dr Nick Murry	
Gloucester City Council	Cllr Richard Cook Jon McGinty	
Gloucestershire County Council	Cllr David Gray Colin Chick David Owen	
Stroud District Council	Cllr Chloe Turner (Chair) Brendan Cleere Georgia Spooner Jenny Youngs	
Tewkesbury Borough Council	Cllr Sarah Hands Simon Dix	
Hospitals Trusts	Jen Cleary	
Integrated Care Board	Cath Leech	Mary Hutton
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner and Gloucestershire Constabulary	Mandy Gibbs	
GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership	Sarah Danson	
Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership	Doug Hulyer Nicola Hillary	
Secretariat	Afriqnmun Lovejoy David Sharman	
Observers	Observers: Polly Gannaway-Pitts, Megan Land and Rachel	

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	Billingham – Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group Jim Wrigley – South West Net Zero Hub (to input on Energy related items)	
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1) Welcome, apologies and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all, in particular our observers from the Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group Panel. All attendees briefly introduced themselves for the benefit of the Youth Climate Panel representatives.

2) Declarations of Interest

Cllr McFarling pointed out that he is a sponsor for one of the 5 GGAF bids to be discussed later, but it was confirmed by the Chair that this should not represent a significant conflict of interest.

3) Updates from the Chair

This will be the last meeting with Cllr Turner serving as Chair. A new Climate Leadership Gloucestershire Chair and Vice Chair will be elected at the CLG AGM on 13th February 2024. Nominations for Vice Chair will be sought for the February meeting, along with any further nominations to Chair alongside, Cllr McFarling as current Vice Chair.

4) Approval of meeting notes: October CLG meeting (paper 2)

The Chair sought agreement for the minutes of the October meeting of this group.

Decision: Climate Leadership Gloucestershire approved the October meeting notes.

5) Energy theme: Recommendations

Nick Murry presented the background, engagement and intelligence gathering conducted to devise the theme recommendations now coming forward. These proposed recommendations were outlined:

- Local Area Energy Planning
 - To develop a county-wide approach to Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) which baselines current activities and capacity across the county, and develops a cost-effective process that effectively engages the District Network Operator (DNO), Community Energy organisations and other public and private sector stakeholders.
- Community Energy
 - To develop a county-wide Community Energy Network that harnesses the potential of Community Energy organisations, community groups and

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residents to directly invest in, support and benefit from local renewable energy generation, working with the South West Net Zero Hub to take this forward.

- Low Carbon Heat/Heat Networks
 - To explore how CLG can support common approaches to the promotion of renewable heat and the development of heat networks across the county.
- Deployment of Renewable Electricity
 - To explore how CLG can support its members in collaborating, coordinating and sharing best practice on what councils are doing, alongside identifying levers and opportunities to encourage deployment opportunities for renewable electricity generation:
 - on their own buildings and estates or on regeneration projects;
 - through schemes for residents and businesses; and
 - via large scale deployment (e.g. wind, solar or other technologies)

Key points arising from the discussion:

Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)

It was confirmed that the LAEP process would be taken forward with the support of the South West Net Zero Hub.

It was confirmed that the aim would be for the LAEP to be countywide as one plan, though it may become evident in the baselining stages that some areas may require an individual focussed plan, i.e. Gloucester.

It was asked whether tidal would be included in the LAEP process, which was confirmed. It was also pointed out however that tidal barrages have potentially a large negative impact on biodiversity. Smaller scale interventions like small lagoons would most likely be preferable.

The question was asked what additionality an LAEP would bring to current renewable assessments developed by some districts in the county. It was confirmed that these assessments are quite static in nature; the LAEP will be more all-encompassing and dynamic- creating active pathways and including more spatial context.

There was a query on whether CLG could join others to lobby for the funding, support and standardisation of LEPs. It was confirmed that there was precedent for CLG acting as a lobbying group, having sent letter to national Government Ministers in the past.

Community Energy

It was pointed out that there is now a district-wide community energy forum in Stroud. Cllr Turner is a member of this forum and can facilitate discussions with CLG here.

The Community Energy Fund will support work here; this Fund will be managed by the South West Net Zero Hub. This will be open to applications before December 2023.

Deployment of Renewable Electricity

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A question was raised on working with developers at the planning stage to ensure deployment of renewables- it as confirmed that more can be done to convene developers and planners/wider LA stakeholders. The CLG Planning theme is exploring how developer contributions towards renewables can be secured via Local Plans and related policies.

Low Carbon Heat Networks

Some discussion of the fact that though heat networks have so far been focussed on urban areas there are emerging technologies to make them more feasible in rural areas. This includes putting a shared ground heat source pump loop into the ground.

Decision: the initial Energy theme recommendations were approved by CLG.

6) Retrofit theme: Update & recommendations review

Brendan Cleere presented an update on the work achieved under the theme over the last year. This included a recap on the 'Innovate to Renovate' partnership of the six districts and South Gloucestershire Council. This produced both research on how to best engage residents on retrofit, and encompassed the soft launch of the Retrofit Centre web platform as a portal of information on retrofit. There are now two pilots going forward in the county offering free home assessments to residents.

Brendan then confirmed the updated recommendations to take forward to work of the theme:

- The Retrofit Centre site
 - Continue district development of the Retrofit Centre platform to make it suitable for a full initial launch in January 2024.
 - Re-subscribe to Parity data usage to enable continued use of the Plan Builder function on the Retrofit Centre site. Funding ask of £2436 per annum from each I2R partner authority Support the Economy theme action
 - Support Economy theme's provision of a Green Economy platform, to further stimulate the retrofit supply market and be an additionality to the Retrofit Centre offer.
- Green Skills
 - Explore the most cost effective option to provide in-county PAS2035 qualifications and skills coordination.
- Market Support
 - Utilise the learnings from both Low Carbon Communities and SWEA's Accelerator project, on how to engage the able to pay market, in future support offers.
 - Support the coordination and promotion of individual district retrofit offers
- Expert Support
 - Explore options and seek funding for third party expert support (e.g. such as from SWEA) to: engage able to pay retrofit market; coordinate action across the county; and further develop and maintain the Retrofit Centre platform.

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- Support the Economy theme action: Provision of a Green Skills Coordinator to stimulate the proliferation of installers and green skills across the county..

Key points arising from the discussion:

A query was raised on what was being done for those in fuel poverty and not able to self-finance retrofit, as this isn't in the focus of the recommendations. It was confirmed that there was advanced support already in place for these residents via the Warm & Well scheme delivered by Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA).

It was asked what the 'third party expert support' would entail, and it was noted that many districts are considering similar offers. It was confirmed that this third party support would aim to include a fuller advisory service, including guidance on finding suppliers, along with a facility to access home assessments. It was agreed that the theme needed to move swiftly to scope this offer as many districts wish to pursue this, and it would be sensible to explore a county model to reduce duplications, and potentially be more cost effective.

It was confirmed that any third party support would be assessed on their ability to market an offer to the self-financing market, and engage that audience, given the difficulty of shifting behaviour to retrofit. It was also pointed out that CLG should consider lobbying central government to re-affirm boiler targets to move forward this change.

Decision: the updated Retrofit theme recommendations were approved by CLG, including the additional funding ask for the Parity data resubscription.

7) Greener Gloucestershire Action Fund: Approval of bids

David Sharman introduced the bid review item, outlining that the Secretariat would seek approval in principle for each of the bids, and then move to a discussion of prioritising approved bids for either immediate funding from the Action Fund, or to enter a pipeline for future funding. The bids received are for:

- Green Skills Coordinator post
- A Climate Community Fund
- A Green Economy supplier matching platform
- A shared climate bid writer post
- An energy baselining project (Stages 1-3 of the LAEP process)

David presented the collated criteria scoresheet that encapsulates the feedback already received from partners on the bids, and in essence had shown them all to be viable and beneficial.

Key points arising from the discussion:

Green Skills Coordinator

There were queries on what this post could achieve within a one-year fixed term. LEP colleagues advised that they believe that much could be achieved within a year if the activity and role was properly focussed.

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It was asked if any specific consultation with young people had been conducted in constructing the bid. It was confirmed that this hadn't happened, though had drawn on data from the Local Skills Improvement Plan.

Action: The LEP and Climate Youth Panel agreed to explore attendance of the Panel at an upcoming LEP meeting to provide this consultation, and further views on this.

Energy Baselineing

A question was asked on the prospects of our DNO/DSO funding this process, making this bid unnecessary expense. It was confirmed that the DSO covering Gloucestershire is not currently providing additional support that would mean the Local Authorities not commissioning a plan themselves. The theme views it as a low-risk proposal that positions Gloucestershire as leading on LAEP, but does not get into the really costly elements of LAEP- to allow for developments at DSO, and indeed any national support that might develop in future.

Green Economy Platform

Would this need a completely separate website or could this be linked to the Retrofit Centre site. It was confirmed that the Green Economy Platform would have a much wider remit than the Retrofit Centre platform and cover areas such as hospitality, financial services, and manufacturing, and so though the two sites could be linked, they would need to be separate.

Community Fund

The point was made that it may be worth considering extending the bid window for this project as the current month allotted for community group to draft and submit bids might not be sufficient.

It was queried how consumption would be reduced via the Community Fund. The bid submitter will come back with further information on this would occur.

Bid Writer

This could be the only project that cover its costs. If carried out appropriately there would also be much value in having an individual prompting CLG members to access the climate-related funding often missed.

A question was raised on whether any of these projects entailed ongoing costs, or were one off costs for this year. It was confirmed that as the FTE role bids were 1 year only, the only project with a longer commitment was the Green Economy Platform.

After discussion of these queries and concerns related to bids it was generally agreed that all projects had CLG approval and therefore a prioritisation process was needed to decide how the GGAF funding would be allocated.

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There was some debate on the best process to undertake this prioritisation and if the group was happy with the scoring already received prior to the meeting, which represented feedback from around half of CLG members.

It was agreed that members wished to provide further input into the prioritisation rankings but as discussion had overrun, this would be collected post-meeting.

Action: Secretariat will request prioritisation scores from all CLG partners and confirm the final bid rankings via email to CLG as soon as possible.