

Climate Leadership Gloucestershire Meeting #16 11/06/24, 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 Iain Dobie Debbie Baker	
Cotswold District Council	Cllr Mike McKeown Olivia McGregor (sub for Rob Weaver)	Rob Weaver
Forest of Dean District Council	Cllr Chris McFarling (Chair) Dr Nick Murry	
Gloucester City Council	Jon McGinty	Cllr Sebastian Field
Gloucestershire County Council	Cllr David Gray David Owen Toby Waller (Growth Hub) – presenting Andrew McKenzie (Growth Hub) – presenting	Colin Chick
Stroud District Council	Cllr Chloe Turner Georgia Spooner (sub for Brendan Cleere)	Brendan Cleere
Tewkesbury Borough Council	Cllr Cate Cody Simon Dix	
Hospitals Trusts	Jen Cleary	Ian Quinnell
Integrated Care Board		Mary Hutton Cath Leech
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner and Gloucestershire Constabulary	Mandy Gibbs	
Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership	Doug Hulyer Nicola Hillary	
Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils	Kerrin Wilkinson	

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Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group	Polly Gannaway-Pitts Rebecca Fulford Kai Steward	
Secretariat	Afriqnmun Lovejoy David Sharman	

1) Welcome, apologies and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular our new elected Member representatives- Cllr Cate Cody, Tewkesbury BC Lead Member for Climate and Ecology; Cllr Iain Dobie, Cheltenham BC new Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency; Cllr Sebastian Field, new Gloucester City Cabinet Member for Environment (though he sends his apologies for this meeting).

The Chair wished to put on record the group's thanks to outgoing Members Cllr Sarah Hands, Tewkesbury BC; Cllr Alisha Lewis, Cheltenham BC; and Cllr Richard Cook, Gloucester City Council, for their contribution to Climate Leadership Gloucestershire.

2) Declarations of Interest

No declarations.

3) Approval of meeting notes: April CLG meeting (paper 2)

Meeting notes approved by members as a true and accurate record.

Decision: Climate Leadership Gloucestershire approved the April meeting notes.

4) Updates from Chair

Vice Chair nominations

This is the Chair's final full meeting in this position as Cllr McKeown will assume the Chair role at the September meeting. CLG is now seeking nominations for Vice Chair, to assume that position in September. It was confirmed that nominations could be received in advance of the next meeting. The Secretariat confirmed they would be happy to brief Members or answer any queries on the responsibilities of the role.

Questions raised

It was asked why CLG has a six-month Chair tenure. The Chair confirmed that the decision was taken to give all partners a chance to regularly lead the partnership.

Action: Nominations for CLG Vice Chair to be confirmed with the Secretariat ahead of the September meeting if possible; or made from the floor at that meeting.

September meeting: In-person proposal

It's proposed that the September meeting be extended and converted into a face-to-face meeting; to encompass a session on the Countryside & Community Research Institute's

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recent work with districts on engaging rural communities via 'Climathons'. This would likely be held either in Cotswold DC, or at the University of Gloucestershire. Exact location and further details will be confirmed asap with a hold to be sent for a full day rather than 2hr session.

Decision: Climate Leadership Gloucestershire approved converting the September meeting into an all-day in-person meeting.

Updated Terms of Reference (ToR) (Paper 7)

The Chair noted that the ToR had been slightly updated - to reflect the new elected Members representing district councils.

5) New voting member proposed: Education membership (Paper 3)

Jackie Jobes, presented the paper, outlining the intended new shared voting membership of University of Hartpury and College, the University of Gloucestershire, and the Royal Agricultural University. The shared seat would represent the higher education sector. The group would also look to set up an underlying forum tapping into the FE and HE wider network.

Decision: Climate Leadership Gloucestershire approved the shared membership for the education institutions, will voting rights, on agreement of equal financial contribution.

6) Action Plan and Funding update (Paper 5)

The Secretariat reiterated the purpose of this new standing item: to highlight some key updates from the progress reports included in the Action Plan, and to give an overview on current funding.

Action Plan update

- Action 0102 – The Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment tenders have now been received and will be evaluated next week.
- Action 0501 – Local Area Energy Plan will be progressed, though we're awaiting all 4 county areas involved in this SWNZH project to sign contracts and transfer their funds to the hub to allow procurement to begin.
- Action 0601 – Food & Farming Partnership have identified a potential funding source (AFN+ Network) to develop integrated plan on Food & Farming.
- Action 0702 – Business case for centralised Planning resource has been developed and partners are identifying individual funding contributions.
- Action 0901 – Transport decarbonisation working group- meeting on EV infrastructure delayed from 6 to 27 June.

Funding and spend update

Progress reported on the Greener Gloucestershire Action Fund funded projects:

- Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment – as above

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- Shared bid writer – to join the secretariat team from the 12 June
- Green Skills Coordinator – recruitment processes underway
- Local Area Energy Plan – as above

It was also confirmed that partners have agreed funding for a countywide retrofit platform to include expert support to residents on retrofit.

Key points arising from the discussion:

Clarity on the two areas of support on retrofit was requested. It was confirmed that £75k has been secured from the SWNZH Local Net Zero Fund to partially fund retrofit engagement officers across three of the districts - to supplement the countywide platform. It was confirmed that learning would be shared across entire county and if successful we shall look to replicate in other areas in the county.

It was asked whether youth voices have been included in the transport decarbonisation working group. It was confirmed that this had not occurred so far as efforts had been focussed on LA working relationships across tiers. The group could consider appropriate topics in the future in which the youth group could input.

Action: Secretariat to share transport workshop topics with the Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group in future where appropriate.

7) Economy theme update

Introduction

David Owen introduced this item, and confirmed that the functions of GFirst LEP have now been transferred to the County Council as of the 1st April 2024, and with that the responsibility for this theme. These functions also include the business groups, Invest in Gloucestershire, Made in Gloucestershire, the Careers Hub and the new Economic Growth Board - replacing the LEP Board.

Net Zero Business Support Programme

Toby Waller and Andrew McKenzie presented the model, data, drivers, case studies, events and supply chain observations that the programme can provide.

This looked at the in-depth diagnostic support on calculating and auditing carbon footprint/emissions that is provided as part of the programme, to both LA suppliers/supply chains and wider SME businesses within the county. It also confirmed the additional tools that the programme signposts to - such as the independent verification organisations businesses can use to receive accreditation; as well as in-county work around B Corps.

The presentation also confirmed the events that have taken place - as Growth Hub mediated workshops across the districts, as well an annual business conference, due to take place again in November 2024.

Key points arising from the discussion:

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A question was asked around whether carbon reduction measures compromise businesses' profitability. Andrew and Toby confirmed that on the contrary actions should create efficiencies and allow for more streamlined processes.

It was asked whether all Growth Hub staff had the necessary skills and training to provide support on decarbonisation. It was confirmed that not all staff have this in-depth level of knowledge, and that there is, and should be a clear referral route to Toby and Andrew as part of this programme. Navigators should be informed enough to make such referrals.

It was asked how this approach compares to other counties, and if there were similarly effective programmes. It was confirmed that the approach via the Growth Hubs was relatively unique in terms of outreach method.

It was suggested that CLG's new academic partners may be able to contribute to methodology to benchmark or track carbon reduction within businesses in the county.

It was asked whether there were grants available for businesses to take forward carbon reduction measures. Andrew and Toby confirmed that grant funding is limited; though referenced the recent work conducted with Tewkesbury BC, who have recently utilised the Rural Prosperity Fund for this purpose and further innovative ideas to create funds of this type was encouraged.

It was asked if the Hub had delivered any work with landlords on working with business tenants to decarbonise. Andrew and Toby confirmed that the Hub considers how businesses can work with landlords, but agreements are made directly with businesses, so activity beyond that is limited.

It was queried as to how much operational engagement the programme has had with key district officers, and if there was anything CLG, and elected Members in particular, could do to encourage greater collaboration with districts. The speakers and the Secretariat confirmed they would be happy to follow up with district CLG Members directly on this point, and will be working together to engage district officers further via further meeting.

Action: Secretariat will work with Andrew and Toby to continue greater engagement with district officers, and will get in touch directly with Members if they can assist in these efforts.

Green Skills - A training provider's view from South Gloucestershire and Stroud College

Laura Gaiger outlined the shared challenges work taking place on green skills at South Gloucestershire & Stroud College (SGS) to address these including:

- The work that SGS and other FE Colleges are doing to stimulate green skills - including work towards the Local Skills Improvement Plan and aligned funding.
- The Skills Bootcamps that SGS is currently providing, funded by the West of England Combined Authority, providing short courses on heat pump and solar PV installation.
- SGS has also introduced a Level 2 Retrofit Advisor award.
- SGS are also working with the Forest of Dean DC to utilise UKSPF funding to upskill unemployed residents.
- Plans for the Green Skills Training Centre to be retained at the Berkeley campus.

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Laura also noted the key challenges:

- The ongoing challenges in training opportunities in-county to meet the predicted demand in heat pump engineers in particular.
- The lack of funding from adult skills budget; employers not having the resource to pay for courses, nor the ability to release employees for course hours required; the lack of qualified staff to deliver courses; possible Gloucestershire devolution impacts; and uncertainty from national Government.

She also noted that some of these challenges will also be looked to be addressed via the incoming Green Skills Coordinator. Laura also cited the ongoing need for:

- More skills funded provision.
- More project longevity - current funding is for a 4–5 month course rollout which is insufficient.
- A better more joined-up countywide approach.
- Further information and knowledge available to consumers - to stimulate supply.

Key points arising from the discussion:

It was asked why devolution was seen as a challenge. Laura confirmed she only saw it as such as there was much unknown about the process and the College is currently unaware of what this will mean for training provision in the county.

It was asked whether enough was being done to communicate and publicise training opportunities via schools. Laura confirmed that this was a gap, and that it would be beneficial to address this. This will also come within the scope of the new Green Skills Coordinator.

Laura's colleague Dave Quinton confirmed that more work needs to be done on educating the public on the fabric first approach to retrofit, instead of a focus on simply heat pump installation. It was confirmed that this would be the approach taken via the countywide retrofit platform being taken forward by districts.

It was asked whether CLG's new higher education partners would have graduates who might be suitable for the upcoming retrofit engagement roles in districts. It was confirmed that the Youth Climate Group and university may be able to assist here.

Action: Relevant district partners to share retrofit engagement officer job profile when appropriate with Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group and University partners.

8) Energy theme update

Nick Murry outlined the 4 priorities within the theme:

- Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP)
- A Countywide Community Energy Network
- Low carbon heat/district heat networks
- Deployment of renewable energy

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The presentation focussed on an update under the first two of these priorities:

On LAEPing:

- LAEPs are now a recognised method of translating national net zero targets into local energy system action.
- LAEPs are led by Local Authorities, and though currently non-statutory, are fast becoming the preferred method of energy planning nationally, with around 10 new councils each month committing to pursue a LAEP.
- A LAEP aims to develop a collaborative approach between energy stakeholders, identifying actions required to improve the energy system and attract private sector investment, and potentially grid improvement.
- This will therefore be a key method to influence energy operators and the future National Energy System Operator and Regional Energy Strategic Planners.
- CLG are taking forward a project as part of a collaborative group of LAs to procure a shared resource to deliver initial stages 1-3 of the process (with a current contribution of £20k from Gloucestershire CC and £10k match from the South West Net Zero Hub (SWNZH)).
- The full process is reported to cost between £150-500k. The SWNZH project will look to confirm a more cost-effective methodology for a full LEAP process as well as undertaking the early stakeholder mapping, engagement and data collection stages of the work.

Countywide community energy network:

- The SWNZH produced a 'Community Energy in the South West' report in partnership with Community Energy South. The report identifies the key support needed by the sector including regulatory reform around community energy systems, and genuine plans for net zero at a truly local level.
- The SWNZH will now look to set up a regional community energy forum and an annual networking event to support community energy organisations, along with providing project management and grant support specific to this sector.
- As part of reviewing the outputs of the report Energy theme leads noted that Gloucestershire authorities should be strategic partners in delivering local energy and act as convenors of community energy stakeholders.
- CLG have therefore taken forward launching a Gloucestershire Community Energy Network – which first meet on 11 June.
- Existing community energy organisations were surveyed ahead of the initial meeting to ascertain current and planned projects across the county, and the challenges encountered which included grid connection; lack of locations of projects; lack of low cost financing; lack of dedicated local volunteers; lack of public awareness; planning system barriers – e.g. a strong need to put support of local community energy projects within Local Plan policies; lack of national policy drivers; and a lack of local skills and resources.
- The new Gloucestershire Community Energy network agreed the value of meeting and sharing learning and agreed to programme future meetings to discuss, break down and find solutions to the key challenges listed above. Initially focusing on key action areas i.e. planning- discussion of solutions such as better local policies and

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guidance on deployment; better training for officers; more planning system support to educate communities taking forward projects; case study compilation; consideration of national lobbying opportunities.

- An offer was also made by Gwent Energy to host CLG representatives at a community energy project site visit within the county.
- Nick also flagged the current national consultation on barriers to community energy that closes on 30th June, which all LAs should consider responding to and which CLG will respond to based on the

Action: CLG to consider a site visit to community energy project (facilitated by Gwent Energy).

9) Draft Climate Leadership Gloucestershire Comms Plan

The draft CLG Communications plan was proposed for approval.

It was noted that the comms plan will require some additional resource to deliver - specifically around case study template creation, and some web design assistance.

Action: Secretariat will circulate specifics on the resource need with partners.

The point was made that youth voices was not currently included in the plan; the Secretariat agreed that this will be addressed going forward. It was asked whether a one-page infographic could be included to distil the communications plan.

Action: Secretariat to engage the Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group on representation within the CLG communications plan.

Decision: The Comms Plan was approved for adoption by Climate Leadership Gloucestershire members.

10) Any Other Climate Business

It was asked whether there was any interest in further collaboration on carbon literacy training, particularly for new elected Members. Publica are working on Member-focused carbon literacy training and would be interested in discussing and working together to address other councils' Member training needs.

Action: Members to confirm with Secretariat if they are interested in further Carbon Literacy training provision.