

Climate Leadership Gloucestershire Meeting #14 13/02/2024, 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	Debbie Baker	Cllr Alisha Lewis
Cotswold District Council	Cllr Mike McKeown Rob Weaver James Brain	
Forest of Dean District Council	Cllr Chris McFarling (Chair) Nigel Brinn Dr Nick Murry	
Gloucester City Council	Cllr Richard Cook Jon McGinty	
Gloucestershire County Council	Cllr David Gray Colin Chick	
Stroud District Council	Cllr Chloe Turner (outgoing Chair) Andrew Cummings Georgia Spooner Jenny Youngs	Brendan Cleere
Tewkesbury Borough Council	Cllr Sarah Hands	Simon Dix
Hospitals Trusts	Jen Cleary	Ian Quinnell
Integrated Care Board		Cath Leech
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner and Gloucestershire Constabulary	Mandy Gibbs	
GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership	David Owen Sarah Danson	
Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership	Doug Hulyer Nicola Hillary	

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Secretariat	Afriqnmun Lovejoy David Sharman	
Observers	Observers: Nathan Hine (GCC) Petula Davis (GCC shadowing Colin Chick)	

1) Welcome, apologies and Introductions

The outgoing Chair, Cllr Chloe Turner, welcomed all to this in-person AGM at Stroud District Council. Stroud District Council Strategic Director of Resources and S151, Andrew Cummings also welcomed the group to Stroud and the Council Chamber, in lieu of Brendan Cleere and on behalf of Stroud DC.

All attendees briefly introduced themselves.

2) Declarations of Interest

No declarations.

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

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

Decision: Climate Leadership Gloucestershire approved the November meeting notes.

4) Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2024 (paper 3)

The outgoing Chair introduced the Revised ToR and reiterated that this would see Vice Chairs automatically assume the role of Chair after a six-month term. All agreed with this amendment.

Cllr McFarling therefore assumed the role of Chair for the next six months, and the chairing of this meeting. He thanked Cllr Turner for her excellent service as Chair.

Cllr McFarling introduced the election for Vice Chair. He confirmed that one nomination had been received in advance of the meeting- for Cllr Mike McKeown. The Chair sought any further nominations from the floor; none were received. A vote was held on Cllr McKeown's nomination.

Decision: Cllr McFarling approved as the new CLG Chair and Cllr McKeown approved as the CLG Vice Chair.

5) CLG Administration (Papers 4 &5)

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Non-voting members - The Secretariat introduced the proposal to create non-voting members; allowing for relevant groups within the county integral to climate goals to join CLG as non-voting members. They would not contribute to the CLG budget and so would not have the voting rights of current members.

The Secretariat outlined the three proposed initial non-voting members- Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils; Gloucestershire Youth Climate Panel; and an Academia place.

Greener Gloucestershire Action Plan – The Secretariat introduced the Greener Gloucestershire Action Plan internal tracker, which amalgamates all of the recommendations approved by CLG over the last year. This will be used to produce a public-facing document. The Secretariat asked for approval for that this to become the document to monitor CLG actions and used to produce a public-facing action plan.

Greener Gloucestershire Action Fund – The Secretariat provided an overview of the current status of the four funded projects using the £200,000 Fund, and that they are all now being progressed.

CLG future structure – the Secretariat outlined the proposed new meeting structure given the instigation of the Action Plan, which will see a focus on thematic action updates. Following a survey with Members there will be no change to the frequency and timing of CLG meetings over the next 12 months. The Secretariat wishes to include several cross-cutting forward look items that will be added to agenda in addition to the thematic items.

Action: Further suggestions for these cross-cutting items would be welcome and should be emailed to the Secretariat.

Risk register- The Secretariat introduced an open discussion on the merits of a CLG central risk register, and what risks might be included in that. It was agreed that this conversation should be limited to the risks to the central CLG model as its function moves more towards that of a programme board, as opposed to the risks of individual actions on climate change.

Key points arising from the discussion:

CLG non-voting members- It was debated whether it might be worth considering the three proposed non-voting members instead be elevated to full members.

In response it was recognised that votes should be reserved for those who contribute to the CLG budget, particularly as key votes are taken on how CLG spends its Action Fund, and final decisions on this should be reserved for those that contribute to this fund.

It was discussed how the proposed non-voting member list was arrived at and how we might seek to extend this in future.

The Chair confirmed that members will need to carefully consider whether and which further members would be beneficial to the CLG model, and as suitable voices on climate actions

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within the county, whilst balancing the risk of making this group too unwieldy. It was confirmed that the current proposed new members were suggestions from existing members, and clearly addressed gaps in representation across the public sector. Further members that would likewise be valuable to CLG's objectives should be considered as and when proposed.

LEP representatives were asked how they saw the voice of business being represented on this Board in the future, given the demise of the LEP. David Owen confirmed that CLG should consider coordination with the Economic Growth Board. He confirmed discussion with the Secretariat on their attendance as observers to the officer group of that Board. This will be further discussed at the June CLG meeting, which will include an Economy theme update.

Decision: Approval of non-voting member status, and the inclusion of the three proposed non-voting members.

Action: CLG Secretariat to continue to review the efficacy of non-voting member status and consider further relevant organisations for invitation to be non-voting members.

Greener Gloucestershire Action Plan – The Chair raised the RAG ratings, in particular the rating for carbon reduction, and initiated a discussion on the clarity and use of these.

The Chair suggested introduction of KPIs into the Action Plan. The discussion that followed agreed that it may be preferable to pick out the actions most appropriate for KPIs and utilise for these key areas, as it would not be an appropriate framework for all.

It was suggested that a forward-looking GANTT chart could be utilised to help track actions over the next year.

Decision: The Action Plan format was approved.

Action: The Secretariat will consider possible actions where it may be effective to use KPIs to monitor progress and present back these suggestions at a future meeting.

Greener Gloucestershire Action Fund - The group agreed that funded projects, and approved projects yet to be funded, should be also considered for additional funding pots such as the current South West Net Zero Hub Local Net Zero Fund whilst also pursuing alternative funding options.

Risk Register – A number of risks to the central CLG model were suggested by the group:

1. The lack of climate change specialists, and other key staffing vacancies including e.g. within planning teams across partners – inhibiting our ability to deliver our ambitions.
2. Potential political and priority changes within LA members of the Group. Though this is mitigated by a well-established collaborative approach.
3. Financial risk - CLG has an increase range of commitments across its 10 themes and limited funds with which to deliver these.

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4. Risks relating to partners being torn between local priorities and central shared projects for mutual gain, and the need to ensure continued collaboration.
5. Risks related to the ability for individual partners to maintain a focus on climate action with reducing resources and competing pressures particularly those that are under acute pressure- such as the NHS. Potential mitigation of this might be resolved by continued demonstration of CLG as a model to address limited resource- as a source of best practice and collaboration that can aid partners.
6. Risk that we are setting overambitious goals and targets in the Action Plan.
7. Risk related to partners limited ability to influence wider community action- a lot of the effort needed to reach our net zero targets is not under direct public sector control, and we need to work to gain community buy-in to deliver our desired results.
8. Risk of non-delivery- there is a lack of direct ownership of CLG objectives as they are not under the direct control of any one stakeholder or partner. CLG's role is limited in many instances to encouragement of action across the wider community and will not necessarily fit within traditional project management frameworks.

Action: Secretariat to draft a CLG risk register based on the above initial list and present this at a future meeting.

6) Planning theme: Update & recommendations review

The Chair confirmed the importance of the Planning theme to our shared climate goals and its interdependency with delivering other CLG themes. He then welcomed James Brain, Head of Planning at Cotswold District Council to present the theme's updated recommendations.

James outlined the key messages:

- The time is to tackle climate change within planning is now as all LPAs are at an appropriate stage of the plan-making process.
- We have stretching net zero ambitions but LPAs do not have adequate policies within current adopted local plans. We need to change those ambitions into substance.
- Planning resources are currently extremely stretched, and therefore introducing a commonality of approach, and doing things once together would create resources efficiencies.
- Others are already making great progress and there is now opportunity to taking learning from the best practice of Lancaster, BaNES, and Cornwall among others.

There are seven key recommendations:

1. A suite of overarching sustainable planning policies for the county:

We should coordinate and have a suite of principles across all 6 LPAs. However, a watching brief will be required at present as central government are reviewing the central planning system which may affect our local policy setting ability, we expect to know more on plans for the new system towards the end of this year.

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2. A central climate planning office/officer/expert:

Essex Climate Planning Unit is an example of this, recent outputs include creation of a countywide design code. This would deliver policy in a more coordinated and efficient manner. The recommendation if approved suggests funding should be secured for this by the end of the Summer.

3. Sharing work on evidence and best practice:

This recommendation includes the suggestion for a gap analysis across authorities on the existing evidence gaps. CDC have developed a good evidence base, and would be willing to share this, as part of their new policy proposals including: Retrofitting and decarbonising existing homes; Renewable and low carbon energy generation, storage and transmission; Wind Energy Development; Rooftop and ground mounted solar Panels; Community renewable energy schemes; Net Zero Carbon new buildings; Space heating demand; Energy Use Intensity; No fossil fuel use; Flood Risk and Water Management Infrastructure; Assured energy performance; Energy offsetting; District Heating; On-site renewable energy; Green Infrastructure; and Sustainable Transport.

4. Training for officers:

Many planning officers have had to self-teach themselves the technicalities of building standards and sustainable policy development. We need to offer training on areas like energy efficiency performance standards and other such areas to help our planners deliver our ambitions effectively.

5. Collaboration with other Climate Leadership Gloucestershire themes:

Planning is central to other key strategic CLG themes- we need to ensure that the Retrofit and Transport themes, along with the Biodiversity and Adaptation themes work closely together with the Planning theme.

6. Influencing Government:

This could include coordinated CLG responses to consultations. There has also been some interest in a coordinated response to the current Future Homes Standards Consultation.

7. Sustainable outcomes through CIL and S106 payments

This would consider further opportunities to leverage CIL and S106 payments to obtain funding towards climate outcomes.

James concluded by saying that ensuring some level of commonality and shared priorities and outcomes across the councils is key to effective climate change planning policy for the Gloucestershire.

Key points arising from the discussion:

Members discussed the potential opportunities from extending the commonality of approach to Neighbourhood Plans, something which could be raised with GAPTC following

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the agreement they be invited to join CLG as non-voting members. We should also consider commonality of strategic spatial strategies.

It was noted that future Neighbourhood Plans may possibly have more leeway to extend beyond national policy and so could become a key tool in delivering our net zero ambitions.

The recommendation within the Statement of Common Ground towards the development of a countywide Spatial Strategy was also noted.

Attendees discussed the importance of Recommendation 2, and how best to fund this since the proposal had missed the first round of applications to the Greener Gloucestershire action fund (now oversubscribed). It was asked if there was a view on how we could resource this.

James confirmed that the trimming of individual LPA planning policy budgets could be considered, particularly given that all authorities would have a budget for consultancy to develop evidence bases related to sustainable policies for the next round of LDPs, and this could be conducted once to deliver a common approach and at a cheaper cost than six individual costs. Further external resource would likely be required however, as planning policy teams are already working to tight budgets.

Despite resource concerns, group members agreed this was a sensible approach in lieu of clear mandated national policy on climate change within planning. The LEP also confirmed that business would welcome a joined-up approach to planning as per Recommendation 2; and that it should be pursued if at all possible.

A question was raised on the status of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and how valid they remain. James confirmed that they will be phased out over the next 4-5 years. They should only be used to provide further clarity on a policy and cannot be used to mandate actions for developers if not directly linked to an existing policy within the Local Plan. He further noted that 'Supplementary Plans' are due to be introduced over the next 18 months and would potentially better serve the purpose of providing additional guidance in future.

The importance of the Strategic and Local Plan was also considered by partners both in its ability to provide a vehicle and testbed for joint working, but also in considering what could realistically be expected at this stage of the development of the plan and within the planned delivery timescales.

it was suggested that SLP planners could look at CDC policies and adopt much of their content as a low-resource option.

Decision: The updated Planning theme recommendations were supported by CLG but the theme officers were asked to urgently explore:

- **A business case for the funding needed for central climate planning resource.**
- **It was noted that further consultation with Cabinets/Leadership Gloucestershire may be required to approve any re-allocation of funding both for centralising resources and for re-distribution of potential S106 and CIL funding.**

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Action: Planning theme to work with CPOG to urgently develop an invest-to-save business case for a central climate planning resource, and explore potential funding routes for this.

7) CLG Communications Plan workshop

The Secretariat introduced the intention of the workshop: to gain initial views on the parameters of any CLG communications work ahead of the development of a CLG communications plan that will be brought back to future meetings. The session is split into three sections:

- A group discussion on the areas of focus for any central CLG communications
- Two breakout groups would then consider:
- Key CLG audiences; and key CLG messages

Key points arising from the discussion:

Group discussion:

It was confirmed that the group did not believe that a 'CLG logo' was necessary and efforts should not be focussed on developing separate brand recognition of CLG with residents, detached from its member organisations.

However, the benefits of the CLG model should still be promoted where appropriate, and efforts should be made to ensure that the CLG webpages contain clear and accurate information on CLG, and the actions that it is undertaking.

It was queried whether behaviour change of residents should be included within this discussion of CLG communications priorities as responsibility for this had already been given to the external Behaviour Change theme and its supporting officer group convened by GCC colleagues. The Secretariat confirmed that was the case, and the debate for this discussion pertained to further work to develop an overarching CLG brand and narrative that would be used to engage Gloucestershire communities.

There was significant support for a focus on building the national profile of CLG. This could promote Gloucestershire and CLG as a pioneering model for climate action for a dual purpose: To aid in securing funding for CLG actions; and to influence national policy and decision makers. There was general agreement that this should be a key priority for the draft CLG communications strategy.

The group then separated into two breakout groups -

- Group 1 focussed on national audiences that CLG should engage. This included:

Key stakeholders that hold influence over funding pots and/or policy levers- key senior civil servants within DLUHC, DESNEZ, Defra and DfT; Innovate UK and other national funders; The South West Net Zero Hub; key developers and significant commercial partners.

- Group 2 considered a wider selection of audiences and the key outcomes that engaging them could achieve. This included:

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National stakeholders- Government departments, APPGs, representative bodies (LGA, DCN); Further local government representatives- MPs, councillors, PCCC; Gloucestershire wider strategic partners- ICB, police, growth hubs, Western Gateway; academia; business; voluntary sector; staff; and residents.

The group considered these audiences' ability to- shape future national and local policy; provide funding; develop funding bids; learn from and share best practice; and raise awareness of CLG's model and role.

Breakout Groups (Messages) –

Group 1 Considered how CLG should present themselves to the national stakeholders they'd previously discussed.

It was agreed that these comms should focus on where the partnership can make the biggest difference through a joint approach, promoting key successes.

This might include:

- Planning - and Gloucestershire as 'pioneers of strategic planning' bringing together the work to create a common approach to climate planning policy, and the joint approach to LAEP and the CRVA
- Transport
- Retrofit
- Development of a land use framework/engagement of rural economies
- Consideration should also be given to the joint approach on Biodiversity- and the approach taken to implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain, as an innovative demonstration of collaborative working.

Group 2 also focussed on the need to raise awareness of the successful work already underway to collaborate across the county on key themes.

The group considered messaging around calls to action on what stakeholders can do individually, or to support CLG.

Action: Secretariat to begin development of a CLG communications plan that focusses on raising CLG's national profile.

8) Behaviour Change theme

The Secretariat introduced the item, confirming that 36 internal behaviour change recommendations had been approved by CLG in 2023, to foster awareness and drive change within our own organisations.

Progress on their adoption has been monitored by the Secretariat with a high degree of variance with adoption of these recommendations between partners, with some perceived as being more easily deliverable than others.

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The priority for the theme is to consider how to further proliferate recommendations via the instigation of information sharing- via forums, webinars etc. to highlight the benefits of these actions and encourage further adoption. The theme leads then presented further on two key recommendations and the justification for wider adoption:

Firstly Mandy Gibbs spoke on Gloucestershire Constabulary's experience with the ISO14001 environmental management system. The Constabulary were already doing a lot of the activity and meeting the requirements of 14001, but not in the strategic manner the system instils. A management system acts as a collator- for your environmental policy, risk register, legal register, and an internal audit. It allows you to set objectives and targets, then it drives you towards continual improvement. For the Constabulary- it has raised awareness of environmental issues, assured legal compliance, particularly around waste management, and led to recycling within the organisation.

A query was raised on the co-benefits of 14001 that were identified in making the case for its implementation. Mandy confirmed that other forces have been prosecuted on waste management- which has come with penalties, both reputationally and financially. The system has also been responsible for energy savings, and driving forward the police's EV fleet, as well as the rollout of air source heat pumps and PV across three sites.

Next Jen Cleary introduced how the NHS Hospitals Foundation Trust has instilled a culture of sustainability. A key strand to this work has been the introduction of green champions. This has seen 120 staff members from different service areas across hospitals, and with differing levels of knowledge on climate change, enact successful changes to make their teams and the Trust more sustainable. The theatres green team in particular have made operating practices more sustainable and items more reusable.

A range of support from senior leadership has helped to make the scheme successful, including regular communications, activities, forums, and funding for green champions' projects. The Trust has also utilised a 'green council' bringing together all green champions, and are now exploring a more informal forum to increase attendance. Green team competitions can also be utilised to run and engage teams of sustainability projects.

Jen also outlined the Warp It platform, enabling simple furniture and equipment reuse and allowing the Trust to sustainably dispose of unwanted furniture and procure needed furniture. Although it has a subscription cost it has avoided circa £47k in furniture and equipment costs over a six-month period; as well as diverting over 400 items from waste.

9) Any Other Climate Business

- I. The South West Net Zero Hub's Local Net Zero Fund was raised and it was suggested that any proposals for joint bids should be put to the Secretariat as it was understood that these would be looked on favourably by the Hub. The Secretariat confirmed that they would happily receive proposal ideas that aligned with CLG's themes and actions, and that they would seek further information and guidance on the fund from the Hub.

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- II. The Secretariat requested to be informed of any members' plans to submit climate-related proposals for the LGA Conference's Innovation Zone, or any thought for CLG representation at the Conference.

Finally all attendees were thanked for their time and asked to leave feedback on one thing that they thought was good about CLG, and one thing that could be changed as they left the meeting.