

Prospectus for Partnership Working in Gloucestershire



Gloucestershire
Conference

GSP

Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership

"Partnership of partnerships" - representatives from thematic, sectoral and local strategic partnerships. Developing the long-term vision and provides forum for deliberation and evaluation.

ABG

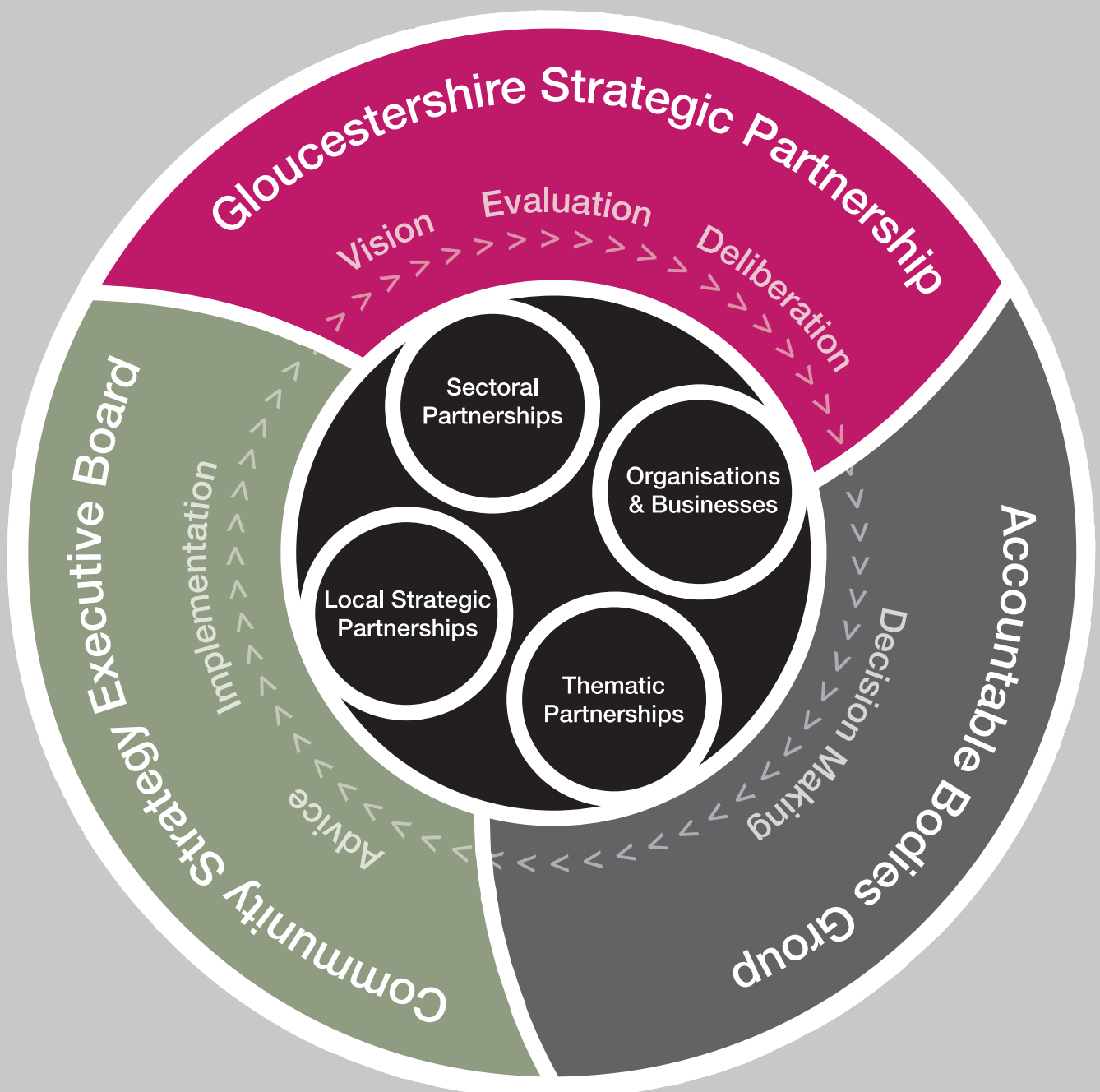
Accountable Bodies Group

Elected and non-elected leaders of major organisations. Provides collective decision making and allocates resources.

CSEB

Community Strategy Executive Board

Chief executives/lead officers from major organisations and key partnerships. Commissions work to deliver agreed strategies and monitors progress.





Prospectus for **Partnership Working** in Gloucestershire

up-dated October 2008

1. Introduction

A partnership is a relationship between two or more independent legal bodies, organisations or individuals working together to secure some shared objectives. We have defined three main types of partnership:-

- Strategic partnerships
- Operational partnerships
- Consultative partnerships

For the purposes of this prospectus, we are dealing with **strategic** partnerships. These partnerships co-ordinate activity, make recommendations and may sign off joint strategies but it is the partner agencies that agree action, commission work and undertake delivery.

Partnership working is now a normal way of doing business. Partnerships are a crucial element in the planning and delivery of public services and their importance is growing.

Gloucestershire has a long history of developing partnership working. We recognised that higher expectations on partnerships to deliver outcomes would mean a review of how they function. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) was the catalyst for this review. The review consisted of extensive consultation with partners and we were assisted by the Tavistock Institute.

Our **Prospectus for Partnership Working** was first published in February 2007. It sets out initial proposals for ways of working, structures, support, evaluation and review. These have recently been reviewed. This up-dated version of the prospectus reflects a number of changes which have been made. The prospectus will be reviewed again by October 2009.

2. Ways of Working

Partnerships in Gloucestershire are committed to working on the following lines:

- treating all partners with equal respect
- giving each other the benefit of the doubt where misunderstandings or differences of opinion arise
- recognising that partners bring different contributions
- working through consensus without impeding progress



- focussing on getting things done
- expecting all partners to actively contribute to the partnership's aims
- making things as simple and straight-forward as possible
- communicating effectively so that partners can participate effectively
- making every effort to look after everyone's interest, recognising that this is possible without everyone being present
- monitoring and reviewing partnerships' successes and learning from these

These have been re-affirmed.

3. Structures

The partnership landscape recognises that there are geographical (spatial) partnerships (e.g. District-level LSPs), thematic partnerships (e.g. Safer and Stronger Communities) and sectoral partnerships (e.g. Voluntary and Community Sector). The **Gloucestershire Conference** is the collective name used to describe the totality of our strategic partnership arrangements.

At **county** level, we will separate vision-setting and deliberation, from authorisation and decision-making, from implementation and monitoring/evaluation. These responsibilities will be undertaken by three bodies within the Gloucestershire Conference. These roles are explained in more detail below and shown in diagrammatic form on the front cover. However, there will be common subject matter. Some examples of how the structure works are shown in **Appendix 1**.

- (a) The **Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership (GSP)** is a “partnership of partnerships”, providing the framework within which other partnerships operate.

The GSP has three main roles: 1) to develop a long-term vision for Gloucestershire. 2) to develop an effective Sustainable Community Strategy for Gloucestershire. 3) to provide a deliberative forum for exploring new and emerging issues, to recommend ways to take these forward (or not) in the partnership arena and evaluate progress. Terms of reference can be found online at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsp

Its **membership** is:

- one representative of each of the district-level local strategic partnerships (LSPs)
- one representative from each thematic partnership (see section (d))
- one representative from the Voluntary Sector Assembly Board
- Chaired by a leading member of Gloucestershire County Council

Others may be approached to join the GSP to make sure there is a balance of skills and interests and to give advice, where necessary.

Work Programme:

- host a “State of Gloucestershire“ Event for the wider group of stakeholders. Representatives will be invited from geographic, thematic and sectoral partnerships
- develop a 10 year vision for Gloucestershire
- oversee the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Gloucestershire
- establish effective ways of communicating with the LSPs and thematic partnerships, using structures and processes.





- (b) The **Accountable Bodies Group (ABG)** brings together council and other leaders to commit and sign-off (authorise) major decisions emerging from the partnership structures. It is responsible for collective decision making which helps the partner organisations to deliver the agreed strategies, including allocating resources to support priorities.

Detailed terms of reference can be found online at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/abg

Its **membership** is

- a leading executive member from the County Council and each of the six district councils
- the Chair of the Voluntary Sector Assembly Board
- the Chair of the Police Authority
- the Chair of the Primary Care Trust
- the County Board member of the Learning and Skills Council
- the County Board member from the Regional Development Agency
- chaired by an independent person (i.e. non-elected member)
- appropriate representation from the business sector

Other relevant bodies may be approached to join the Accountable Bodies Group, particularly those who have a “duty to co-operate”.

Work Programme

- oversee the delivery of the LAA
- agree LAA roll-forward
- advise on financial issues e.g. Performance Reward Grant
- allocate partner bodies’ resources to support partnership priorities

- (c) **The Community Strategy Executive Board (CSEB)** is responsible for advising the GSP and the ABG and implementing decisions. It will commission work from organisations and partnerships to ensure the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy. It will also monitor delivery of the Local Area Agreement and other relevant delivery plans. Detailed terms of reference can be found at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/cseb

Its **membership** is:

- Chief Executives of the County Council and the six districts councils
- Chief Executive of the Primary Care Trust
- Chief Constable
- Partnership and Participation Manager of the Voluntary Sector Assembly
- Director of the Learning and Skills Council
- Lead Officers from each thematic partnership
- Area lead for the Regional Development Agency
- Area lead, Government Office for the South West
- Chaired by the Chief Executive of the County Council

Alternatives at executive director level will be acceptable as substitutes.

Chief Officers from other relevant partnership or organisations represented who have statutory responsibilities for delivery outcomes may also be co-opted to join the Board.



Key Tasks

- advising the GSP on the development of the new Sustainable Community Strategy
- performance management of the Local Area Agreement
- advising the ABG on the roll-forward of the LAA
- commissioning research on new issues affecting communities in Gloucestershire e.g. migrant workers
- advising on effective communications mechanisms for the partnership framework
- performance management of non-LAA priorities/actions arising from the Sustainable Community Strategy
- risk-management of LAA and non-LAA delivery
- advising on and co-ordinating the Comprehensive Area Assessment for Gloucestershire.

(d) Thematic Partnerships

There are a number of thematic partnerships; five of which are directly responsible for the delivery of the Local Area Agreement.

- Gloucestershire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership
- Gloucestershire Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership
- Gloucestershire First (Economic Development and Enterprise)
- Gloucestershire Health and Community Well-being Partnership
- Gloucestershire Environment Partnership.

All five partnerships are represented on the GSP and CSEB. Links to Thematic Partnership websites can be found at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/thematicpartnerships.

(e) Local Strategic Partnerships

There are six district level Local Strategic Partnerships.

- Cheltenham Strategic Partnership
- Cotswold Local Strategic Partnership
- Forest of Dean Local Strategic Partnership
- Gloucester Partnership
- Stroud Local Strategic Partnership
- Tewkesbury Local Strategic Partnership

Through their membership of the GSP, district-level LSPs help to shape the overall vision and direction of the Gloucestershire Sustainable Community Strategy. Through their links with thematic partnerships, they also help to deliver the Local Area Agreement.

Links to District LSP websites can be found at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/districtlsp





Their role is to:

- contribute to the delivery of the countywide Sustainable Community Strategy and develop their own SCS
- consult locally to identify district priorities within the context of the countywide SCS
- support local delivery of aims by district partners.

(f) Parish and Town Councils

Parish and town council plans have an important contribution to make to understanding local needs. Their plans should integrate with District-level sustainable community strategies.

(g) Third Sector

The Third Sector is a full and committed partner in the delivery of the Gloucestershire “Vision”. The VCS (Voluntary & Community Sector) Assembly, through the Assembly Board, co-ordinates and promotes the strategic views of the sector whilst celebrating and encouraging the operational diversity the sector represents. The Compact and its Codes of Practice, agreed between the Third Sector and partner agencies across Gloucestershire, underpins and informs partnership working between the Third Sector and its statutory partners.

4. New and emerging issues

There are a number of new and emerging issues which are relevant to the overall strategic partnership governance arrangements. They are at different stages of development. Decisions will be taken during the next 12 months about how they best fit within the Gloucestershire Conference.

(a) Countywide Infrastructure

In the development of the latest Local Area Agreement (LAA), it was felt that the existing thematic partnerships did not adequately cover countywide development and planning issues. Furthermore, there is a new statutory requirement to align Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) with Sustainable Community Strategies (SCSs).

Detailed work is being progressed to develop Joint Core Strategies (essential parts of LDFs). Programme governance arrangements which make links to the Gloucestershire Conference are starting to emerge.

(b) Culture

Culture has an important role to play in delivering the SCS and LAA. There are good links with the five thematic partnerships. Therefore, it is not felt necessary to create a new thematic partnership. The Chief Executive of Cheltenham Borough Council will act as culture “champion” on the CSEB to ensure relevant issues are dealt with effectively.



(c) **Olympics 2012**

Active Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire First are joint leads for the project making preparations for the London Olympics in 2012. They will also use the Culture “champion” link to escalate relevant issues to CSEB.

(d) **Efficiency and Improvement**

The Gloucestershire Conference arrangements focus on services and outcomes. Proposed changes to the external inspection regime, the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), bring new expectations of efficiency and improvement through partnership working. Work has been commissioned to examine the benefits of and governance arrangements for a more joined-up approach.

(e) **Scrutiny**

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 includes provisions which are designed to enhance councils’ scrutiny powers in the context of LAAs. The “Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power” consultation document published in August 2008 describes the Government’s power to make regulations in respect of:

- overview and scrutiny committees requiring information from partner authorities
- publication of scrutiny reports, recommendations and responses
- establishing joint county and district overview and scrutiny committees
- enhancing the powers of district overview and scrutiny committees

The Government expects arrangements to be co-ordinated and to avoid duplication in two-tier areas like Gloucestershire.

Further work is being done to prepare for the implementation locally.

(f) **Organisations and partners**

In the same way that partnerships do not remain static, then neither do organisations. National changes have an impact locally, for example new roles for Regional Development Agencies and the demise of local Learning and Skills Councils. Named partners have a statutory duty to co-operate with the LAA. Most are already “plugged into” the Gloucestershire Conference; others are looking to strengthen their involvement. This Prospectus already allows for co-option so no further changes are recommended at this stage.





5. Support

Effective governance arrangements require effective support. This support role includes:

- providing a 'clerk' function for meetings
- briefing and supporting chairs
- monitoring performance and chasing progress
- preparing papers, reports, agendas, minutes and key messages
- undertaking specific actions on behalf of the Partnership between meetings

LSPs will continue to be supported primarily by the district councils.

Thematic Partnerships will continue to be supported by the relevant lead agency or agencies.

VCS Assembly will continue to be supported by paid staff through an infrastructure contract.

The GSP, ABG and CSEB will be supported primarily by Gloucestershire County Council.

The Community Strategy Support Team will co-ordinate support across the Community Strategy Executive Board and the five Thematic Partnerships, particularly in respect of developing and delivering the Local Area Agreement.

Ultimately, we would like to establish support structures which are resourced and managed by the partnerships rather than individual organisations.

6. Evaluation and Review

The original 'Prospectus' was based on extensive discussion and consultation. The new arrangements were implemented enthusiastically and with good faith. They were reviewed between April-July 2008 and re-affirmed as fit for purpose. They will be reviewed again by October 2009.

1 October 2008



Appendix 1

How the new structure might work **in practice**

An example of strategy development: environment

Local debate stimulated by The Stern report on climate change highlights the likely threats to Gloucestershire over the next decades.

While some issues of biodiversity and sustainability have already been the centre of activity, the report suggests a much broader strategy development is required across the range of environmental issues. This does not feature on the immediate agenda of any of the partnership bodies in the county, but the GSP concludes that each thematic partnership and the

LSPs should be asked to debate the issue, identify potential consequences for their policy or geographical areas. The Community Strategy Executive Board pulls together the results of these debates. A set of potential short term actions is put to the Accountable Bodies Group; the topic is identified as the key theme for the next GSP vision-setting meeting and the Accountable Bodies Group is charged with the task of preparing an issues paper for that discussion.

An example of strategic response: a major employer closes

Employco announces that it is closing its plant in Gloucester. It employs 4,000 people, two thirds of whom live in the Forest of Dean. The Forest of Dean and Gloucester LSPs discuss the issue and agree to have a joint meeting with Gloucestershire First to agree a strategy. They decide its too late to lobby. What's needed is tailored benefits/career/training support for the workforce (some provided in the Forest to save transport costs) and rapid thinking on how to redevelop what is a prime site. The action plan requires input from the two councils, the county council, the Learning Skills Council and Job Centre Plus. The meet-

ing also spotted that there are two other major employers in the county in a similar business area. So:

- an action plan is signed off at a special meeting of the Accountable Bodies Group;
- a task group led by Gloucestershire First, but involving the Gloucestershire and Forest of Dean LSPs is set up to oversee it;
- the future of “whatever the industry is” is proposed as one of the issues to be explored at the next GSP meeting.



An example of strategic review: developing community cohesion

Community cohesion is identified as an important issue by the Community Strategy Executive Board, which refers the topic to the GSP for deliberation. The GSP identifies that County, Districts, thematic partnerships and LSPs share a pre-occupation with this issue, but that approaches and experience varies across the county.

Bringing together the range of different approaches being enacted pinpoints neglected areas which need more rein-

forcement as well as highlighting examples of good practice which might be adapted and adopted elsewhere in the county. Strategic review involves data gathering of practice in other local authorities, appraising a range of models which could extend the current range of practice.

The outcome is a programme for approval by the Accountable Bodies Group and a continuing role for LSPs in reviewing the position in their areas.

An example of emergent strategy: unauthorised absences from school drop

The County Council becomes aware that truancy is increasing in the county, but particularly quickly in a few schools in Cheltenham and the Forest.

The CYPSP has an initial discussion based on stats from the county and the schools. A range of issues is identified – in some cases alienated young people, a number involving children with care responsibilities, and in one case serious problems with the school.

All LSPs are asked to have a look at this issue in their area, both in terms of the extent of the problem in their area and possible solutions. Three LSPs confirm that this is a real problem and establish joint groups with the relevant schools to tackle them. The CYPSP co-ordinates and picks up countywide issues. It soon becomes clear that several schools in

affected districts are no longer suffering from these problems: quite the contrary – their attendances are improving fast and in some case are better than anywhere in the county thanks to individual innovations by their leadership teams working with other very local services particularly those who are part of the neighbourhood community safety partnerships.

Following some work by an ad hoc working group formed by the CYPSP and Safer and Stronger Communities partnerships together with the three LSPs, a report back is made and discussed by the GSP as a whole and a new countywide policy is formulated for approval by the Accountable Bodies Group and subsequent implementation by the Community Strategy Executive Board.

