

## Partnership Management Group

### Minutes of the meeting held at 1.30 p.m. 1st October 2009 at the QinetiQ, Boscombe Down

#### PRESENT, MEMBERS AND ACTING MEMBERS:

Fleur de Rhé-Philippe	(FdRP) Wiltshire Council (Chairman)
Councillor Peter Boulton	(PB) Test Valley Borough Council
Lesley Andrews	(LA) Voluntary Sector/ Community First
Brigadier Stephen Hodder	(SH) Ministry of Defence / 43 Brigade
Michael Jones	(MJ) Independent (Vice-Chairman)
Michael Mounde	(MM) Wessex Association of Chambers of Commerce
Mitch Roberts	(MR) Community Area Devizes
David Wildman	(DW) CPA 13 Tidworth
Geraldine Wimble	(GW) Independent

#### DEPUTIES AND STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

John Dowsett	(JD) Programme Manager, Plain Action
Julian Head	(JH) Accountable Body
Sally Rackard	(SR) SWRDA
Lesley Thomas	(LJT) Programme Assistant, Plain Action

#### 1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from Richard Amery (Independent), Digby Barker (Community Area Warminster), Peter Beech-Allen (WSEP), Philip Brown (Community Area Westbury), Alex Sparks (South Wilts Economic Partnership), Len Turner (Mid Wilts Economic Partnership).

The Chairman welcomed Brigadier Stephen Hodder and Michael Mounde to the meeting and thanked QinetiQ for their hospitality and Jane Whittingham for her work in organising the meeting.

#### 2. Minutes of last meeting (Enc A)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th August 2009, which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record.

#### 3. Matters Arising

4. Membership – Young people representation – JD would be addressing this issue.

6. Management of LAGs – SR confirmed that around half of the South West LAGs had their management staff housed within Local Authorities, while a variety of regeneration and other bodies provided the remainder with management and administration services.

#### 4. Membership (Enc B)

The need for two minor amendments was noted **(LJT)**.

Vacancies remaining would be pursued as follows:

- Farming community: **JD**
- Wilton / South Wilts CPA: **FdR-P / JD**
- Stonehenge CPA: **JD**

#### 5. Marketing and Promotion (Enc C)

JD presented proposals for marketing and promotion which had been circulated. Discussion and comments included the following:

- . Website cost appeared modest. It was accepted that this was a vital marketing and communication tool. It was confirmed that more funds could be made available if this appeared necessary **(JD)**, and the mechanism for recording the number of hits would be put in place. **(JD)**
- Ideas and venues for next year's (annual) event would be welcomed **(all Members)**
- Attendance at Area Board meetings was recognised as important, in view of the large numbers of the urban and rural public attending as members of the public, even from the rural areas, do attend. **(JD and others)**
- Continuing liaison with the Community Partnerships remained important as they developed under the new arrangements. **(JD and others)**

#### 6. Programme Finances (Encs E and F)

##### Management and Admin Budget

JD elaborated on the figures which were accepted. It was accepted that the predicted positive residual balance for 08/09 would be carried forward and that increased staffing might be necessary as the Programme developed.

##### Project and Activity Commitment Budget

JD explained the commitment budget in detail. It would be presented in the same format at each future meeting as a means of understanding and managing the Programme's commitments. JD mentioned that the Age Concern application was currently on hold. Subsequent discussion in the context of the applications about to be considered included:

- On the figures presented there was a danger of committing a disproportionate amount of the Objective 1 funds at this early stage in the Programme.
- The risk of losing funding through not committing or expending sufficient at this stage was discussed. It was thought this could become an issue by December 2010. There was a possibility of SWRDA ultimately transferring funds from underperforming LAGs to more successful ones.
- The potential for commissioning work if sufficient appropriate applications were not forthcoming to deliver all parts of the Programme was mentioned and would be included in the review and Delivery Plan 2010.
- The tendency for projects to under spend arose. The issues associated with 'over committing' to avoid under spend were discussed.
- A cash flow of actual expenditure was included in the Delivery Plan and would be updated again for 2010 and the remainder of the Programme. A 'commitment budget' separated into years would be considered.

## 7. Project Applications (Enc D)

### Procedure

FdRP suggested a format for considering applications which was agreed as follows:

- Those invited to make presentations would each have 5 minutes for presentations and 5 minutes to answer Members' questions. The presentations would follow each other directly.
- After the presentations Members would consider each application in turn.
- For each application Members would first be asked to declare if they had an interest. If the interest comprised a connection with the applicant organisation, or similar interest, that Member would not be entitled to vote but would be entitled to volunteer purely factual information if asked; that Member should not seek to persuade others. A purely geographical interest should not debar a member from full participation and voting, but should be declared.
- After discussion of each application the Chairman would conduct a formal vote, the results of which would be fully recorded.

### Project Applications

The Meeting considered five project applications. (Minutes of this part of the meeting are to be found as the last item).

### Remaining Applications

It was agreed to consider the remaining 3 applications by the approved electronic process.

## 8. General Report (Encs H and I)

A paper (H) providing information on a variety of topics had been provided.

**Appraisers** Members approved in principle the appointment of a further 2 – 3 appraisers. At this point no PMG volunteers to become appraisers were forthcoming.

**Review and Development Plan 2010** JD would send out a note the following day asking Members to suggest any significant issues not mentioned in the paper that they felt should be addressed. The Working Group would agree the first draft, and subsequently agree the final version following the direction of the PMG at its December meeting.

**Operating Manual – paper I** Members approved the asterisked new papers and revisions to the Operating Manual.

**Changes to project application – decision making procedures** After discussion it was agreed to defer to the next meeting a final decision on changes to the application decision making procedures. It was agreed that receiving the presentations and discussing the 5 projects had been very helpful.

**Grants below £10,000** The grant of £2175 to the Friends of Urchfont Garden was noted.

## 9. Public Forum

There had been no public requests to attend. However, QinetiQ staff, including Jane Whittingham, were in attendance at the meeting.

## 10. Any other business

**Meeting dates for 2010** were suggested provisionally as follows based on the first Thursday of alternate months: 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1<sup>st</sup> April, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 5<sup>th</sup> August, 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2<sup>nd</sup> December. The

provisional date for the annual event was Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> April. These would be circulated and considered formally at the next meeting.

**The next meeting** on Thursday 3rd December would be at 2.00 p.m. in the Warminster area with the venue was still to be decided.

There was no other business.

## PROJECT INSPIRE

<b>Project Title</b>	Project Inspire	<b>Applicant</b>	Community First
<b>Grant Requested</b>	£201,141	<b>Total Project Cost</b>	£279,662

### Evidence

- Application form, financial breakdown, business plan, appraisals, Wilts Council Financial Risk Assessment (all circulated electronically in advance of the meeting)
- Brief summary (included in Meeting paper D)
- Presentation and question and answer session with the applicant.

### Interests

Michael Jones and Lesley Andrews declared an interest through their association with Community First.

### Appraisals and FRA

JD and JH briefly summarised the main issues:

- Appraisal scores: 66/100 and 75.5/100
- Lack of cash in match funding
- Need for justification for volunteer in-kind value
- General clarification needed re salary costs, budget, and in-kind.
- Potentially greater scope for military liaison
- If the full application was approved a comprehensive mid project evaluation should be undertaken.

### Discussion

- The proposal was now for a three year project, financially very much in excess of that proposed at EOI stage.
- If approved the grant involved would commit 30% of Plain Action's total Objective 1 (skills and training) budget of £713,000. The general feeling was that at this stage of the Programme, and for what the project would deliver, the full grant requested was untenable.
- Similarities to the expected BTCV application were noted, with potential issues of duplication or involvement with the same young people. Different ways of approaching this were mentioned.
- The sustainability of the project post Plain Action funding was doubted.
- The number of training schemes currently available was of some concern, with the possibility of some young people simply moving from one to another.
- The lack of any cash contribution within the match funding was a concern.
- Possible alternatives to full acceptance or rejection of the application included at this stage funding for one year (£64,552) with no further commitment, or funding for one year with an implied commitment to further funding if the project was performing well (total potential commitment £131,084+), or straight funding for two years (£131,084)
- The drawbacks from the applicant's point of a Plain Action commitment limited to one year's funding were discussed – principally the need to gather momentum, and the possible difficulty of recruiting a committed staff member for only one year. It was accepted the applicant might not accept this offer.

### Decision (6 in favour, 1 abstention, MJ and LA not voting)

A grant of £64,552 (69.97%) was awarded towards total project costs of £92,252 based on the first year of the project application, subject to the following conditions:

- A full review of progress against the application be provided after six months.
- The project to incorporate military liaison to a greater extent, and progress on this to be included in the six month review.
- The project budget be reformed, backed by additional evidence and agreed with Plain Action, SWRDA and Wiltshire Council, with particular emphasis on the values and calculations associated with salaries, match funding and 'in-kind.' Ideally some element of cash match from the applicant should be introduced.

## MAKING TRACKS

<b>Project Title</b>	Making Tracks	<b>Applicant</b>	Community First
<b>Grant Requested</b>	£39,845	<b>Total Project Cost</b>	£53,338

### Evidence

- Application form, financial breakdown, appraisal, Wilts Council Financial Risk Assessment (all circulated electronically in advance of the meeting)
- Brief summary (included in Meeting paper D)
- Presentation and question and answer session with the applicant.

### Interests

Michael Jones and Lesley Andrews declared an interest through their association with Community First.

### Appraisals and FRA

JD and JH briefly summarised the main issues:

- Appraisal score: 57/100, with no qualifications
- Need to clarify source of 'earned income.'

### Discussion

- There were clearly expressed views of how 'Wheels to Work' had proved successful in some areas and had failed in others.
- It was clarified that Plain Action was the only source of funding for this project in the Plain Action area. It had taken place successfully elsewhere in Wiltshire with SWRDA support, and the evidence was that these schemes were extremely beneficial to the individuals involved.
- Whether lack of transport in the 'hotspots' quoted was a contributory factor to failure to be in employment or training was queried. It was particularly valuable in rural areas adjoining the 'hotspots.'
- It was thought unlikely to assist Service leavers directly although it might assist Service dependents (*although research for the application indicated Service dependents unlikely to use. Note after meeting*)
- The provision of the scooters themselves was queried – a stock of approximately 20 scooters would be 'inherited' from the previous scheme supported by SWRDA.
- The 'earned income' had been mentioned in the presentation and in writing before the meeting – it emanated from fees from users and potential sale of scooters.
- There was considerable concern about how the scheme could become financially sustainable after Plain Action funding – a recurrent difficulty of these schemes.
- The current recession might make this scheme even more valuable.

### Decision (5 in favour, 2 abstentions, 2 not voting)

A grant of £39,845 (75%) was awarded towards total project costs of £53,338 subject to the following conditions:

- That the applicant provide a comprehensive review of progress after one year.
- Evidence that the other income quoted in the application is in place.

## OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION AREA

<b>Project Title</b>	Observation and Interpretation Area	<b>Applicant</b>	Museum for Army Flying
<b>Grant Requested</b>	£39,500	<b>Total Project Cost</b>	£54,400

### Evidence

- Application form, appraisal, summary form
- Brief summary (included in Meeting paper D)
- Presentation and question and answer session with the applicant.

### Interests

Mitch Roberts declared a personal interest and did not vote.

### Appraisals and FRA

JD and JH briefly summarised the main issues:

- Appraisal score: 63/100.
- Appraisal points: Need for planning permission and Defence Estates agreement, and clarification re disabled access.
- Appraiser overall: in favour subject to conditions as above.
- The FRA had not been circulated with the papers. The main concern was lack of planning permission, which had been raised with the presenter, and clarification re procurement issues.
- FRA additional point for information: Planning Permission costs ( £360) and Defence Estates Licence (£340) not permissible costs.

### Discussion

- Applicant making a substantial contribution which was already available.
- Potential financial benefit by applicant from increased footfall and increased space and use of café was not an issue. This type of project, whether proposed by a Charity or business, fitted exactly under Measure 313 Encouragement of Tourism Activities (small scale capital projects.)
- Close match with Plain Action's military civilian theme, and promotion of understanding of military matters.
- There was already close liaison with the Planning Authority and with Defence Estates, and on the advice of both the applicant and a Member it was very unlikely there would be any difficulty.

### Decision (7 in favour, 1abstention, 1 not voting)

A grant of £39,500 (72.6%) was awarded towards total project costs of £54,400 subject to the following conditions:

- Applicant confirmation that disabled access had been incorporated into the design.
- Plain Action and Accountable Body satisfied that procurement rules would be met.
- Award of Planning Permission, Defence Estates agreement, and any other necessary permissions.
- Adjustment of the figures re ineligible costs (total £700)

## PLAIN ACTION BUSINESS SUPPORT

<b>Project Title</b>	Plain Action Business Support	<b>Applicant</b>	GWE Business West
<b>Grant Requested</b>	£39,385	<b>Total Project Cost</b>	£88,785

### Evidence

Application form, financial breakdown, appraisal, Wilts Council Financial Risk Assessment (FRA). The applicant had not been able to make a presentation for a combination of circumstances, and the meeting accepted that the invitation to do so came at short notice and resulted from a late variation in the application procedures.

### Interests

David Wildman declared an interest on various counts.

### Appraisals and FRA

JD and JH presented appraisal and FRA issues:

- Appraisal summary: 76/100, in favour
- Appraisal points: As project only for 7 months, extension / continuation project needed at early stage to encourage use and confidence in this business support service.
- FRA: there had been a significant state aid issue related to potential support for GWE Business West, albeit effectively as a contractor. This had been resolved by identifying the proposed activity as eligible under Measure 331 (training and information.)
- FRA: much of the substantial in-kind match funding needed clarification and more definition.

### Discussion

- Some of the expenditure indicated under the broad categories on the main application form was queried. It was explained that the detailed breakdown did set out in detail the expenditure – the main cost was staffing.
- The application was for 7 months work – to 31<sup>st</sup> March. The equivalent cost to Plain Action at the same rate was approximately £200,000.
- This project was being submitted as a pilot. There should not be a formal further Plain Action commitment, but the applicant could be encouraged to submit a further application based on experience of the first few months and including a comprehensive progress report.
- If it was not possible for a new application to be submitted and approved within the timeframe it could be suggested to the applicant that this current project be run on a slightly reduced basis.

### Decision (7 in favour, 1 abstention, 1 not voting)

A grant of £39,385 (44.36%) was awarded towards total project costs of £88,785 subject to the following conditions:

- The 'Skills for Business' logo be included in all material relating to of the project's work.
- Plain Action and Accountable Body be satisfied on issues relating to the budget and details of the indicated in-kind match funding.
- *(After the meeting it was noted that the grant figure as approved is correct, but the total project cost and intervention figures are £59,835 and 65.82%. JD)*

## BUSTARD COUNTRY

<b>Project Title</b>	Bustard Country	<b>Applicant</b>	The Great Bustard Group
<b>Grant Requested</b>	£38,000 (62%)	<b>Total Project Cost</b>	£61,500

### Evidence

Application, appraisal, Wilts Council Financial Risk Assessment (FRA), additional procurement and marketing statement

### Interests

No interests were declared.

### Appraisal and FRA

JD and JH presented appraisal and FRA issues:

- Appraisal score : 69/100
- Appraiser commented that although project looked expensive in relation to number of additional visitors there were hard to measure gains for overall profile of Salisbury Plain area and more general efforts to increase interest and visitors.
- FRA: concerns re the procurement process – depending on the cost of the marketing service being provided three quotes potentially necessary, or an alternative acceptable route.
- FRA: confused explanation re relationship with proposed contractor.
- FRA: some clarification needed re the staff costs and employment issues.

### Discussion

- Need for a broader view of the marketing proposition, and more liaison with Visit Wiltshire and the Salisbury Tourism Partnership.
- The applicant needed to think through its marketing plan and requirements more clearly. It was accepted this had largely been a self-help effort to date.
- There was general recognition of the work and success of the Great bustard Group to date, in which previous LEADER+ funding under Sustain the Plain had played a significant part.
- A grant for marketing would increase the Group's income and help its long term stability.

### Decision ( 9 in favour)

A grant of £38,000 (62 %) was awarded towards total project costs of £61,500 subject to the following conditions:

- The applicant clarify to the satisfaction of the Programme Manager and Accountable Body the relationship with the proposed contractor.
- The applicant meet the procurement regulations to the satisfaction of the Programme Manager and Accountable Body.
- The applicant work in consultation with Visit Wiltshire, other relevant visitor promotion bodies, and in cooperation with any Plain Action visitor initiatives.