

Governance Sub Group

Notes of meeting to discuss development of LINK governance
Wednesday 25 September 2009, 10.30 – 12.00, Buckerell Lodge, Exeter



Present:

George-Alfred Husband (Chairman)
Marjorie Brace (Governance lead)
Kate Fenton (Host)

1. GAH expressed concern leading on from the previous Steering Group meeting about the lack of active participation in Task Groups.
2. Amendments to governance document following decisions made at previous Steering Group meeting were agreed.
 - a. Need to be clear on amendment giving greater autonomy to Task Groups
 - b. Matters arising must be received in advance in future to enable greater efficiency in the meetings
 - c. Meetings should avoid Mondays
3. MB proposed a new model for the Steering Group (attached).
 - a. Core group of 6 people to be carried forward with the core roles. This nucleus would ensure continuity and assist in maintaining relationships. Term to be extended to 3 years as 12 months is too short, hinders continuity and a 3 year term would also enhance the transition into the 2nd phase of the LINK (April 2011).
 - b. Additional places to be extended to Task Group Chairs/representatives. This will bring enhanced flexibility, enable better engagement with wider communities, increase diversity of the group and give Task Groups greater influence on LINK decision-making. Task groups will be able to feed in directly. The LINK must emphasise how the network is community led and all work is evidence based, robust and based firmly on what local people are telling the LINK.

Actions:

1. GAH to address inactivity of SG members between meetings. Host (SC) to print off web calendars for GAH regularly.
2. KF to ensure new Community Engagement Worker in N Devon keeps in touch as previous arrangement.
3. MB continue to act as conduit for information for the LINK with the Way Ahead North Devon group.
4. Proposal to be circulated for comment in advance of October meeting. Comments to be forwarded to KF for collation. Any further discussion to be directed to MB.

Proposal for future structure of LINK Devon Steering Group

1. The name of the Group should be changed to Strategic Planning Group with immediate effect.
 - Structures and ways of working are well established and the LINK has direction. Therefore, it no longer needs the degree of 'steering' that was required early on.
 - The proposed name is a more accurate description of the scope, role and responsibilities of the Group.

2. The tenure of the Group should be extended to 2012 and, subject to extension of LINK funding, should be elected every three years thereafter.
 - The financial and resource cost (including time) of an election is extremely high.
 - A longer term would enable:
 - Greater opportunities for learning within the group and putting this learning into practice for the benefit of the LINK
 - Better opportunities for building relationships within the group and with partner organisations
 - Continuity within the current funding period and taking the LINK into any post-2011 plans.

3. The group should include the six core roles (Chairman, Governance, Community Engagement, Diversity and Finance). Participants who hold these roles will be elected by LINK participants as above. In addition, task groups should be invited to put forward a representative to be co-opted to the Group for the life of that task group. This change should take effect from April 2010.
 - The core roles reflect the strategic role of the Group
 - The LINK would benefit from the continuity described above and from the flexibility of having task group representatives
 - There would be opportunities for more participants to get involved
 - The Group would be more diverse
 - Task groups would be able to feed directly into the Group and, therefore, the key decision-making
 - The Group will learn about LINK projects directly from the participants rather than via a third party (Host)
 - Any decisions relating to the statutory obligations and/or powers of the LINK could be dealt with quicker
 - Task groups are established in response to what people and communities say is important to them. Direct involvement of the task groups in key decision-making will further demonstrate that the LINK is community led.