

Annual Action Plan

Summary

The amalgamated Annual Action Plan and Local Resilience Action Plan are presented, together with a commentary on progress to date and suggestions for SMART TARGETS for the next quarter.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to consider the summary reports for each of the seven areas of focus in the Action Plan and discuss & approve the focus for the next quarter.

- Membership, Communication and Engagement
- Representation
- Forums of Interest
- Partnership Working and Awareness Raising
- Compact
- Projects & Initiatives
- Resilience Action Plan

Introduction

Following the September meeting, work has been carried out on the Assembly's Action Plan's to make them easier to manage.

Firstly, all the 'actions' which related to the basic 'business' of the Assembly have been taken out of the Action Plan and put into a separate document. These included items such as holding 4 Board meetings per year, issuing the newsletters following Board meetings and producing e-mail updates. These represent a significant amount of work for the VCS Assembly Coordinator, but are now embedded in the basic working of the Assembly and are all currently green rated.

Secondly the actions from the Local Resilience Plan and the Annual Action Plan have been amalgamated. There was a significant amount of duplication, but now all the actions from the Local Resilience Plan have been cross referenced against the actions in the Annual Action Plan. An additional section has been added to the Annual Action Plan document, which lists only those actions which were unique to the Local Resilience Action Plan –the remainder already being featured in the original Annual Action Plan.

Finally each section of the final document has been sorted in date order.

It should be noted that many of the actions are still fairly broad and open ended, as they are currently framed, and are unlikely to move from amber to green because there is not a clearly defined end point. It will be important over time to break these down into more specific actions so that we can chart progress

It should also be noted that with 47 actions still to progress on the Plan, it has not been possible to make progress on every one this quarter and that it would be helpful to agree priorities for focus in each quarter.

For each of the seven sections, I have written a short update, highlighting areas in which progress has been over the last quarter and making recommendations for particular focus in the coming quarter.

1. Membership, Communication and Engagement.

Particular focus this quarter has been given to action 1.4 ‘inviting new members to join’ and a detailed update has been part of an earlier paper to the Board. As part of this membership drive, the original leaflet, tabled at the September meeting has been significantly simplified. It is recommended that this remains a priority in the next quarter. We could set a target of increasing membership to over 300 by the end of quarter 3.

Some progress has been made on all of the remaining actions, but not as much as I would have liked and there are comments against each to reflect progress. A realistic target would be to finalise a minimum of 2 fact sheets (1.3) and publish these on a new page of the website (1.2) as well as through the usual channels. It is recommended that the focus of these be the particular communication issues raised in the Horizon Scanning paper.

Suggested SMART TARGETS for Quarter 3

	Outcome
1.4 Invite new contacts to become Assembly members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300+ members on database
1.3 Produce information sheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish 2 fact sheets

2. Representation

All of the actions in this block have received particular focus over the last quarter. Getting this right is fundamental to the future success of the Assembly.

Two briefing sheets on ‘Representation’ to support Board members (2.1) have been created. These will be circulated to the whole Board for comment and tackle issues such as potential conflicts of interest. A third briefing sheet, which is intended for public sector partners, working with our Representatives is almost ready for circulation. A realistic target is to have all three briefing sheets finalised in the next quarter.

We have filled the vacancy for a representative on the South Area Partnership Board (2.2) using the protocol agreed at the last Board meeting. However, the action remains amber because all three Area Partnership Boards would ideally like a second representative, and it would be a useful support to existing Board members to have a ‘second’. As we already have established Board members for each Area Partnership Board, **it is recommended** that when we advertise these

vacancies we indicate that preference will be given to volunteers from organisations not already represented on the Board, rather than making this an absolute criterion.

Considerable effort has been put into the identification of suitable training providers (2.3 & 2.4) and it is with some frustration that we are still unable to confirm a training date. However, we have settled on a training provider and believe that we will be able to access a bursary of up to £1500 towards the cost. The target for the next quarter must be to have confirmed a date to deliver training.

	Outcomes
2.1 Guidance on representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 briefing sheets on representation available
2.3 Arrange representation training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training date set.
2.2 Fill gaps in representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Seconds' identified for the 3 Area Partnership Boards

3. Forums of Interest.

Some progress has been made against all these actions. Only 3 returns have been made as regards to the cost of running a Forum.

Priority must be given to getting the existing structures working well, so the recommendation here is that we particularly focus on 3.5 in the next quarter – setting ourselves the target that all existing Forums of Interest will provide feedback to the next meeting.

	Outcomes
3.5 Establish regular feedback from FOI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All FOI's and Partnership Groups will feedback to March Board Meeting. • Alternative feedback template available for reporting on Partnership meetings • After Board Meeting send newsletter & Board briefing to Representatives?

4. Partnership Working and Awareness Raising

Actions 4.1 & 4.2 were originally to be led by Task and Finish Groups and the Board is asked to consider if they still wish to set up Task and Finish Groups to support this work.

Progress towards 4.2 has been reasonable, with the only outstanding action being the VCSA coordinator doing a 'team brief' to the Community Working Team. This had been booked, but was cancelled at short notice, another date has been requested.

My recommendation is that this does not require Task & Finish input.

Action 4.1 (undertake work with new Shropshire Council Elected Members) is the action requiring most, further work and support. It is proposed that once the Evidence Base is assembled, that would be the most appropriate time to have a Members' seminar –then we could combine raising awareness of the Assembly structures, together with demonstrating the 'voice' of the Assembly In action.

A Task and Finish Group to support the production of the Evidence Base and the structure of a Members seminar would be welcomed.

Actions 4.3 & 4.4 are due in the next quarter. It is recommended that 4.4 is suggested as an action to be led by the Compact Implementation Group.

	Outcome
4.1 Undertake work with new Shropshire Council Elected Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Evidence Base for approval for March meeting • Members seminar booked
4.2 Provide information about the VCSA to the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCSA Coordinator completes team briefing to Community Working Team
4.3 Presentation & written information for Area Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Pack available to Representatives

5. Compact

This has been the subject of a separate Board paper and is an ongoing work stream against which considerable progress has been made. It is a standing item on the Board agenda.

The Board's attention is drawn to action 5.1 and it is requested that we discuss and document the Board's position on the necessity of a 'Third Sector Strategy'.

Suggested outcome measures for the third quarter are:

	Outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VCSA has 5 named Representatives to sit on the CIG.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VCSA has at least 1 named Compact Champion for each Forum of Interest.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VCSA has 5 named individuals willing to undergo training for the Disputes & Resolution process.

6. Projects and Initiatives:

Action 6.1 has been completed.

Progress with actions 6.2 & 6.4 have been discussed in separate Board papers to this meeting.

Action 6.3 has not progressed this quarter as the focus has been elsewhere.

The recommendation is that we focus on 6.2 & 6.4 in the next quarter.

Evidence Base (6.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect at least 1 local case study to illustrate each of the 'marketing' points we want to make in the Evidence Base
Engaging with small groups (6.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact a minimum of 5 small groups who are already VCS Assembly Members and discuss their perceptions and needs• Test out the two fact sheets to be produced in response to action 1.3 with some small groups

7. Resilience Action Plan

This is an area in which we have been keeping a watching brief via the Forums of Interest (Action 7.6). Since the last Board meeting there has been a significant development in that the Council has announced the requirement to save a substantial amount of money in the next budget round – this is a result of the public sector spending squeeze which, in turn, has been a consequence of the recession.

In previous sections it has been identified that work on the Evidence Base (6.4) needs to be prioritised in the next quarter and it is suggested action 7.4 will be effectively covered in the development of the Evidence Base and that is the main focus in the next quarter. **See priority 6.4 above**

Insufficient progress has been made with the other actions. This is mainly due to time pressure and the huge number of actions overall.

Meetings have been booked which will take forward 7.2/7.3 & 7.12.

Note that now the two Action Plans have been amalgamated it will be easier to focus on progressing the remaining actions.

8. Core Business

The Core Business document has not been tabled at this meeting, however, one item is drawn out here for the Board's consideration: planning for the next Annual Assembly Conference.

As our next Board meeting is not until March, it would be prudent to begin planning for the Conference in the next quarter. **The Board is asked** to agree the preferred timing of this event, so that venues can be investigated and booked, in plenty of time. Suggestions for the format of the event would also be welcome.