

## Operational Consideration

### Summary

This paper draws together a number of operational issues for the Board to consider including:

- a) The Board's relationship with the new member champion for the Third sector
- b) The current representation of the Assembly at key meetings and forums
- c) 'Open' Board meetings as described in the Terms of Reference.

### Recommendations/ Actions

1. The Board is asked to confirm their preferred way of working with the Member Champion for the Third sector.
2. The Board is asked to decide on its preferred way forward to resolve the vacancy on the South Area partnership Group and suggest a possible representative for the LSP sustainable communities steering group.
3. The Board is asked to approve involvement in the Shropshire Physical Activity Network as described in the paper.
4. The Board is asked to clarify if they wish for the dates of the meetings to be advertised more widely so that there is openness in the business of the Board, as described in the Terms of Reference, item 7.4

## 1. Working with the Member Champion for the Third Sector

The new Member Champion for the Third sector is Councillor Martin Bennett. Clearly a good working relationship with Councillor Bennett is very important for the future work of the VCS Assembly. A meeting with the Chair of the Assembly and Councillor Bennett has been arranged, and will take place shortly after the September Board meeting.

The **Board is asked** to raise any specific issues that they would like to see discussed by the Assembly Chair and Councillor Bennett, in their initial meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> September.

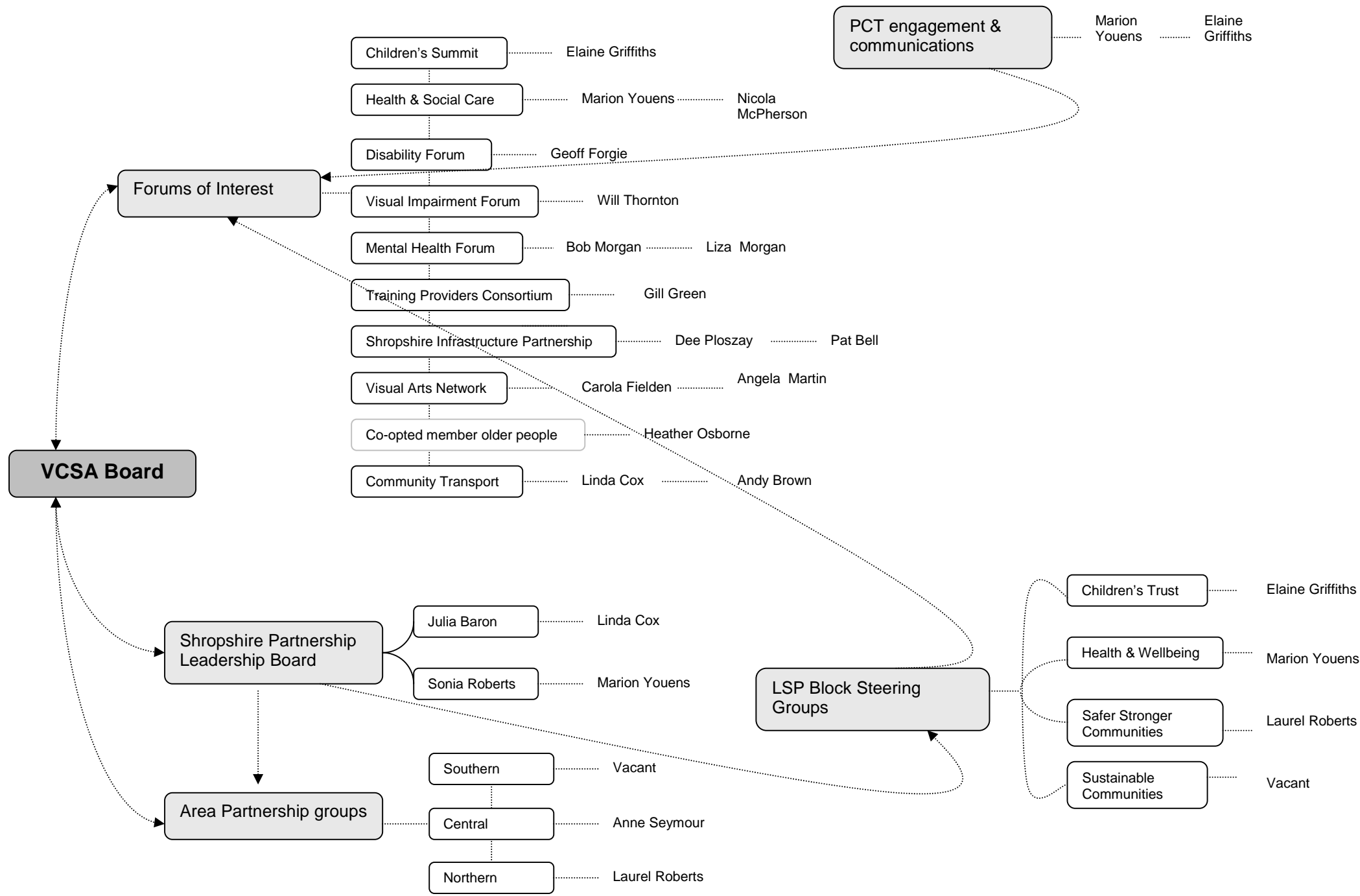
The **Board is asked** if they would like to invite Councillor Bennett to a future Board meeting as an observer (please see later item on 'open' meetings) and if they would like to issue an open invitation to him to attend all future Board meetings.

## 2. Representation of the VCS Assembly at key meetings and forums

The core business of the VCS Assembly is communication and representation, thus it is vital to have clear picture of who our representatives are, and to fill any major gaps in representation.

- a) At the last Board meeting it was proposed that a list of representatives be drawn up and circulated; this information has been collated and is presented in Fig 1. Board **members are asked** to check the information for accuracy. Once approved, this information will be circulated via the web site and newsletter. Assembly **representatives are asked** if they are happy for their contact details to appear on the website/ newsletter or if they would prefer to channel communication via the Assembly Coordinator. In addition Assembly representatives are encouraged to consider the newsletter as a possible vehicle for communicating with the wider Assembly membership, for example, individual representatives might write short articles, introducing themselves, and giving a flavour of the meetings on which they sit as representatives.

Fig 1 (next page)



- b) It can be seen from Fig 1 that the key gap in representation is on the South Area Partnership. We are aware of a number of individuals who would be prepared to represent the Assembly at the South Area Partnership meeting, however, in all cases they are either currently Board members, or members of their organisation already sit on the Board as voting members. As the seat on the South Area partnership is currently designated for a Board member and no organisation can be represented twice on the Board, we are currently unable to ask any of these individuals to take up this role. Clearly this is a situation that needs to be resolved as soon as possible, as the Assembly members in the South of the County are currently missing out on having their views represented at this key meeting.

The simplest, and fairest, solution would be to advertise in the newsletter for a suitable candidate, though **the Board** would need to **agree a process** for choosing the Representative if a number of suitable individuals come forward. This would be a useful template for recruiting other representatives in the future. In the event that no candidates come forward, **Board is asked** to put forward a suggestion/ suggestions of suitable Assembly members who might be individually encouraged to put their names forward.

Given the limited capacity of the VCS to field candidates at the wide range of meetings at which VCS input is desirable, it may be that finding a representative without existing organisational ties to the board will not always be practicable. In these circumstances, rather than leaving a vacancy in representation at a key meeting, the **Board is asked** to consider taking a pragmatic view in the next annual review of the Terms of Reference in regard to number of individuals from one organisation who may, in exceptional circumstances, be represented on the Board. It is proposed that following the December board meeting a Task and finish Group is set up to consider the Terms of Reference before their annual refresh and that this group takes forward this issue.

- c) It can also be seen from Fig 1, that we have Assembly representation on each of the LSP block steering groups except the sustainable communities steering block. The VCSA Coordinator has been in touch with the Chair of this block and he is happy to consider having an Assembly Representative at that meeting if a suitable candidate can be identified. The **Board is asked** to suggest the name of a suitable candidate. It should be noted that, as this position does not attract an automatic place on the Board, this should not exclude existing Board members or organisations already represented on the Board.
- d) We have been asked to provide a representative at the Shropshire Physical Activity Alliance (SPAA) which is a newly formed stakeholder group looking at strategic physical activity development throughout the County. The SPAA is a subgroup of the Health and Wellbeing Board of the Shropshire Partnership. On the advice of the Assembly Chair, this opportunity was advertised in the VCSA newsletter, and I am pleased to say that one current Assembly member has responded positively. The proposal is for the VCSA coordinator to meet with this individual, discuss what is involved in being an

Assembly representative and establish mechanisms for linking meaningfully with the wider VCS involved in delivering opportunities for physical activity – this, in turn, may lead to an increase in VCSA membership. At this stage it is proposed that communication with the Board would be via the health and social care forum. The **Board is asked** to approve involvement in the SPAA forum as described above.

### 3. 'Open' Board Meetings.

The attention of the Board is drawn to section 7.4 of the current Terms of Reference for the VCS Assembly, which is reproduced in full below.

7.4 The first part of Board Meetings will be open to observers from the voluntary and community sector. They will be welcome to attend and will be able to speak at the invitation of the Chair.

At present the dates of the Board meetings are only circulated to Board members and are not advertised widely to the wider membership, although, according to the Terms of Reference observers from the VCS are welcome to attend. There is not a clear delineation of the agenda into part 1 (open session) and part 2 (closed session) items, but requests from none Board members to speak at the Board are considered by the Chair prior to the meeting.

**The Board is asked** to clarify if they wish for the dates of the meetings to be advertised more widely so that there is openness in the business of the Board, which appears to be in the spirit of the Terms of Reference, item 7.4. If the Board do wish for the meetings to be advertised more widely then, it is proposed that an additional section is added to the standing items of the Board agenda 'Questions from members of the VCS (with previous agreement from the Chair)'. This would add clarity for observers and hopefully avoid disruption to the meeting. In addition the Board would need to clarify what type of items they would like to receive in closed session.