

Minutes of the Meeting of GreenSpace South West
Tuesday 11th December 2007 at 1pm
Livestock Centre, Exeter

		Actions
1.	Present	
	Mark O'Brien – Carrick DC Richard Taylor – Torbay BC Lindsay Evans - Torbay BC Hasnein Kanani – Mid Devon DC David Morrison – South Gloucester DC Michael Rowland – Bournemouth BC Bob Hussey – Kennet DC Carl Dallison – Weymouth & Portland BC Jon Mitchell – Kerrier DC Stuart Wallace – Kerrier DC Karen Hughes – Taunton Deane BC (chair) Richard Keating – GreenSpace South West Sarah Moore – GreenSpace Jude Lockett – GreenSpace (minutes) Anna Smith – REGENworks Stephen Finn – Blue Sky Associates Nicola Davey – Groundwork South West Naomi Wright – Natural England Richard Nicholson – Poole BC Mark MacGregor – North Somerset Council Tracy Brooks – Torbay BC Rachel Young – Cornwall County Council S Tallach – East Devon DC	
2.	Apologies	
	Brian Hosken – Penwith DC Lyn Harris – Penwith DC Len Croney – Pengelly Consulting Keith Rennells/Tim Pollard/Alex Whish/Ross Kennerley – South Hams DC Jane Hembrow – Play England Emma Gorbitt – West Devon BC Peter Wilkinson – Bristol CC	

	<p>Andy Chard – Bath and NE Somerset DC Frances Mangan – Gloucester CC Mike Childs – Poole BC Tara Gooding - Weymouth & Portland BC Paul Faulkner – Exeter CC Adrian Cook – Mid Devon DC</p>	
3.	Meeting	
1.	Welcome and Introductions	
1.1	KH welcomed the meeting and introductions were made.	
2.	Minutes of the last meeting	
2.1	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true account.	
3.	Steering Group Feedback	
3.1	NJ updated the meeting on the outcomes of the morning’s steering group meeting. There is a need for increased membership payments from attendees, and a membership letter will be sent out to all local authorities in the region very soon. NJ asked attendees to push the idea of paying membership fees in their authority.	
3.2	RK’s Action Plan was described, including the upcoming Natural England planning research and 3 regional events. County meetings are also being planned in several counties over the next few months.	
3.3	An initial meeting of the Training and Skills Working Group was held in Plymouth on 27 th November. Attendees from Mid Devon, Torbay and East Devon were there, plus SM from GreenSpace and David Winn of Lantra. Lantra are carrying out some research into skills and this will be taken forward by a questionnaire. The next meeting will be held on 29 th January in Sidmouth and anyone is welcome to get involved. An initial focus will be identifying best practice in training. JL to circulate T&S WG minutes. ALL to let JL know if they want to attend the next meeting.	
3.4	A wellbeing event is to be held on 13 th February in Taunton, which will share best practice and consider health initiatives, with a string regional focus. ALL to send RK any case studies regarding health at greenspacesw@gmail.com.	

<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>GreenSpace National Forum Update</p> <p>SM explained to newcomers at the meeting that the GSNF is a mechanism for feeding back from the regions to the national level, and involves a quarterly meeting attended by chairs of each regional forum, plus representatives from CABE Space, Natural England and Lantra as well as GreenSpace. CLG attended the last meeting in November.</p> <p>At the last meeting, the National Performance Indicators were discussed, as there has been a loss the existing indicators and no new ones for green space. GreenSpace and the National Forum are commenting to CLG to highlight the loss of indicators.</p> <p>GreenSpace are currently developing a bid to CLG, and a document is available summarising work over the past year. The situation is not looking as hopeful as previously, as the total amount of money available has been dramatically reduced as a result of the CLG spending review. It is now therefore key to increase the number of paying members, as this will provide funding and also independence. The forum will still try to get grants if possible, but membership payments are now more important than ever. Letters inviting people to join, including a membership form, will be sent out as soon as possible. The delay has been due to rewriting them following the CLG news.</p>	
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p>	<p>Groundwork South West Update</p> <p>Nicola Davey from Groundwork South West gave a presentation on their work in the region. Groundwork exists to make a difference to people's lives Environmental action is the means</p> <p>What is Groundwork? A leading environmental regeneration organisation A federation of 50 local Trusts in England, Wales and Northern Ireland A partnership between the public, private and voluntary sectors</p> <p>What do they do? Work through partnership to bring about social, economic and environmental regeneration Use local environmental action to engage and motivate people to improve their quality of life Deliver sustainable development in deprived neighbourhoods</p> <p>Environmental improvement projects: Wetland nature trail near Seaton, Cornwall Transforming derelict land: Brewery Park, Torbay & Saltmill Park, former landfill site</p>	

	<p>Working with young people: Phoenix Project, Plymouth Training for long-term unemployed people: Horticultural Healing Project, Plymouth Sports projects: Multi-use games areas, Skate parks, Tennis courts Use of Art in Regeneration: Working with artists and community arts projects eg Saltmill Park, Saltash, Cornwall Improving business performance: saving energy, saving costs, reducing CO2 emissions: Environmental Business Services across the region</p>													
5.5	Projects delivered by the regional team: Barclays Spaces for Sport, Sport England Spaces for Sport, Living Spaces													
5.6	<p>The SW Regional Team:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Peter Kirkham</td> <td>Regional Director</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Louise Walsh</td> <td>Regional Development Manager</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nicola Davey</td> <td>Regional Development Manager</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jane Hickie</td> <td>Regional Development Manager</td> </tr> <tr> <td>David Williams</td> <td>Regional Administrator</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ray White</td> <td>Strategic Arts Co-ordinator</td> </tr> </table>	Peter Kirkham	Regional Director	Louise Walsh	Regional Development Manager	Nicola Davey	Regional Development Manager	Jane Hickie	Regional Development Manager	David Williams	Regional Administrator	Ray White	Strategic Arts Co-ordinator	
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5.7	<p>The impact ...“Groundwork has successfully intervened to stimulate a wide range of projects in the most difficult neighbourhoods where others are reluctant to go.” Joseph Rowntree Foundation</p>													
6.	Blue Sky Offenders Scheme													
6.1	<p>Anna Smith from REGENworks has been working with the Blue Sky scheme in the South West. Blue Sky aims to help ex-offenders avoid re-offending, by offering supported employment for people leaving prison. They procure labour contracts in parks maintenance for local authorities, meaning the LA gets grounds maintenance and the offender gets a job. The scheme has mostly been in the South East so far, but there is now a team in Gloucester through an LAA contract, and they are looking to pilot a team in Bristol. REGENworks act as consultants, connecting Blue Sky with partners and looking at their contracts and funding. Long term, the hope is to expand through the South West and eventually the UK. ALL to contact Anna directly if interested in involvement with Blue Sky on info@regenworks.co.uk or 01225 465467/07946 618115.</p>													
6.2	<p>Steve Finn from Blue Sky is a team leader. He has been involved with the scheme since the start and supervised a regeneration project working with Hounslow CIP. Blue Sky maintenance teams are made up of a supervisor/mentor and the workers, all of whom are ex-offenders. The scheme offers people a second chance in life and the success stories are impressive. People are able to reintegrate into society and get houses and further jobs. They work with contractors and if the partner is not happy then they can cancel</p>													

	<p>the contract. The teams have a six month trial, and after this the contractor looks to employ the workers on a temporary to permanent basis. There are risks, but these are recognised and managed. The supervisors have all been in the same place as the workers and this has strong social benefits. 2 local authorities have included Blue Sky in their LAA, under Stronger Safer Communities. They are keen to expand into the South West and take ex-offenders off the street and get them working.</p>	
6.3	<p>The Blue Sky funding differs in different areas and includes Exodus funding from ESF, some private investment and then the contract from the local authority. The LA pays core maintenance funding only, paying for the team of workers.</p>	
6.4	<p>Groundwork is the umbrella organisation for Blue Sky, so the pilot could end up in Devon or Cornwall near their regional base.</p>	
6.5	<p>HK asked about the risk factor of the scheme. SF said that it is recognised and strictly managed, with all staff going through probation and no sex offenders being employed due to the nature of the work. All the workers have an individual risk assessment, and Blue Sky attends their probation meetings and knows all about their offending history. Safety is paramount and supervisors are fully checked out through probation, which is more thorough than CRB checking. This thorough knowledge of the workers means that the risk levels are well known and can therefore be tackled.</p>	
6.6	<p>ALL to contact Steve or Anna if they are interested in involvement with Blue Sky; info@regenworks.co.uk or 01225 465467/07946 618115.</p>	
7.	<p>Natural England Planning Obligations Research Project</p>	
7.1	<p>Richard Keating gave a presentation on the upcoming Natural England Research.</p>	
7.2	<p>IMPROVING GREEN SPACE : Making the Most of the Development Process GreenSpace South West Regional Forum and Natural England</p>	
7.3	<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To Research the various ways in which green space can be created, improved and safeguarded through the development process, including through the planning system ● To share best practice with practitioners involved in improving green space 	
7.4	<p>Methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● circulation of a questionnaire to research and identify the current tools that Local Authorities use across the region to work 	

	<p>with house builders and developers in the provision of good quality green infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussion at sample County Meetings between January and February • an event on 13th March with workshops to exchange information, look at good practice, current Growth Points and the role of ANGST. • Disseminate a report/handbook 	
7.5	<p>Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the research process • tools to be explored • areas of concern to cover • who to involve • who to influence 	
7.6	<p>Michael Rowland gave an update on Bournemouth's situation regarding Section 106 contributions.</p>	
7.7	<p>Bournemouth has very little green field site development Virtually all development is brownfield Most is small scale development 1 or 2 units Mostly big houses demolished to build flats The population has not officially risen in the last 10 years (despite ONS predictions which we based our last SPD on)</p>	
7.8	<p>£929 per house £598 per flat 50% play (to be spent reasonable distance from development - usually 1km) 36% playing fields (can be spent borough wide) 9% amenity (to play to be spent reasonable distance from development -usually 1km) 5% leisure facilities (can be spent borough wide)</p>	
7.9	<p>Collected: £3.49m Allocated: £1.43m Spent: £0.74m</p>	
7.10	<p>The consequences... Lots of small pockets of cash to spend on play – but, in the wrong places – where there are very few play areas and children. Not much money for kids where we need it Not enough for big projects where there is development</p>	
7.11	<p>The problems: Fixed amounts for play / amenity / facilities / playing fields Restrictive catchments</p>	
7.12	<p>What's best for Bournemouth: A dependable and defensible strategy that channels money into</p>	

	<p>mostly small and indifferent facilities that are not in great demand; or, A strategy that takes the ethic of PPG17 and tailors it to the locality providing exactly what people want and need, even if it has to test the guidance.</p>																			
7.13	<p>Projects: Excellent for matched funding Boscombe Chine play area: £120,000, part of £2.5m restoration/regeneration project. KPSK8: £250k project, £50k from S106, the rest from Sport England and the Lottery</p>																			
7.14	<p>Richard Nicholson gave an update on Poole’s approach to Section 106 contributions.</p>																			
7.15	<p>Planning obligations: Recreational Contributions ‘Residential development should make provision for recreation facilities directly related to, and necessary for, the development, having regard to the type, location, scale and cumulative impact of the development proposed: The Council’s open space standards are:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Amenity open space</td> <td>.8 ha per 1000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Casual and equipped children’s play</td> <td>.6-.8 ha per 1000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Youth and adult outdoor play</td> <td>1.6-1.8ha per 1000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>3.2 ha per 1000</td> </tr> </table>	Amenity open space	.8 ha per 1000	Casual and equipped children’s play	.6-.8 ha per 1000	Youth and adult outdoor play	1.6-1.8ha per 1000	Total	3.2 ha per 1000											
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7.16	<p>Amenity open space and provision for casual play will be provided on-site if the development is of a size sufficient to justify the provision of an area of at least 0.2 ha. Where the area of open space is less than this, and in the case of equipped children's play, youth and adult outdoor play and other recreation facilities will be provided off- site’.</p>																			
7.17	<p>Since 1997, Poole has collected £6.1m in S106 contributions and has £2.6m still to spend. They have experienced the same problem as Bournemouth of development in areas where there is no scope for green space, and councillors do not want to take funds from one ward to another. They have tried to prioritise projects against objectives, and there is a team dedicated to spending the money.</p>																			
7.18	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Corporate objective</td> <td>(1-20)</td> <td>weighting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Supporting children / young people</td> <td></td> <td>.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Promoting Health and well-being</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Protecting Poole’s environment</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strengthening our communities</td> <td></td> <td>.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Developing a dynamic economy</td> <td></td> <td>.2</td> </tr> </table> <p>Efficiencies and value for money</p>	Corporate objective	(1-20)	weighting	Supporting children / young people		.5	Promoting Health and well-being		1	Protecting Poole’s environment		1	Strengthening our communities		.7	Developing a dynamic economy		.2	
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7.19	<p>The good points are that it is easy to collect the money if there is an overarching agreement in place, rather than working per</p>																			

	development. They are currently redefining the agreement based on areas of need, which is a larger scale than a ward-based approach.	
7.20	The bad points are that the user profile is difficult – often it is not families moving into new developments. Maintenance is a problem – they are not allowed to use S106 funds for this but maintenance funds are not being increased. There is political pressure to spend the money, but the small pots of money cannot be used for anything meaningful and are not allowed to be brought together.	
7.21	The good points outweigh the bad ones, but it is important to be cautious of ward-based funds. It is easy to spend the large pots of money, but the smaller ones can be a struggle.	
7.22	A discussion session based on the discussion points raised by RK followed. The following points were identified:	
7.23	<p>Research Process:</p> <p>Questioning of the whole policy – using funds to pay for things LA should pay for anyway? Should only spend what new population needs, or change rules and use in deprived areas that need investment</p> <p>Local standards and local process – communities differ across nation</p> <p>Potential to use money for regeneration, as often poor quality parks are in areas where there is no development</p> <p>Value of house or number of occupants – setting rates</p>	
7.24	<p>Tools to be explored:</p> <p>Moving from S106 on each site to a tariff based policy</p> <p>Policy based on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – PPG17 – Central Government Agendas and other national standards – Corporate priorities – Council Annual Surveys <p>Importance of Development briefs in the process where land is to be allocated for green space, as specifying the area of green space will affect cost of land – not an issue where we want cash alternative</p> <p>Funding for monitoring and maintenance</p> <p>Sharing best practice</p> <p>Green space strategies</p> <p>Green Flag Awards</p> <p>LAAAs</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Surveys including GreenSTAT etc</p> <p>Green Infrastructure</p>	
7.25	<p>Areas of concern:</p> <p>Section 106 constraints</p>	

	<p>Maintenance implications Not everyone has standards – are we getting enough money? Guidance needed on standards Managing expectations – members, town and parish councils Clawback challenges? Developers challenge if money not spent on what it is designated for Lack of strategy – piecemeal approach. Area wide fund overview needed, difficult to marry with greenspace strategy.</p>	
7.26	<p>Who to involve: Groundwork Natural England Developers Planners Homebuilders Communities, friends groups CABE Space Future changes to S106 – DCLG Agencies – police, health Play England Sport England Regional Development Agency Landowners – National Trust, Duchy Private Leisure Facilities Politicians, members Anyone using open space</p>	
7.27	<p>Who to influence: Developers – costings already worked out so need to know what is expected beforehand Members, politicians at all levels Development Control/Management Local communities Parish councils – get onside Open spaces on site RDA – put standards forward Council officers – grounds maintenance, cultural services Community planning officers – tie in with objectives National statutory bodies – English Heritage, Defra, Environment Agency, National Parks, AONBs Funding bodies – local to national Groundwork Friends groups/Public Usergroups and volunteers CABE – liveability Strategic Planning</p>	
7.28	<p>Going forward, RK is going to circulate a research questionnaire. ALL to complete/pass on to relevant colleagues.</p>	

8	Regional Updates	
8.1	RT - Torbay received money through the New Growth Point bid under Green Infrastructure.	
8.2	JM – green space strategy has been discussed in West Cornwall. The heartlands had a successful BIG lottery application and will receive £22m for the centre of Poole, creating a flagship green space and a gateway to the Cornwall World Heritage site. This project will take 2 years to deliver and is the only project of its sort in England.	
8.3	KH – Taunton have finished their play strategy and will be implementing Play Rangers. They are also working on an allotment strategy and will be looking at S106 funding as there are significant waiting lists at the moment.	
8.4	MB - Carrick are looking at processes for protecting on site green space from developers. They are collecting good practice and would be happy to circulate this. The main concern is that there is discrepancy between levels of contributions charged by LAs, which may lead to conflict. Park prices do not vary much so it is hard to justify these variations. The project is aimed at standardisation. CD endorsed this, saying that use of the same evaluation criteria will make them more defensible. MR suggested that it should be the criteria used, rather than the value, that should be standardised as value depends on what you are doing. Transparency is important. SM commented that this project will enable people to see what others are doing and that benchmarking can develop from there. All to contact MB if they would like to contribute to this work.	
8.5	DM – Gloucester will be looking to request S106 contributions for public open space core requirements only in the future, and will utilise management committees with residents participating. Local management will also be used for licensing playing fields.	
8.6	HK – A community centre has just been finished in Tiverton as part of S106, including a multi games area. The plan was for the community to run this themselves, but the committee has since dissolved and now the council has liability.	
8.7	NW – Natural England are currently looking at Green Infrastructure and maximisation of resources, and will be lobbying CLG to recognise the value of this. Natural England are also currently funding Sustainability South West’s Planting Places scheme, aiming to improve green space networks in urban areas initially. They are also looking at LAAs and hoping to influence indicators, and they will be delivering the Access to Nature lottery scheme which is to be launched at the end of March. GIS mapping will be used to decide where to target resources and the plan is to work with the Forestry Commission to create green infrastructure where it is most needed.	

8.8	<p>ND – In terms of regional development, Groundwork are currently looking to pilot Blue Sky in Bristol, and are looking at a similar project in Devon/Cornwall focusing on construction but still using ex-offenders. A family learning BIG lottery project will be focusing on access to the environment in the 5 most deprived areas of the SW, working to improve access to green space. Groundwork are hoping to develop their presence across the region.</p>	
8.9	<p>NJ – In Plymouth the green space strategy is in draft form and standards are being set. There is a large £3.1m HLF scheme for Stronger Safer communities projects, BIG lottery Play England funding and the BBC year of action with park events also going on.</p>	
8.10	<p>RT – A reshaping exercise is being carried out at Torbay. The Play Rangers conference was very successful, and the RHS Britain in Bloom 2009 meeting was held. 3 submissions will be made to the GFA this year and there is a judges meeting in January. All to send any issues of concern with the GFA to RT.</p>	
8.11	<p>MM – North Somerset is in the middle of S106 at the moment, and they have achieved a top slicing of 10% to use for employing people to deliver a programme of work against the cash not being spent. A green space strategy brief is to be written and will be a supplementary planning document – discussions are currently going on with Len Croney. Reorganisation is also taking place and a budget review is underway. 200 people are likely to lose their jobs. MM is also having trouble with his grounds maintenance contract and one officer is having to virtually manage it himself. A locality based approach is desired – ALL to contact MM if they have any suggestions.</p>	
8.12	<p>RY – in Cornwall reorganisation is also taking place. RY is developing a community volunteer programme across the county to manager green spaces. This has been very successful and has grown significantly, with very positive results and senses of ownership fostered. It is also providing exercise in an alternative form. The events programme will incorporate the DCs and wildlife trusts etc, and following a successful spring and summer a winter programme is to be run this year. A partnership approach has been used to get communities into green space, as surveys have shown that there are people within 5km of country parks who have never been there as they were unaware of the resources available.</p>	
8.13	<p>CD – A local government review is being carried out in Weymouth & Portland, and Pathfinder status has been awarded. Concessionary bus passes have meant a £300k loss, but some cuts were thrown out due to friends’ group involvement. With regard to S106, they are moving towards a tariff approach from individual project work. A BIG lottery play area has also been recently finished.</p>	

8.14	RN – in Poole there are 13 open space improvement schemes from planning obligations payments. There is also a tax on developers if they build within a certain distance of SPA heath land.	
8.15	MR asked about charging planners to S106, as in Bournemouth they can fund staff by charging a specific project if they work on it. MM said that there could be a challenge if people are employed, but that it is not a high risk and so it has been accepted. MR said that he is only able to charge staff to S106 when they are working on it, and has to charge elsewhere when they are not. MM said that S106 work is additional to core services, so additional staff are needed and it is reasonable to employ someone to cover the additional work. BH said that it can be written into S106 agreements that admin and management need to be paid for, perhaps allocating 10% to this. It would be useful if this was standardised across S106 agreements for different councils. DM said that developers have said that they want reliable information up front, as once they buy land the price is fixed. If agreements are available prior to this, that can be used in working out costs. Maintenance can be stipulated up front as can administration, as part of the breakdown. BH said that 20 years of maintenance costs can be charged, and 15% for administration.	
8.16	BH – Kennet has been told that reorganisation will be taking place and open space will be given away to smaller councils, but the money for them will not. Liability for existing playgrounds will be too high for the smaller councils, so they will probably go to the county. He has been advised not to give land to community groups as there is a risk that management will fade off if people move. Kennet are also waiting on Play lottery money.	
8.17	SW – Kerrier are putting forward a strategy for the DC, including a S106 spending needs strategy and a strategy for disposing of green space, in order to ring fence the income. They are in a regeneration areas and there is a housing crisis. Affordable housing is needed and so is green space – the issue is disposal vs giving away land for affordable housing. SW to send email to JL for circulation.	
8.18	MR – in Bournemouth they have more money that staff as it is difficult to employ someone at the market rate. They are currently using Spaceshaper, the CABE Space tool, and this is proving useful.	
9	AOB	
9.1	GreenSpace launched an online Community Network Forum on 10 th December. ALL to promote – web address http://www.green-space.org.uk/phpBB2/index.php.	
9.2	GreenSpace have been commissioned by CABE Space to run	

<p>9.3</p>	<p>TAES training courses. TAES is the new self assessment framework. The South West event will be held in Taunton on 23 January – ALL to promote and to book with JL.</p> <p>The next GreenSpace conference is called ‘A Place of Their Own’ and will focus on young people. It will be held in Manchester on 19 February 2008.</p>	
<p>Date of the Next Meeting</p>		
	<p>13th February – Wellbeing Event, Taunton</p> <p>13th March – Planning Research Evaluation Livestock Centre, Exeter</p>	