



The Power of Three

Matson, Robinswood and White City –
Three Communities – One Strong Economy

OUR VISION:

Local people empowered to take an active part in a growing, resilient economy

MARCH 2016



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Introduction

Community economic development is about people, groups and organisations taking a lead in shaping the local economy for the benefit of their communities.

The area is located to the south east of the city of Gloucester with Robinswood Hill dominating the western third of the ward.

The Matson, Robinswood and White City communities have a number of issues including concentration of deprivation, low household incomes, high numbers of benefit claimants and a lack of employment opportunities.

Over the years there have been a number of government (local and national) programmes in the ward. This has left a legacy of a large number of community organisations and initiatives, however they tend to 'go it alone' and there is little co-ordination of effort.

Increasingly community organisations are identifying that fewer people are coming forward to take on leadership roles within the community. This impacts on the way that communities are able to influence what is going on around them and, in particular, on the economy.

One community organiser said: *“There is a need for stronger leadership in our communities – for people*



prepared to question and influence the decisions by, for example, housing providers and local authorities, so that future decisions have wider, long-term benefit for our communities.

“People need to build their skills and confidence to take on these leadership roles. Through our community organisations we have the skills to support more local people to gain that confidence.”



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Introduction (2)

Leadership is crucial if communities are to own and shape their economies.

At the core of the CEDP process was the development of wider local leadership capacity and a shared vision; the desire to bring the communities closer together, forge stronger relationships and build stronger partnerships to tackle local challenges.



“ In terms of measures of relative deprivation, the communities of Matson, Robinswood and White City are above the national average





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The CEDP process in our communities



Over a period of nine months, starting in the summer of 2015 a local steering group explored opportunities in the communities and how they related to economic wellbeing and began to develop the community economic development plan.

As the process moved on, opportunities were evaluated using the 'positive – economic, social and environmental outcomes' model. For instance, at a consultation event a resident showed up with a picture of rubbish behind some flats, a well-known common problem that is causing a nuisance.

Rubbish is an environmental problem, contention about whose fault is a social problem, the extra costs of rubbish management are an economic problem.

To get to a solution and break the cycle is the next challenge





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Insights gained from the process

- That communities like ours can have a plan that sets out a shared agenda for the future
- That having a plan brings more influence and promotes collaboration
- That it is easier to tackle some of the challenges by working together rather than potentially competing for decreasing funds
- That a strong plan needs to take account of factors other than 'reacting to situations' and that it must be relevant to our local small business people as well as our few bigger employers.
- The actions of one organisation may well have an impact on another organisation, especially regarding buildings – it would be important to discuss what the wider community needs, long term.



Thoughts and responses to the process

Luckily some people really stepped forward to take part

I have already taken this to my board for them to consider

It is going to take a while for some of these CEDP ideas to sink in and make sense and know what to do with them

This has set a pathway for my organisation to work with other organisations

I chatted as I handed the flyers out and got positive feedback

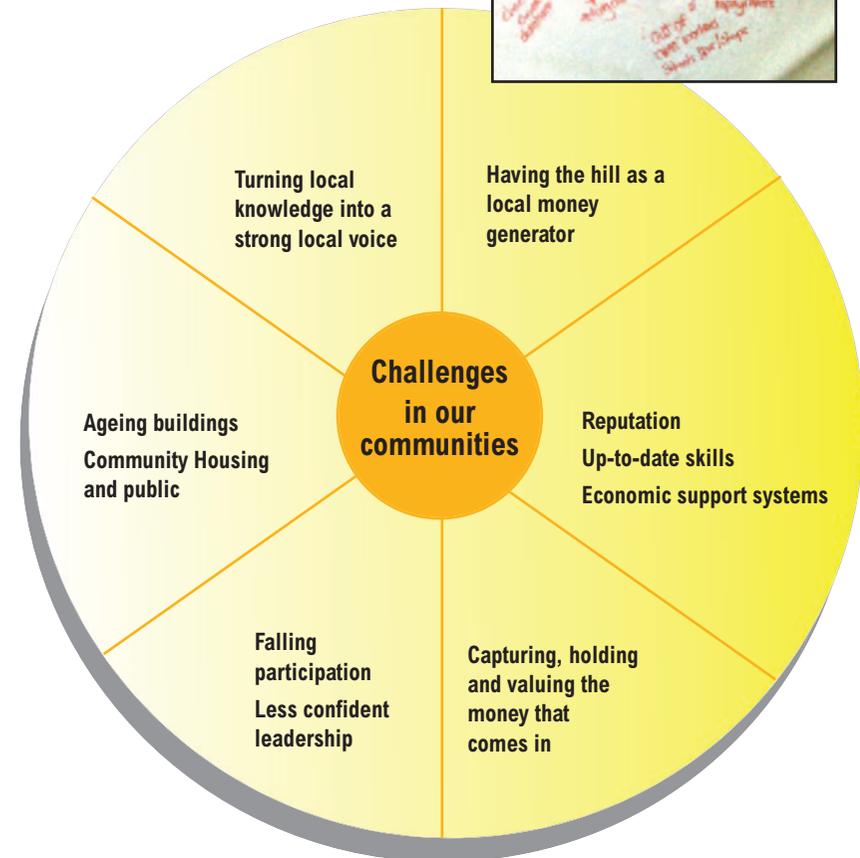
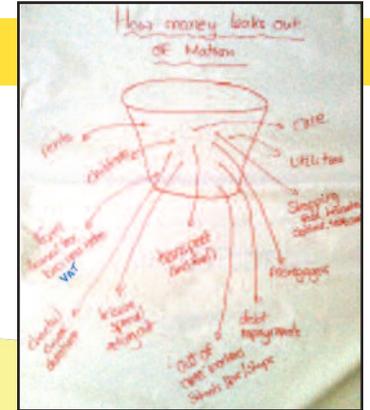


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Assets and challenges in our communities

The starting point for developing the action plan was to recognise the assets and challenges in our communities. The following diagram represents the outcomes of our discussions and consultations.





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Key themes and priorities

Through this process a number of key themes and priorities were identified that would sit at the heart of the community economic development plan:

- **Empowering local people to provide leadership in our communities** – we need the 'drivers' from our communities to shape the way forward
- **Improving the reputation of our communities by promoting what is positive and developing more cohesive communication between local organisations** – making our communities somewhere people will want to live, work and stay
- **Access to flexible 'wrap around' care with an initial focus on childcare** – opening up employment opportunities for people that are outside the 9 to 5 day
- **Better use of our community assets, in particular community buildings** – making them more financially sustainable and responsive to the needs of the communities
- **Improved education, training and financial inclusion** – making our schools a positive choice for children and young people and increasing access to economic activity skills training



- **Access to improved transport links** – public transport, cycling and walking – enabling residents to access services and employees to get to work
- **Influencing housing refurbishment decisions and planning of new developments** – making the physical environment support the economic conditions in our communities
- **Supporting local small businesses** – helping new businesses to start and enabling existing businesses to grow



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Consulting Our Communities

A number of consultation activities with the wider community were carried out to test the thinking so far. The information gathered from these consultations affirmed and confirmed the impressions held on the big topics of reputation, childcare, transport, qualifications, buildings and housing.

The key observations arising from the consultations were:

Empowerment – the ad hoc way of working between organisations has worked well to hold the community together and be aware of each other, but to progress we need a way of endorsing leaders so that they can confidently move forward plans and ideas.

Reputation – our biggest asset, our community spirit, is invisible we need to talk it, and our communities, up

Childcare – there are small micro-networks of childminders in different locations who may be open to ideas around co-operatives and extended hours

Buildings – there is a real need and desire to be more effective with our community buildings that a common approach could make a difference to



“ To progress we need a way of endorsing leaders so that they can confidently move forward plans and ideas.



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Consulting Our Communities (2)



Education, Training and Financial Inclusion – across the community, lots of good work goes into building up skills for work and self-employment. Locally we specialise in face-to-face, confidence building, volunteering opportunities, coaching and problem solving to reduce barriers with all ages. But at the moment we don't know what difference it makes.

Transport – the survey conducted during the consultation affirmed the concerns about buses, the lack of effective and responsive connections, the reliance on route one and limited alternatives. There was an undercurrent awareness of possibilities around car sharing, electric cars, promoting cycling - all of which could boost economic resilience and improve our environment.

Housing – there is a lot of strong feeling about housing: 'unaffordable', 'in the wrong place', 'disconnected', 'people attitudes' and confusion: 'how can local contracts be given against best value' but there is also potential to use the housing development and maintenance to get some local people new opportunities, but this needs linking with other ideas.

Business – the need for storage space and business units available locally.





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Outcomes

From this work the steering group have identified a series of outcomes that will deliver the vision of **local people empowered to take an active part in a growing resilient economy.**



Empowering local people to provide leadership in our communities

Wider participation in community activities by local people

New and existing community leaders feel supported in their roles.

Culture of participation and leadership by local people embedded in the communities

Promoting a positive reputation of our communities

Better internal communications in the ward

External reputation of the ward is enhanced

Residents have a positive image of the ward. The strengths of the ward are recognised across the City and beyond

Access to flexible 'wrap around' care

More informed about childcare choices and opportunities

Access to suitable childcare for people in employment.

Childminding seen as an attractive employment opportunity for local people

Different models of caring are available to support employment opportunities for local people

Better use of our community assets (buildings)

Better information about the buildings available for community use

Organisations running community buildings working together to improve access and viability





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Outcomes (2)



Improving education, training and financial inclusion	More information about existing provision of economic activity skills training and support	Reduction of duplication and filling gaps, better use of resources
Access to improved transport links	Local providers and commissioners engaging with the community to find local solutions	A mix of suitable transport options available in the communities
Influencing housing refurbishments decisions and planning of new developments	Residents recognised as an equal partner in discussions about housing	Decisions about housing are seen in the context of the whole ward rather than in isolation
Supporting local small businesses	More awareness of what businesses are based in our communities	More support for businesses to start up and grow in the ward





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Next steps

From the process it is clear that in Matson, Robinswood and White City organisations and individuals have learnt a lot.

A set of priorities and themes have emerged that need to be followed through to create strategies, legitimacies and partnerships to make a broader sustainable plan that has longevity to it.

On a small scale some work has already started including:

- **Matson, Robinswood and White City Community Partnership agreeing to, and being recognised, as the organisation that will effectively ‘hold’ the plan and function as an inquiring body that is accountable for its collaborative leadership**
- **The purchase and development of a Matson, Robinswood and White City website**
- **Exploration of a childcare co-operative**
- **An audit of community buildings**

The steering group has agreed to focus on three themes where there are people who have already committed to champion them.

Matson, Robinswood & White City Community Facilities 2015

Venue	Managed/owned	Meeting room (cap)	Hall (cap)	Kitchen	Contact	Usage (1-5)	Condition
Gloucester Academy	Academy Trust	various	250		428800	1	Excellent/new build
Robinswood School	Academy Trust	10	150	/	330130	5	Good
Moor School	Academy Trust		100		320502	1	Good
Finlay School	Academy Trust		100		530310	1	Good
Redwell Centre	Together in Matson, County Council	15-25	100	/	361070	4	Poor, constantly needs repair
Trinity Centre	GL Communities GCH	12			505544		Poor, not fit for purpose
Phoenix Centre	GL Communities, St Katharine's	25		/	505544	2	Tired
St Augustine's Hall	St Augustine's		100	/	412702	3	Recently refurbished
St Hilda's Hall	St Katherine of Elton Housing		100	/	300388	1	Excellent/new build
Matson Baptist Church	Matson Baptist Church	20	100	/	417301	3	Good
St Ailbe's Church	Gloucester Diocese						Hall closed for 10 years, unfit for use
Matson Rugby Club	Matson Rugby Club		80	Bar	328963	2	Good
Old Centralians RFC	Old Centralians	25	80	Bar	303788	1	Good
One Church	One Church		150		418219		Good
Robinswood Pub	Brewery	50		Bar		1	Poor, welcome community use
Three Oaks	Brewery	50		Bar		1	Good
Library	County Council	25				1	Good
Adventure Playground	The Venture Ltd	25		/	303199	2	Good



These are: **empowerment, reputation and childcare** (more detailed action plans for these are on the following pages). The other themes will be revisited as part of the review and monitoring process carried out by the Partnership.

[See Appendix: Other Themes and Actions](#)



One of the key challenges ahead is to embed the community economic development plan and to gain recognition of it from the organisations and agencies that work in the ward. **Those organisations which have been involved in the core steering group have committed to taking the plan to their boards for endorsement, and to use it as their blueprint for the future.**

The Partnership needs to re-engage with those organisations that dipped in and out of the process. Although they were willing to engage they were often unclear as to their role. Having the plan will help them to identify that.

There are a number of sectors and organisations that have not been involved to date. The Partnership recognises that they need to be engaged going forward. These include GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership and the wider business sector.



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Empowering local people to provide leadership in our communities

Objectives

- Grow community leaders
- Increase participation
- Build skills and confidence

Champion

Together in Matson



Outcome: Wider participation in community activities by local people

<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent spotting of future community leaders • Identify possible roles for community participation • Promoting opportunities to be involved in community activities
<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>Together in Matson, existing community leaders, community organisations and website/newsletters</p>

Outcome: New and existing community leaders feel supported in their roles

<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking events for community leaders • Mentoring of potential community leaders • Training of local people to develop skills in community activism
<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>Existing community leaders, small grants to support events and training</p>

Outcome: Culture of participation and leadership by local people embedded in the communities

<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be decided – dependent upon success to date
<p>RESOURCES</p>



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Promoting a positive reputation of our communities

Objectives

- Effective communication with residents
- Have a brand that showcases the strength of the ward
- Improved coverage in both local and regional press

Champion
The Venture



Outcome: Better internal communications in the ward

ACTIVITIES

- Streamline community newsletters so that one regular edition is produced for the whole ward
- Set up the Matson, Robinswood and White City website
- Improve access to public IT facilities and encourage people to visit the website
- Develop a brand and common look for the ward

RESOURCES

The Venture, Matson & Robinswood Residents Group, the new website, existing newsletters and publicly-available IT facilities

Outcome: External reputation of the ward is enhanced

ACTIVITIES

- Engage with the local authorities regarding signage and in particular 'Welcome To' signs at entry points to the ward
- Recruit and equip 'Community Ambassadors' to promote a positive image of the ward and to blog on the website
- Social media activity
- Create articles for local/regional press
- Develop a communications strategy for the ward

RESOURCES

MRWC Community Partnership, Matson & Robinswood Residents Group, local media and CSR support

Outcome: Residents have a positive image of the ward. The strengths of the ward are recognised across the City and beyond

ACTIVITIES

- Develop a signature event or set of events that people will identify with the ward

RESOURCES

To be identified



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Access to flexible 'wrap around' care

Objectives

- Create a flexible childcare package in the ward
- Increase the number of childminders in the ward

Champion

GL Communities/Gloucestershire Gateway Trust



Outcome: More informed about childcare choices and opportunities

*Outcome: Access to suitable childcare for people in employment.
Childminding seen as an attractive employment opportunity for local people*

Outcome: Different models of caring are available to support employment opportunities for local people

<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey parents about childcare needs/current provision/gaps • Audit of existing childminders/childcare provision • Talk to local employers about childcare and their employees • Explore the childminder agency model • Develop a business plan for a childminder agency
<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>GL Communities, Gloucestershire Gateway Trust and CED technical support</p>

<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a childminder agency (if a viable option) • Identify and train potential new local childminders
<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>Small business grants, local childminders</p>

<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the effectiveness and replicability of the model for other carers
<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>To be determined</p>



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The following documents are also available:

- About Matson, Robinswood and White City
- Who was involved in the CED process
- Our Community Consultations

For copies, please contact
cep@redwellcentre.co.uk

Report author: Iain Riddell, Matson, Robinswood and White City Community Partnership

With editorial support from Beth Whittaker, Viva Communications Ltd

Design: Steve Palmer, The Design Co-operative

March 2016

CED is led by Co-operatives UK and delivered in partnership with New Economics Foundation, Locality, Community Development Foundation and the Community Development Finance Association.

CED gives people the opportunity to shape how their economy develops. The approach recognises that local economies are characterised by the relationships and activities which everyone faces, based around where you live, work and play.





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Appendix – Other Themes and Actions

Better use of our community assets (buildings)

Suggested actions/ideas:

- A more comprehensive audit of community spaces and usage
- Advertising of community buildings on the website – a single place to look
- Explore ways for organisations to work together

Improving education, training and financial inclusion

Suggested actions/ideas:

- Bring access to credit union services in Matson, Robinswood and White City
- Establish what work is being done and what has been done that is improving education and skills
- Analyse and evaluate this work in a collaborative way
- Free broadband available in the ward
- Understand and promote success in economic activity
- Community governors support network
- Education establishments employing local people as support staff

Access to improved transport links

Suggested actions/ideas:

- Highlight initial findings with local providers and commissioners
- Develop a better utilisation of local minibuses
- Promote the pre-paid travel card
- Highlight traffic management for the new residential developments
- Participation in the consultation on the No 13 bus route
- Car share
- Bike Scheme
- Footpath to the Gloucester services





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Influencing housing refurbishments decisions and planning of new developments

Suggested actions/ideas:

- Campaign for redevelopment/refurbishment of flats on Winnycroft Lane
- Develop partnerships to promote community pride and tackle fly tipping & promote recycling
- Engage residents to participate in pilot ideas to reduce the recycling barriers
- Develop an engagement strategy with residents of new housing development from day one at least
- Promote the benefits of mixed share-ownership communities
- Offer local young people apprenticeships in construction

Supporting local small businesses

Suggested actions/ideas:

- Local business directory
- Feasibility study and trial trading for fruit and veg shop
- Small business units
- Pop up shops

Other

Suggested actions/ideas:

- Increased use of Fairshares in the communities
- Robinswood Hill – successful stage 2 project, development of new facilities and cultural icons
- Identify local community assets and apply to have them included on the Community Assets Register
- Growing food locally which can then be sold – open spaces/gardens/allotments



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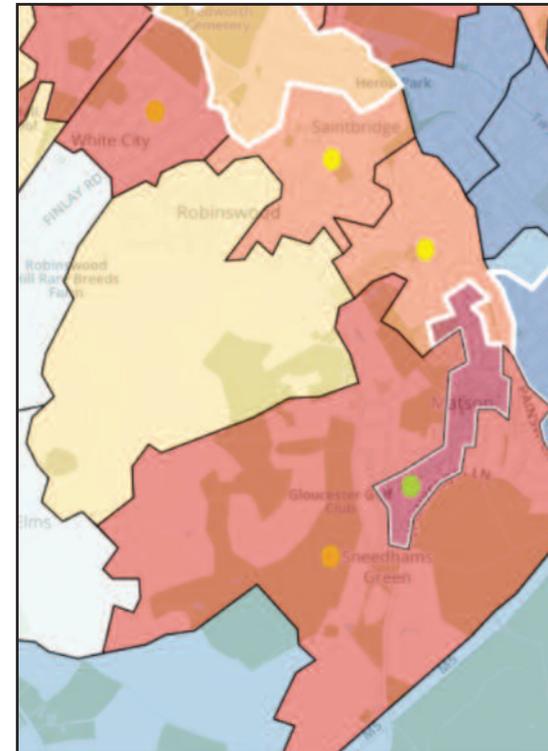


About Matson, Robinswood and White City

The communities of Matson, Robinswood and White City lie at the south east corner of Gloucester City.



Mostly developed from the 1960s onwards, they loop around Robinswood Hill Country Park. People living here are amongst the least affluent in the City and in Gloucestershire.



- The government numbers say that corridor of housing along Matson Avenue from the shops to the library are amongst the poorest areas in England ranked 1243 out of 32482
 - White City is ranked at 5152 and the rest of Matson is ranked at 6392 and 6512 whilst Robinswood is ranked 7323 putting it amongst the the poorest quarter of all English communities
 - <http://apps.opendatacommunities.org/showcase/deprivation>
- We know these important facts about our combined economic areas which is almost all of the Gloucester City Council ward of Matson and Robinswood.

Our areas are much poorer than the Gloucester average

The people in the ward have more health issues and less understanding about work skills than most of the city.

Our ward's recent unemployment rate is 3 x that of the county

1/3 of our ward's people have no formal qualifications and 40% of the ward's children got good GCSE results in 2013

25% of our ward's people have an A-level or NVQ level 3 equivalent and higher this is true for 33% of all Gloucester's citizens and 40% of the County's residents

Compared to the city average our ward has more children and older people who need support



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The three communities suffer the classic markers of deprivation:

- low levels of car ownership
- lower qualification attainment
- higher rates of unemployment
- low democratic-civic engagement
- higher need for family economic support

The communities are supported by a variety of agencies including social housing providers and government (local and national) programmes to boost outcomes, sustainability and family resilience which are delivered by schools, community groups and local authorities.

Economically the area is mostly residential with limited local employment available through shops, schools and service-care industries. Higher qualification-based work within the communities mostly goes to people (professionals) commuting in.

Unlike Matson and Robinswood, White City is split between electoral wards and, due to geography and history, has developed a distinct identity. With a need for authorities to have larger areas (electoral wards), White City has often been overlooked and therefore has forged its own path.

The communities have been socially and economically weak for many decades and local organisations have appeared at different times in response to this marginalisation, with a focus on a particular sub-area or issue, and in some cases have generated a legacy organisation. The social housing stock is owned and managed by a variety of providers.

Our environmental greenspaces are:

- 1 Robinswood Hill Country Park
- 2 A substantial area of land which has been earmarked for housing
- 3 Pockets of land that is unsuitable for building
- 4 Areas of land that would legally or logistically be difficult to develop for further housing

How CED in our communities started

In Spring 2015, **Together in Matson** (TiM), a long-standing community group, promoted the idea of becoming part of a central government pilot programme aimed at supporting the least affluent communities to engage with the Community Rights agenda.

TiM considered and spoke with others in Robinswood and White City about

- Local groups and their resident teams being hugely committed to responding to need, tackling the consequences of poverty and economic marginalisation
- That the impact of government initiatives delivered by the different organisations overtime makes a difference to individual families and households
- But that the communities functioned in a reactive way to events and the decisions of others rather than having a vision for their own future; this meant that decision-making and influence lay elsewhere outside of the communities



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The focus for the pilot CEDP programme in White City, Matson and Robinswood

At the core of the application for inclusion in the pilot CEDP programme was the development of wider local leadership capacity and a shared vision; the desire to bring the communities closer together, forge stronger relationships and build stronger partnerships to tackle local challenges – including the 'leaky bucket' where money earned by local people was not being spent within our communities, thereby not benefitting our communities.

- White City community leaders report a shrinking pool of active people. They had responded by bringing together a number of the local groups
- **Together in Matson** highlights the need for more local people to take part in its internal leadership
- A review of the consultation processes for the largest social housing provider, **Gloucester City Homes**, notes the need to bolster the independent voice of tenants and residents groups

At Matson, Robinswood and White City Partnership meetings it is obvious that there is growing generation gap in participation, as well as a lack of resident-participants with a business or professional background.

The lack of a Partnership plan to date also highlights the need for leadership development – a plan would give more influence to the Partnership's representatives.

An analysis of the communities' statistics on wages and education results highlights the need to develop interest in leadership as the existing pool of local leaders with the experience to grow confidence, negotiate with agencies, develop policies and organisations, is limited.

As the process of developing a community economic plan worked through, leadership continually came to the fore. Some examples of sentiments expressed at different times:

- **A seasoned community organiser:** 'I don't want to look / feel stupid by talking about economics.'
- **An experience public sector worker:** 'This was a lot easier when we had lots of professionals in the room to guide the process.'
- **An organisation leader:** 'This means looking up from what my organisation is doing, which is good... but time consuming.'
- **A new community volunteer:** 'This is making me think.'
- **A new community activist:** 'I am frustrated trying to get people organised, motivated and moving forward.'
- **An organisational developer:** 'It is hard to move forward without being totally confident that everybody agrees'
- **A veteran organiser:** 'Leadership needs someone giving people tasks and getting them to deliver.'



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Who was involved in the CED process

The work and effort put into developing a CEDP stretched over many months from May 2015 – March 2016 and involved a range of people from seasoned community activists, public sector workers, elected members and local residents; the two biggest gaps in attendance were people with business backgrounds and local authority paid officials.

Local community groups and initiatives who are involved, and their roles in the CDP process:

- **Together in Matson (TiM):** a community centre supporting young people, the wider community and people with disabilities. Grew out of work done by the local churches. (TiM submitted the application for a pilot CEDP programme based around leadership and the need for strategic local plan and has championed the CEDP process)
- **Matson and Robinswood Residents Group:** which primarily works with Gloucester City Homes (social housing provider) and the Gloucestershire Gateway Trust to make sure tenants' voices are heard, and inspires activity and opportunities (Spoke up and offered logistical support for the CEDP process)
- **The Venture White City:** a long standing community based organisation that supports children, young people their families. (Took a joint lead in the delivery of the CEDP process)
- **The Matson, Robinswood and White City Partnership:** The Partnership of a small active group of volunteers holds regular semi-formal meetings bringing together agencies, organisations and local people to take part and share information to build co-ordination and co-operation
- **GL Communities:** county-wide but based in Robinswood (Helped co-ordinate childcare element and offered advice to CEDP process)
- **Gloucestershire Gateway Trust:** the community and charity partner of the new M5 Gloucester Services which supports all the neighbouring communities. Around 70 residents of White City, Matson and Robinswood now work at the new Services, which operates on both sides of the M5 that borders the Matson estate. (Used its contacts to support participation, bring in others, co-ordinate transport and housing elements of CEDP process)
- **Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust:** assists Gloucester City Council in the active management of the environmental and historical resources of Robinswood Hill Country Park through the 'All Paths Lead to the Hill' project. (Developing awareness of the improved resources accessible through the country park)



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Others involved in the CED process

- **Local councillors from Gloucester City and Gloucestershire County Council** (involved from the start of the process and one City councillor took the lead on the transport theme)
- **Robinswood Primary** (came on board during the winter with an interest in education)
- **Gloucester Academy** (spoke up during the summer)
- **Gloucester City Council** (used its Asset-Based Community development strategy to make space for the process without being overbearing; offered up economic team to listen and highlight issues in the summer part of CEDP process)
- **Gloucester City Homes:** Gloucester City Homes: A local Housing Organisation recently transferred from an ALMO to a Housing Association managing a large proportion of the housing stock in the area (used four tiers of staff from Director level through to community engagement officer, to support insights and logistics, give feedback to the CEDP process)
- **Barwood:** a private house builder with a strong interest in the large area of residential development to the east of Matson, keen to have effective relationships with the community and other agencies in the community (contributed time and energy to the process)

Local residents:

- The chair of the Partnership is a local resident and not on the staff of any of the organisations and has lead the partnership into owning the both the process and the emerging planning ideas
- In the autumn and summer, groups including staff of community organisations and volunteers, all local residents, participated in the process and share their ideas
- The final consultation event towards the end of the process attracted local people to help prioritise the 'next steps' action plan on February 11.



Ian Riddell, CED Plan co-ordinator and report writer



The chair of the Matson, Robinswood and White City Partnership, Bob Allen



Dawn Adams, The Venture, White City



Cllr. Kate Haigh



Kelly Thomas, Development Manager, GCH



Jo White, Co-operative Futures



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Our community consultations

Local community groups and initiatives who are involved, and their roles in the CDP process:

Gatherings of organisational staff based in the communities and others such as Local Authority Community Team, were organised to talk about, promote and be briefed upon the pilot programme June - July 2015.

Meetings in August and September 2015 began the process of looking at community economic development and were attended by the core steering group and various other organisations on an occasional basis.

Wider Public Consultations

The first two of these meetings involved community organisations getting beyond their leaders and staff teams to bring residents to the tables in conjunction with community-based staff and there was a session with a mixed group of young people.

A CED Plan Open Day was held in February which was promoted throughout the communities through a newsletter, posters, word of mouth and social media.

The family-friendly open day – with tea and cake – was organised around six 45-minute sessions,

repeated from 1pm to 7pm, to allow the largest demographic to attend and take part. Residents, local businesses, community organisations, schools etc were all invited. People who were unable to attend were encouraged to make their views known in other ways.

The publicity for the Open Day stated:
Community Economic Development Planning is a new initiative that is all about local people and organisations taking a lead in shaping and improving the economy of their own communities.

Simply put, it is about people taking ACTION to create a CHANGE in the way money is made and used at a local level. This change can make our communities a better place to live and work – and that has to be a good thing, right?!

The economy impacts job growth, education, housing, taxes, transport – the list is endless. Understanding how we can influence and change the economy within our own communities means that we can tackle these issues in a community driven way. This means that we can get the best results!

For the past few months the Matson, Robinswood and White City Community Partnership have been starting to look at a CED plan for the Ward.





The Power of Three

Matson, Robinswood and White City Community Partnership

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The issues that have already been identified to include in the plan fall into six area - these are detailed below:

					
Promote The Reputation & Perception Of Our Area	Improve Education & Qualification Prospects	Develop The Use Of Community Buildings	Provide Community Based Childcare Opportunities	Enhance Community Transport Links	Improve Influence On Local Housing Issues
<p>We want to promote what is positive about our communities.</p> <p>This means we need to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop a strategy that allows us to communicate effectively with residents, businesses and other organisations both inside and outside of our communities to tell them what is happening and how they can get involved. - make sure we have regular coverage in local and regional press for our 'good news' stories - engage with the 'All Paths Lead to the Hill' project 	<p>We want our local schools to be a positive choice for children and young people and for our schools and communities to work together in a proactive way.</p> <p>This means we need to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support local schools to find and retain community Governors. - promote and celebrate the achievements of our local schools - identify ways for local businesses to offer training/qualification opportunities for local residents 	<p>We want to make better use of our many community buildings.</p> <p>This means we need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - undertake an asset survey to find out where these buildings are, what facilities they have and their effective use - use the results of this survey to develop a plan to make sure that these buildings are used - we need to maximise their potential 	<p>We want to improve child care facilities in our communities - this will have a direct benefit on people's ability to gain employment and further/higher education.</p> <p>This means we need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - explore a co-operative approach to child care across our communities, that allows child care providers to support each other with purchasing resources, training and managing time off etc. 	<p>We want to make sure that our communities are better connected to other services and job opportunities.</p> <p>This means we need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gain an understanding of how we can influence decisions made about public transport on a local level - ensure public transport is affordable and meets local need. - explore car share schemes and bike riding initiatives 	<p>We want our local residents to have a stronger voice on these issues and have the knowledge and capacity to influence decisions.</p> <p>This means we need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make sure that new housing developments are properly integrated into our communities - engage with planners and developers to ensure that new homes are energy efficient, accessible and inclusive - encourage housing providers to use local businesses for maintenance of housing stock

What do you think ? Are there issues that you think we are missing ? Please come along to the Open Day and have your say - your views on this plan are so important. If you are unable to make it then please use the form that came with this newsletter to tell us what you think...

Lots of people were encouraged to speak up and share their thoughts about the communities which helped shape a direction of travel even without fully understanding the CEDP process and concepts.

Information was gathered that affirmed and confirmed the impressions held on the big topics of reputation, childcare,

transport, qualifications, buildings and housing. Lots of opinions and proposals were out there.

The heavily advertised February event brought out some small business people as well as bigger organisations that we hadn't known how to approach as well as extra small networks to get in touch with as the plan moves forward.





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Outcomes of the Open Day and final priorities/conclusions:



Reputation – our biggest asset, our community spirit is invisible. We need to talk it and our communities up



Childcare – there are small micro- networks of childminders in different locations who may be open to ideas around co-operatives and extended hours.



Buildings – there is a real need and desire to be more effective with our buildings that a common approach could make a difference to.



Housing – there is a lot of strong feeling about housing, 'unaffordable', 'in the wrong place', 'disconnected', 'people attitudes' and confusion 'how can local contracts be given against best value' but there is also potential to use the housing development and maintenance to get some local people new opportunities, but this needs linking with other ideas.



Transport – the survey conducted on the day affirmed the concerns about buses, the lack of effective-responsive connections, the reliance on route one and limited alternatives. There was an also an undercurrent awareness of possibilities around car sharing, electric cars promoting cycling all of which could boast economic resilience and improve environment.



Skills for economic activity – across the community lots of good work goes into building up skills for work and self-employment, locally we specialise in face-to-face, confidence building, volunteering opportunities, coaching and problem solving to reduce barriers with all ages. What doesn't happen is any co-ordinated evaluation between the organisations of the impact of that work, mapping of what we offer and no communication of the results as a community.



Empowerment – the ad hoc way of working between organisations has worked well to hold the community together and be aware of each other, but to progress we need a way of endorsing leaders so that they can confidently move forward plans and ideas. A new structure of working together will also mean people can be accountable to each other and will create an environment in which organisations and not just individuals.



our biggest asset, our community spirit is invisible. We need to talk it, and our communities, up

