

Greensand Ridge Local Action Group

Terms of Reference

August 2008

1. Purpose

The Local Action Group (LAG) has been set up to direct and oversee the delivery of a Local Development Strategy (LDS) for the Greensand Ridge area 2008 to 2013, as outlined in a Leader bid approved through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).

2. Area Covered

The LAG area is defined by parish boundaries, following the Greensand Ridge Joint Character Area (JCA) as defined by Natural England. It includes all parishes that fall at least partly within the JCA, as well as some parishes on the fringe of the JCA that have been included because their main service centre is within the area. This makes a total of 45 parishes, 38 of which are within Mid Bedfordshire district, 4 in South Bedfordshire, 2 in Huntingdonshire and 1 in South Cambridgeshire.

The population of this area at the time of the 2001 census was 85,789. A list and map of the parishes covered have been attached as Appendices A and B.

3. Roles

The LAG's principal roles are as follows:

- Set the strategic direction for the LDS, based on continuous monitoring and review
- Oversee and advise on the delivery of the LDS, including identifying links to other strategies and funding streams
- Agree and regularly review a three-year workplan
- Oversee, and review the performance of, the steering group and accountable body (see below)
- Develop collaborative relationships with other LAGs and regional RDPE projects
- Identify its range of skills, and address any gaps through member recruitment and/or capacity-building

Individual LAG members may be expected to take a lead within their specific areas of expertise, as appropriate.

4. Structure

4.1 Chair and Vice Chair

The LAG will elect a Chair and Vice Chair from within its membership, on two-year, renewable terms. The role of the Chair is to represent the partnership externally, chair LAG meetings and manage the LAG's relationship with the accountable body (see 4.3). The Vice-Chair will deputise for the Chair where necessary, and chair the steering group (see 4.2 and 9).

4.2 Steering group

The LAG will elect a steering group (see 9) from within its membership, as a formal sub-committee, which will oversee the day-to-day operation of the programme and approve grants through Leader. It may also create other time-limited sub-groups as the need arises.

4.3 Accountable body

The accountable body (see 10) employs the programme staff, and is responsible for delivering the programme, providing the secretariat to the LAG, and fulfilling monitoring and audit requirements.

A diagram of the LAG's governance and management structure is attached as Appendix C.

5. Membership

5.1 Representation

Throughout its lifetime, the LAG will ensure that its membership is broadly representative of the full range of economic, social and environmental interests in the area. According to Leader rules, no more than 50% of members can be from the public sector; the LAG will aim for a private/voluntary to public sector ratio of 2:1.

The LAG's inclusive approach to its membership to date has fortunately resulted in the full range of sectors, interests and skills being broadly represented. At July 2008, the Greensand Ridge LAG consists of 36 members representing 31 organisations. 25 of members are from the private / voluntary sector, and 11 from the public sector. A full membership list is attached as Appendix D.

5.2 New members

Membership of the LAG will need to be refreshed during its lifetime, in order to introduce new perspectives, ensure inclusivity and replace members who resign, while continuing to maintain the balance of sectors and interests represented.

Membership of the LAG will be open to anyone living or working in the LAG area, or whose responsibility covers all or part of the area, or whose work is relevant to the LAG in some other way. This is subject to the essential need to maintain the balance of sectors and interests represented on the LAG.

Anyone seeking to join the LAG should apply, outlining his/her skills and interest in the LAG, to the Programme Director. The LAG can also co-opt new members if desired.

5.3 Resignation

In order to ensure continuity, LAG members are encouraged to remain in membership for at least three years where possible and appropriate.

Any LAG member who fails to attend three consecutive LAG meetings (see 6) shall be understood to have resigned from the LAG.

6. Meetings

The LAG will meet a minimum of four times per year, on a quarterly basis. The main purpose of full LAG meetings will be to monitor progress on the Local Development Strategy, and to review the strategy in the light of progress and changing circumstances. In order to maximise representation from all parts of the area over the course of the programme, meeting venues will be rotated.

For voting purposes, a quorum shall be considered to be a majority of LAG members voting and present.

Agendas and supporting documents will be issued at least one week before each meeting. Minutes will be circulated within ten working days of the meeting.

7. Inclusivity and transparency

The LAG will aim to be as inclusive and transparent as possible in its policies and procedures for membership (see 5).

Members of the public will always be welcome to observe LAG meetings (see below), provided at least a week's notice is given to the secretariat. We will also post minutes of LAG and steering group meetings on the LAG's website.

The LAG will adopt BRCC's Equal Opportunities policy in order to facilitate the incorporation of good EO practice in day-to-day delivery of the LDS. The LAG will also ensure that its members have a sound understanding of Equal Opportunities practice, and will address this through capacity-building activities where necessary.

8. Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest may arise where LAG members have competing professional or personal interests, particularly where they are partners in project applications, or approved projects. These will be addressed in the follows:

8.1 Separation of duties

A requirement of the EU for the delivery of funding is that there must be a 'separation of duties' between those who facilitate, appraise and approve projects and monitoring. For LAGs in the East of England, all project applications for funding by Leader will be appraised by an independent appraiser drawn from a panel made up of LAG administrators in the region. The steering group will approve projects (guided by the feedback from the appraisal process), while facilitation and monitoring will be carried out by programme staff.

8.2 Disclosure

Given their role in approving grants, steering group members will be required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest as a condition of membership.

8.3 Recusal

Any steering group member faced with an actual conflict of interest (for example, being a project partner or direct beneficiary from a project for which funds are being sought) will have to abstain from the approval of the relevant project.

In the event of a conflict of interest not being disclosed, the LAG and/or accountable body may need to take action against the person concerned, in order to protect its own integrity and finances. This may include forced resignation from the steering group, and could also lead to monies paid out in grants being 'clawed back' from any projects approved improperly.

9. Steering group

9.1 Role and powers

As a formal subcommittee of the LAG, the steering group has delegated powers to carry out the following roles:

- Oversee the day-to-day operation of the programme
- Act as the project approval panel for grants through Leader

9.2 Membership

The steering group will have a maximum of 12 members, and must reflect the range of interests represented on the LAG. As the project approval panel, it must (under RDPE rules) have no more than 50% public sector representation (which will include an EEDA representative). Steering group membership will be elected by the LAG at the beginning of the programme, and then every other calendar year from 2010.

The steering group must have at least a majority of confirmed members present to be quorate. Members may send deputies from the LAG if they are due to be absent; alternatively, the Chair of the steering group can invite other LAG members to deputise for absentees, where this is necessary to obtain a quorum, or to restrict public sector representation to 50% or less.

Any steering group member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings, or attends fewer than half of the meetings in a given calendar year, shall be understood to have resigned from the steering group.

9.3 Performance and reporting

The LAG secretariat will be responsible for ensuring that steering group members have access to all the information necessary for reaching decisions. The secretariat will also provide a full detailed report to every quarterly LAG meeting, explaining and justifying the steering group's decisions.

The steering group's performance in carrying out its roles will be assessed by the LAG on an annual basis, or more frequently if deemed necessary. This will be achieved through the monitoring and review of the LDS.

10. Accountable body

BRCC is the accountable body for the LAG. Its roles are as follows:

- Ensuring regulatory compliance with the RDPE
- Bankrolling the LAG between the payment of projects and the reclaim of funding
- Providing a robust and accessible audit trail
- Delivering the LDS and reporting on progress to the LAG
- Providing the secretariat to the LAG
- Employing (and providing working premises for) the project staff

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11. Representation, networking and collaboration

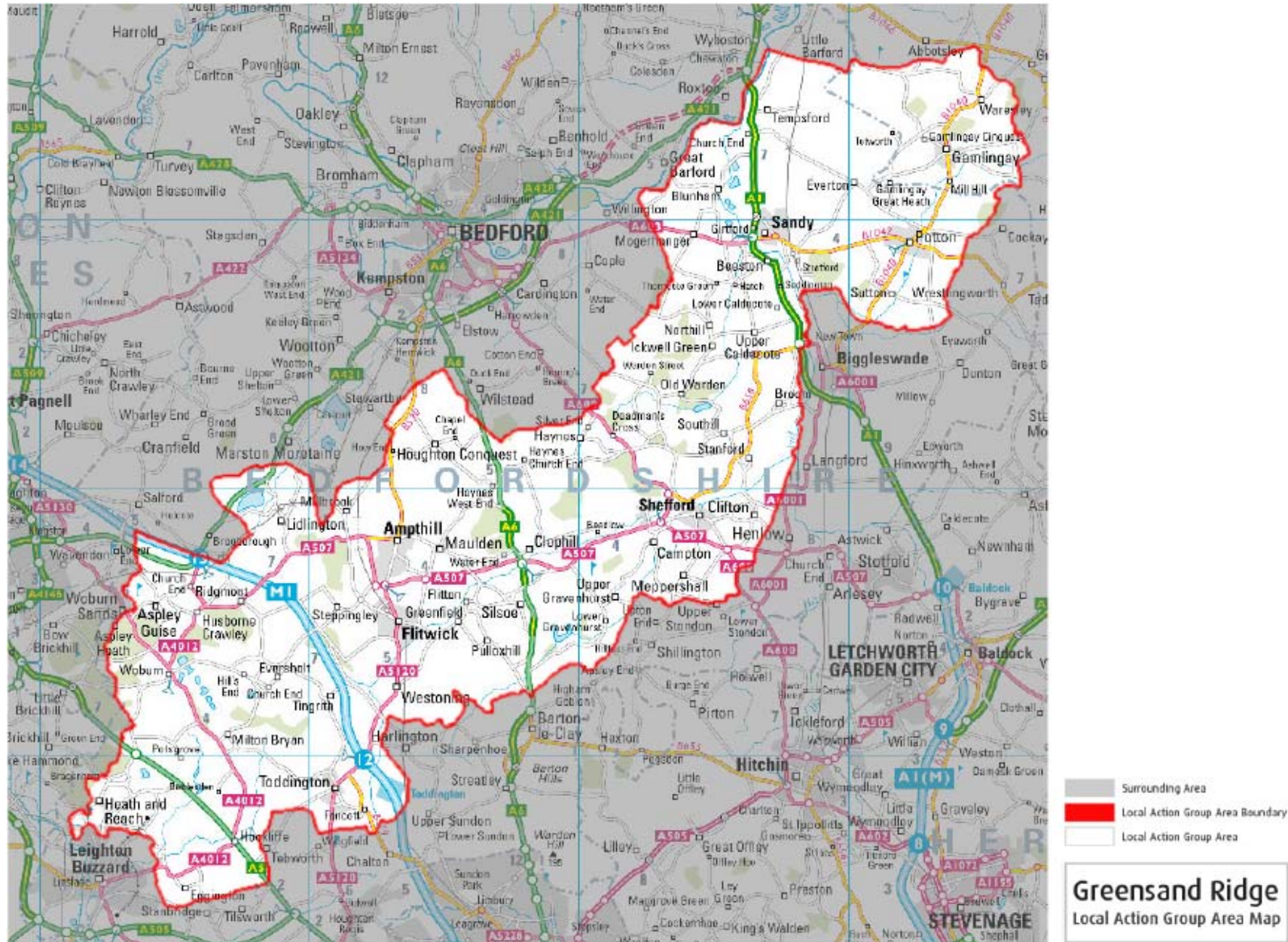
The LAG will be formally represented externally (e.g. in the press/media) by the Chair, Vice Chair, BRCC Chief Executive, or programme staff. While LAG members are encouraged to promote the LAG and its work far and wide, they can only formally represent the LAG if directly authorised by the Chair.

The LAG is committed to its undertakings to seek opportunities for collaboration with other LAGs, and to participate fully in the regional peer support group for LAG administrators, and the proposed national rural network.

12. Review and amendment

These terms will be reviewed annually by the LAG. Proposed amendments can also be considered by the LAG at its meetings, provided that a minimum of two weeks notice is given to the secretariat.

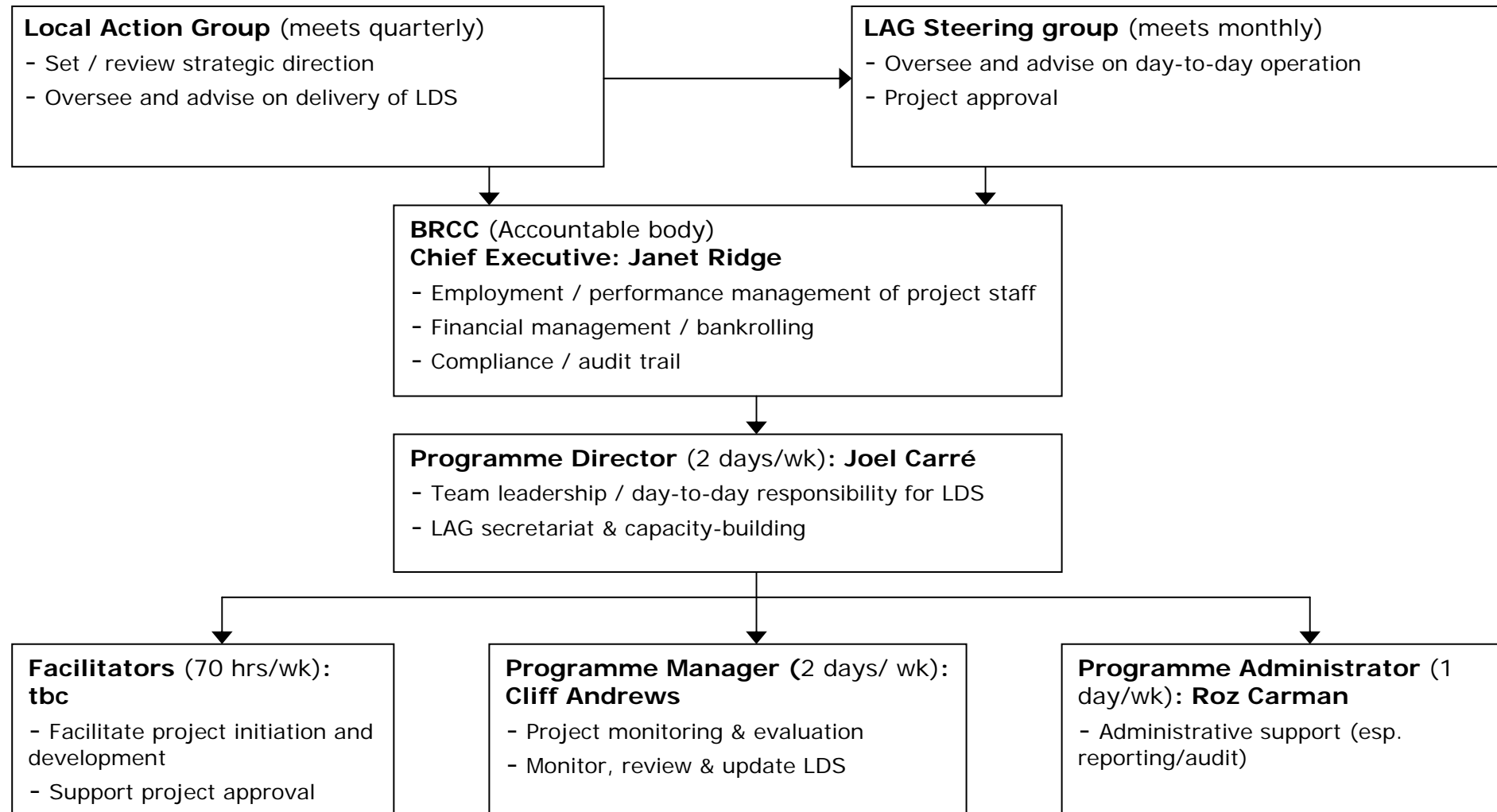
Appendix A Map of LAG Area



Appendix B List of Parishes covered

Parish	Population	Ward	District
Amphill	6,690	Amphill	Mid Bedfordshire
Millbrook	130		
Aspley Guise	2,120	Aspley Guise	
Husborne Crawley	190		
Clifton	2,730	Clifton and	
Meppershall	1,549	Meppershall	
Flitton & Greenfield	1,320	Flitton, Greenfield	
Pulloxhill	910	& Pulloxhill	
Flitwick	13,100	Flitwick East	
		Flitwick West	
Steppingley	260		
Houghton Conquest	1,350	Houghton, Haynes,	
Haynes	1,130	Southill and Old	
Southill	1,110	Warden	
Old Warden	390		
Lidlington	1,120	Marston (part)	
Clophill	1,740	Maulden and	
Maulden	2,980	Clophill	
Blunham	926	Northhill and	
Moggerhanger	620	Blunham	
Northhill	2,380		
Tempsford	564		
Everton	540	Potton and	
Potton	5,010	Wensley (part)	
Sutton	299		
Sandy	11,470	Sandy Ivel	
		Sandy Pinnacle	
Campton & Chicksands	2,340	Shefford, Campton	
Gravenhurst	600	and Gravenhurst	
Shefford	4,928		
Silsoe	1,730	Silsoe	
Tingrith	160	Westoning and	
Westoning	2,200	Tingrith	
Aspley Heath	630	Woburn	
Battlesden	40		
Eversholt	400		
Milton Bryan	160		
Potsgrove	40		
Ridgmont	420		
Woburn	940		
Heath & Reach	1,340	Heath & Reach	South Bedfordshire
Hockliffe	710		
Eggington	280	Stanbridge (part)	
Toddington	4,459	Toddington (part)	
Gamlingay	3,500	Gamlingay (part)	South Cambridgeshire
Tetworth / Waresley	284	Gransden and the Offords (part)	Huntingdonshire

Appendix C Governance and Management Structure



Appendix D LAG membership at August 2008

Name	Position	Organisation	Interest	Sector
Roy Tebbutt	Town Councillor	Amphill TC	Social	Public
Jon Billington	Iic Manager	BLEDP	Economic / Social	Private
George Ruddock	Managing Director	Bedfordshire Social Enterprise Network	Economic / Social	Private
Sarah Hughes	Principal Regeneration & Economic Development Officer	Beds County Council	Economic	Public
Caron Kendall	Tastes Of Beds	Beds County Council	Economic	Public
Jane Varley	Business Manager	Beds Green Business Network	Economic / Environmental	Private
David Morgan	Manager	Beds And Cambs Rural Support Group	Social	Private
Laura Kitson	Green Infrastructure Officer	Bedfordshire & Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium	Environmental	Public
Diane Budd	Specialist Advisor	Business Link	Economic	Public
Mark Waller	Landscape Architect	Center Parcs Ltd	Economic	Private
Richard Collyer	Head Of Regional & International Development	Chamber Of Commerce Beds & Luton	Economic	Private
Steve Dowie	Chair	Chicksands Bike Park	Economic	Private
Ali Bradbury	Chair	Clophill Parish Plan	Social	Private
Deepak Chandarana	Owner	Clophill Stores Ltd	Economic	Private
Colin Carpenter	Project Manager	Community Tree Trust Ltd	Environmental	Private
Kirstie Trewartha		Cranfield University	Environmental	Public
Mark Smith	Rural Devt Officer	CVS Mid & North Beds	Social	Private
Nick Saltmarsh	Project Manager	East Anglian Food Links	Economic	Private
Sara Hind	Rural Development Manager	East of England Development Agency	Economic	Public
Mike Wredde		English School Of Falconry	Economic	Private
Matthew O'Brien	Countryside Advisor	Farming & Wildlife Action Group	Economic Environmental	Private
Nick Parrish	Partner	F.B. Parrish & Son	Economic	Private
Jennifer Dancy	Parish Councillor	Flitton & Greenfield Parish Council	Social	Private
Anita Stone		Forestry Commission	Environmental	Public
Bridget Smith		Forward Gamlingay	Social	Private

John Franklin	Farmer	Franklins Farm	Economic	Private
Kirstin Rayner / Leanne Bacon	Parish Clerk (Job Share)	Gamlingay Parish Council	Social	Public
Gill Welham	Chief Executive	Greensand Trust	Environmental	Private
Jon Balaam	Director Of Devt	Greensand Trust	Economic	Private
Richard James	Parish Councillor	Haynes Parish Council	Social	Public
Pauline Hey	Parish Councillor	Heath & Reach Parish Council	Social	Public
Sandra Einon	LSP Manager	Mid Beds DC	All Three	Public
Jilly Hall		Natural England	Environmental	Public
Helen Deavin	Project Manager	RSPB East Of Eng.	Environmental	Private
Mike Johnston	Director	Shuttleworth College	Economic	Public
Charles Whitbread	Estate Manager	Southill Estate	Economic	Private
Mark Egar	Estate Manager	Southill Estate	Economic	Private
Mick Dobson	Advisory Services Manager	WENTA	Economic	Private
Andrew Davies	Managing Director	Woburn Country Foods	Economic	Private
Jill Green		Woburn Heritage Mus. & Tourist Info	Economic	Private