

GL 11 Business Plan

2007 – 2010



‘GL11 Project aims to promote and develop a friendly, welcoming environment for local residents to access a variety of services and activities’

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Summary

GL11 Mission Statement – the reason we exist

'GL11 Project aims to promote and develop a friendly, welcoming environment for local residents to access a variety of services and activities'.

Over the last three years GL11 Project has successfully met its strategic objectives and delivered its core services of training and learning, childcare and parent support, healthy lifestyles and community support in the communities of the GL11 postcode area.

This Business Plan covers the three years 2007 – 2010.

The Project will firm up the successes of the last three years and enter into contracts with agencies to continue to deliver its core services in the GL11 postcode area. There is a very good strategic fit between GL11 aims and the aims of the Gloucestershire Community Strategy and its Local Area Agreement. Therefore, a service level agreement with the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership will form the core of the organisation's funding, supported by other contracts that GL11 Project will secure. It will aim to generate two thirds of its income from contracts by the end of this Business Plan. This will give the Project a firm foundation to sustain itself for the future. A third of GL11 Project's income will come from project grants and other income generated through opportunities arising over the next three years – this will give the Project the flexibility to continue to respond quickly to community need.

To prepare itself for the contractual requirements of service level agreements, GL11 Project will adopt a company structure (company limited by guarantee) and will continue to also operate as a charity.

Any financial surpluses generated by GL11 Project will be re-invested in the staffing and systems of the organisation and in the community activities it supports.

1. Introduction to GL11 Community Project

The GL11 Community Project is a young vigorous organisation dedicated to meeting the needs of the local community in a diverse variety of ways. It has strong management committee and staff team and volunteers who have identified the most pressing social needs of the local area and are seeking to meet them. Currently it employs two part-time staff, supported by one full-time employee seconded by Gloucestershire County Council to oversee the Project. There are ten sessional crèche workers and twenty-six volunteers from the local community.

The Origins of the Project

The GL11 Community Project (referred to throughout this document as “the Project”) was launched on New Year’s Day 2002 by a group of interested parties representing a broad spectrum of relevant skills and experience and a wide cross-section of the local community. From its inception the Project has been led by a broad based and strong management team comprised largely of local residents, supported by agencies. It is based in the Fairmead Centre in Cam.

The Philosophy, Structure and Management of the Project

It is the philosophy of the Project that everyone should feel welcome to the Project and, recognising that issues such as depression, loneliness, domestic violence and a need for new skills arise regardless of household income, the Project aims to offer services to **all** socio-economic groups. As its name implies, the Project limits its activities to the GL11 postcode area and it is this combination of **total inclusiveness** within a finite geographical area which makes the Project unique.

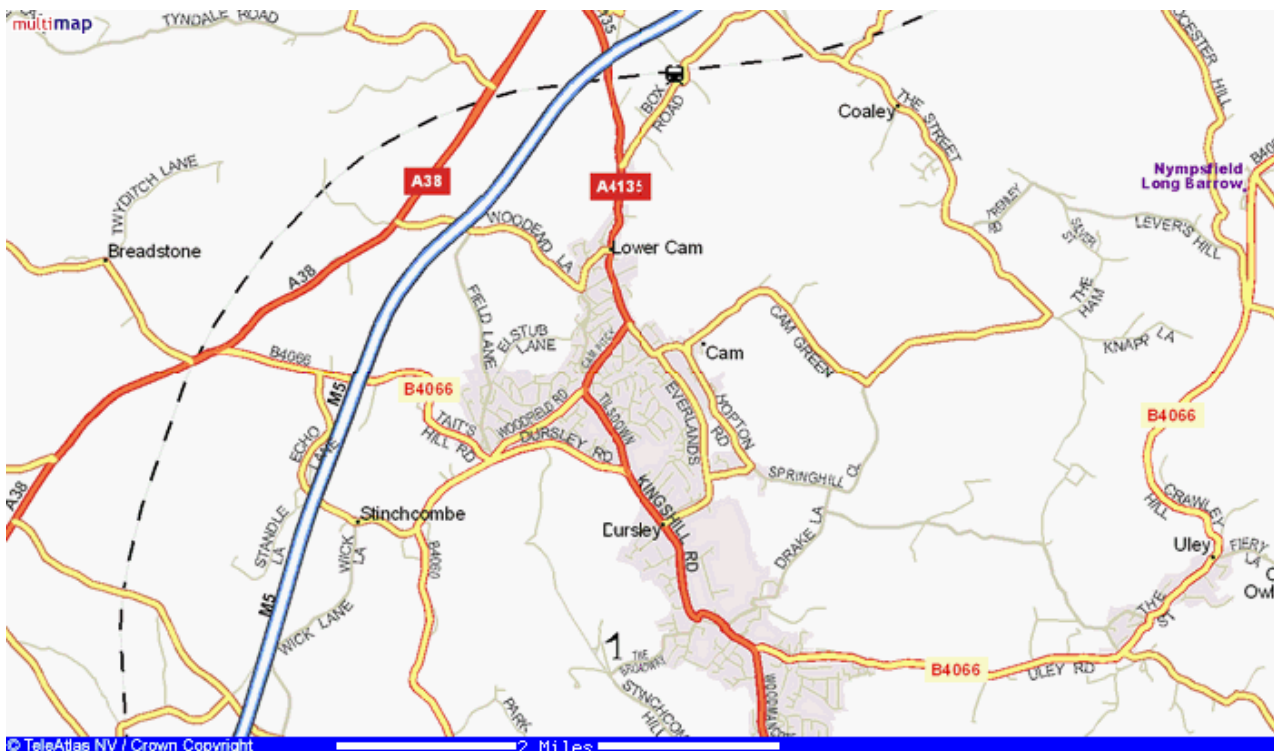


Figure 1: The GL11 postcode area

The Project is a registered charity and, as such, is a not-for-private-profit making organisation. It has a formal constitution and is run by an elected management committee: as already mentioned this is a strong and broad based team - a summary of its present composition, skills and experience profile is attached as appendix.

The Project's core belief is that providing services and activities for residents via a welcoming, friendly environment will help in the advancement of local education, the integration of the community as a whole, the protection of health and the relief of poverty, personal distress and financial hardship.

The Project addresses learning, social isolation and health needs and promotes community cohesion in the area by bringing the people of the GL11 postcode together in a number of individual and activities and initiatives.

2. The Needs of the Local Community

The GL11 postcode area has been identified as one of the more deprived areas within the Gloucestershire county. For Dursley alone, child poverty ranks 6th with the Local Authority District and 4th for employment deprivation. The income poverty index for the area is 1.25. The area has a factor score of 37.5 and ranks within the top 10 most deprived areas in Gloucestershire.

Maiden (a Multi Agency database on deprivation) statistics show Cam and Dursley ranked 32nd and 49th (of a total of 146 wards) respectively in terms of the education index of multiple deprivation. These low levels of engagement in learning demonstrate a need to remove barriers to attract individuals into "first step" learning, offering progression routes to vocational learning where possible in a bid to raise confidence, self-esteem and employability.

The GL11 community has become fragmented as the result of a number of changes. The most significant of these is the withdrawal of large organisations such as Lister Petter, Bymacks and Mawdsleys, leaving many out of work residents. This fragmentation has led to deprivation and the lack of community strength and capacity to tackle issues such as social exclusion, unemployment, education and training, and crime and disorder.

The area served by the Project is largely residential and quasi-rural. Broadly, the needs identified are those one would expect of such a community – the need to combat isolation and the need for local access to services. In particular, the Project has identified its core market as being female, non-working or part-time working parents aged 31 – 45 and their children i.e., as a broad generalisation, those who remain at home in the area during the working week. Another sizeable group in the GL11 postcode area is older people, particularly those who are infirm or disabled. The Project is physically situated in the same building as the local day care centre and has excellent information on the needs of the people in this target market for its services.

The Project exists to address these difficulties and meet the needs of the local community. There is no similar project within the GL11 area. Local management of the Project ensures that local needs are quickly identified and that there is the motivation to find ways of meeting those needs.

3. Market Demand for Project Services

The Project has carried out market research in the development of this business plan. Face to face interviews were carried out in 2007 with local people attending Project activities as part of a five year Celebration Event hosted at the Fairmead Centre. In addition, street interviews were carried out with residents in the Cam area, to find out what services local people want. Through these community consultations the Project has identified demand for services among people seeking:

- training and adult learning opportunities
- new social skills and recreational opportunities
- lifestyle alternatives
- childcare provision
- support in ways not available from other providers

These needs and demands fall into four categories as follows:

1. Training and Learning, Advice and Guidance
2. Childcare and Parent Support
3. Social Skills and Recreational Activities
4. Healthy Living Lifestyles and Community Support

The Project's management believes that people in GL11 need services:

- at a price they can afford
- at a place they can get to
- at a time they can make it
and, in many instances
- with crèche facilities available

In addition the Project has identified a market opportunity to provide research and consultancy services to agencies and groups seeking help in engaging their local communities.

4. Project Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats

Fig 2. SWOT map

<p>Strengths (inside the Project and community) Strong community spirit and enthusiasm Motivated committee, staff and volunteers Investors in People status Ofsted registered Excellent knowledge of needs of the GL11 community Effective community engagement Good success record re project grant applications Strong partnerships with local and national agencies</p>	<p>Opportunities (outside the Project and community) Local Area Agreements, strategies and 'single pot funding' which meet GL11 strategic objectives - gives opportunity to secure sustainable contract funding Every Child Matters policy and development of Children's Centres Land potentially available for new (shared) premises</p>
<p>Weaknesses (inside the Project and community) Lack of secure funding for core staff beyond 2008 No common system for collection of monitoring data Lack of visibility of Project Lack of strong branding – e.g. confusion between GL11 and TLC branding Lack of profile of Project – has not trumpeted success Premises inadequate for developing needs of the organisation Committee inexperienced in running Project as a business</p>	<p>Threats (outside the Project and community) Local Area Agreements mean much of available funding is pre-scribed – i.e. general grant funding becoming much more difficult to achieve Increased competition for available funding Other local organisations securing support and funding for delivery of statutory priorities.</p>

Recent evaluations have shown that over the last five years the Project has been successful in achieving its aim to become known as *the* key community development agency in the GL11 area.

Notable successes have been:

- effective community engagement – the Project has many committed community volunteers and users
- strong partnerships with statutory agencies – consistent support and help for the Project has been provided from local authority and other public sector and voluntary sector agencies, who remain strong supporters
- Consolidation of management systems and processes – during the last three years the Project has received Ofsted registration and has achieved Investor in People status
- Increase in income to the Project year on year over the last five years

Government strategies in respect of childcare and parent support – the cornerstone of GL11 service activity – have changed. GL11 has been at the forefront of delivering Surestart outreach services with other agencies in the GL11 postcode area and, as government strategy has moved to the introduction of Children's Centres and the introduction of a Children's Trust, so the Project will continue to engage with the Treetops Children's Centre to continue to deliver the Children's Centre outreach services in Cam and surrounding area.

Government policy has also brought about integrated Local Area Agreements for the delivery of national outcomes in a way that reflects local priorities in the following four 'blocks' of services:

- Children and young people
- Safer and stronger communities
- Healthier communities and older people
- Economic development and enterprise

All of these blocks reflect the core work of the Project. Local authority funding, hitherto accessible to the Project in the form of a seconded full time staffing post, will no longer be available in this form from April 2008. The Project is placed well, however to bid into the Local Area Agreement as well as the Children's Trust for contracts to deliver outcomes of its delivery plan in the GL11 postcode area.

5. The Strategic Objectives of the Project 2007 - 2010

Management, Partnerships and Organisation

- develop strong partnership links with key service providers and community organisations
- launch a new marketing and communication structure to deliver and enhance publicity opportunities and visibility of the Project and develop this structure in a defined manner over the next three years
- improve quality assurance monitoring systems to ensure effective data upon which to plan
- build the skills and confidence of the management committee to operate most effectively and efficiently as a social enterprise over the next three years
- sustain and extend existing links with regional and national partnership organisations with the aim of co-ordinating all activity aimed at meeting the needs of the local community
- develop a 3-year community volunteer strategy

Financial

- develop a 3-year contracts, fees, donations and project grant programme to create a solid, forecast income stream
- explore new ways of staging fees to a range of target groups, with a view to piloting means-testing

Human and Physical Resources

- build the staff resources and skills necessary to sustain and grow the Project over the next 3 years
- build provision of the equipment required to achieve all aspects of the Project objectives

Premises

- explore and develop potential for the re-location of the Project to a new site within the next 5 years
- explore the capacity and sustainability of the current premises at Fairmead, Cam, in relation to achieving social objectives over the next three years

Service Development**Training and Learning, Advice and Guidance**

- build on the success of the training and education courses as a way of increasing the employability of residents within the area, decreasing levels of distress and financial hardship, and bringing economic success back to the area
- develop new courses that aid the regeneration of the area and increase the local skills base

Childcare and Parent Support

- expand childcare services and activities to create a revenue generating concern, profit from which can go directly back into the Project
- investigate the feasibility of further day care and playgroup provision with the aim of increasing affordable childcare places, thereby expanding back to work opportunities and reducing levels of financial hardship
- establish links with local schools in order to develop learning programmes for residents and their families such as the Rednock Extended School Status scheme
- confirm involvement in the Cam & Dursley Children's' Centre implementation plan.

Healthy Living Lifestyles and Social Skills

- expand the range of services and activities available to the elderly within the community
- reduce social isolation and promote mental health
- explore ways of providing youth activities, incorporating any strong partnership potential

Community Support

- develop services that help to create a more integrated community
- increase activity in local transport strategy development, working in partnership with local organisations such as Vale Vision.

Customer Base

- increase the overall customer base by 30% over three years and consolidate the services offered to existing customers

6. The Three Year Plan

The Project's three year service development plan is based on taking steps towards meeting the four categories of need within the local community identified in section 3. The overall target involves increasing the overall customer base by 30%; this is seen as a modest target, worthwhile in its own right, not exhausting the potential for future development and also giving the organisation the breathing space to consolidate the range of services it provides to its existing market. The table at the end of this section categorises the Plan according to bands of service and reflects the Project's need driven approach to service provision. Brief details of the services involved are as follows:-

Training and Learning, Advice and Guidance - linked to LAA outcomes

This is planned as a growth area covering all age ranges. The training and learning services provided fall into three categories:

1. *Adult training and education.* These services are designed to increase the number of skilled residents within the area, help parents return to work, increase self esteem and, indirectly, reduce the levels of stress and financial hardship in families within the district. Many of existing courses give participants the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised certificate. Crèche facilities are provided for all courses. In addition to providing adult training and learning directly, GL11 Project supports The Learning Community (TLC). TLC is a project of the GL11 Project and for the past two years TLC has given more people the chance to benefit from learning and training opportunities in their local area through co-ordinating and promoting the learning provision from a range of providers in the area. It has brought together many organisations working in Cam and Dursley including Rednock School, Dursley Education Centre, Vale Vision and the Library Service. TLC's have now received Lottery funding for staff, for the next 3 years and as it has proved successful over the last two years it is intended that this service will continue to co-ordinate training and learning provision in the GL11 area, funded by Lottery and contracts through the Local Area Agreement and other public sources.
2. *Family learning.* This is a specialist educational service giving families the opportunity to learn together. Small group sessions are aimed at bonding families in distress while a summer Family Learning Weekend each year provides the opportunity for a number of families to come together for group learning and mutual support. GL11 has a Service Level Agreement with GCC Community and Adult Care Directorate to provide family literacy, language and numeracy from April 2008.

3. *Information and Guidance services.* The range of services provided by GL11 over the last three years has highlighted clients' requests for a very local one-stop-shop for information and guidance on a range of sensitive issues, in a building where other services are also provided and the nature of the information or guidance request will not necessarily be immediately apparent. GL11 intend to explore the potential for a partnership agreement with the Job Centre Plus whereby GL11 will provide initial pre-vocational guidance and information on training and job opportunities to those people accessing the Project – both face to face and with an on-line link with the Job Centre Plus. GL11 refer clients to IAG sessions with other providers e.g. Next Steps, Stroud College and Adult Care and Community Directorate

Childcare and Parent Support

Currently childcare and parent support activities involve parent and child group playtime sessions, crèche provision whilst parents are in training and learning sessions, therapeutic sessions, other activities and Children's parties. These services are planned to generate income. Future developments include plans to develop the crèche facility, occasionally using a mobile service to local organisations and partners and an expansion of day-care services to include playgroups and babysitting services.

GL11 Project formed a key part of the delivery of Surestart, providing childcare and parent support in the Cam and surrounding area. For the next three years the Project will continue to develop these activities as part of the outreach elements of the Treetops Children's Centre, based in Dursley.

Healthy Living Lifestyles and Social Skills

Therapeutic services are provided by the Project at the Fairmead Centre. The aim of these therapies is to promote well-being by reducing a number of stress related disorders such as insomnia and relieving debilitating symptoms such as headaches, shoulder and neck tension, back pain and low energy. Current therapies offered include, Baby/Child Massage Nia Dance and holistic art. GL11 intends to develop beauty therapy with adults in 2008.. All therapies are provided by qualified therapists and are accompanied by free childcare.

Recreational activities are provided for residents of all ages and are designed to provide the community with avenues to relieve stress, learn through fun and meet other people in a social setting. The Project has identified these services as a key growth area to be developed and expanded over the next three years. Current projects include:-

Summer Fun activities	
The Den	7-12
Sparkles	14-16
Meadowvale kick stars	5-12
Drop in groups	
Over 50's	50 +
Lone Parents	0+
The Bike Shed	teenagers
Baby Clubs	Under 1
Bright Buttons toddler fun	0+

Further gradual expansion both in the range of activities and the number of people using them is planned for the three year period, to include provision for young people as outreach at Woodfileds Community Centre.

Community Support

A coordinator of volunteers is to be employed from 2008 to implement a volunteer strategy which will support the gardening programme and others.

Gardening: this is a volunteer programme which aims to provide:

- Help with garden maintenance to vulnerable older or infirm residents who are unable to come out of their homes and are thereby rendered vulnerable and hard to reach.
- Opportunities for volunteering, social interaction and practical skills development.

Over the last three years the gardening programme has proved beneficial in providing a supported volunteering opportunity for a small group of volunteers. Over the next three years it is planned to capitalise also upon the potential of garden maintenance as an income generating programme in its own right. The Project aims to access project funding for paid staff support and training for volunteers and gradually expand the programme into a core group of supported volunteers, undertaking a range of DIY tasks from light to heavy-work gardening, generating income for the Project from within the local community.

Further Opportunities for Income Generation

- a. **Accommodation** is provided on a commercial basis to local partners such as Social Services, Home Start, Health Visitors, the Youth Offending Team and Connexions in order to enable them to provide specialist services locally for various categories of people referred to them.
- b. **Crèche facilities** are made available to local agencies and groups – either at the Fairmead premises or offsite in other venues.
- c. **Provider support services** – practical help, such as the provision of accommodation, for local initiatives in return for a contribution to costs.
- d. **Research and Consultation Services.** This service offers research and consultation expertise e.g. how to engage local communities, to external partners and companies at a charge. The service is provided by Project staff, drawing on their training, qualifications and expertise to maximise income to the Project. A gradual expansion is planned together with a gradual increase in the level of fees charged.

7. Financing the Project's Services

Year	Income (£k)	Expenditure (£k)
2005	174	122
2006	196	187
2007	219	189

Fig. 3 GL11 Income and Expenditure 2005 - 2007

GL11 is currently a grant funded social project bringing much needed social benefits to the local community. Reliance on grant funding is likely to continue for the foreseeable future but as a diminishing proportion of total income. The Project has the long-term aim of becoming self-sufficient and seeks to provide its services and activities in a business-like and professional manner and the aims enshrined in its core beliefs (see Mission Statement) come before any profit motive. Essentially, the services provided by the Project are labour intensive and therefore costly and if there was quick money to be made in providing them private enterprise would have filled the gap already.

The Project believes that over a period of years many of its services can be built up to pay their way as the economy of the area improves through regeneration, but this will take time. Grant funding as subsidy to contracts and other forms of income generation therefore remains essential to the Project's existence – certainly for the duration of the current three year plan. The Project asks those considering an offer of funding support to examine its beliefs, aims and ethos, the services it provides and its efficiency and effectiveness in providing them and to make their own judgement.

The attached three year budget forecast is based on the Project's Three Year Plan and reflects consolidation of services and a modest expansion in the nature of the Project. The budget forecast projects a 10% increase in income and expenditure each year of the next three years in line with its objectives to consolidate services and penetrate its existing market in greater depth rather than seeking to expand greatly the range of services it provides. The budget projection also shows a reduction of grant income to one third of total income by year three. Management believes this to be achievable.

8. Risk Analysis

Fig. 4. Risk Analysis Table

Risk – Funding, Governance and Premises	Contingency
Project does not succeed in securing contract funding to support a full time paid co-ordinator in 2008.	Project continues on a reduced scale, with part-time, sessional and volunteer staff. All service areas will progress on basis of full cost recovery, including elements for management and supervision costs, which will contribute over time to co-ordinator salary costs.
Project does not succeed in securing project funding to support expansion in service areas.	Management committee has policy that no activity will be started unless the funding has already been secured to provide it and unless projected additional income generation from fees can be proved as achievable. New financial accounting systems within the Project will apportion overhead costs to projects in order to identify full costs of providing services.
Management committee lack the governance and business skills and experience to effectively manage the organisation.	Management committee has undertaken skills/experience audit and will seek to fill and skill or experience gaps through recruitment or training of committee members and induction of potential committee members, bolstered by consultancy/professional support where necessary.

	Each of the four service areas will be subject to continual monitoring and an annual performance evaluation to provide business performance feedback to inform management committee decisions.
Existing Premises lack capacity to expand service areas in longer term	Management committee assess that 30% target increase in numbers using the Project can be accommodated within existing building. They are currently negotiating with parish council partners for the acquisition of land for a potential joint use, larger community building.

9. Conclusion

To achieve implementation of the next stage of the Project's strategic objectives the following staffing is envisaged:

- 1 GL11 Project Co-ordinator (ft)
- 1 Office Administrator (pt)
- 1 TLC Project Co-ordinator (ft)
- 1 TLC Project Administrator (pt)
- 1 Volunteering Projects Co-ordinator (pt)
- 10 sessional workers
- 26 core volunteers

A peppercorn rent is paid to GCC for the use of premises and the Project seeks grant or donation funding on an ongoing basis for maintenance and repairs. All other funding is achieved through specific project or contract funding with management or administration fees or use of other resources being now apportioned per project or service area as a cost centre. Donations are received in respect of some services e.g. contribution to use of facilities and hire of resources, gardening services, toddler groups etc.

The Project believes that it is already enhancing the lives of many local people and that this will continue and expand. Over time, a catalytic effect is envisaged, for example, an improved contemporary skills base within the community will help to retain fledgling new jobs within the area and ultimately draw in new employment opportunities. As with any social development, the full benefits to the community may take time to become apparent but it is the belief of management that the immediate benefit of its activities will ultimately feed through to a stronger, more stable, socially integrated and empowered community. The Project asks for your support.