

**South West Observatory
Operational and Research Group Meeting**

Thursday 1 May 2008
Western Power Training Centre, Taunton

MINUTES

1. Attendance

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Vinita Nawathe (Chair) | SWO Core Unit |
| Doug Anderson | Wiltshire County Council |
| Donald Barr | SWRDA |
| Rose Bird | GOSW |
| Malcolm Brown | Cornwall County Council |
| Jules Channer | Culture Module |
| Nick Chase (Minutes) | SWO CU |
| Mark Dancox | SW PHO |
| Alistair Gordon | SWENVO |
| Laura Grady | West of England LIN |
| Jane Hiller | Somerset SIne |
| Matt Loble | Exeter University |
| Allison McCaig | BEM/RDA |
| Karen McDonald | Glos CC/LIN |
| Hazel Mitchell | ONS |
| Paul Moore | ONS |
| Ben Neild | SLIM |
| Ray Perrins | SWO CU |
| Louise Taylor | Devon LIN |
| Kat Watters | Borough of Poole/EBase |

Apologies

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|---------------------|----------------------|
| Paul Brown | SW PHO |
| Annette Carr | SWENVO |
| Tom Frost | Wiltshire CC/LIN |
| Jackie Guinness | Wiltshire CC |
| Rachel Hartnell | SWO CU |
| Carrie-Anne Hiscock | Planning Module/SWRA |
| Nigel Jump | SWRDA |
| Gerry Merrell | SWO CU |
| Shane Vallance | SWRDA |

Also present

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| Dev Verdee | ONS |
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2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes were agreed. The action matrix was then discussed.

Actions: See Matrix

3. Review of last year – lessons learnt /areas for improvement

a. Roadshows

Devon LIN – good, will do another one next year, very useful in promoting the services on offer. Have learnt what works and what does not.

West of England LIN – well received – good response and requests for more of the same. Liked the specific topics approach, pleased with the wider audience in attendance.

Gloucestershire LIN – very happy with outcome, will hold another in June and bring in a wider audience.

Somerset LIN – good opportunity to discuss services provided and access to information to better understand their needs. Will look to have a ‘mini’ Sine event/conference.

ONS – very interesting, different approaches and ‘flavours’ with audiences getting a lot of information.

b. Seminars

Culture – positive feedback and follow up

BEM – numbers small and some no-shows

ENV – lots of follow-up working with MAA in Dorset as result

Biodiversity – RDA offices may have put people off as venue, not much follow-up

SLIM – good positive feedback, will continue to hold future seminars

c. Conference

Would be better to make the morning speakers available for a plenary in the afternoon. Events like this and the smaller ones around the region reinforce the sense of a network. Could focus on a theme to reiterate the modular network (seminars). Examples of work already done with a focused audience are; environmental modelling work by AG, MCTA work.

What can we agree to sign up to undertake?

- Training day for REAP

How do we get more people along with a local interest as opposed to the ‘usual’ regional players?

Did we use the network enough to promote the conference?

Need to see to a wider audience, get diary date in as early as possible and emphasise who will be the key speakers.

d. State of the South West 2008

Comments – SLIM good, no real problems, GOSW – OK, but some technical issues. PHO asked what to do with new data as it comes along. NC replied that we would like to add any new data in as it is available for the 12 months that this edition is valid. Version will be archived but still available so that the commentary is kept. Suggested that the document is clearly linked to the regional trends produced by ONS. **Action – NC to assess**

AG suggested that the linkages within and between the document could be better.

Group was asked if a ‘State of the Sub-regions’ report would be of any value?

LINs said that it would be useful to have a sub-regional report and some of them already produced something similar but it would be more useful initially to know what was held at the sub-regional level by the Modules and other partners.

Action: NC to scope this and email group with suggestions of way forward

e. Sharing of information/best practice

The group should have a protocol agreed for the sharing of information. It was thought by some that the LINs were not always ‘in the loop’. JH – not just about the ‘numbers’ or data but about engaging with a much wider group beyond the technical experts.

The group discussed various projects that they had been involved with that demonstrated joint working and sharing of information.

f. **Future planning**

The group discussed the mission statement and the objectives below and the following text was agreed;

*The South West Observatory is a network of experts across six thematic modules and seven local intelligence networks working towards the common **vision** that policy and decision making should be based on sound evidence. Access to any part of the network gives access to the whole.*

*Our **mission** is to be the first stop shop for intelligence in and about the region.*

Our objectives are to:

1. *Enable a shared understanding of the region and its parts*
2. *Promote the best use of good evidence in policy and decision making*
3. *Develop a well functioning intelligence network within the region that enhances the work of all its members.*
4. *Raise awareness of the South West Observatory Network*

We achieve this by:

- *Exchanging timely and relevant information within the network to develop a common understanding; share best and worst practices; and to avoid duplication.*
- *Promoting and engaging in cross-silo thinking*
- *Improving the delivery of information to be accessible to a variety of audiences through appropriate media, including via an easy to navigate website.*
- *Promoting awareness of available intelligence, the network and its services.*

4. Agreeing outline and features of next year's work plan

Action: ALL requested that all LINs and Modules send their respective forward plans to VN, these will be compiled and an indication given of where the individual plans sit in the overall SWO plan

5. Self help / open forum

DB – the RDA funding for the LINs is set out in an outline agreement and will incorporate an extension of the current contract for the first quarter of this financial year (2008/9). The current funding represents the recognition of the networking activity currently undertaken by the LINs more than research activity.

BN – SLIM are currently engaged in a piece of work looking at inclusion that could be relevant to all Modules and invited anyone interested to contact SLIM to discuss potential collaborations.

RP – the SWO Annual Report is being compiled by RP and a request for content from all of the Modules and LINs would be made shortly. RP will circulate the timetable for the report.

Action: RP – Circulate timetable for production of the SWO Annual Report to group with request for content.

6. Review of Actions/Close of meeting

VN reviewed the actions and thanked the group for a constructive and positive meeting.

Date of next meeting – Thursday 17 July 2008