
-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Batley [mailto:Mike.Batley@csft.co.uk]

Sent: 29 May 2007 14:16

To: Geoff Brown; Charlie Allan; niall; BrinkinsJ@northlan.gov.uk; OKaneD@northlan.gov.uk; Robert Hunter

Cc: Gillian Barrie

Subject: RE: CSFT proposal for resolving problems with Project Champion

Partners

Gillian and I met with Simon Rennie this morning. Simon will take soundings within FCS during this week to help inform his position; he believes at this point that a partner response is the most appropriate way to progress. Whether this is a preemptive approach based on what we know now and what he may be able to ascertain, or whether we get a response from Alan Stevenson that can be directly replied to, will depend on progress over the next week.

Simon cautions against a more robust approach at this point as it risks entrenching positions. In addition, Simon knows from his own experience that the argument in respect to revenue costs is a very live issue within FCS so if we misplay our hand we could find ourselves presented with not only hardened attitudes but also a case that is supported at the top level. To force timetables on this again may not be helpful but I am aware of the group's desire to 'get on' and have impressed this upon Simon.

I will keep you in touch with progress.

Mike

Mike Batley
Sustainable Development Officer
Central Scotland Forest Trust
Tel. 01501 824794
Fax. 01501 823919

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07/10/2008

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>>> "niall" <niallt@[REDACTED]> 29/05/2007 10:56 >>>
Thanks Robert

You say the situation has to be resolved but you don't say whether you agree with the suggested course of action and without action we are going nowhere? I think we all know that concerted action is more likely to succeed in the short term and that is precisely what Mike is advocating I believe.

CVDG stance is quite simple: After the numerous false starts, as you put it, we finally have an agreed position and we would like to see Stirling Council and the other public bodies make a stand. If this can't be done on the basis of documented evidence and agreed principles then we may as well wrap it up right now. The other issues you mention are irrelevant if you are starting from that agreed position Robert so wasting time speculating on Aberfoyle, the National Strategy and all the other smokescreens that have been done to death and lost all credibility more than a year ago is just going to cloud the issue.

We have bent over backwards to accommodate the compromises FCS wanted to impose upon us and we have gone to great lengths to ensure everything is confirmed in writing so my point is: Are we collectively going to tell them we expect them to deliver on their undertakings or are we not? I can tell you quite categorically that this is CVDG position and we expect to see it delivered to the letter - one way or the other.

Sorry to sound so incredibly blunt but FCS has driven the metaphorical coach and horses through the entire partnership process - a situation which is now beyond insult. CVDG are not going to waste another month on this so the CVP has but weeks to rescue it collectively or we will take further action. I wish to make it clear we are not trying to brow beat the other partners but I think it's only fair we expect everyone to state their position quite categorically

Niall

Niall Thomson

Chairman

CVDG

Tel [REDACTED]

Fax [REDACTED]

Mob [REDACTED]

Web www.carronvalley.org.uk

-----Original Message-----

From: Robert Hunter [mailto:hunterr@stirling.gov.uk]

Sent: 29 May 2007 08:31

To: Mike Batley; niall

Cc: Geoff Brown; Charlie Allan; BrinkinsJ@northlan.gov.uk;

OKaneD@northlan.gov.uk

Subject: Re: CSFT proposal for resolving problems with Project Champion

Mike/Niall,

I thought I'd better try and give a response to this, although we are on holiday today, but I recognise that I am out of the office for most of this week.

07/10/2008

First of all, I have enormous sympathy for Jeremy, who seems to have, in all faith, been brought in to deliver the development, was doing a good job, but now appears to be placed in a position, which is not of his making.

We all seem to recognise that the Carron Valley development has been nothing but positive for the area and is helping, after numerous false-starts, to showcase the wider potential of the Campsie/Touch Hills. We just need to refer to the Bikefest to see both the variety of visitors in attendance, but also the geographic spread, hence my willingness to approach Falkirk and East Dunbartonshire Councils to see if we can bring them on board.

This uncertainty is now causing problems and has to be resolved.

I have arranged to speak to the senior officers in Active Stirling to move forward the work that Duncan Sinclair had done, to try to engage with Falkirk and East Dunbartonshire Councils and also the local Enterprise Company, but to be honest there is no point at this stage, as we have no clear idea of the gameplan.

We all know that there was the major national mountain biking study. If, within the national strategy of FCS, there is an objective to play down Carron Valley, because it is too successful, in terms of the 7 stanes, but more importantly any aspiration for a national centre in the central belt in Arran, Fife or more likely, the National Park, let's be upfront about it. It is totally unfair on all the partners, but most especially the CVDG, who give up their time to attend meetings and have made such a huge commitment to the development.

If we know the story, we can then look at all the options for continuing to deliver the project, assuming, of course that FCS are still minded to support the development, in principle, if not financially.

Robert

Robert Hunter

Countryside Development Officer

Tel. 01786 442751

>>> "niall" <niallt@[REDACTED]> 27/05/2007 20:34:15 >>>

Mike / all

The CVDG committee has discussed the proposals you outlined during the Partnership meeting and in our brief conversation after the meeting. I now have approval, in principle, to follow your suggested course of action - in the short term. We suggest this does need to move quickly though.

Apologies, this is lengthy, but please read thoroughly

The Partnership has it all in writing: FCS has taken unilateral action and they have done so without consultation within the CVP. They have ignored the terms of our Concordat and so their behavior is incompatible with the accepted norms of partner working. Most importantly however, FCS has reneged on an agreed position therefore they are in breach of process. Mutual trust is implicit in any partner arrangement so if any one partner behaves in a manner which breaches that trust and contradicts the fundamental tenets of the partnership - this threatens the very continuance of the Partnership itself. Let us be clear, the remaining partners are predominately public bodies with a responsibility to bring FCS to account. In short, doing nothing is not an option. To avoid Jeremy or any member of his team being further compromised CVDG move that it is necessary for FCS to be excluded from this discussion.

07/10/2008

Can we have agreement on this please?

In a final attempt to avoid escalating the matter beyond the point where the remaining partners have direct control over what happens next, it is appropriate that the most senior and potentially influential figure within the CVP make enquiries within FES as to whether Alan Stevenson is prepared to review his position. Mike: it is CVDG view that this person is your CE Simon Rennie. As I understand it Lorna Bowden of North Lanarkshire Council sits on CSFT Board and CSFT are, in practical terms, the lead partner therefore SR would seem to be the most appropriate spokesperson.

Can we have agreement on this please and can you confirm Mike, if Simon Rennie is prepared to act?

It is CVDG view that the CVP is now way beyond the point where any "change of heart" from FCS is remotely acceptable. I think we need to remind ourselves how clearly FCS has defined what is in and what is out - there really is no ambiguity. Mike, you will no doubt make SR aware that we have an audit trail which, in our view, implicates Messrs Stevenson, Wall and Thompson in a duplicitous, and as we have now witnessed with meeting minutes etc, a dishonest trail of events. It is not for CVDG to speculate "who knew what." In Alan Stevensons case we go much further - we are drawn to the inescapable conclusion that this situation has been orchestrated by him from the outset so using logic and attempting to plead our case so to speak has little chance of working. That is one option but there is another which CVDG considers more appropriate: If FES Board are not going to be professionally briefed from the bottom up then they can at least be briefed from the top down. There are now two members of the National Committee with an interest in this and given the information which is now in CSFT

possession I don't think there is any choice Mike?

Could we have views on this please?

Jeremy has unwittingly made FCS predicament much worse by asking that it is not for the CVP to consider what is happening at other locations. One wonders if Jeremy is for real - are we seriously being asked to disregard what is happening elsewhere given all the circumstances? When all is said and done FCS remain publicly accountable and this is clear discrimination. CVDG has implemented the most sophisticated "monitoring and evaluation process" in the country so when Mr Stevenson asks that we "consider" such a scheme it is only fair we ask him how we could possibly improve upon what we are already doing? We could also ask him what monitoring and evaluation he implemented at Golspie before FCS sank £300k of taxpayer cash into a £500k mountain bike centre comprising predominately Red and Black trails? For that matter we could also ask him what evaluation processes are ongoing at the 7 Stanes where £millions are being spent. If there is an imbalance of Red trails - why are FCS continuing to lead the building of Red trails at 7 Stanes locations and at Glanbranter, Bonar Bridge, Campbeltown and Skye - all projects which have been delivered this year. How can the CVP possibly justify (to any potential Funder) building a trail centre on the doorstep of the largest population in Scotland with only beginner trails? Are visitors to Carron Valley not expected to progress at this location? We know they will so by what means are they expected to travel to other centres when they do? Is Mr Stevenson aware of the percentage of car ownership (the only means of getting to these places) in large parts of Lanarkshire and Glasgow?

We (CVP) are all intelligent people and we are doing our very best to deliver a quality project - one that will deliver lasting benefit for generations to come. It is self evident Alan Stevenson is doing everything to impede this. The plan is borne out of the most solidly constructed case for development anywhere - this project has witnessed

literally decades of talks, workshops, feasibility studies and scoping surveys and it's all documented. Alan Stevenson is also sitting (nee hiding) on an independent report which he himself commissioned - it recommends significant development at Carron Valley and our plan is based on these recommendations. If push comes to shove FCS has nowhere to hide - asking us to justify our position when FCS has literally stuck a finger in the air at numerous rural locations and hoped for the best it grossly insulting The amount of time and money spent justifying this project is quite literally in danger of outstripping physical development on the ground - £125k. Jeremy Thompson has worked on nothing else for 6 months so we need to collectively pinch ourselves and stop this nonsense. The situation has become preposterous in fact it's outrageous when you consider there are 5 public bodies in the CVP - all of whom have sunk huge amounts of time and resource into this and all of whom are working to a previously agreed position. It is not in FCS interest to have this exposed because there will be only one outcome for them

If Simon Rennie is unable to move this forward then again Mike, we agree with your suggestion that the CVP write to FCS with an agreed position. CVDG are happy that CSFT represent the CVP however, again, this needs to happen very quickly. There is one problem: We need Stevensons co-operation i.e we need sight of his position because all we have from Jeremy Thompson is a.) that none of the plan AS agreed to 6 months ago is basically acceptable in it's present form and b.) Stevenson wants us to "consider" a series of changes to type, scale and delivery.

CVDG found Jeremy's explanation of what Mr Stevenson would like to see very ambiguous to say the least - that suits their purpose obviously. I remind everyone that I have already written Jeremy on 1st May asking FCS to consider their position. This email was copied to Michael Wall - interestingly it is the only e mail I have sent him in several years which he did not send a read receipt on. I also wrote to Alan Stevenson on 20th May and he read the email on 21st May. The silence from the Project Sponsor and the Project Champion is deafening. I wouldn't bank of Jeremy obtaining Stevensons position for us so it may be necessary for CSFT to write to get this in the first instance.

Could everyone feed back as soon as possible please?

Regards

Niall

Niall Thomson

Chairman

CVDG

Tel [REDACTED]

Fax [REDACTED]

Mob [REDACTED]

07/10/2008