Thirty Percy Foundation

What We Heard
Gloucestershire Scoping Notes in Full

January - February 2020 Focus Group Conversations

Farming and Agriculture

The context
- Brexit (and recently made climate commitments) were both acknowledged as potentially huge catalysts for significant change in our food and farming systems. The challenge of re-creating our national policies and frameworks provides the UK with an opportunity to advance sustainable farming practices and land management and to think of more holistic and forward-thinking models.
- The landscape in Gloucestershire is already seen as being quite degraded, which is partly due to the increase in intensive farming practices and to there being a lot of large estates that have cleared vast areas of natural vegetation and wildlife.
- A focus on the environment and valuing nature as the foundation of the economy is a big theme within Gloucestershire and is an area the county are leading on nationally.
- Gloucestershire is going through rapid changes in terms of the way farms are owned/managed. Joint ventures and micro-businesses are starting to become more common. The region still has a county council farm and is one of the few county's that has a long-term plan /strategy for these. They are beginning to split these into smaller farm units, which will help with new entrants and regenerative agriculture.

The landscape
- The county is split into three farming regions: Cotswold which is predominantly arable with a lot of big estates; Gloucester Vale which has smaller family owned units; and West Gloucester which has very small farms with the odd big estate. This makes it difficult to tackle the agendas of the 1,100 farming businesses in the county as they have such diverse issues, different opportunities and varied geographies.
- There is a huge variation in what is happening in farms nationally and across the county, and for various reasons not **all** can transition to regenerative farming practices. Those that could adapt need investment, advice, support and local leadership, to enable them to manage the transition successfully.

The challenges

- Over the next few years education and skills development within the farming community needs to be improved, particularly around disease management, future of farming support, diversification and flexible procurement. In particular, older farmers are unsure of what to do next, as there is a minefield of information and they struggle with the transition to newer methods of farming.

- It is important to improve communication particularly in terms of what is happening in the public realm. Many farmers are struggling with the speed of change and the messaging involved. They feel targeted by the media and consumers, whose perception is that farmers are responsible for climate change, when really the impacts of different forms of farming are much more nuanced/complex than they are portrayed. Farming and agriculture have an enormous opportunity and leadership role to play in helping to combat both climate change and biodiversity loss and this needs to be made more explicit in public dialogue.

- Mental health problems, stress and social isolation within the farming community is at an all-time high, with very limited support available. Farmers are also anxious about changes in payments they receive from the Government, from the basic payment scheme through to transitional payments.

- Farmers are supplying the food that consumers want. If farmers need to make changes to that supply, it will be difficult and costly, as they have already invested a lot in particular types of farming practices (e.g. if a farmer has already moved their whole production to dairy and suddenly people no longer want milk then it is a whole change to their system to supply what is currently in demand).

- Given the many transitions involved in moving to a net zero society, we heard that community growing will have to play a much larger role over the next few decades. This is something that new developments need to be considering and building in.

- There is a growing need to think about how we get young people and people from more diverse backgrounds into farming.

- Access to land, particularly as a new entrant can be an enormous barrier to entry. It can take an average of 200 years for land to become available on the market, either to rent or to buy and even when it does become available it is difficult to get the capital to get started.

- There is an increasing level of entrepreneurship within the farming community. However, this brings a risk of increased competition and some of the community feeling left behind.

What needs to change…

Policy

- [We heard that] Legislative and regulatory changes are needed at a national level to create a more sustainable farming sector that empowers the community to have more of a say in what shapes their livelihoods. One change (currently underway) is designing what our future subsidy model (currently the Common Agricultural Policy) will look like post-Brexit. The Government are trialling the idea of paying farmers for the 'public services' they deliver (for example flood prevention, biodiversity protection, improving soil health etc.) instead of providing subsidies based on productivity. If implemented effectively, this new model could have enormous impacts on the type of work and skills required of farmers.
- Advisers and networks who can provide support for farming communities are needed to help navigate them through the chaos and uncertainty of business transition, the different types of payments and funding available for them and support them to maximise their opportunities.

Narratives

- The farming community needs to become more united under a collective narrative / core message. We need simplicity and clarity that everyone buys in to. Gloucestershire could demonstrate how to build this harmony between actors.
- It is important to connect people to where their food comes from and raise awareness about UK farming, and the country's actual growing ability. The hope is that understanding what landscapes and climates are best for different types of farming, would increase people's acceptance that certain foods may not be accessible in the future. This could also be a way of encouraging local supply chains, greater opportunities for farmers and connecting people more with nature.
- Due to the lack of clarity on the future of farming, the community needs to become more united as a sector on some core messages. There's a need to consider different ways to build harmony within the sector. Some suggestions of useful approaches given were:
  - Peer to peer learning is a powerful tool
  - Joint projects that facilitate groups of farmers to collaborate on different issues such as soil management, natural flood management or creating better habitat management.
  - Supporting farmer co-operatives to invest and work more collaboratively. 50% of farmers have a co-operative membership. The Co-op sector in the UK turns over £8bn a year, which is bigger than farming. If the big co-ops would work more collectively it would increase the number of farmers able to participate in creating solutions and shifting practice.

- Ideas about introducing a regenerative farming brand or 'mark', provided by an independent organisation to give assurance of the footprint and biodiversity of the products farms produce.

Finance and land
- A *local* agricultural transition bank is required, a similar idea is currently being explored in Devon and Cornwall. It is difficult to get access to business finance and investment for complex system changes as it is hard to translate a system change business case to something investors and banks would understand.
- The major landowners are not willing to take the risk to rent part of their holding to young farmers or micro businesses. Examples of successful models are needed to de-risk the idea. However, some large landowners that have complicated governance structures (such as the national trust) means their trustees might have to abide by certain objectives on how to make the most money with their land, which can be another barrier. We need more innovative and independent landowners to demonstrate the potential of these models to encourage the larger ones.
- It's about land share and not land spare. We need to collaborate with the bigger landlords, the county councils or organisations like the National Trust to enable new entrants to rent land from them. We could have an agricultural match-making organisation who can bring together landowners who are interested in renting out part of their holding with new entrants and micro businesses.

Community
- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) schemes could work well in the county as a way to support locally grown, environmentally positive and affordable food for communities. However, farmers can not be reliant on funding from these, which is normally short-term, and need to look at alternative ways to build sustainability with this scheme over a long period of time.
- We heard that large scale farming doesn't help with rural unemployment in the county but that small scale farms and CSA's really can support greater employment and help buy supporting family hours.
- A regionally bounded whole food system would be an excellent way to achieve a socially just and environmentally positive food sector. Finding local routes to market and educating communities on how best to do that is key. However, having the right infrastructure, such as small scale and local mills and abattoirs in place is crucial for this to be successful.
- The creation of a Gloucestershire rural hub for the farming community which could include access to peer-to-peer support and financial advice. This might need to be more of a hub and spoke model so that farmers across the county have access to more local support hubs rather than just one main one in Gloucester or Cheltenham.

Technology
- It was thought that technology will play an important role in the future of farming. Suggestions about building on **farmer-led** innovation, to get a more coherent, invigorated, agricultural research system that is collaborative and supports farmer ingenuity.
- Agritech, which is user led and supported by the community, will provide opportunities for farms to become more sustainable, for farmers to share knowledge and infrastructure and to better manage their land and production.

Net Zero
- Encouraging and supporting farmers to reduce their carbon footprint is key. The National Farmers Union (NFU) have now started to work on this issue and how they can support farmers with this transition. The very involvement of the NFU was observed as signalling an important tipping point in awareness and acceptance of the changes required.
- Agro-forestry was platformed as also being extremely important and often not mentioned enough. It is important to bridge the worlds of forestry and farming by growing both trees and agricultural/horticultural crops on the same piece of land – this is seen as an important step towards sustainability and helps to break down arguments about land sharing versus land sparing.
- It was acknowledged that better promotion of regenerative agriculture within universities and agricultural colleges is needed. This is currently not a core module at any of the agricultural universities and needs to be branded to appeal to all.

Young People

The context
- There appears to be a number of different, interconnecting issues and challenges affecting young people in Gloucestershire.
- One of the main challenges for the region, now and into the future, is the high rate of young people leaving the county and not returning. This, combined with the regions higher than average ageing population, creates a big challenge for the region's economic and social prosperity.
- We heard that Cheltenham has the 2nd highest exclusion rate in the country and that Gloucestershire has a much higher exclusion rate than other regions nationally - in particular in permanent exclusions in both primary and secondary schools are significantly higher.
- The main issues young people in Gloucestershire are concerned about are: 1) climate change and the environment; 2) lack of transport options for getting around; 3) lack of activities or places for young people to go; and 4) lack of jobs and universities that fit with their aspirations
- We learnt that there is **no** basic youth provision across the region of Gloucestershire. We also heard that there is no strategy from statutory agencies for youth services in the region. The few opportunities that are

available for young people are run by small community centres, parish councils and charities.

The Challenges

Youth Violence

- With a high number of young people being excluded from mainstream education, combined with vulnerable situations at home, many of these young people are getting involved in violent crime and drug trafficking.
- The increase in local press coverage of young people committing violent crimes has been recognised as one cause of the growing division between young and old in the county.
- There is a significant 'county lines' issue in Gloucestershire, where vulnerable young people in the county are groomed by gangs from London and Birmingham and end up involved in drug trafficking and related gang violence. Much of the increased knife crime in the region is recognised as being linked to county lines.

Community

- Investment needs to stop going into the 'brand' of Gloucestershire, like the quays in Gloucester, and put more money into building a better community for all.
- One of the main challenges for the region, now and into the future, is the high rate of young people leaving the county and not returning. There is a net deficit of young people leaving the county every year. This, combined with the regions higher than average ageing population, creates a big challenge for Gloucestershire's economic and social prosperity.
- Young people admit that they have no trust in the Police. In an ideal world young people would prefer respectful interactions with the police, but they don't believe this will happen. They feel that the police hold onto stereotypes and make assumptions about them.

Public transportation

- Public transport is expensive and the services outside of the main towns and city centres are unreliable. The services that are available generally cater for the older residents and end early or only run once a day in either direction. This prevents young people from getting to places they want to be (if facilities are not available in their area, which they often aren't).

Education

- Cheltenham has the 2nd highest exclusion rate in the country and Gloucestershire as a region has a much higher exclusion rate than other regions nationally - in particular permanent exclusions in both primary and secondary schools are significantly higher.
- It was observed that a lot of these exclusions appear to be due to very low tolerance from schools and selective admissions processes. Schools are often driven more by targets (in terms of student grades and Ofsted inspections)

than by how they can best support and nurture the county's young people. This is especially true for some of the more challenging students where exclusion seems to be the default solution for many schools.

- A very high percentage of the county's most vulnerable children are being home schooled and the quality and standard of home schooling is seen as being extremely poor.
- Most local authorities tend to make contact with home educators once a year for a 20 minute visit, however, the home educators are not legally obliged to meet with them and can refuse entry. These home schooled young people tend to fall off the radar and end up being isolated from the community.
- Gloucestershire does not have enough alternative provision for the number of students that are being excluded and the alternative provision available is not appropriate for the needs of the majority of these young people.
- There are issues in current policy/legislation that prevent alternative schools from offering more holistic life and vocational skills (for example the need to be Ofsted registered if you are providing full time education and the path that Ofsted registration inherently sends a school/institution down).
- However, young people have reported that they would like to have more relevant topics such as life skills and money management be taught in schools (or other accessible spaces).
- There are two major transition points in a young person's life, between primary and secondary school and again between secondary and college. Young people are not provided with the tools and life skills to navigate these important transition points.
- Average students don't get the attention that those at either end of the spectrum (the high achievers or the most troublesome) receive. They go through the educational system without any support and are left to fend for themselves.

Safe Places
- There are a lack of safe places and facilities for young people in the county. The only example given was a coffee shop in Gloucester city centre, called The Cavern, where young people are welcome to visit and do not have to spend money to socialise there. Other than that, it is pubs and clubs and not all young people want to be around alcohol. However, the situation is even worse outside of the main town and city centres, where there are absolutely no safe spaces for young people to be.
- We have learnt that it's important to understand the different regions of the county, as different communities that all have different needs.
- Adults' idea of a youth club is outdated and different from what young people today want from a safe space. They want a place where they can build trusted relationships, a drop-in centre to discuss various issues, rather than having to book appointments, as they prefer that type of flexibility.

Employment
- There is a need to support the development of new jobs and skills for young people in the region. There is a focus regionally on cyber security, technology

and agriculture, as well as ensuring greater uptake of STEAM subjects at school (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Maths).

- Career advice and work experience opportunities for young people fall far short of being inspirational, motivating or representative of the options available - this is an area that needs a "big shake up". NEET (Not in Education, employment or training) individuals tend to have a lot of social issues and are not ready for employment. The level of career support services for these individuals depends on where they live in the county, it's a bit of a postcode lottery. GFirst LEP deliver a career guidance programme in the county, with the aim to ensure that every young person has the opportunity to access high level career advice. They pair schools up with Enterprise Advisers (senior business volunteers) who help the schools to develop and implement a careers strategy. Unfortunately, not many schools sign up to the scheme, generally it's the more progressive state, independent and grammar schools that do.
- YP find it hard to get work experience in the field they are interested in. There is a lot of competition for limited jobs available. They feel there is no support available to help them navigate the job market and are generally left to fend themselves, which they find overwhelming.
- Another key issue is how to engage the young people in hard to reach communities, where employment opportunities are even more limited.
- There are not enough apprenticeships opportunities in the county, although what is available has been successful. There is a hunger for apprenticeships, which gives an opportunity for much more to be done. Many businesses are not using their apprenticeship levy, and if a small business down the road needs an apprentice, the bigger companies could transfer their levy to them. There needs to be some kind of broker in place to manage this.
- We also heard that there is a need to increase and diversify the types of 'non-urban' based jobs available to young people.

Mental Health
- Mental health was seen by many as a main priority for the region and a key issue affecting young people.
- The statutory Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) for supporting young people with mental health concerns and emotional wellbeing currently has a 9-month waiting list and the voluntary sector is having to fill this gap in service provision.
- We also heard about the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on young people's resilience, mental health and future life chances. ACEs are stressful events occurring in childhood that have been found to have lifelong impacts on health and behaviour.
- The important role the wider community can play in preventing adversity in these situations was also raised. By providing young people with safe and consistent places to go, where they have access to a trusted adult and emotional support is critical in preventing the long-lasting impact of ACE's on a child's ability to think, learn and interact with others.

- The decimation of youth provision across the county has added to the negative impacts of ACE's on young people's development and future life chances.
- Young people feel that mental health issues are disregarded in schools. They are pressured from teachers to get good grades and have observed many teachers being more interested in receiving good Ofsted reports, than their students wellbeing.
- Many young people with mental health issues do not want to reach out for help, they can either be in denial about the severity of the problem, they don't want to feel like a burden, or they feel people won't understand them. There are a lack of trusted adults young people can turn to.
- Mental health provision needs improving, there's no real support network. Pro-action not reaction is required. There's a need for professional support from schools and colleges. Teachers should be trained to identify early signs of possible mental health problems or have specialised councillors available in schools, who understand the wide range of mental health issues that young people suffer from and are available for confidential drop-in conversations.
- Isolation, particularly for young people from certain areas of the county, such as the Forest of Dean, is seen as a problem - their voices are not heard, and this can lead to depression.

Services for young people
- There is a lack of connection and collaboration between organisations that work with young people. It is important to get the long-term connections in place to allow the organisations that work with young people to continue to develop and work in a much more joined-up and holistic way.
- The services that are available primarily deal with the young people who are most at risk, so organisations are being reactive rather than preventative (there's a lack of early intervention across the board).
- There is no responsible duty of care for young people coming out of the care system. The supported housing, where they send 18 year olds, normally house adults who have support needs around substance misuse, mental health and social issues and it is not an environment where a young person can thrive. If the young person has siblings still in the care system, they are often separated from them.
- SEN (Special Educational Needs) children or children in care have little or no access to support services.
- Young people are classed as adults, but due to the vulnerabilities and needs they have, they are unable to access the appropriate support or services they require, as they don't 'tick the right box'.

Climate Change & the Environment
- Young people are very concerned about climate change; however, they are unsure of what they can do about it. This can lead to higher levels of anxiety and a feeling of hopelessness.

What needs to change…

Youth Violence

- Schools should be a safe space for young people, more protection is required to make pupils feel safe and supported. Safeguarding practices need to extend beyond individual children and their homes to public places like schools and parks etc.

Community

- Gloucester city needs to be safer for young people. The street lighting needs improving, especially in Gloucester Park. More investment is needed across the county in cycling and walking paths and increasing green spaces in the main cities and town centres.
- We need to find/provide ways for young people to have a more positive relationships with the police and others in authority. However, young people fear the repercussions of talking to these people. PCSOs should be trained how best to communicate with young people and build better relationships with them.
- As well as looking at ways to ensure the number of young people leaving the county each year decreases. We also need to consider ways to improve the net import of young people to the county, such as ensuring the universities offer the right types courses to attract young 'in-comers'.
- We heard about the importance of talking directly to young people and co-creating and implementing initiatives with them. This way of working needs to be embedded across many services and institutions. Young people have high levels of distrust when it comes to people listening to them and actually taking action based on what they say.
- A small bursary scheme was suggested as a way of engaging young people with how they want to improve their communities. For example, the innovation that came from the applications made to the Gloucestershire Youth Climate Panel from young people from all around the county were excellent, with the range of requests being highly diverse.

Public Transport

- Local buses need to be cheaper and have improved services, especially for towns and cities outside of Gloucester and Cheltenham.
- It was suggested that young people who use wheelchairs could have them fitted with QR codes, that would be read by a screen at the bus stops to ensure that the appropriate type of transportation arrives for them and allows them to be more independent.

Education

- Parents and teachers need to be educated on how they can help students to become active citizens, provide them with the stepping-stones towards independence whether that is to continue with further education or move into the workplace.

- More teaching assistants are required, one teacher can't teach 30 students. Schools need to rethink what is taught, speak to young people to find out what they would like to learn. Not all students respond well to traditional form of teaching methods. Young people would prefer to be taught life skills, like cooking, money management, how to apply for work etc.
- Schools should provide extracurricular activities, but have members of community, like retired people, or business leaders, lead practical based learning sessions rather than teachers. Young people said they would be happy to attend sessions like this after school hours.
- We need to consider ways to realign the SEN system, to ensure that this group of young people are not overlooked. GFirst LEP have started working more with pupil referral units and SEN students; they recognise there is a need to engage with these young people and catch them before they fall off the radar. When these young people are presented with the right opportunities, they thrive.

Safe Places
- More safe places are needed for young people to socialise and have as a 'base' outside of school and college, especially in the different communities throughout Gloucestershire, as it is difficult for young people living in rural areas to travel to city centre and many young people have home lives that they do not want to return to immediately after school hours.
- For a hub / centre for 16 – 18 year olds to succeed, it needs to be under the right management, a person (or people) that can relate to the young people who want to attend. It is important to understand your audience and what their needs are. Young people want to be given the opportunity to thrive and build their confidence and help them become more integrated in their communities. Young people suggested that it would need to be a large a hub, with different spaces to cater to the different types of young people who would want to attend. The spaces could provide music workshops, video games console, mental health drop-in centre, walk in education support and careers advice. However, smaller drop in hubs would also be needed in other areas of the county to support hard to reach young people.
- There's a need for more places like Alex's pop up shop in the city centre during the Christmas and holiday periods. It included activities for young people, such as making music, DJing, gaming stations, barbers and young entrepreneurs selling merchandise. The pop up was mainly attended by young people, from 10 to 25, during the three days. Alex received funding from The Music Works based in Gloucester to put this into action.
- Mobile centres that provides music and art therapy would be beneficial and would help to break down transport barriers. This is seen as something that is sustainable and accessible to young people throughout the county.

Employment
- There is a need for good individualised careers advice for all young people. A skills-based approach to careers advice with a platform to create opportunities

and provide support for young people to get into business or alternative career paths.

- There's a need to work with employers to get them to understand the benefits of giving opportunities to young people whether through work experience or apprenticeships.
- Shared apprenticeship schemes (e.g. South West Apprenticeships) have been set up to help employers who want to support the development of skills in young people, however, they are not in a position to offer a full-term apprenticeships.
- The 30/30 challenge was originally set up and run by Gloucester County Council to work with 30 employers to provide 30 work-awareness experiences to young people with learning disabilities. GFirst LEP are now looking to continue this scheme but want to engage more employers and open it to all young people.

Mental Health
- More education around mental health is required especially for older generation and professionals working with young people, as young people feel they don't understand the complexity of the different types of mental health issues they experience.
- Schools could provide services around mental health. One to one sessions between students and teachers throughout school life would be helpful. They could then get to know students and understand the pressures they are under (in or outside of school) and be trained in the best ways to support their students.
- Self-esteem should be tackled at an earlier age. There's research that early self-esteem training can impact on issues that young people deal with, such as consent. In Holland they provide assertiveness training for young children early on in their education.

Services for Young People
- Rather than wait until a young person reaches crisis point, there is a need for trusted relationships to be built before these reactive services are required. The impact of this would be far greater. Continuity is key, having one or two trusted adults young people can turn to throughout their school/college life and into early adulthood is crucial.

Climate Change
- Is there an opportunity for young people in the county to work with the Forestry Commission or another environmental organisation to lead on a climate initiative for the region? There is a huge lack of social and work opportunities in the area and a scheme like this could be tied in with the work the county is doing on climate change.
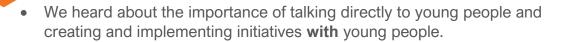
September 2019 Conversations

What we heard…

A unique region

- We have heard that Gloucestershire has one of the most diverse landscapes in England – with a total of 38 landscape character types identified. This is an unusually large number for a county and is a reflection of the great diversity of different underlying geologies and the pattern of social, economic and cultural impacts in reaction to these differences.
- The county is seen as a national exemplar in a number of areas: such as flood protection measures, progressive climate policies (particularly in Stroud) and county-wide Growth Hubs for businesses
- We have heard that the county is a 'hot bed' of expertise and knowledge across a range of areas, such as: farming and agriculture, cyber security, sustainable development and green energy.
- The Severn Estuary is one of the largest, and most important wildlife habitats in Europe and is one of the most important 'wildlife super highways' in the world. The Estuary's habitats are protected by British, European and international law. The Severn Bore is the result of the Severn's immense tidal range and makes the Estuary ecosystem so unique. There is consistent interest nationally in ways the power of these tides can be used to generate renewable electricity, which is a prime example of some of the conflicts that can exist between biodiversity loss and climate change.
- We have heard that there are plans for Gloucestershire to join a cross-border partnership with regions in the southwest of England and South Wales to form a 'Western Powerhouse', which will bring improved infrastructure, investment and career options across the region.

Young people

- There appear to be **a lot** of different, interconnecting issues and challenges affecting young people in Gloucestershire.
- We have heard that one of the main challenges for the region, now and into the future, is the high rate of young people leaving the county and not returning. This, combined with the regions higher than average ageing population, creates a big challenge for the regions economic and social prosperity.
- We heard that the main issues young people in Gloucestershire are concerned about are: 1) climate change and the environment; 2) lack of transport options for getting around; 3) lack of activities or places for young people to go; and 4) lack of jobs and universities that fit with their aspirations
- We learnt that there is **no** basic youth provision across the region of Gloucestershire. We also heard that there is no strategy from statutory agencies for youth services in the region. The few opportunities that are available for young people are run by small community centres, parish councils and charities.

- We heard about the importance of talking directly to young people and creating and implementing initiatives **with** young people.

Career Opportunities
- There is a need to support the development of new jobs and skills for young people in the region. We have heard that there is a focus regionally on cyber security, technology and agriculture, as well as ensuring greater uptake of STEAM subjects at school (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Maths).
- We heard that career advice and work experience opportunities for young people fall far short of being inspirational, motivating or representative of the options available and that this is an area that needs a "big shake up".
- We also heard that there is a need to increase and diversify the types of 'non-urban' based jobs available for young people to enter into.

Mental Health
- Mental health was seen by many as a main priority for the region and a key issue affecting young people.
- We heard that the statutory Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) for supporting young people with mental health concerns and emotional wellbeing currently has a 9-month waiting list and that the voluntary sector is having to fill this gap in service provision.
- We also heard about the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) on young people's resilience, mental health and future life chances. ACE's are stressful events occurring in childhood[1] that have been found to have lifelong impacts on health and behaviour. They affect and cut across all sectors and involve all of us in society.
- The importance the wider community can play in preventing adversity in these situations was also raised. By providing young people with safe and consistent places to go, where they have access to a trusted adult and emotional support is critical in preventing the long-lasting impact of ACE's on a child's ability to think, learn and interact with others.
- We also heard that the decimation of youth provision across the county has added to the negative impacts of ACE's on a child's development and future life chances.

Education
- We heard that Cheltenham has the 2nd highest exclusion rate in the country and that Gloucestershire has a much higher exclusion rate than other regions nationally - in particular permanent exclusions in both primary and secondary schools are significantly higher.
- It was observed that a lot of these exclusions appear to be due to very low tolerance from schools in the county. We heard that schools are often driven more by targets (in terms of student grades and Ofsted inspections) than by how they can best support and nurture the county's young people.

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[1] such as: domestic violence, parental abandonment through separation or divorce, a parent with a mental health condition, being a victim of abuse, being a victim of neglect, a member of your household being in prison, growing up around alcohol or drug use problems

- We have heard that a very high percentage of the county's most vulnerable children are being home schooled and that the quality and standard of home schooling is extremely poor. Children being home schooled only receive one 20 minute 'check in' appointment a year and that they can choose not to open the door to these checks.
- We heard that there is not enough alternative provision for the number of students that are being excluded and that the alternative provision available is not appropriate for the needs of the majority of these young people.
- We also heard that there are issues in current policy/legislation that prevent alternative schools from offering more holistic life and vocational skills (for example the need to be Ofsted registered if you are providing full time education and the path that Ofsted registration inherently sends a school/institution down)
- It was acknowledged that this is recognised as a significant issue and risk for the local area and there is (at present) enormous engagement from the council on the issue. However, greater innovation and creative thinking in how to address the problem is seen as vital.

Youth Violence
- We have heard that the high number of young people being excluded from mainstream education, combined with vulnerable situations at home, has led to many of these young people getting involved in violent crime and drug trafficking
- There has been an increase in local press coverage of young people committing violent crimes and was recognised as one cause of the growing division between young and old in the county.
- We heard that there is a significant 'county lines' issue in Gloucestershire, where vulnerable young people in the county are groomed by gangs from London and Birmingham and end up involved in drug trafficking and related gang violence. Much of the increased knife crime in the region is recognised as being linked to county lines.

The Environment & Climate Change
- We have heard that the people of Gloucestershire have great appreciation for the 'green capital' available to them in the county and that many people utilise the natural environment for health and recreational reasons.
- Considerations and concerns about the natural environment and climate change were mentioned throughout **all** of our conversations and we heard that this is an area that needs to be embedded across all future initiatives and plans (regardless of sector).
- Climate change is seen as one of the biggest challenges and threats to the future prosperity of the county (and the world).
- It was observed that the level of awareness and concern about climate change and biodiversity loss had reached a tipping point among the population. It is now seen as a question of **how** we make significant progress quickly (to avoid catastrophic impacts), whilst also protecting the county from the impacts that

are now inevitable. This is something that district and county councils are grappling with now.

- All but one of the district councils (Tewkesbury) have declared climate emergencies and set carbon neutral targets but it was also recognised that these councils are now struggling with turning this into action.
- We heard that flooding is an enormous issue for the county and that significant efforts have been made to increase flood defences in recent years. We also heard that the size and frequency of flooding will get significantly worse in the next few decades and that conversations and decisions about which areas to "let flood" need to start if the county are to limit the severity of these impacts.
- The need to engage more people with sustainability was raised and that to do this it is important for it to be fun and enjoyable. We also heard that connecting people with nature will be key to engaging more people on these issues and that there is a challenge that certain groups do not currently feel ownership of their outdoor environments, which was seen as an important area to address.
- We heard that creating experiences for people to envisage a positive future can be extremely impactful for engaging people and creating agency and responsibility among citizens.
- We also heard that there is a need to raise awareness that people are already suffering from the effects of climate change **now** (for example from flooding and fuel poverty).
- It was recognised that due to legislation changes in 2010 (for example the code for sustainable homes) new buildings being developed today are still not zero-carbon and given the very clear regional, national and international targets, this was raised as being completely inconsistent.
- We heard about the importance of creating better connected places that allow people and nature to thrive and that this will mean changes in the layout and infrastructure of our communities, as well as to cultural norms (such as working behaviours etc.)
- We also heard about the need to 're-wild' certain places in the county and how this should be done in an entrepreneurial / innovative way that does not threaten people's livelihoods.

Agriculture and farming
- Brexit (and recently made climate commitments) were both acknowledged as potentially being huge catalysts for significant change in our food and farming systems. We heard that the challenge of re-creating our national policies and frameworks (because of Brexit) provides the UK with an opportunity to advance sustainable farming practices and land management and to think of more holistic and forward-thinking models.
- We heard that legislative and regulatory changes are needed at a national level if we are to create a more sustainable farming sector. One change (currently underway) is designing what our future subsidy model (currently the Common Agricultural Policy) will look like post-Brexit. The Government are trialling the idea of paying farmers for the 'public services' they deliver (for example flood prevention, biodiversity protection, improving soil health etc.)

instead of providing subsidies based on productivity. If implemented effectively, this new model could have enormous impacts on the type of work and skills required of farmers.

- We heard that education, training and skills development for farmers and land-owners will be extremely important in the next few years and that at present no one has really put much thought in to how this will be delivered and what is most effective and useful.

- We also heard that working alongside farmers to reduce their carbon footprint will be key. The National Farmers Union (NFU) have now started to work on this issue and how they can support farmers with this transition. The very involvement of the NFU was observed as signalling an important tipping point in awareness and acceptance of the changes required.

- The landscape in Gloucestershire is already seen as being quite degraded, which was partly assigned to the increase in intensive farming practices and partly to there being a lot of large estates that have cleared vast areas of natural vegetation and wildlife.

- We heard about the importance of connecting people to where their food comes from and who produces it. We heard that this could be a way of encouraging local supply chains, greater opportunities for farmers and connecting people more with nature.

- It was thought that technology will play an important role in the future of farming. 'Agri-tech' will provide opportunities for farms to become more sustainable, for farmers to share knowledge and infrastructure and to better manage their land and production. We also heard that technology will play a key role in helping farmers to connect with their local communities.

- It was recognised that farmers will need significant support in order to transition to these new ways of working. In the long-term, farmers will be likely to embrace new ways of working and their role in 'stewarding the land' but that in the short-term, support will be needed in terms of capital investment and skills/knowledge development.

- We heard that there is a need to understand the UK's growing ability (as a whole), in order to understand what landscapes and climates are best for different types of farming. There also needs to be an educational piece with communities to increase understanding of this and acceptance that certain foods may not be accessible in the future.

- We have heard that there is a growing need to think about how we get young people back into farming and that community growing will be vital over the next few decades. This is something that new developments need to be considering and building in now.

- We heard that there are strong arguments for new, innovative models that allow people without significant capital or savings to get into farming. There were various suggestions of how this might work, such as offering significantly reduced rent or bursaries to young farmers; setting up agricultural apprenticeship schemes; or community donation of land from large landowners. However, despite these ideas, we did not hear of many initiatives/pilots actually taking place in this space.

Sense of 'place'

- We heard that many people locally feel quite a strong a connection and sense of 'belonging' to their local towns or districts but that there is less of a sense of 'place' county-wide.
- We have heard about the importance of physical spaces and places in
- communities. These places allow for people to congregate and feel ownership. It is often these physical spaces that allow for community relationships to develop and for the sharing of ideas to take place.
- In general, young people feel less of a sense of 'place' in their local area. We heard that this may be due to short-term rents preventing young people from staying in one place and 'putting down roots' and the lack of physical spaces or activities for young people to congregate around.
- Young people have also highlighted a lack of places where they can meet to talk about /engage with the issues they care about (for example climate change and the environment).
- We heard a lot about Gloucester city centre having significant potential as a 'future hub' for the county. We heard that Gloucester has a large number of potential assets, such as: a much more diverse community (in terms of age, ethnicity and socio-economic status), a large number of empty physical spaces that could be regenerated to form community spaces and hubs and an increasing energy and momentum around creative arts and culture. We also heard that Gloucester City Council is very engaged in the local community and is starting to do a lot of work bringing people together to think about the problems that exist here.

Stronger relationships and connections

- We have heard that the relationships and connections that exist with, and between, communities are fundamental to their resilience and ability to respond to change.
- It was observed that fostering and nurturing strong relationships in local communities might be one of the most important factors in whether we are able to achieve a sustainable future. It was recognised that we don't know what the future holds and that the solutions we need will change over time, so instead of investing in specific solutions or issue areas, people should invest in building relationships of trust, equity and reciprocity. This way you build resilient communities, that can adapt to change and will support each other to address new challenges as they arise.
- We heard that when people develop connections locally, they feel more agency and responsibility to help each other and to create a safe and prosperous future for everyone.
- In order to build these sorts of relationships and connections, it was highlighted that certain aspects of our society will need to change. For example: how are people valued for the time they spend supporting others in their community? How do we value everyone's time, strengths and skills equally? How does our economy (and wider society) have to change for this to work?

Voluntary & Charity Sector

- There are over 2,300 charities and voluntary organisations operating in Gloucestershire.
- We heard that there are significant overlaps between these organisations, with many focusing on the same issues but with very little strategic co-ordination and planning. This has been seen to lead to wasted resource and duplication of effort.
- We also heard that, although there are a very large amount of charities present, there are still significant gaps in the issue areas being addressed, which again signals the need for greater co-ordination between actors in the area.
- It was emphasised that there is a great need for infrastructure in order to support strategic co-ordination and collaboration between parties. We heard that this sort of infrastructure is notoriously hard to secure (and maintain) funding for. We also heard that the true cost and resource associated with doing this sort of work is usually significantly under-estimated.

Council dynamics

- We have heard that the commissioning climate within the county council has damaged a lot of social services and charities in the region.
- The two-tier council structure (county and district) is seen as a blocker to being able to achieve more consistent strategies around public services and infrastructure.
- We have heard that the leadership within councils across the county needs a 'good shake up' and that creativity and strategic thinking are consistently lacking in many areas.
- It was also observed that there is often genuine will and desire to do more at a council level, but that putting ambitions into practice is difficult. For example, all but one council have set carbon neutral ambitions but are now struggling to set out an action plan for achieving these.

Feedback

We are always seeking feedback on this evolving work and hope that in reading this, you will count yourself as a partner and consider sending your thoughts, reflections, ideas, challenges and critiques to us.

Please contact hello@thirtypercy.org with any feedback you have.