

GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee held on Wednesday 30 November 2016 commencing at 10.00 am at the Cabinet Suite - Shire Hall, Gloucester.

PRESENT MEMBERSHIP:

Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Cllr Christopher Hancock
Cllr Paul James	Cllr Steve Lydon
Cllr Steve Jordan	Pete Carr
Cllr Robert Vines	Adam Starkey

Substitutes: Cllr Brian Robinson

Apologies: Cllr Patrick Molyneux

60. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Patrick Molyneux.

Cllr Brian Robinson substituted at the meeting for Cllr Molyneux.

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

62. MINUTES

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2016 be approved as a correct record.

63. GFIRST LEP UPDATE

Pete Carr, Deputy Chief Executive of GFirst LEP, provided the Committee with an update on the delivery of the Growth Programme in the county.

An overview of the status of projects going through the approval and funding process was provided, and it was highlighted that the A40 Benhall bus lane project was not being progressed. Members were also informed that, following a change in process, the GFirst LEP Investment Panel had started to review projects. The Metz Way project and A40 Over Roundabout Scheme had so far been reviewed by the Panel.

One member queried whether the funding for the A40 Benhall bus lane scheme would be reallocated. Pete Carr confirmed that the funding would remain available locally, however the outcome of the Growth Deal 3 submission would need to be known before it was decided where the funding would be best allocated. It was also highlighted that Gloucestershire County Council would continue to work with Stagecoach on other improvements to the A40.

Members were made aware of the current project reporting figures. The out turn from the current Growth Deal programme was £18.499m, the actual cumulative total spend (including direct leverage/ match) was £21.8m, and the total leverage (direct and follow-on) declared by the projects was £64m.

Members were informed that the 'Annual Conversation' with the Cities and Local Growth team from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) was taking place in December. A representative from Gloucestershire County Council would be in attendance in addition to the GFirst LEP Chair and GFirst LEP programme management staff.

Pete Carr informed members that BEIS had confirmed that all LEPs and Accountable Bodies were required to carry out reviews and updates of their assurance frameworks by February 2017, and that they needed to be signed off by the Section 151 Officer. The Programme Management Group had already started to review the GFirst LEP's Assurance Framework and would be discussed at the 'Annual Conversation' meeting.

It was explained to members that GFirst LEP was still in conversation with the Government regarding the amount of funding that would be received for Growth Deal 3. Members noted that the Government had applied three criteria to help in their decisions over funding allocations. It was also noted that there had been no clarification yet as to whether there would be any further Growth Deal rounds.

One member queried why GFirst LEP did not score as strongly as some other areas under the private sector match funding criteria that the Government had applied. In response, it was explained that the criteria for private sector match funding had changed during the bidding process so that match funding now needed to be confirmed at the start of the project. Pete Carr explained that this could be addressed in future through early conversations with project promoters and by looking at how other areas had achieved this. It was also noted that under the governance criteria, areas with metro mayors, combined authorities, and devolution deals already in place scored higher than GFirst LEP, and it was acknowledged that this Growth Deal round had been a more political process.

It was queried how GFirst LEP would involve the Committee in its process for the allocation of Growth Deal 3 funds to projects. Pete Carr explained that the Government would determine the projects that would receive funding and the amount of funding each project would receive. The Committee would be informed of the allocations once the LEP Board had ensured it was comfortable to accept them. It was recognised that it was important for Committee members to be informed of

the proposals so that they could be aware of the impact they would have on the county.

One member asked for an update on the establishment of the Employment and Skills Board. Pete Carr explained that the LEP Board had considered the draft proposals for the Employment and Skills Board, which had made some recommendations, and that it was expected to be established in March 2017. Once it had been established, the Employment and Skills Board would work on developing a draft skills strategy. It was confirmed that the Employment and Skills Board would report to the LEP Board and to the GEGJC, and that once they had been drawn up, the papers for the Board would be made available to the Committee.

The Committee noted the report.

64. VISION 2050 AND FUTURE AMBITIONS WORK

Nigel Riglar, Commissioning Director: Communities and Infrastructure, Gloucestershire County Council, presented the Gloucestershire Ambitions Roundtable Workshop Report to the Committee. The Report was the final outcome from the challenge work that had been completed by the Committee.

The Committee noted the report and it was agreed that the report should be submitted to the Vision 2050 Steering Group for their consideration.

Resolved

- 1. To note the report;**
- 2. To submit the report to the Vision 2050 Steering Group for their consideration.**

65. JCS POSITION STATEMENT AND TIMELINE

Mike Dawson, Chief Executive, Tewkesbury Borough Council, provided the Committee with an update on the Joint Core Strategy position statement and timeline.

It was explained that Tewkesbury Borough Council had resolved to consider a plan without the Twigworth strategic allocation, however it was committed to the JCS.

The Committee was also informed that the Ministry of Defence and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation had confirmed that a significant portion of the MoD site in Ashchurch would not be released for housing, which would impact on the JCS.

It was explained that modifications to the JCS would be brought back to Gloucester City, Tewkesbury Borough and Cheltenham Borough Councils in the new year, with the aim for completion by the end of March 2017.

The Committee discussed the importance of joint-working between the partners within Gloucestershire on local strategic plans. It was reported that Leadership Gloucestershire would be considering this matter and members recognised that the associated work would need to be resourced to drive changes and develop collaborative working.

It was highlighted that the Government's intervention in the local strategic plans needed to be raised with them.

66. BUSINESS RATE POOL

David Stanley, Accountancy Manager, Stroud District Council, provided the Committee with an update on the Business Rate Pool.

It was highlighted to members that the forecasted amount that would be retained within Gloucestershire as a result of pooling for 2016/17 had been revised down to £1.983m, following a meeting of the Gloucestershire CFOs in September 2016. Based on the current governance arrangements, the Strategic Economic Development Fund would receive around £200k.

The Committee was informed that NHS Trusts were looking to be classed as charitable bodies and therefore qualify for mandatory charitable business rates relief of 80% of their business rates. Should the application be successful, it would have a significant impact on the Business Rates Pool.

In response to a query, it was explained that should the NHS Trusts application be successful, appeals could be backdated by a 6 year period.

The Committee noted that new rateable values (RV) would come into effect on 1 April 2017, which had seen the RV for Gloucestershire increase by 6.1%. However, whilst there was a positive change in the RV across the county, the revaluation should be fiscally neutral. Members were also made aware that the new rating could lead to an increase in appeals activity.

In response to a query as to when it would be anticipated that Tewkesbury Borough Council could return to the Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool, it was explained that Tewkesbury would be kept under review.

It was recognised that a presentation at the next meeting on the new business rates retention system would be useful.

It was also requested that a report regarding the opportunity for Gloucestershire to take part in a pilot for the new business rates retention system be drawn up and circulated with Committee members in order to seek their agreement for Gloucestershire's involvement in the pilot.

The Committee noted the report.

67. GLOUCESTERSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN

Mike Dawson provided the Committee with a verbal update on the Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Plan.

The Committee noted that two projects on the GIIP had been re-categorised: Cheltenham High Street had moved from Category D to a Category C, and Cheltenham Cyber Park had moved from Uncategorised to Category B.

The Committee also noted that the GIIP would be updated to incorporate any changes made during the JCS modification process.

It was explained that following the approval of the Local Transport Plan, an exercise to update the GIIP with any new projects was underway, which would be completed in early 2017.

Members were informed that there were a number of significant funding opportunities that Gloucestershire had been made aware of relating to housing delivery. These included the Home Building Fund and the Capacity Fund. It was noted that the Senior Officers Group continued to progress projects and seek funding opportunities in support of Gloucestershire's infrastructure requirements, including opportunities determined in the Autumn Statement.

The Committee was informed that work was ongoing to make the infrastructure analysis and mapping tool, which was demonstrated at the previous Committee meeting, publically available.

68. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The Committee noted the meeting dates for 2017.

CHAIRPERSON

Meeting concluded at 12.00 pm