

GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee held on Wednesday 7 September 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	Matthew Burgess
Cllr Patrick Molyneux	Mally Findlater
Cllr Robert Vines	

Substitutes:

Apologies:

50. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies from Committee members at the meeting.

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

52. MINUTES

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2016 be approved as a correct record.

53. GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2015-2031

Ben Watts, Principal Planning Officer, Gloucestershire County Council, provided the Committee with an overview of Gloucestershire's Local Transport Plan (2015-31). The LTP, which was formally adopted by Gloucestershire County Council on 29th June 2016, outlined the long-term transport strategy for Gloucestershire.

Members were informed that the schemes included within the LTP reflected the county's transport priorities, however did not represent a commitment of funding by Gloucestershire County Council. It was explained that the LTP was a living document, which would be updated to reflect national guidance or the adoption of local plans, and progress would be monitored against the LTP monitoring indicators.

In response to a query it was clarified that funding for highways maintenance and part of the Integrated Transport funding would continue to be awarded to the county council, however all other funding for local major schemes would be subject to bids through the local Growth Deal process. It was suggested that schemes without County Council or local leadership could be addressed as part of the integration of the LTP with the Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Plan.

Members were informed that, in addition to local transport objectives, the LTP set out the County Council's policy for schemes that were being developed in the areas surrounding Gloucestershire, such as the Chepstow Bypass and the Metro West.

There was some discussion as to how the LTP related to Gloucestershire's devolution ambitions.

The Committee noted the report.

54. GFIRST LEP UPDATE

Mally Findlater, Programme Manager, GFirst LEP, provided the Committee with an update on GFirst LEP Growth Deal Activity, including progress with Growth Deal 3.

Members were provided with an overview of the status of the projects that were going through the approval and funding process. The Committee noted that projects were progressing as expected, with due diligence completed on 14 projects, and funding agreement in place for 12 projects.

Mally Findlater explained that at the end of Q4 2015/16 the out turn from the current Growth Deal programme was £13.169m, and that the total leverage, including both direct match and follow-on leverage, declared by the projects was £25.368m.

The Committee was informed that the GFirst LEP Assurance Framework had been updated and was published on the GFirst LEP website. The Committee noted that the audit by Gloucestershire County Council of the LEP and Accountable Body processes was ongoing, in addition to project sampling work that was being undertaken by BEIS. Members would be informed of the results once they had been made available to GFirst LEP.

In response to a query, Mally Findlater confirmed that the report prepared by the Programme Management Group on 'lessons learned' would be shared with Committee members at a future meeting after the report had been shared with BEIS and the LEP Board in October 2016.

Members were informed that GFirst LEP's Growth Deal Round 3 bid had been submitted at the end of July 2016. 11 projects were included in the bid and the total funding 'ask' was just under £79m. Mally Findlater informed members that the feedback following a challenge session with MP Robert Goodwill was positive, and

that it was apparent from the meeting that the GFirst LEP was well-regarded nationally.

Following a discussion on match funding, it was clarified that details of projected leverage had been included in the Growth Deal Round 3 bid.

It was highlighted to members that the Government was talking to LEPs nationally about the position of funds that had been allocated in previous Growth Deal rounds. It was suggested that where spending was not on track, funding could be pulled and reallocated. Mally Findlater informed members that the GFirst LEP was confident regarding its delivery of projects funded through previous Growth Deal rounds.

In response to a query, Mally Findlater confirmed that it was the responsibility of project promoters to identify and inform the LEP of risks which could affect the delivery of projects.

The Committee recognised GFirst LEP's positive track record for the delivery of projects and noted the report.

55. SKILLS POLICY FOR GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Peter Holmes, Head of Extended Learning, Gloucestershire County Council, provided the Committee with an update on the skills policy for Gloucestershire.

The Committee was informed that key stakeholders had been consulted with following the initial discussions on the proposal for a skills policy at the Committee meeting on 16th March 2016. There was a broad consensus amongst stakeholders regarding the priorities of the policy and on investment into skills.

It was explained that the proposed policy would act as a framework for an Employment and Skills Board which would be tasked with developing and implementing a skills strategy for the county. The Employment and Skills Board would be established by January 2017 and would report to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee and GFirst LEP Board in the first instance.

Peter Holmes informed the Committee that the County Council had commissioned consultants to determine what would constitute a successful Board. The Committee acknowledged the importance of having the right board membership, which would include public, private and third sector stakeholders.

Members were made aware of the Government's Post 16 Skills Plan, which aimed to address the need for more highly skilled and effectively trained people to grow the economy, raise productivity, and ensure prosperity for individuals. In particular, it focused on technical and vocational educational routes, feeding into apprenticeships and higher education. It would be the remit of the Employment and Skills Board to consider how the Plan is supported within Gloucestershire.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

The Committee recognised the importance of focusing on skills within Gloucestershire and it was recognised that the Employment and Skills Board should add value to existing frameworks.

Peter Holmes informed members that Kathryn Wagstaff, Strategic Alliance Project Manager had been appointed by the University of Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire College, and Stroud and South Gloucestershire College to identify future skills needs of businesses across the county, and was currently in discussion with County Council officers about carrying out a skills survey. It was agreed that it would be useful for Kathryn Wagstaff to attend a future meeting of the Committee to update members on the survey and skills needs of businesses.

Members were also made aware of a Gloucestershire County Council funded project whereby officers worked alongside social workers to discuss skills and employability with members of the local community.

One member suggested that it would be useful to have an understanding of the cost of the economic inactivity cohort.

Matthew Burgess, GFirst LEP Board Member and Principal of Gloucestershire College, informed members that he welcomed the proposals for the establishment of an Employment and Skills Board.

There was a discussion as to whether it was within the remit of the Committee to recommend the establishment of an Employment and Skills Board. It was clarified that as the Committee would be supporting the establishment of the Board by Gloucestershire County Council, it was within the remit of the Committee.

The Committee noted the report, and thanked Peter Holmes, who was retiring, for his advice over the years.

Resolved

To recommend the establishment of an Employment and Skills Board to develop the policy into a more detailed employment and skills strategy for the county.

56. BUSINESS RATE POOL

David Stanley, Accountancy Manager, Stroud District Council, provided members with an update on the state of the Business Rate Pool and the health of the Strategic Economic Development Fund.

Members were reminded that during its first year of operation in 2013/14, Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool reported a surplus of £774,862, of which £94,972 was paid to the Strategic Economic Development Fund. In 2014/15 the Pool suffered a significant loss due to the successful backdated appeal by Virgin Media in particular, and, due to the ongoing risk associated with the Virgin Media

appeal, it was agreed that the Pool be dissolved and reformed excluding Tewkesbury Borough Council from April 2016.

Members were informed that the Pool reported a surplus of £1.129m for 2015/16 due to an improved position across the majority of pool members and the impact of the lower pool levy rate. A safety net payment of £252k to Tewkesbury was made and the remaining balance of £878k was distributed back to pool members in accordance with governance arrangements.

David Stanley explained that for 2016/17 it was estimated that an additional £2.5m would be retained in Gloucestershire as a result of pooling, and that, based on current governance arrangements, the Strategic Economic Development Fund would receive around £250k. Members noted that an update on the 2016/17 forecast would be provided at the Committee meeting in November 2016.

Members discussed the estimated contribution to the Strategic Economic Development Fund for 2016/17. It was agreed that officers would develop recommendations as to what the Strategic Economic Development Fund contributions could be spent on. These recommendations would be reported back to the Committee at a future meeting.

Members were informed of the Government's intention to introduce 100% Business Rates Retention to local government, and of the two Government consultations that would be closing at the end of September 2016.

It was highlighted that it was important for members to be aware of the proposed changes to Business Rates Retention, as the changes would significantly impact the way local government was funded.

Members recognised that local businesses would need to be consulted with should 100% Business Rates Retention be introduced. It was suggested that ways to engage with local businesses regarding the intended reformed business rate retention system be considered.

The Committee noted the report.

57. GLOUCESTERSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN (GIIP)

Mike Dawson, Chief Executive, Tewkesbury Borough Council, provided the Committee with an update on progress with the development of the Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Plan (GIIP).

Members noted that a review of the recently approved Local Transport Plan to update the GIIP project list was underway. Members also noted that the LEP had submitted a bid to the Department for Transport for funding for the M5 Junction 10 scheme, and that successful bids would be announced around the time of the Autumn Statement. A bid for £1.47m for revenue for local sustainable transport fund measures was also being developed for submission in September 2016.

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

Jonathan Medlin, S106 Negotiator, Gloucestershire County Council, provided members with a demonstration of the infrastructure analysis and mapping tool.

The Committee agreed that it would be useful for the public to have access to the mapping tool as a way to share information on projects, and that the tool should therefore be developed to enable public access. It was also suggested that the functionality of the tool be tested by Committee members.

Resolved

- 1. To note the proposed review of the recently approved Local Transport Plan to update the GIIP project list;**
- 2. To note the projects submitted from the GIIP for Local Growth Fund funding through the LEP;**
- 3. To note the GIS mapping exercise to visualise interdependencies between strategic sites and infrastructure requirements;**
- 4. To note the priority projects in Annex 2 across Gloucestershire.**

58. VISION 2050 AND 'FUTURE AMBITIONS' WORK

Nigel Riglar, Commissioning Director: Communities and Infrastructure, Gloucestershire County Council, presented the Committee with a report drawing together Vision 2050 and work on future economic ambitions.

It was highlighted to members that the 'think piece' produced by David Marlow of Third Life Economics was focused on stimulating discussion on long term ambitions for economic growth, taking an 'inconvenient truths' approach.

A workshop would be taking place on 30th September 2016 to allow Committee members and partnership organisations to discuss the ambitions raised in the 'think piece'. The discussion could form the basis of a GEGJC submission into the Vision 2050 project, which was being undertaken by Leadership Gloucestershire.

Resolved

- 1. To note the report;**
- 2. Member Councils to make arrangements to comment on the Think Piece contained in Appendix 1 during September; and,**
- 3. Committee members either to attend the September 30 workshop or to make sure they are appropriately represented.**

59. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The Committee noted the meeting dates for the remainder of 2016 and for 2017.

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CHAIRPERSON

Meeting concluded at 12.00 pm

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