

GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee held on Wednesday 20 November 2019 at Shire Hall, Gloucester.

Present at the meeting:

Committee Members	Cllr Patrick Molyneux	Cllr Bernie O'Neill
	Cllr Steve Jordan	Cllr Rob Bird
	Cllr Paul James	Dale
	Cllr Doina Cornell	Dev Chakraborty
	Cllr Steve Jordan	Cllr Tony Dale
		Cllr Bernie O'Neill
		Dev Chakraborty (GFirst)
Officers/ Presenters	Steve Mawson (GCC)	Pete Williams (FODDC)
	Gillian Parkinson (GCC)	Angela Presdee (GCC)
	Mike Dawson (TBC)	Claire Edwards (GCC)
	Colin Chick (GCC)	Tim Atkins (CBC)
	Jon McGinty (Glous City)	Matt Smith (Fastershire Broad)
	Kathy O'Leary (SDC)	Sarah Scott (GCC)
		Matt Whitney (LNP)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Joe Harris (Cotswold District Council) and from Cllr Tim Gwilliam (Forest of Dean District Council).

Cllr Harris was represented at the meeting by Cllr Tony Dale and Cllr Tim Gwilliam by Cllr Bernie O'Neill.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2019 were confirmed and signed as a correct record of that meeting.

Draft Local Transport Plan Stakeholder Consultation Events

A member asked if the request to hold local authority briefings on the Local Transport Plan (LTP) had been actioned? It was announced that district councillors would be notified of the dates after the meeting. Following the announcement, the details below were confirmed. District councillors will be notified of the events via their local democratic service teams.

LTP Consultation Launch – 16 January 2020 (4pm) Shire Hall, Gloucester
Cheltenham Borough Council - 28 January 2020
Cotswold District Council (South) - 6 February 2020
Gloucester City Council - 10 February 2020
Stroud District Council - 13 February 2020
Tewkesbury Borough Council - 25 February 2020

Cotswold District Council (North) - 5 March 2020
FODDC District Council - 16 March 2020

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Steve Jordan declared a pecuniary interest in item 8 b) 4 (request for funding from Cheltenham Borough Council in respect of the Cyber Central Project).

4. DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Matt Smith, Operational Manager for the Fastershire Broadband Project, gave a detailed update on the progress of the inter-authority agreement between Gloucestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council for the deployment of superfast broadband across the two counties. The agreement was made in 2011.

Please refer to the attached document to view the power-point presentation for this item.

Members noted the success of the project, including receiving an award for having the greatest public sector impact at a recent conference. Through its work with BT and Gigaclear, plus a host of other smaller providers, it was confirmed that the Fastershire project had been successful in extending superfast broadband access to 94.6% of premises in Gloucestershire. Moreover, Fastershire had been acknowledged as being at the forefront of the new full fibre revolution, with each rural district in the county placed within the top 20 rural areas with such access. Noting the data making comparisons

It was confirmed extensive work would be ongoing, moving east to west across the county, and building on the success of the Cotswold District being accredited as an area with the fastest average download speed of anywhere in the UK. Detailed information was provided on the work due to be completed in 2020/21.

Noting concerns about those areas of the county where download speeds were not as fast as would have been hoped, members were assured that the desired level of access was anticipated to spread across the whole of the county over the course of the next two years. It was confirmed that plans were already in place to address issues affecting the Forest of the Dean. It was confirmed that, over the course of the next few months, a 'glut' of properties across Gloucestershire were about to 'go live' with Superfast Broadband.

Drawing attention to the Fastershire Broadband Strategy 2019-22 and the next stages of deployment, officers advised members that 2019-22 was anticipated to be an important period for the project. During this time, it was likely the two counties would be recognised as the most digitally connected areas in the UK. It was hoped this achievement would promote more economic growth and unlock the potential for attracting new investment to the County.

The Fastershire Broadband Strategy 2019-22 makes reference to a new vision statement, detailing the ambition to 'enable all residents and businesses in

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Gloucestershire and Herefordshire to access the connectivity they need and to encourage people to use faster broadband to work online; boost business growth and achieve potential'. Stage 5 of the new strategy to promote opportunities via Business Support Grants and following introduction of a new Community Scheme, offering direct grants to local communities to invest in broadband solutions.

The Fastershire Broadband Strategy includes the following objectives: -

Coverage – to continue to increase superfast broadband coverage across two counties through a mixture of contracts and grants;

Inclusion – to support residents and businesses to make the most of the broadband network through skills training, awareness raising and enabling community led schemes;

Innovation – to continuously drive innovation in addressing the ambitions of broadband coverage in working with partners, funders, suppliers and the community;

Monitoring – to ensure the maximum results from the work of suppliers by monitoring the contracts and driving value for money in deployments;

Partnerships – to productively work with suppliers, parish and town councils on effective communications, with local authority departments to co-ordinate the approach to deployment, and local planning authorities to ensure new premises have broadband connectivity.

It was explained that, endorsement of the new strategy would enable officers to influence commercial investment to the county and offer additional procurement opportunities to deliver superfast broadband to those areas yet to be enabled.

In noting the update, the committee suggested that the challenges of delivering wider digital connectivity might be a useful topic for the Senior Officer Group to consider as a future piece of work. **Action by – Senior Officer Group.**

Noting the forthcoming consultation by Gloucestershire County Council on the production of a 'Local Developer Guide', it was suggested that another piece of work be considered, relating to the 'role of the Joint Committee when looking at local planning regulations'.

Earlier in the meeting, a member had requested information on the ranking of areas, (primarily rural areas), who continued to experience poor levels of broadband delivery. It was agreed pie charts would be provided to relay this information, and that comparisons be made to compare broadband delivery in areas similar to Gloucestershire. **Action by – Fastershire Broadband.**

Members were reminded that at the Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee meeting being held at 1.30pm that day, the committee would receive a presentation from

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Mobile UK, (the trade body for mobile network operators), on the current UK mobile market and future connectivity plans.

The committee thanked Matt Smith for his presentation and noted the advice that members visit the Fastershire webpage at <https://www.fastershire.com/> to receive more information on broadband delivery in Gloucestershire.

5. PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT

The committee received a presentation of a report, (Healthonomics - Tackling Health Inequalities through Inclusive Growth), from Sarah Scott, Director of Public Health at Gloucestershire County Council.

Key actions from the report included:

- a) The Joint Committee were asked to endorse the recommendations included in the report to 'address the challenges and opportunities of driving inclusive growth in order to tackle health inequalities and increase productivity'. Feedback was requested on the following ambitions, (made to partners across the system to deliver as a joint venture). **Action by – Committee Members**
 - 1) The Health and Wellbeing Board to set out its position on inclusive economic growth and its benefits to health (and vice versa) and seek to influence and align its strategy and actions wherever possible with those of economic development partners, particularly GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
 - 2) GFirst LEP, in the development of the Local Industrial Strategy and other key strategies and plans, consider the recommendations of this report and set out its plans to ensure that everyone in Gloucestershire can contribute to and benefit from local growth. Representation by GFirst LEP on the Health and Wellbeing Board would support this.
 - 3) GFirst LEP and the Employment and Skills Board should consider their role in tackling social mobility and promoting inclusive growth. Key partner organisations should cooperate to undertake a 'deep dive' of Gloucestershire's social mobility indicators, to better understand areas for focus and trends of concern and agree a joint approach to increasing social mobility. In the meantime, partners should continue to focus efforts around school readiness to maintain the early improvements being seen.
 - 4) Public Health and Local Planning Authorities should continue to work together with other partners in housing, transport and other infrastructure specialists to maximise opportunities to build healthy communities with a thriving and inclusive economy. This should make sure that there is a strong understanding of inequalities amongst planners and other partners, and that actions taken to create healthy places benefit people from all socio-economic backgrounds.

- 5) Businesses and public sector partners should consider how 'good work' in Gloucestershire could be measured and encouraged amongst local employers. Plans to improve the flexibility of the workplace should seek to make sure that this is available to all, wherever possible.
 - 6) Local anchor institutions should consider how they can lead by example in delivering inclusive growth through their employment and spending power. There may be an opportunity for the One Gloucestershire Integrated Care System (ICS) to play a key role in this at a local level.
- b) The Joint Committee noted the progress of the Cheltenham Borough Council's 'no child left behind' piece of work and agreed to make reference to the work as a measurement of how the county, (as a joint exercise), ensured disadvantaged children were being cared for.
 - c) The Director for Public Health welcomed the suggestion that the Employment and Skills Board consider how to ensure a commitment from organisations involved in major developments to provide/invest in delivering a employment and skill plan for the development. **Action by - Employment and Skills Board**
 - d) Responding to concerns about the investment needed from local authorities to address social issues within their areas, the committee reflected on the work being undertaken by the Health and Wellbeing Board in dealing with this problem. To provide a link between the Joint Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board, it was suggested the committee invite the Director of Public Health to join the Senior Officer Group. **Action by – Mike Dawson (Chair of Senior Officer Group)**
 - a) Activities undertaken by Stroud District Council, (reflecting high ranking status in social mobility performance), to be shared with the other Districts. **Action by – Sarah Scott, Director of Public Health**
 - e) The use of Health Impact Assessments to be encouraged. **Action by – All**
 - f) The committee requested that an agenda item be added to the committee work plan to consider information on the changing role of the work place and how to support local businesses in providing pastoral care. **Action by – Mike Dawson (Chair of Senior Officer Group).**

The committee thanked the Director of Public Health and her colleagues for her report. Particular thanks was made for the work involved in developing the Local Strategy.

6. LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP (LNP) INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY PLEDGE

The committee received a detailed presentation from Matt Whitney, Partnership Manager for the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership, (LNP) on proposals

relating to the creation of a Natural Recovery Network Map and the background to an expression of interest/request for funding from the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF).

The request for funding was considered at item 8 b) 2 of the agenda.

7. CYBER CENTRAL UPDATE

The committee received a presentation from Tim Atkins, (Manager Director for Place and Growth at Cheltenham Borough Council), on proposals to support the development and promotion of Gloucestershire as the UK home of cyber tech industry and the delivery of significant numbers of high value jobs, increasing productivity and driving business rates growth.

The request for funding was considered at item 8 b) 4 of the agenda.

8. BUSINESS RATE POOL FUNDING

Andrew Cummings, Section 151 Officer at Stroud District Council, gave an update on the Gloucestershire Business Rate Pilot Pool and the Strategic Economic Development Fund.

The following requests for funding were made at the meeting: -

- 1) **Rail Investment Strategy**, (ratification of an in-principle decision made on 4 September 2019) (Appendix 1);

The committee considered the request for funding made at the Economic Growth Joint Committee meeting held on 4 September 2019 for the commissioning of a Rail Investment Strategy (RIS) for Gloucestershire. The study will underpin GCC's priorities for rail investment in the County and inform the ongoing review of the Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP). It will also form a key part of the emerging Local Industrial Strategy (LIS).

Subject to agreement from a meeting of the Gloucestershire Chief Executives Group on 10 June 2019, and the in principle agreement of this committee on 4 September 2019, the committee: -

RESOLVED to provide the additional £70,000 required in order to complete the proposed two phased approach for the Rail Study Commission.

- 2) **Request for funding from the Local Nature Partnership (LNP)** in respect of Natural Recovery Mapping (Appendix 2);

Seeking clarification on the statutory obligations of government legislation, (25 Year Environment Plan, Industrial Strategy and National Planning Policy Framework), and the amount of government funding anticipated for the proposals, (including anticipated maintenance costs), the committee deferred

this item for further consideration. **The decision to be considered at a reconvened meeting to be arranged in February 2020.**

3) Request for funding from the Central Gloucestershire City Region Board (Appendix 3)

The committee noted an expression of interest for funding from the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF) to fund the commissioning of work proposed by the newly established Central Gloucestershire City Region Board.

If successful, the request for funding to be used to assist in providing additional capacity and resources from which to support the strategic aims of the Board and the ambitions of Vision 2050. A key function of the Board would be to develop a vision for the future of Gloucestershire to 2050 and beyond. The vision to be incorporated into a high level masterplan, (a key document setting out the growth aims and priorities of the county), and to provide guidance on the development of future spatial and strategic plans.

An expression of interest was made in respect of £500,000 funding. Governance arrangements from which to manage the funds would be developed, including the ability to recruit the necessary staff support that might be required. Administration costs, fund holding and staff provision to be allocated to one or more partner bodies and funded jointly.

The outcomes of the investment, including key milestones of delivery, to be reported to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee and to Leadership Gloucestershire, (as the sponsoring and advisory body for the Programme Boards). To date, no new funding for this work had been received. Emphasis was placed on the understanding that the investment was not only to benefit the Cheltenham area, but the whole of Gloucestershire.

If the request for funding was unsuccessful, the newly established Board would not be in a position to commence work on the development of the annual work programme, nor focus resources on producing a masterplan for the setting out of ambitions for the future. Concerns were raised about not being able to realise the growth aims of the county, including making the necessary investment in the infrastructure and long term aspirations of Gloucestershire.

The request for funding was deferred pending further consideration and will be considered at a reconvened committee meeting to be arranged in February 2020.

4) Request for funding from Cheltenham Borough Council in respect of the Cyber Central Project (Appendix 4)

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The request for funding to support the development and promotion of Gloucestershire as the UK home of cyber tech industry and delivery of significant numbers of high value jobs, increasing productivity and driving business rates growth was agreed.

Having considered the request at the meeting, the committee: -

RESOLVED (subject to agreement by the Senior Officer Group) to award £200k funding, based on the following allocations;

Cost of project: £280K

Secondment of Senior Cyber Innovation manager from GCHQ to CBC for 1 year £90K

Commercial advisor / Industry specialist (Bristol Engine Shed MD) £30K

Consultancy / Economic case / prospectus £100K

Project & on costs £20K

Promotion & marketing £30K

Contingency £10K

Direct admin / project & management support costs not included – provided in-kind by CBC

Other contributions £80K

CBC / TBC contribution for market / investment development for Cyber

Central Garden Community **£50K**

GCHQ contribution of 1/3 of value of post **£30K**

In kind contributions (estimated value) £95K

GCHQ in-kind contribution of specialist consultancy support around cyber innovation programme £50K

CBC in-kind contribution - Project support officer – (2 day per week estimated value week £15K)

CBC & LEP in-kind contribution - Management support – (2 days per week (mix of Cyber Central SRO, Programme Manager and other team members)) estimated value £30K

Overall bid: £200K

5) LEP Core Funding

The committee to note: Information relating to a decision made at the Joint Committee meeting on 27 November 2017 in relation to LEP Core Funding.

In November 2017, the Joint Committee resolved that: -

- i.* £250k of reserves held in the Strategic Economic Fund would be used for the purposes of match funding the Government's core funding contribution to the GFirst LEP in 2018/19
- ii.* The first £250k of SEDF revenues arising during 2017/18 would be used to match fund the Government's core funding in 2019/20;

- iii.* The 7 District Councils would enter into a simple 'memorandum of understanding' with GFirst LEP for the period 2018-2020;
- iv.* A review of the on-going need for Core Funding and the correct mechanism for achieving this would be completed by December 2019; and,

Historically, the Government has provided LEP's with an element of core funding, match funded by the localities. The maximum amount of funding granted by the Government is £250k.

Over the 4 year period to 2017, the localities contributed the full £250k contribution match funding, allowing GFirst LEP to benefit from the full £500k allocation per annum. Funding is confirmed on an annual basis by the Government.

Discussions with the LEP at that time (2017) had resulted in a consensus by senior officers representing the 7 local authorities and GFirst LEP on how locality match funding would be processed in the future.

From these discussions, the following issues were raised:

- i.* There was a need for the locality to continue to match the Government core funding and for the funding partners to be diversified;
- ii.* The Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF) of the Business Rate Pool provided an effective route for achieving this;
- iii.* SEDF reserves to be released to the Accountable Body by GCC, subject to a positive resolution by the Joint Committee.
- iv.* The Accountable Body to enter into a contract with the LEP for the release of funds;
- v.* To mirror Government processes, locality funding to be agreed by the Joint Committee on annual basis;
- vi.* The exact business rate mechanism for match funding from April 2019 may change as work developed around the Business Rate retention pilot;
- vii.* It was suggested that there should be a review of the need for on-going Core Funding during 2019 to coincide with the end of the Growth Deal period in 2021 and to identify the best financial mechanism for enabling the Councils to provide a financial contribution;
- viii.* Should the Strategic Economic Fund not have sufficient reserves to fund the 2019/20 (Year 2) commitment, (unlikely based on the financial monitoring calculations at that time), the 7 Councils would need to underwrite any shortfall;

At the committee meeting on 20 November 2019, the committee acknowledged an omission to consider the award of reserves held in the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF) for the purposes of match funding the Government's core funding contribution to the GFirst LEP for 2021/22.

To avoid the detrimental financial impact of not making the decision, including the implications of not awarding match funding to the LEP, the Committee agreed an 'in principle' decision to award £250,000 core (match) funding to the LEP for the period 2020/21. **The decision to be ratified at the reconvened meeting to be arranged in February 2020.**

9. GFIRST LEP UPDATE

Due to insufficient time at the meeting, it was agreed to defer this item for consideration at a reconvened meeting to be arranged in February 2020.

After the meeting, an email was circulated to members inviting the committee to consider the report circulated with the agenda, (published at item 9 of the agenda for the meeting on 20 November 2019), and submit any questions to jo.moore@gloucestershire.gov.uk. Written responses to the questions would be provided.

The committee to note the update and ask any questions at the reconvened meeting on 4 February 2020.

10. GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Cllr Kevin Cromwell, Chairman of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee, gave a brief update on the work plan of the committee.

Cllr Cromwell confirmed that, on 4 September 2019, the Scrutiny Committee had participated at a meeting at the Gloucester Growth Hub, where members received information on the work of the GFirst LEP and an update on the Local Industrial Strategy. On 18 September 2019, a further (joint) committee meeting was held in association with the members of the GCC Environment Scrutiny Committee to consider the Draft Local Transport Plan.

An localised meeting was held at the Stroud District Council Offices on 30 October 2019, with presentations on growth issues affecting Stroud District, Carbon Neutral 2030 targets and spatial planning proposals.

At the scrutiny committee meeting to be held later that day, the committee would receive an update from Mobile UK on mobile connectivity and an update on the newly created Vision 2050 Programme Boards.

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11. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The dates of the meetings arranged in 2020 were noted:

18 March 2020

3 June 2020

16 September 2020

18 November 2020

A review of the process for considering the work of the district/borough authorities at future committee meetings and an update of the committee work plan to be considered at the reconvened Economic Growth Joint Committee meeting to be arranged in February 2020.

CHAIRPERSON

Meeting concluded at 13..25pm