

GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee held on Wednesday 18 November 2020 commencing at 10.00 am at the Virtual Meeting - Web ex meeting.

PRESENT MEMBERSHIP:

Cllr Patrick Molyneux (Chair)	Cllr Doina Cornell
Cllr Steve Jordan (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Tony Dale
Cllr Rob Bird	Cllr Richard Leppington
Cllr Richard Cook	Dev Chakraborty

Substitutes:

Apologies:

Officers:	Steve Mawson (GCC)	Phillippa Lowe (CDC/ FODDC)
	Gillian Parkinson (GCC)	Peter Williams (FODDC)
	Mike Dawson (TBC)	Jon McGinty (GCity)
	Colin Chick (GCC)	Ian Edwards (GCity)
	Laura Powick (GCC)	Lisa McCance (Shared Intelligence)
	Angela Presdee (GCC)	Andrew Cummings (SDC)
	Adam Barnes (GCC)	Kathy O'Leary (SDC)
	Pete Carr (GFirst LEP)	Stewart Deering (Reef Group)
	Gareth Edmundson (CBC)	Esther Croft (Reef Group)
	Cllr Kevin Cromwell (GCC)	Sam Potter (Reef Group)
	Cllr Rowena Hay (CBC)	

246. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies at the meeting.

247. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

Mike Dawson, Chair of the GEGJC Senior Officer Group (SOG), informed the Committee that since the last meeting, the SOG had received a presentation from officers on the Golden Valley Development, and SOG officers had discussed with their own district authorities how they could work with the development. Tim Atkins, Director for Place and Growth, Cheltenham Borough Council, was coordinating

these responses, and would bring a paper back to the next GEGJC meeting in January 2021.

248. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Steve Jordan declared a personal interest in item 10 of the agenda (Business Rates Pool, including SEDF Funding Requests – LEP Core Locality Match Funding) as a member of the LEP Board, and therefore would not participate in the vote on the decision being put before the Committee.

249. GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Cllr Kevin Cromwell, Chair of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee (GEGSC), provided an update on the work of the GEGSC.

It was noted that the summary and outcome report of the local meetings held at each district council by the GEGSC between 2017 and early 2020 had been shared with the GEGJC. One of the outcomes was to incorporate a standing item at each GEGSC meeting to allow for district feedback on economic growth.

It was also noted that GEGSC members had received the Golden Valley Development presentation at their last meeting, which they had been impressed by, and wished to be kept informed of developments.

At its meeting this afternoon, the GEGSC would be receiving a presentation on modern methods of housing construction from Gloucestershire Homes and Communities Partnership.

250. GLOUCESTERSHIRE SKILLS AGENDA UPDATE

Pete Carr, Director of Employment and Skills, GFirst LEP, provided the Committee with a presentation on proposals for Gloucestershire's local skills response, and on the skills portal.

The difficulties facing individuals as a result of the pandemic, such as those on furlough, those who had been made redundant, or those working in sectors, such as hospitality, which had been significantly affected by Covid-19 restrictions, were highlighted. It was recognised that the skills agenda was integrated with County and district economic recovery plans.

It was explained that the skills portal brings together in one place careers and skills advice, and support at both a national and local level. It was understood that the portal would be a live document. The portal went live last week, and members were invited to share their feedback.

It was also noted that the Careers Hub had been launched this morning, which would provide support to schools and colleges, helping them to connect with local businesses, and take part in virtual work experience.

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

The proposals for Gloucestershire's local skills response were explained to the Committee. Key priorities have been considered in consultation with partners, including training providers and the DWP, and the work stream would be driven and monitored by the Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel, reporting to the GFirst LEP Board and this Committee.

Four priorities, which included information and signposting; apprenticeships; unemployment/redundancy support; and digital and cyber skills, had been developed and details were provided as to how these priorities could be delivered. The resources currently available for these proposals, as well as the resources that are currently missing, or require further investigation, were highlighted in the presentation.

It was understood that Pete Carr was working alongside economic and skills leads in the districts on the agenda. It was also noted that Growth Hub partners would be meeting in December to talk to district leads about redundancy support. Members were asked to feed through any opportunities to support local people through their skills leads.

The importance of this agenda and collaboration on skills, particularly in light of the current pandemic, was acknowledged by the Committee.

There was an offer to share work by Cotswold District Council on the development of skills relating to the visitor economy, such as on work to enable businesses to become more digitally enabled.

Following a query, it was explained that conversations about setting up clearing offers for apprenticeships through UCAS needed to be re-entered. It was also noted that Worcestershire had an apprenticeship hub linked to their growth hub, which would be explored locally.

A comment was made regarding the support offered by trade unions to individuals who had been made redundant, even if they were not union members.

It was requested that an update be provided on the Skills Advisory Board and the development of the skills strategy. It was agreed that this would be added to the work plan for the Committee meeting in March 2021. An update on the skills portal would also be provided at that meeting.

251. KINGS QUARTER REGENERATION UPDATE

Cllr Richard Cook, Gloucester City Council, introduced Ian Edwards, Head of Place, Gloucester City Council, and Stewart Deering, Esther Croft, and Sam Potter from the Reef Group, who would be providing the Committee with a presentation on the Kings Quarter Regeneration in Gloucester.

The development, which had been retitled The Forum, was to be located at the former site of the Bruton Way car park and tax offices, next to the new bus station,

in Gloucester city centre. It was understood that the pandemic had not impacted on the scheme development or demolition at the site.

An overview of the strategic context for the development was provided, which included strong alignment with the Local Industrial Strategy, strong alignment with Gloucester City Council's Digital Strategy, and that the project would help Gloucestershire lead the way for the Western Gateway by adding to key digital and cyber business opportunities. The development would lead to the creation of 1175 new jobs in the higher value added digital sector, and working alongside the Golden Valley Project and other County initiatives would increase the digital technology sector 5 year growth projections in Gloucestershire from 34 to 50 percent.

Members were talked through the designs for The Forum, and were informed that plans included residential housing; office space; a car park; the first four star hotel in Gloucester; a gym; and leisure facilities, such as restaurants. There would be a link bridge between buildings; a digital screen on the front of one of the buildings; and the area would be pedestrianised. Buildings would be sustainable, net carbon zero, and would be naturally ventilated. The Forum would also feature the largest green wall in the South West.

The development also featured The Forge, which would be a high tech and flexible working space, including education spaces and computing facilities, and would be designed with both businesses and local community groups in mind. The Forge would be seen as complimentary to the Golden Valley Cyber Development, in helping to further Gloucestershire as a leader in the cyber and digital sector.

Following a query, it was explained that strategies to offset the carbon from construction of the development would be put in place, such as working with local contractors and using renewable sources of energy.

A question was raised as to the working relationship with the developers and archaeologists, given the Roman archaeology at the site. It was understood that working relationships were positive with the city archaeologist, excavations had been carried out over the last 6 months, and that an innovative strategy had been developed to preserve the archaeological discovery of White Friars.

The Committee thanked officers for their presentation, recognising the development as an exciting project and opportunity for Gloucestershire.

252. STRATEGIC PLANNING IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Mike Dawson provided the Committee with an update on the status of Strategic Planning within Gloucestershire.

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The report set out the individual growth needs for each local plan area, as well as key delivery projects across the County. The significant growth within Gloucestershire was recognised, which included notable developments such as The Forum and the Golden Valley development.

The Committee was informed that the Planning for the Future White Paper would be revisited by the Government following consultation.

It was noted that the Gloucestershire Strategic Planning Statement of Common Ground was still being worked on and would be brought to the GEGJC meeting in January for the Committee to consider.

253. GLOUCESTERSHIRE COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLANNING UPDATE

Lisa McCance, Shared Intelligence, provided an update on the GEGJC Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan.

The GEGJC SOG had continued to progress the agenda for collaboration across Covid-19 economic recovery planning, focussing on skills, the visitor economy and lobbying.

One member highlighted that Stroud Canal had recently been awarded funding from National Lottery Heritage money, and suggested that key visitor attractions within Gloucestershire could be mapped out as part of activities to promote the visitor economy. It was agreed that the suggestion would be raised with the Visit Gloucestershire Partnership.

It was commented that transport facilities would factor in the development of the visitor economy. It was understood that the development of new cycle routes between districts would help not only with sustainability but also the visitor economy.

Colin Chick, Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure, provided an update on GCC's Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan.

It was noted that the recovery plan had been produced in line with frameworks that already exist within the County, including Vision 2050, and the draft Local Industrial Strategy. The recovery and action plan had been developed in conjunction with district councils and the GFirst LEP. The plan was focused around three themes for recovery which were: people, places and connectivity; skills and employment; and infrastructure, economy and growth.

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The action plan would be a live document, and would be monitored by the GCC Transition Group to ensure actions were being delivered.

There was recognition of the economic challenges faced by Gloucestershire as a result of the pandemic, and therefore the need for the action plan to be continually updated and for there to be collaboration amongst partners to address the challenges.

A member questioned the balancing of actions to address the short term impacts of the pandemic with the long term impacts of issues, such as climate change. In response it was explained that a number of initiatives were being considered to address the longer term issues, such as the development of the cycle network.

254. GFIRST LEP UPDATE

Dev Chakraborty, Deputy Chief Executive of GFirst LEP, presented an update from GFirst LEP.

In particular, the 'Think Gloucestershire' campaign, which had been developed to encourage individuals and businesses in the County to 'Think Gloucestershire', was highlighted.

Work to promote Gloucestershire as a leisure destination had also been underway, and partners had agreed to work together to produce a 3-Year Tourism Strategy for Gloucestershire to be funded by GCC and co-ordinated by the Visit Gloucestershire Partnership.

There was a request for members to promote a survey amongst local businesses, which asked them about working patterns prior to Covid-19, during the pandemic, and their thoughts on what their working arrangements might be like post Covid-19. The results of the survey could be shared with the Committee when produced.

255. BUSINESS RATE POOL, INCLUDING SEDF FUNDING REQUESTS (LEP CORE LOCALITY MATCH FUNDING)

Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources, Stroud District Council, provided the Committee with an update on the Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool.

It was noted that the forecasted position for the pool for this year was a gain of £3.8 million. Additionally, S151 Officers had been considering the pool options for next year to see whether it would be viable. The group would take another look at the

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options in mid December when the settlement for the County comes in to see if the pool was worth continuing.

The Committee was asked to agree an allocation of £500k from the Strategic Economic Development Fund for Core Match Funding for GFirst LEP.

On being put to a vote, it was

RESOLVED to

Agree an allocation of £500k from the SEDF for core funding for the LEP for the period April 2021 to March 2023.

256. FORWARD (WORK) PLAN

It was requested that an update on the skills strategy be provided at the March 2021 meeting.

257. FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that an additional Committee meeting had been established for 20 January 2021 at 10am.

The Committee noted the meeting dates for 2021.

CHAIRPERSON

Meeting concluded at 11.55 am