



REPORT TITLE: Gloucestershire's Economic Strategy (2024 to 2034) - Driven by innovation, built on heritage.

| | |
|---|--|
| Meeting | Gloucestershire City Region Board – Friday 7 June 2024 |
| Presenting Officer | David Owen – Director for Economy & Environment – GCC |
| Key Decision | No |
| Purpose of Report | To inform members of the of Gloucestershire City Region Board of the new Gloucestershire's Economic Strategy (2024 to 2034) - Driven by innovation, built on heritage and seek endorsement for its implementation. |
| Recommendations/ Action sought | <p>That the Gloucestershire City Region Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) endorses the Gloucestershire's Economic Strategy (2024 to 2034) - <i>Driven by innovation, built on heritage</i>;(b) provides oversight for the delivery of the strategy and uses the strategic priorities outlined in the strategy to inform the priorities of the board and future agenda items;(c) supports the delivery of actions outlined the Economic Strategy's Action Plan; and(d) leads the work programme to support progressing the actions related to the Sustainable Growth strategic priority outlined in Appendix A. |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Background Documents | Economic Strategy Summary: Gloucestershire's Economic Strategy 2024–2034 Summary Economic Strategy: Gloucestershire's Economic Strategy 2024-2034 Economic Strategy Action Plan: gloucestershires-economic-strategy-2024-2034-action-plan.pdf Economic Strategy Evidence Base: gloucestershire-economic-evidence-base-combined-v13.pdf GCC Press release on new strategy: Blueprint for economic growth outlined in new strategy Gloucestershire County Council |
| Appendices | Appendix A - Gloucestershire Economic Strategy (2024-2034) Action Plan - Strategic Priority - Sustainable Growth |
| Contact Information | Name: David Owen – Director for Economy & Environment Tel. no: 01452 328483 Email: david.owen@gloucestershire.gov.uk |

1. Background

- 1.1. On the 15 May 2024 Gloucestershire County Council adopted its new Gloucestershire's Economic Strategy (2024 to 2034) - Driven by innovation, built on heritage.
- 1.2. The Strategy introduces and outlines a journey for the county to achieve a new long-term vision:

By 2050, Gloucestershire will be a hub for the UK's intelligence, security, and cyber agencies. We will be a centre for world-leading, sustainable businesses in the cutting-edge industries of digital communications, advanced manufacturing, agri-tech, and green and nuclear energy, while preserving our rich cultural and natural heritage.

Gloucestershire will build on its strength as a prominent location in western England with ease of access to regional hubs in, and beyond, the Western Gateway. We will sustain our unique mix of nationally important rural landscapes and vibrant urban centres by delivering a stronger, more sustainable economy that benefits the whole county.

- 1.3. The strategy has been informed through extensive engagement with stakeholders, and a comprehensive updated body of local evidence.
- 1.4. In recognition of the partnership approach required to deliver some of the priorities outlined in the Economic Strategy, it is proposed that oversight for the delivery of the strategy sits with the Gloucestershire City Region Board (GCRB).
- 1.5. The County Council will be responsible for coordinating the activity required and ensuring actions are delivered. This will include the production of an Annual

Implementation Report which summaries the progress made in delivering the actions from the preceding year, any changes required in terms of the actions and an overview of the economic performance using the metrics identified in the strategy. In addition to the formal annual reporting regular updates will be presented to the GCRB.

- 1.6. The arrangements for scrutiny of the Economic Strategy are being developed in consultation with GCC's Cabinet, the GCRB and Leadership Gloucestershire. These will be subject to approval by Full Council on the recommendation of the Constitution Committee.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1. Gloucestershire's new Economic Strategy outlines the county's existing strengths, opportunities, and challenges. It has been shaped by four strategic priorities and two cross cutting themes. The strategy sets out a range of delivery activities and outcomes and provides a clear and single direction of travel to deliver long-term sustainable economic growth.
- 2.2. The strategic priorities outlined in the document, build upon the foundations established through the GFirst LEP's Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), which include:
- 2.3. **Sustainable Growth** - Sustainable growth in the context of this strategic priority refers to the viability of future development to positively contribute towards Gloucestershire's future growth needs and to help support a strong, responsive, and competitive economy. The strategy identifies the need to do this through the development of a county-wide Spatial Development Strategy and an associated infrastructure plan.
- 2.4. **Inward Investment** - Inward investment, or the investment from external companies or individuals into a particular area, is a key component for prosperity and growth in an open economy. Gloucestershire has been successful in attracting this type of investment, with businesses from outside the county investing millions of pounds in world-class facilities, innovative businesses, and local skills development. The offer has been promoted using Gloucestershire's diverse economic base with a range of key sectors, as well as important and globally recognised clusters such as cyber and specialised high value sectors such as aerospace.
- 2.5. **Employment and Skills** - A strong local workforce is an essential element in the delivery of long-term economic growth. To enable this, it is important for residents to have access to the skills and development opportunities that will allow them to reach their potential. Providing this will contribute towards the county's ambition to improve productivity levels and ensure residents have fulfilling careers through a variety of job opportunities.
- 2.6. **Business Innovation and Support** - Gloucestershire possesses a well-established and robust business support ecosystem, from GFirst LEP's Growth Hub and business groups, to the business membership organisations such as

the Federation of Small Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, Circle to Success, Business West and the county library network. The support offer helps businesses to navigate the complexities of starting, maintaining, and scaling-up their business and to overcome various barriers to growth.

2.7. The strategic priorities are supported by two cross-cutting themes:

2.8. **Greener Gloucestershire** - A central focus of the strategy is for the county to be carbon neutral (also known as carbon net-zero) by 2045 at the latest, although it should be noted that many of Gloucestershire's districts have pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030.

2.9. **Inclusive Gloucestershire** - It is important that all of Gloucestershire's residents can access, benefit from, and positively contribute to the economy. This includes economically inactive residents and those experiencing health inequalities.

3. Sustainable Growth strategic priority

3.1. The Economic Strategy outlines the need for a county-wide Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) to help coordinate and support long-term development across the county. An SDS would provide greater certainty and clarity over future development for residents, developers and businesses, and shape future local development plans.

3.2. In 2022/23, each of the seven local authorities and GFirst LEP formally agreed the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground (GSoCG) as a first step to improve joint working on shared policy objectives with a view to resolving infrastructure delivery issues and the production of a countywide spatial strategy.

3.3. The GCRB is identified within the Economic Strategy as being best placed to provide strategic overview for the development of an SDS.

3.4. It is important to stress that, should a SDS be produced, it would consider growth on a long-term basis with a time horizon greater than 2051. It would not impact the production of Local Plans currently being developed by the Local Planning Authorities. The SDS would be a non-statutory planning document which would be used to inform future planning decisions made when producing future iterations of Local Plans.

3.5. The SDS would support the strategic development of planning policies outlined in the GSoCG including climate change, housing, the economy and employment, the Green Belt, transport provision, digital networks, natural environment and green infrastructure, health and social infrastructure, and minerals and waste.

3.6. Within the Economic Strategy Action Plan there are several actions where the City Region Board is identified as being the lead local body responsible for its delivery. Appendix A outlines these actions.

3.7. If the GCRB agrees to support the leading the delivery of the actions outlined in Appendix A, it is proposed that the Sustainable Growth strategic priority becomes the focus of the next GCRB meeting and officers prepare papers to outline how these actions could be taken forward.

Appendix A - Gloucestershire Economic Strategy (2024-2034) Action Plan - Strategic Priority - Sustainable Growth

By 2050, Gloucestershire's ambitions for future housing and employment growth will have delivered new carbon-neutral communities. This growth will be infrastructure-led and prioritised on a strategic basis.

| Ref | Proposition | Strategic Action | Explanation | Lead local body | External Partners | Funding secured | Expected delivery year |
|----------|------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------|------------------------|
| SG – 1.1 | Spatial Development Strategy | Develop a shared vision for long-term development. | To agree through the City Region Board to develop on a new long-term vision for a Gloucestershire Spatial Development Strategy. | Gloucestershire City Region Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Local Planning Authorities and the County Council. | No | 2025/26 |
| SG – 1.2 | Spatial Development Strategy | Allocate resources to produce a Gloucestershire Spatial Development Strategy. | To further progress The Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground Action Plan. The recommendations of this Strategic Action Plan will be reflected upon by the City Region Board and a decision made with production of a Spatial Development Strategy. | Gloucestershire City Region Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Local Planning Authorities and the County Council. | No | 2025/26 |
| SG – 2.2 | Gloucestershire City Region | Review the concept of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Corridor as part of developing a shared vision for a countywide Spatial Development Strategy. | To consider the concept of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Corridor as part of the visioning work required to inform the basis of a new long-term Gloucestershire Spatial Development Strategy. | Gloucestershire City Region Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Local Planning Authorities and the County Council. | No | 2025/26 |
| SG – 2.3 | Gloucestershire City Region | Identify the breadth and scope of regeneration projects | To undertake a comprehensive review of potential regeneration projects across Gloucestershire's urban areas. This study will identify the potential for urban regeneration projects with the aim of enhancing the quality of Gloucestershire's town centres and increasing the desirability of such areas for people to live in and businesses to locate to. | Gloucestershire City Region Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Local Planning Authorities and the County Council. | No | 2025/26 |
| SG – 3.1 | Infrastructure Delivery Plan | Complete the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground (GSoCG) Action Plan. | To ensure that the GSoCG Action Plan will identify where gaps exist within the existing countywide evidence base to inform a future Spatial Development Strategy. The expected outcome will be a detailed list of the resources required to produce the plan. Once these are understood partners will be able to make an informed decision on how/if they would like to proceed with producing the Spatial Development Strategy. | Gloucestershire City Region Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Local Planning Authorities and the County Council. | Yes | 2024/25 |
| SG – 3.7 | Infrastructure Delivery Plan | Complete an infrastructure needs assessment of countywide infrastructure. | To undertake an infrastructure needs assessment to consider the impact of planned growth and understand the extent of mitigation required to meet the needs of new communities. This assessment would provide high-level costings of the additional infrastructure. | Gloucestershire City Region Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Local Planning Authorities and the County Council. | No | 2025/26 |
| SG – 3.8 | Infrastructure Delivery Plan | Advance proposals that would regenerate soil quality throughout the county. | To enhance soil quality as part of a sustainable approach using innovative technology and regenerative practices such as agroforestry. This will enhance food yields and reduce reliance on fertilisers and pesticides, thus reducing the amount of agricultural runoff into nearby rivers, lakes, and other water bodies. | Gloucestershire City Region Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Local Planning Authorities and the County Council. Academia. Business Sector Group. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. | No | 2025/26 |
| SG – 3.9 | Infrastructure Delivery Plan | Produce a countywide Infrastructure Delivery Plan. | To produce a countywide Infrastructure Delivery Plan with details of Gloucestershire's infrastructure delivery priorities, including a pipeline of future schemes. It would: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide a clear case for why the scheme is important. a priority order for it to be delivered. provide greater certainty to stakeholders regarding the delivery of future schemes. support the advancement of business cases and a future funding strategy. | Gloucestershire City Region Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Local Planning Authorities and the County Council. | No | 2026/27 |