

GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee held on Tuesday 4 February 2020 at Shire Hall, Gloucester

Committee Members:

Cllr Patrick Molyneux
Cllr Steve Jordan
Cllr Paul James
Cllr Bernie O'Neill
Cllr Rob Bird
Cllr Tony Dale
Dev Chakraborty

Officers/Presenters

Steve Mawson (GCC)
Gillian Parkinson (GCC)
Mike Dawson (TBC)
Jon McGinty (Glous City)
Pete Williams (FODDC)
Angela Presdee (GCC)
Claire Edwards (GCC)
Rob Niblett (GCC)
Jeremy Higgins (SLC Rail)
Mark Beckett (SLC Rail)

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. COMMITTEE MEETING - 20 NOVEMBER 2020

Members recalled that at the Economic Growth Joint Committee meeting on 20 November 2019, the committee had agreed to defer the following items on the agenda to allow everyone more time to consider the requests for funding from the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF) and to consider any additional information that might be relevant to the decisions.

Item 8.2 Local Nature Partnership (LNP) - request for funding in respect of Natural Capital Mapping; The request related to £40,000 of reserves to be used for the purposes of contributing towards the overall cost of the commission of the LNP Capital Mapping Work in 2019/20).

Item 8.3 - Request for funding from the Central Gloucestershire City Region Board; (one of the three Vision 2050 Delivery Boards). The original request, (submitted to the committee for consideration at the committee meeting on 20

November 2019), represented a request for £500,000 of reserves to be used to support the commissioning of work by the newly established Central Gloucestershire City Region Board in 2019/2020.

Item 9 - GFirst LEP Update

Having deferred this item at the committee meeting on 20 November 2019, the committee was asked to consider the update report published with the agenda for the November meeting, (published at item 9 of the agenda), detailing activities relating to the GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership, and to submit any questions on issues that might require more information. No questions were submitted. At the committee meeting on 4 February 2020, members were advised that an update on matters arising since the meeting on 20 November 2019 would be considered at agenda item 6 of the meeting.

Item 11 – Future Meetings (including consideration of the Committee Forward Plan and suggestions to facilitate the process of district representatives providing updates on the progress of growth projects within their areas).

Members noted the outcomes of the following decisions, (resolved at the committee meeting on 20 November 2019), and agreed to receive an update on the allocation of reserves allocated for the commissioning of the Gloucestershire Rail Strategy.

Decision 8.1 Rail Investment Strategy

At the committee meeting on 20 November 2019, the committee ratified an in-principle decision agreed by the committee on 4 September 2019, confirming the allocation of £70,000 of reserves to be used for the purposes of contributing to the overall cost of the commission of the Rail Investment Strategy (RIS) for Gloucestershire. It was agreed that the funding would be allocated in two tranches; £40k in 2019/20 and £30k in 2020/21. At the committee meeting on 4 February 2020, members were advised that an update on progress following the award of funding (2019/20) would be considered at agenda item 7 of the meeting.

Decision 8.4 - Request for funding from Cheltenham Borough Council in respect of the Cyber Central Project At the committee meeting on 20 November 2019, the committee agreed the award of £200,000 reserves as match funding for the development of an economic evidence base and prospectus for Gloucestershire and to assist in developing the growth potential of the County

Decision – GFirst LEP Funding At the committee meeting on 20 November 2019, the committee also agreed an 'in principle' decision for the award of £250,000 core (match) funding, awarded to GFirst LEP for the period 2020/21.

Mike Dawson, Chairman of the Senior Officer Group, (established to support the economic growth of Gloucestershire), confirmed that the Senior Officer Group had met on 19 December 2019 to consider the decisions made at the Economic Growth Joint Committee meeting on 20 November 2019 and to further consider the proposals/requests for funding for consideration at this meeting.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2019 were agreed and signed as a correct record of that meeting.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Steve Jordan, (representing Cheltenham Borough Council), declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5 c) of the agenda, ratification of an in-principle decision made at the committee meeting on 20 November 2019, agreeing to match fund any funding awarded to the GFirst LEP by Central Government. Cllr Jordan made the declaration as a board member of the GFirst LEP Board.

5. BUSINESS RATE POOL FUNDING

a) Business Rate Pool Update

Andrew Cummings, Section 151 Officer at Stroud District Council, gave a brief update on the position of the Strategic Economic Development Fund for the period since last reported to the committee on 20 November 2019.

Based upon the current position, it was anticipated the pool would reach £4 million at the end of the 2020. This figure would continue to be monitored throughout the remainder of the 2019/20 financial year, with a final figure reported after district year end audit procedures were completed. A full update to be provided at the committee meeting on 18 March 2020.

Application and Assessment Protocol

An overview of the funding bid application and assessment process was provided. It was noted that, in November 2018, the Joint Committee had approved the eligibility criteria and project approval process for the assessment of any future funding bids for consideration of an award from the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF). The process is outlined below and in the attached criteria flowchart.

Eligibility Criteria for SEDF Applications:

- i. Potential project/request funding requests need to have a significant strategic economic growth focus and clearly demonstrate the economic benefits and contribution it is likely to make in supporting delivery of growth of the local economy and communities in Gloucestershire;
- ii. SEDF is revenue funding (available to support a range of initiatives and projects);
- iii. Access to the fund is for principle stakeholders only. Local Authorities and Local Economic Partnership and any project or funding requests will need to have a clearly identified sponsoring lead organisation or contact; and

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- iv. Any initial ideas/proposals need to complete a written Expression of Interest template, to be submitted for consideration to the GEGJC Senior Officers Support Group, at a relevant meeting. (This process mirrors the same approach adopted for consideration of new projects for the GEGJC sponsored Gloucestershire Capital Investment Pipeline (CIP).

Assessment Process:

- i. The Gloucestershire Economic Growth Senior Officer Support Group to consider and assess formal written Expressions of Interest for SEDF funding against the eligibility criteria by completing an assessment template at one of its bi-monthly meetings;
- ii. Officers from the Senior Officer Support Group will advise the Joint Committee on the conclusions of their assessment and make a recommendation of approval or not. Where appropriate, officers will also make comments on the validity and priority of the bid against other potential commitments. In the case where officers may be advising the committee not to recommend approval of funding, they will provide an appropriate explanation as to the reasons why.
- iii. Any project requests considered appropriate and supported by the GEGJC Senior Officer Support Group will be incorporated into the Joint Committee agenda papers for the next meeting cycle as part of the Business Rates Pool Activity Report.

Decision Process/Approval of Funding:

- i. The Committee will require a formal agreement and/or apply binding conditions to any approved funding, to which the applicant body will be required to agree prior to the release of funding. In support, the completed assessment template will outline the recommended relevant terms and conditions of the award, details with regard to the draw down of funding, plus the suggested reporting requirements back to the Economic Growth Joint Committee.
- ii. Any approved funding requests will be subject to the confirmation of sufficient funds being available in the SEDF pot, during the relevant financial year, by the CFO of the Business Rate Pool managing authority.
- iii. An offer letter will be prepared for any successful funding awards, which outlines the approved level of funding, any relevant terms and conditions, the agreed draw down period and formal reporting requirements. The offer letter will also incorporate claw back provisions in case required.

It was reported that a significant amount of work had been undertaken by the Senior Officer Support Group to review and refine the assessment process for the

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submission of requests for funding from the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF).

Responding to questions, including a request for clarification on how funding expressions of interest forms are assessed, it was agreed the Senior Officer Support Group would review the eligibility criteria against which all bids are assessed, (criteria established and agreed by the Joint Committee), with a report back to the committee at a future meeting. **Action by – Senior Officer Support Group**

It was confirmed that the decision to review the eligibility criteria of requests for funding had no impact on the expression of interest forms/requests for funding to be considered at today's meeting.

For clarification, it was confirmed Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources at Stroud District Council, would act as Section 151 Officer with responsibility for the SEDF, and Steve Mawson, Executive Director for Corporate Services at Gloucestershire County Council, would act as Section 151 Officer for the Joint Committee.

Mike Dawson, as Chairman of the Senior Officer Support Group, presented expression of interest forms in respect of the following requests for funding from the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF).

b 1) Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership (LNP)

The committee considered an updated version of the expression of interest form presented at the committee meeting on 20 November 2019, seeking a contribution towards the commissioning of works for the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership. The bid related to a one off award of funding, (£40,000), for the development of a Natural Capital Mapping Tool for the LNP. The work was considered to be of significant value to assisting local planning authorities with their work.

Responding to questions on how ongoing costs would be met, it was explained that, whilst the service would be free to local planning authorities, a fee would be charged to other service users. A £2.5k per annum maintenance fee would be covered from the income received from other users.

Having considered the bid in detail, the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Senior Officer Support Group supported the proposal and recommended that the Joint Committee approve the bid for funding for the reasons set out below:

The bid has a strong strategic fit; received widespread support from senior planning staff within the local authorities as to the value of developing a mapping tool; and good marketability as a centrally held information resource for the wider development industry in the interest of enhanced joint management of the County's growth plans.

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The project will take approximately 5 months to develop; this will be followed by a period of data testing. On this basis, the GLNP proposed bringing a report back to the Joint Committee at the 16 October 2020 meeting to report on progress.

The Joint Committee noted the expression of interest form submitted by the GLNP and the recommendation from the Senior Officer Support Group and: -

RESOLVED to *authorise the allocation of £40,000 one-off funding from the Gloucestershire Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF) for the development of a Natural Capital Mapping Tool*

b 2) Central Gloucestershire City Region Board

At the committee meeting on 20 November 2019, the committee considered an expression of interest form submitted by the Central Gloucestershire City Region Board, to be used to support the work of the Board in 2019/20. The item was deferred, pending further consideration at this meeting.

In October 2018, Leadership Gloucestershire established three Boards to help deliver the eight ambitions of Gloucestershire Vision 2050. The three boards are:

1. Severn Vale
2. Rural Ambitions
3. Central Gloucestershire City Region

Following the joint committee meeting in November 2019, and further to recent discussions by Leadership Gloucestershire, regarding the provision of funding for the three boards, (to be drawn down from the SEDF), a review of the role and structure of the boards was about to be undertaken. This would be followed by a revised bid for funding.

For this reason, it was agreed to withdraw the original request for funding, pending the outcome of the decision on whether the three boards should merge in to a single Gloucestershire City Region Board.

c) GFirst LEP Funding

At the joint committee meeting on 20 November 2019, the committee had agreed an 'in principle' decision for the award of funding to the Gfirst LEP to match fund government core funding for the period April 2020 to March 2021.

Mike Dawson, Chairman of the Senior Officer Support Group, confirmed that the Senior Officer Group had formally assessed the proposal to match fund the anticipated annual award of £250,000 to GFirst LEP. (National government provides core funding to all Local Enterprise Partnerships to the value of £250,000). Match funding to the Gfirst LEP has been provided since 2013/14 via Gloucestershire County Council directly, or more recently, via decisions made at the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee.

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At a meeting on 19 December 2019, the Senior Officer Support Group supported the proposal that the in principle decision made at the joint committee meeting on 20 November 2019 be ratified at this meeting.

Noting the expression of interest form submitted by GFirst LEP and the recommendation by the Senior Officer Support Group, the committee ratified the decision made on 20 November 2019 and

RESOLVED to award £250,000 as core match funding to the GFirst LEP, (to be drawn down from the SEDF following the award of core funding by national government for the period 2020/21).

6. GFIRST LEP UPDATE

Dev Chakraborty, (Deputy Chief Executive for the GFirst LEP), gave an update on the progress of the Growth Programme for Gloucestershire, including an update on the EU Funding Programme and the preparations underway for developing a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS).

Consultation on the Draft Local Industrial Strategy had closed in the Autumn. Feedback had been received from over 200 organisations and a report, setting out the key themes emerging from across all of the responses, had been presented to the LEP Board on 10 December 2019. The Board had agreed a set of recommendations as a revision to the Draft Strategy, which was now being considered by the government.

The full consultation report can be read at:

<https://www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/2019/local-industrial-strategy-consultation-report.pdf>

On 10 March 2020, a panel of Government analysts will consider the Five Foundations Productivity Evidence Report and a selection of other key documents from the wider evidence base. A full update to be provided at the joint committee meeting on 18 March 2020.

It was confirmed that Diane Savory OBE would be stepping down from her role as Chair of GFirst LEP in July 2020. Diane will have served 9 years as Chair, the maximum period a chair can stay in the role. A recruitment campaign to find a successor was currently underway, with the deadline for applications confirmed as April 30 2020. Interviews to take place in May 2020. Internal candidates, (current members of the LEP Board), are not allowed to submit an application.

The update was noted.

7. UPDATE ON RAIL INVESTMENT STRATEGY DECISION

A detailed presentation on the Gloucestershire Rail Industrial Strategy (RIS) was provided, including details on the award of funding from the Business Rate Pool

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Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF) to support development of the strategy as a countywide commission.

An 'in-principle' decision to transfer £70k funding from the Strategic Economic Development Fund for the development of the RIS was endorsed in September 2019, pending formal ratification of the decision by this committee on 20 November 2019.

The Strategy will be used to inform the Local Transport Plan Review and to feed into the emerging Local Industrial Strategy.

Please refer to the attached presentation and the link below for details: -

8. FUTURE MEETINGS

18 March 2020

3 June 2020

16 September 2020

18 November 2020

CHAIRPERSON

Meeting concluded at 11.25pm