

Meeting	GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH JOINT COMMITTEE (GEGJC) - 20/01/2021
Report Author	Tracey Crews
Background documents	DRAFT Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground
Location/Contact for inspection of background documents	TBC
Main Consultees	Gloucestershire Local Authorities and GFirst LEP
Purpose of report	To present the Gloucestershire Draft Statement of Common Ground to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee for consideration.
Recommendations	<p>That the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee endorse the DRAFT Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground and recommend to the seven local authorities in Gloucestershire that they consider and 'approve' the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground.</p> <p>That the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee agree to receive an 'Action Plan' to advance the agreements outlined in the DRAFT Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground within 6 months of this meeting.</p> <p>That the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee receive an update on the status of the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground following consideration by the relevant organisations (x7 Local Authorities and GFirst LEP)</p>
Reason for recommendations	At the request of the committee, a Draft Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground has been prepared. This follows engagement with elected members and officers of the x7 Local Authorities in Gloucestershire and GFirst LEP, since late 2018.
Resource implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation to relevant organisations for approval - Ongoing requirement to advance and update to be provided within 6 months of this report. This will include an estimate of resource implications (primarily finance and staff) of further work to be agreed

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present the first Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground (GSoCG) (DRAFT) to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (the committee), following a request by the committee for such a document in November 2018. The DRAFT GSoCG is attached to this report (Appendix 1).

1.2 Since the late 2000s and the removal of the County Wide Structure Planning process in Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire has not had one single, overarching strategic planning policy document. Such documents provides a wide range of benefits - ensuring development occurs in the most appropriate locations; providing a basis for funding decisions and bids; and providing certainty for the community, including the development community. A SoCG provides the opportunity to draw together the key strategic planning matters facing Gloucestershire and

agree on how these matters are best addressed. Ultimately, and subject to approvals where necessary, the SoCG provides the opportunity to develop a single strategic plan for Gloucestershire.

- 1.3 Subject to the committee's views, each Gloucestershire Local Authority will be asked to consider the appended GSoCG with a view to approving the document, with the option to 'opt out' of some or all of the proposed agreements listed in the GSoCG. Following consideration of the GSoCG by the 7 Local Authorities and GFirst LEP, an update report will be provided to this committee.

2 Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 As part of its role, the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC) have committed to:

“deliver a high-level spatial planning document for Gloucestershire which will set out agreed broad allocations for housing and economic growth across all districts”

And

“the development of, a high level future growth document for Gloucestershire, and work with the Local Plan teams to translate this into an agreed and adopted Gloucestershire Spatial Development Strategy’

- 2.2 In November 2018, the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee endorsed a proposal to develop a “statement of common ground” as the most effective way of advancing these commitments in the first instance – a Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground (GSoCG). A GSoCG provides the opportunity to:

- a. Present a coherent, agreed development strategy for Gloucestershire to Government, the development industry, investors and the community at large;
- b. Agree on the infrastructure priorities for Gloucestershire and the funding mechanisms to achieve delivery; and
- c. Address common and cross boundary matters (such as economic growth and climate change) in a strategic manner

- 2.3 Any statement of common ground also has a statutory planning purpose - to meet (in part at least) the requirements placed on all Local Planning Authorities through the National Planning Policy Framework Revised 2019 (NPPF) to discharge the statutory ‘Duty-to-Cooperate’ as part of their local plan preparation. The various statutory requirements of a statement of common ground are set out in Appendix 1 of the GSoCG for ease of reference.

- 2.4 Work on the GSoCG has been underway since early 2019, when John Baker was engaged. John engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including representatives (members and officers) of all 7 Gloucestershire authorities, GFirst LEP, interest groups and other organisations. Drafts of a GSoCG have been shared with all 7 Gloucestershire authorities and the LEP, comments made and changes made. The document before the committee now is a culmination of that work.

2.5 The GSoCG satisfies the request of the committee to prepare a statement of common ground and provides the foundations to consider further county wide spatial planning evidence gathering and ultimately consider the need for a spatial plan for Gloucestershire.

3 Alternative Options Considered

3.1 There are two main alternatives:

- a. Do nothing – considered unsatisfactory as this would fail to achieve the request of the committee and would create problems for local authorities undertaking their statutory plan making duties.
- b. Develop a Gloucestershire Spatial Plan now as initially requested by the GEGJC

3.2 Option A is not considered a realistic option. Some form of Statement of Common Ground should be developed across Gloucestershire or at least between various authorities in the County to satisfy the requirements of national planning policy guidance. Furthermore, this committee have requested a Statement of Common Ground be developed.

3.3 Option B would represent a significant body of work, but would prove beneficial in the long run. The attached GSoCG suggests that a spatial plan for Gloucestershire should be considered after deliberations on the GSoCG and following a further report to this committee concerns time, cost and resource implications.

4 Consultation and feedback

4.1 All local authorities in Gloucestershire (officers and some members) have been involved in the preparation of the GSoCG. There is no requirement to formally consult on the document. Any spatial plan work arising from the GSoCG would significantly benefit from thorough consultation.

5 Performance management –monitoring and review

5.1 The GSoCG should be a live document. As such, annual update reports are proposed.

5.2 The GSoCG has attached an 'action plan'. The purpose of this plan is to identify the areas of work required to advance the agreements in the GSoCG, the resource and cost implications of doing that work etc. It is recommended that the committee receive a worked up action plan within 6 months of this paper, in order that future work can be considered and commissioned where appropriate.