

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Title:	GEGJC GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS
Reporting to:	Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
Date:	30 March 2023
Chairman:	Cllr Matt Babbage
Presenting Officer:	Gareth Edmundson
Purpose of report:	This paper provides an update on the future governance proposals relating to the Gloucestershire Economic Joint Committee (GEGJC) and the Gloucestershire City Region Board (GCRB).
Background documents:	GEGJC Governance Paper November 2022 GEGJC Governance Paper February 2023 Levelling Up White Paper Levelling Up Bill
Summary:	<p>A report was presented to GEGJC in November 2022 that contained draft proposals for establishing a single forum under the retained name of the Gloucestershire City Region Board.</p> <p>GEGJC provided a number of views on the proposals contained within the report but a key issue surrounded who would Chair the proposed GCRB going forward. Further points related to the composition of the Board, voting, its relationship to County Deals and how the Board will function in practice.</p> <p>A further governance update was provided to the GEGJC in February 2023 proposing an updated governance structure as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A singular forum will replace the GEGJC and the GCRB under the retained title of the Gloucestershire City Region Board. 2. The full members of the GCRB will remain as being elected representatives from each of the seven Gloucestershire Local Authorities. Each member will have an equal vote at the Board. This will allow decision making over items such as SEDF to continue. 3. The GCRB will be chaired by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) but the Chair will not be the Leader of GCC who will continue to lead the GCC Cabinet and administration as the overall upper tier authority lead for any prospective County Deal as per the legislation in the Levelling Up Bill. It is proposed a GCC cabinet member will be nominated as Chair of the GCRB.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Meetings will remain in public inviting external attendees to present and engage in discussion about the economy and growth in Gloucestershire. 5. The future development of the GCRB will be dependent on any County Deal or opportunity relating to the devolution agenda that is negotiated and agreed with Central Government. 6. Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee will continue to oversee the activities of the GCRB as part of its scope. <p>The principles of this proposed governance structure, including the role of Chair, were presented to Leadership Gloucestershire on the 1 March and no objections were raised to the proposed governance. However, the final governance will have to be developed, finalised and ratified by each of the Gloucestershire Councils to enable the launch of the new Gloucestershire City Region Board.</p> <p>To enable an appropriate transfer to the refreshed governance GEGJC will be extended for approximately 6 months to allow the GCRB to be finalised, ratified and established. All Councils have been contacted to ensure the completion of the extension.</p>
<p>Anticipated Outcomes:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That all Gloucestershire Local Authorities extend the GEGJC for approximately 6 months to allow for the future governance of the GCRB to be developed, finalised and ratified. 2. That necessary agreements and terms of reference are developed to underpin the refreshed governance structure. 3. That the updated governance of the GCRB will replace the GEGJC.

1. Introduction & Background

- 1.1. A report was presented to the GEGJC in November 2022 setting out draft proposals for the future governance surrounding the GEGJC and the GCRB.
- 1.2. Members of the GEGJC provided feedback on the proposals presented and raised further questions surrounding the specifics of how the governance may function.
- 1.3. Full published minutes are available from the November meeting but a summary of key points and views surrounded:
 - Decision making responsibilities of the proposed GCRB and its relationship to GCC as the upper tier authority and as the lead for County Deals
 - Membership of the committee
 - Who would undertake the role of Chair
 - How the transition would be managed with the existing GEGJC
- 1.4. Since the meeting in November, further consultation and discussion has taken place via Leadership Gloucestershire and with Gloucestershire Local Authorities to reach finalised principals on the future of the Governance.

2. County Deal

- 2.1. Since the meeting of the GEGJC in November, Gloucestershire has submitted an expression of interest to engage in discussions with Central Government regarding a County Deal for Gloucestershire.
- 2.2. However, the timescale under which the government may want to engage and negotiate a County Deal for Gloucestershire is, at present, unknown due to Government resources being focussed on negotiating County Deals with existing areas that expressed interest in “Tier 3” deals. Therefore, many factors remain unclear as to what the eventual composition of any County Deal may contain. In addition, the recent announcement made as part of the Spring Budget that responsibility for Local Economic Partnerships will be returned to local authorities is also a policy announcement that will need to be progressed.
- 2.3. Under the Levelling Up Bill, GCC as the upper tier authority have been given the lead role in the negotiation of a County Devolution Deal. However, despite the current uncertainty regarding timescales, GCC have committed to continuing to work with and engage with District Councils as the County Deal journey progresses. In addition, there is a consensus among all Gloucestershire Councils that the opportunity of a County Deal is about drawing power away from Central Government to Gloucestershire and it is not a mechanism for realigning and removing powers from any Gloucestershire Authority.

3. Principles of the Gloucestershire City Region Board (GCRB)

- 3.1. Consultation and engagement via Leadership Gloucestershire and with all Gloucestershire Local Authorities has led to the following final draft principles for a Gloucestershire City Region Board as follows:
 - 3.1.1. A singular forum will replace the GEGJC and the GCRB under the retained title of the Gloucestershire City Region Board.
 - 3.1.2. The full members of the GCRB will remain as being elected representatives from each of the seven Gloucestershire Local Authorities. Each member will have an equal vote at the Board. This will allow decision making over items such as SEDF to continue.
 - 3.1.3. The GCRB will be chaired by GCC but the Chair will not be the Leader of GCC who will continue to lead the GCC Cabinet and administration as the overall upper tier authority lead for the County Deal as per the legislation in the Levelling Up Bill. A GCC Cabinet Member will be nominated as chair of the GCRB.
 - 3.1.4. Meetings will remain in public and external attendees will be invited to present and engage in discussion about the economy and growth in Gloucestershire.
 - 3.1.5. The future development of the GCRB will be dependent on any County Deal that is negotiated and agreed with Central Government. For example, achieving clarity on the

future role of the LEP will be an important part in determining any necessary future governance.

3.1.6. The Senior Officers Group will continue to support the work of the singular GCRB.

3.1.7. Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee will continue to oversee the activities of the GCRB as part of its scope.

3.2. These governance principles were presented to GEGJC in the form of an update in February 2023 and at a meeting of Leadership Gloucestershire on the 1 March. No objections were raised to the proposals presented at Leadership Gloucestershire. However, the detailed governance and necessary agreements will now have to be developed, finalised and ratified by each of the Gloucestershire councils before the proposed Gloucestershire City Region Board can be formally launched. To enable a smooth transition a 6 month extension to the GEGJC has been agreed and each council is currently taking necessary decisions to confirm this.

4. Next Steps

4.1. That GEGJC is extended for approximately 6 months to allow the GCRB to be finalised, agreed and established. A decision is required by each Gloucestershire Council to extend the GEGJC. Councils have previously agreed to extend the GEGJC and updated recommendations, following the template from previous extension, are being put forward for decision as necessary by each council.

4.2. Work will be undertaken to develop necessary agreements for development, finalisation and ratification between partners to establish the GCRB and to ensure a smooth transition from the GEGJC to the new Board.