

The Severn Vale Board

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

This Board is a high level multi-agency strategic partnership focussing on infrastructure and connectivity for Gloucestershire.

2. The Area Covered

The Severn Vale Board area extends from the southern fringe of Gloucester incorporating the administrative areas of Stroud and Forest of Dean District Councils on the east and west sides of the River Severn. This area is key to connecting Gloucestershire with Bristol and Cardiff and other centres along the M4 and M5 motorways and rail network.

3. Context

The Board is established by Leadership Gloucestershire as set out in the Gloucestershire Vision 2050 Concordat 2018. In its formation it has also had regard to the later emergence of the Gt Western Powerhouse and the climate emergency declarations of the local authorities in Gloucestershire. Leadership Gloucestershire will act as the sponsoring body for the board.

The Board will report progress periodically to Leadership Gloucestershire as required to ensure consistency with the delivery of other Vision 2050 actions.

These terms of reference require approval by member organisations as part of the wider Vision 2050 adoption. Future actions and priorities of the Board may also require adoption by member organisations.

The terms of reference will be subject to future review and amendment as required.

4. Membership

Member organisations are:

- Stroud District Council
- Forest of Dean District Council
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Stroud Local Strategic Partnership
- Forest of Dean Economic Partnership and Bridges and Borders Sub Group
- GFirst LEP
- Transport representatives (as required including Network Rail, Highways England, Welsh Government, Transport for Wales)
- South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS)
- Gloucestershire College
- Monmouthshire County Council

5. Aims

The Board will:

1. Develop a long term, strategic vision for the future of the Severn Vale which supports the eight Ambitions of Gloucestershire Vision 2050 and recognises the climate emergency.
2. Champion that shared vision inside and outside Gloucestershire.
3. Lobby and bid for funding and support via government growth and funding programmes to support the delivery of the Board's ambitions.
4. Identify and promote infrastructure and wider connectivity requirements to ensure that Gloucestershire is able to attract inward investment and support its growth ambitions.
5. Work closely with the Severn Vale communities, businesses and agencies to engage them in the generation and delivery of the vision.
6. Work with partners to ensure the Severn Vale vision can guide future strategic spatial and infrastructure plans.
7. Integrate the Severn Vale Vision to ensure it supports all relevant place making strategies for the wider area.
8. Ensure the development of a Severn Vale Vision complements other visioning and strategic planning development.

6. The Vision and Associated Tasks

The Severn Vale Board will promote this part of the county not just as a destination in its own right but also a new gateway to South Wales, the West of England, and the West Midlands. Key to achieving this is engagement with the emerging 'Great Western Powerhouse'.

Work will examine the critical infrastructure necessary to achieve the physical and digital connectivity required to support the County's growth ambitions and take advantage of the opportunities provided by the Great Western Powerhouse and new working relationship with neighbouring authorities.

There will be examination of the potential for a new crossing of the Severn River with specific emphasis on rail, cycle and footpath links, making links to the metro systems around Bristol and South Wales and providing resilience to the national rail network.

The Board will develop a work programme initially aimed at delivering the Vision. The initial Annual Work Programme will be completed by April 2020. Post April 2020 the Board will produce an Annual Work Programme which will incorporate the actions planned to deliver the aims of the Board.

The Board will seek agreement from partners and other sources to secure the funding required to support the work programme from April 2020 onwards. Funding may be sourced from one or more partners or other sources by agreement. The Board will establish appropriate arrangements through one or more of its member organisations for managing funds and if necessary staff support as required.

Once the Vision is in place the Board will work to secure its delivery and inclusion in spatial and other strategic plans and keep progress under review.

The Board will actively promote the Vision and work to secure support and funding as required to deliver the aims set out. This work will be included in the Annual Work programme.

7. Governance Arrangements

Member organisations will have one representative each plus one officer in support. For local authorities this will normally be the Lead Member and a Senior Officer of the Council. Substitutions are permitted if required.

The Board may invite partner organisations or relevant individuals to attend meetings and may appoint independent board members who have relevant expertise or interest. All invitees and or appointments are wholly at the board's discretion and will be reviewed at least annually.

The Board may elect to invite additional organisations to become member organisations on a fixed period or permanent basis.

The Board will elect a Chair and Vice Chair annually. The Board may elect to appoint a suitable person as an independent Chair.

The Board will seek to operate by general consensus and cannot make any decision which is binding upon any member organisation. All partnership agreements including those relating to staffing and finances will require the formal agreement of the member organisations affected.

The Board recognises that there are many key stakeholders who will need to be fully engaged in its work. The Board will establish methods to secure the engagement of these stakeholders who include:

- Young people and schools
- Universities
- Businesses
- Developers
- Parish Councils
- Community Organisations
- Other Gloucestershire Districts and Vision 2050 Boards

The Board may establish sub-groups/task groups as required.

Exclusions:

- The Board will not take responsibility for strategic spatial planning, development management decision making or local transport planning which will remain the responsibility of the local planning and transport authorities.
- The Board will operate as a partnership and will not be an independent legal entity and will not have devolved decision making powers.
- Administration, fund holding and staff provision cannot be held by the Board and will be allocated to one or more partner bodies and jointly funded.