

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
COUNCIL

**AGENDA
ITEM NO**

16 JULY 2020

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| Report Title | GLOUCESTERSHIRE CITY REGION BOARD | | | |
| Purpose of Report | To endorse Leadership Gloucestershire's agreement in principle to amalgamate the previous three Vision 2050 Boards into one City Region Board for the county and to agree that the Council participates in the activities of the Board. | | | |
| Decision(s) | <p>The Council RESOLVES to:</p> <p>a. Endorse the creation of a single Gloucestershire City Region Board for the county;</p> <p>b. Approve the Terms of Reference attached at Appendix 1;</p> <p>c. Note the funding allocations made by the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee to support the work of the Board (£2m has been ring-fenced from the Strategic Economic Development Fund, of which £410,000 has been drawn down for Multi-Modal Transport Study); and</p> <p>d. Agree that Stroud District Council participates in the activities of the Board.</p> | | | |
| Consultation and Feedback | Group Leaders | | | |
| Report Author | Kathy O'Leary, Chief Executive Tel: 01453 754780 Email: kathy.oleary@stroud.gov.uk | | | |
| Options | The option of not agreeing to the creation of a single Board and retaining the previous three Boards is not recommended as there can be no return to that structure, and it is strongly recommended that the Council participates in the activities of the new Board. | | | |
| Background Papers | Report to Strategy & Resources on 3 October 2019 on Severn Vale Delivery Board and subsequent report to Council on 17 October 2019 | | | |
| Appendix | Appendix 1 – Gloucestershire City Region Board Terms of Reference | | | |
| Implications (further details at the end of the report) | Financial | Legal | Equality | Environmental |
| | No | No | No | No |

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following public consultation in 2018, a vision and concordat for Leadership Gloucestershire were developed and agreed by the public sector organisations that constitute it.

- 1.2 The vision endorsed by Leadership Gloucestershire is 'Gloucestershire: a great place to live, work and do business, with a thriving future.' This was underpinned by eight 'ambitions':
- a) **An inclusive county:** *we will ensure that the economic and social benefits of growth are felt by all.*
 - b) **A magnet county:** *we will see a growing working age population, by keeping and attracting more 18-40 year olds with high level qualifications, who want to live and work in the county.*
 - c) **An innovative county:** *we will see more businesses starting up, growing, and investing in research and innovation.*
 - d) **A skilled county:** *we will see more people with high-level skills and jobs in skilled occupations.*
 - e) **A prosperous county:** *we will see rising productivity and household income, offering higher living standards.*
 - f) **A healthy, happy and safe county:** *we will ensure people have a good work/life balance and see improved health and wellbeing.*
 - g) **A connected county:** *we will see improved transport and internet connections so that people and businesses can connect with each other more easily.*
 - h) **A sustainable county:** *we will see more efficient use of resources and more use of sustainable energy.*
- 1.3 The 2018 concordat set out that Leadership Gloucestershire agreed to scope further the establishment of three Boards each charged with considering how to frame its scope so that it best delivered against the above eight ambitions.
- 1.4 Further discussions were held during 2019 and three Delivery Boards were established:
- Central Gloucestershire Board
 - Rural Ambitions Board
 - Severn Vale Board
- 1.5 The purpose of the Central Gloucestershire Board was to provide the vision and strategic context for the area currently covered by the Joint Core Strategy, that is, Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Borough, including all aspects of community life and business ambition, rather than having just a development focus.
- 1.6 The Rural Ambitions Board was created to provide a positive vision of a vibrant rural economy, to allow market towns and villages, communities and businesses to be as proud of their contribution to Gloucestershire as they are already proud of their landscape, and to ensure that our rural assets compliment the vision for growth elsewhere in the county.
- 1.7 The Severn Vale Board was created to consider infrastructure and connectivity of the vale beyond the county including such issues as rail improvements, M5 corridor upgrade (and particularly junction capacity at 12, 13 and 14) and wider national transport links including the potential of a third crossing of the River Severn between the Forest of Dean and Stroud districts, and to consider all aspects of community life and business ambition as well as focus on infrastructure.
- 1.8 Stroud District Council stood to participate in all three Boards, with a leading role in the Severn Vale Board.

2. ONE BOARD

- 2.1 The focus of the three embryonic Boards shifted with the launch of 'A Powerhouse for the West', now the 'Western Gateway' in 2019, which recognised the geographically pivotal role of Gloucestershire on an east-west access between South Wales and Wiltshire and north-south from the Midlands to Bristol on the M5/M4 and rail corridors. Leadership Gloucestershire recognised the need to position its activity to derive maximum mutual benefit for local communities and the Western Gateway in terms of strategic and local connectivity, prosperity, sustainable tourism and clean growth.
- 2.2 In addition, there was a great deal of duplication between the three Boards and it was recognised that the county could take a more cohesive approach by amalgamating all three into one.
- 2.3 At its meeting on 5 March 2020 Leadership Gloucestershire therefore agreed, subject to the approval of partner organisations, to dissolve the Rural Ambitions and Severn Vale Vision Boards and to:
- extend the membership of the Gloucestershire City Region Board to include all of the local authorities in the county with the terms of reference adjusted accordingly;
 - note the activities undertaken by the other boards to date, including the Rural Ambitions Board, and ensure that these were not lost under any new structure;
 - identify activity streams under the Gloucestershire City Region Board involving relevant elected members and senior officers; these included the Statement of Common Ground, Joint Core Strategy, other spatial plans and transport strategies;
 - identify the evidence gathering study areas along with indicative costs, these included land availability, employment, health, waste, schools, transport, climate change and flood risk;
 - request an initial sum of £2 million from the Strategic Economic Development Fund via the Joint Economic Growth Committee and include an indicative list of activities required;
 - note that a total of £13-14 million was likely to be needed to allow all the evidence to be gathered; and
 - note the potential 'public/private think-tank' role that could be undertaken by the GFirst LEP Board.

Terms of Reference

- 2.4 At its meeting on 22 June, Leadership Gloucestershire considered Terms of Reference for the Board and agreed them subject to the necessary approval of partner organisations. The original terms of reference (ToRs) for the Central Gloucestershire City Region Board have been amended to amalgamate them with the keypoints of the ToRs for the Severn Vale and Rural Ambitions Boards. The Strategy & Resources Committee considered the ToRs for the Severn Vale Board on 3 October 2019 and Council approved them on 17 October. The new ToRs have also been slightly updated to include reference to key partnerships such as the Western Gateway and they are attached at Appendix 1.

Funding

- 2.5 Further to the request of Leadership Gloucestershire, on 3 June the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee considered and approved two requests for funding in respect of the Gloucestershire City Region Board as follows:
- a) that £2 million is allocated within the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF) to support the work of the Gloucestershire City Region Board. This funding will be held within the SEDF as a ring-fenced allocation and can be drawn down following the Joint Committee's approval of individual projects; and
 - b) that £410,000 is approved from within the ring-fenced allocation to fund a Gloucestershire Multi-Modal Transport Study to complement existing highway modelling.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has delayed work around the Board. Although there are still many challenges facing all partners in respect of Covid-19 response and recovery, there is a need for the Gloucestershire City Region Board to meet to commence its work, as related projects are continuing to progress.
- 3.2 Work areas include the development of a long-term spatial strategy, local plans, transport infrastructure planning and the Local Industrial Strategy. In addition, partner organisations outside Gloucestershire such as the Western Gateway are also progressing their agendas and it is important that Gloucestershire has a forum to set out its growth ambitions and communicate and promote them with a single voice.
- 3.3 The Board will need to meet to progress a number of actions including the following:
- Produce a Prospectus and associated communications/marketing campaign to raise the County's profile as an ambitious growth area within Western Gateway
 - Develop an action plan and programme of meetings for 2020/21
 - Consider staff resource requirements
 - Develop more detailed governance structures as required
 - Consider the potential for appointing an independent chair, working arrangements and support
 - Establish high level engagement with Government Departments and agencies.
 - Consider current projects and quick wins.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The proposal to amalgamate the three former Vision 2050 Boards into one, with associated Terms of Reference and approved funding, is one that will serve the constituent partner organisations well to promote the future for Gloucestershire in the regional and national context. It is recommended that Stroud District Council plays its part in the new Gloucestershire City Region Board.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications at this stage from the Council's involvement in the City Region Board.

As set out in the body of the report the Board has been allocated £2m from the Gloucestershire Strategic Economic Development Fund. This is a central pot from the County which has been generated by the Business Rates Pooling and Pilot arrangements over recent years.

Any future City Board projects which may require direct financial involvement from this Council would be assessed when the need for funding arose.

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5.2 Legal Implications

There is no proposal to cede any decision making powers to the new Board or to authorise it to act on behalf of the Council (See Para 7 of the TOR), as such there are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

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5.3 Equality Implications

An EIA is not required because there are not any specific changes to service delivery proposed within this decision. However, it is important to note that following its meeting on 22 June, Leadership Gloucestershire issued a statement to say that in its work on recovery and renewal, addressing discrimination and promoting equality would be central to its delivery plans.

5.4 Environmental Implications

There are no significant environmental implications arising from the creation of one Vision 2050 Board for the county in itself.

Gloucestershire City Region Board – Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

This Board is a high-level multi-agency partnership to develop and support a shared vision for strategic growth and economic success for the County of Gloucestershire.

2. Context

The Board is established by Leadership Gloucestershire in response to the Gloucestershire Vision 2050 Concordat 2018. Leadership Gloucestershire will act as the sponsoring body for the Board.

The Board will report progress periodically to Leadership Gloucestershire as required and at the request of Leadership Gloucestershire.

These terms of reference require approval and support of 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.

3. The Area Covered

The Gloucestershire City Region is defined as the economic functional ‘region’ consisting of the County of Gloucestershire including the administrative areas of all six constituent district, borough and city councils.

Gloucestershire is a beautiful and successful area with significant economic growth ambitions for all its communities. Although the communities and places within the area are varied, ranging from rural to urban there is significant interdependence. The interdependent, but varying community ambitions and the need to protect the county’s natural beauty calls for a county wide city region partnership approach. The aim is to ensure the ambitions of both rural and urban areas are integrated.

There are interdependences with areas outside the County of Gloucestershire and important links in respect of economic growth and infrastructure provision, of particular relevance is the Western Gateway Powerhouse.

By working together through the City Region approach to support the ambitions and needs of Gloucestershire, the City Region Board will provide a single point of leadership and focus for government departments, other agencies and wider partnerships including the Western Gateway Powerhouse.

4. Membership

Member organisations are:

- Cheltenham Borough Council
- Cotswold District Council

- Forest of Dean District Council
- Gloucester City Council
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Stroud District Council
- Tewkesbury Borough Council
- GFirst LEP
- Gloucestershire University
- Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group.

Invited Organisations may include representatives from the following departments and organisations, the list is not exhaustive and the City Region Board may invite representatives from other organisations as required:

- Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government
- Ministry of Business Energy Innovation and Skills – Cities and Local Growth Unit
- Department for Transport
- Homes England
- Highways England.

5. Aims

The Board will:

1. Develop a long term, strategic and dynamic vision for the future of Gloucestershire which supports the eight Ambitions of Gloucestershire Vision 2050.
2. Champion that shared vision and its delivery with a single voice inside and outside Gloucestershire, including with strategic partner organisations such as the Western Gateway Powerhouse.
3. Lobby and bid for funding and support via government growth programmes and Western Gateway Powerhouse and other partners to support the delivery of the Board's ambitions.
4. Promote the success of the Gloucestershire City Region and its strengths to attract inward investment and growth.
5. Work closely with all sections of the Gloucestershire City Region communities, businesses and agencies to engage them in the generation and delivery of the vision.
6. Build upon the inter-related strengths of the communities of the Gloucestershire City Region to fulfil the ambitions of each place and maintain their identities.
7. Create a positive vision for vibrant rural communities, businesses and infrastructure to maximise their contribution to Gloucestershire.
8. Work with partners to ensure the Gloucestershire City Region Vision can guide and integrate with future strategic spatial and infrastructure plans.
9. Ensure the development of a Gloucestershire Vision complements other visioning and strategic plans in the County through such documents as the Local Transport Plan and the Local Industrial Strategy.
10. Through the Gloucestershire City Region Vision - aim to create a special County which has uniquely attractive offers as a place to live and visit and a vibrant economy firmly based on modern commercial activity, built on the strengths of our communities.

6. The Vision and Associated Tasks

The main task of the Gloucestershire City Region Board will be to develop the vision for the future of Gloucestershire to 2050 and beyond. The Vision will be incorporated into a high level Masterplan. The Masterplan is not a spatial planning document, but it will set out the broad ambitious growth aims and priorities which can be used to guide the development of future spatial and strategic plans.

The Vision will:

- Incorporate and integrate economic, housing, infrastructure, education, health, cultural and environmental aims.
- Place emphasis on maximising the growth in cyber and digital businesses and recognise the continued importance and significance of a mixed economy, building upon traditional Gloucestershire strengths such as advanced and aircraft engineering, agri-tech and tourism.
- Include and support current key strategic growth and infrastructure projects.

The Board will develop a work programme initially aimed at delivering the Vision and Masterplan. The initial Annual Work Programme will be completed by April 2021. Post April 2021 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 2021 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 and Masterplan 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 Masterplan 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 Leader and Chief Executive 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 full engagement of these stakeholders who include:

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

The Board will establish sub-groups/task groups as required. The Gloucestershire Chief Executives Group will provide strategic support for the Board.

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 not replace the Joint Core Strategy governance arrangements which will remain as established.
- 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.