

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**AGENDA
ITEM NO**

28 MARCH 2019

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Report Title	DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY TO 2050
Purpose of Report	To update Committee on progress to date and to make recommendations on the way forward through the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground.
Decision(s)	Committee resolves to:- 1. Support the development of a broad Strategic Planning Framework for Gloucestershire to 2050 and beyond, through the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground, to be prepared by the six local planning authorities, Gloucestershire County Council and the GFirst LEP.
Consultation and Feedback	A Leaders Board has been set up and has met regularly to consider methods of securing greater co-ordination of strategic planning matters across Gloucestershire. Progress has been reported to Planning Review Panel.
Financial Implications and Risk Assessment	There are no direct resource implications arising from this report, other than the continued funding of the Gloucestershire Strategic Planning Coordinator which is funded on a two year partnership basis between all councils. There will be further costs much of which will be associated with existing plan development. Any additional budget requirements will be brought forward for consideration as they arise. Adele Rudkin, Accountant Tel: 01453 754109 adele.rudkin@stroud.gov.uk Failure to maximise the opportunity created through the creation of an effective Strategic Planning Framework for Gloucestershire County would mean that opportunities for effective strategic development discussions are lost. The opportunity to save resources through joint commissioning of an effective evidence base may also be lost.
Legal Implications	This is a report template that is going to all six

	<p>district councils. The template included legal implications written by Tewkesbury Borough Council officers as follows:</p> <p><i>“The Statement of Common Ground is a non-statutory planning document. Paragraph 20 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the matters that the strategic policies should make provision for. This is also linked to matters set out in sections 33A(4) and 19(1B) to 19(1E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Para 27 of the NPPF requires Local Authorities to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working by preparing Statements of Common Ground. The formal approval of the Statement of Common Ground will remain the responsibility of each local planning authority.”</i></p> <p>The matters set out in: 19(1B) are that the Council must identify strategic priorities for the development and use of land in its area; 19(1E) deals with combined authorities; and, 33A(4) places a duty on the Council to co-operate on sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on (in particular strategic infrastructure) at least two planning areas or is a county matter and/or would have a significant impact on a county matter.</p> <p>Legal advice on the Strategic Planning Framework resulting from the process will be provided as appropriate and required.</p> <p>Craig Hallett, Solicitor & Deputy Monitoring Officer Tel: 01453 754364 Email: craig.hallett@stroud.gov.uk</p>
Report Author	<p>Mark Russell, Planning Strategy Manager Tel: 01453 754305 Email: Mark.Russell@stroud.gov.uk</p>
Options	<p>A number of options have already been considered by Gloucestershire authorities to support greater co-ordination of strategic planning matters across Gloucestershire, ranging from liaison on an informal basis, through the preparation of a non-statutory growth strategy to the preparation of a single Local Plan for Gloucestershire.</p> <p>Options at this stage are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. approve the development of a Statement of

	<p>Common Ground with a scope as set out in the report;</p> <p>2. approve a Statement of Common Ground with an amended scope or</p> <p>3. support a different approach.</p>
Performance Management Follow Up	<p>Progress with the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground will be reported to Leaders Board and within this Council to Planning Review Panel and Environment Committee. Decisions on spatial planning matters contained within the document will need to be agreed by Council.</p>
Background Papers/ Appendices	<p>Appendix A – Gloucestershire Strategic Planning Governance Structure</p>

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 It has been recognised for some time that a better coordinated approach to long term spatial planning in Gloucestershire would be beneficial. Such an approach could provide an agreed broad vision for the future growth of the County which would support local plan development and avoid duplication, potential conflict between plans and fulfil the duty to cooperate. This partnership approach could also better coordinate infrastructure requirements and associated funding whilst delivering potential savings through joint commissioning of evidence.
- 1.2 These advantages can be gained by working together and by cooperating effectively, however the responsibility for spatial planning decision making will remain with the local plan authorities individually.
- 1.3 In June 2018 the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC) appointed the Strategic Planning Coordinator for the County. The role of this post is to work towards better planning coordination in the County. The Gloucestershire Strategic Planning Coordination project has now been running for six months. Work to date has focussed upon:
- Establishing the governance and working arrangements for the project including the setting up of the Leaders Board (which consists of Leaders of all the District Councils, the Leader of the County Council and LEP representatives) and an associated officer group under the auspices of the GEGJC. The governance structure is shown at appendix 1
 - Synergising the relationship between this piece of work and the continuing work on existing local plans
 - Reviewing the available evidence and developing the means of supplementing the evidence base through collaborative working
 - Reviewing existing joint planning arrangements and partnerships, for example evidence commissioning

- Considering the type and nature of 'framework document' for Gloucestershire.

2. WORK TO DATE

- 2.1 The Leaders Board has been meeting on a regular basis since its inception in June 2018. One of the key discussions has been the consideration of the type of plan that is appropriate for Gloucestershire. These discussions have concluded that whilst there are other methods of securing a Strategic Planning Framework and its associated benefits the most appropriate model for strategic planning in Gloucestershire is considered to be the non-statutory Statement of Common Ground (SCG).
- 2.2 The SCG is a document which has been established by the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 and will be required to be produced and agreed between the six local planning authorities, the County Council, GFirst LEP and other key parties as appropriate. It will set out the agreed position in respect of cross boundary strategic planning issues, demonstrating that the 'Duty to Cooperate' has been fulfilled, but it can also be used to set out a long term agreed vision for the broad location of development within the county.
- 2.3 Following consideration of the best way to deliver a long term strategic planning framework, the Leaders Board consider that a joint SCG would be the best mechanism to deliver a coordinated approach agreed by all partners. This will allow local planning authorities to continue to deliver current and future spatial plans and policies, but will also allow the local planning authorities to work together to determine a coordinated approach to future strategic planning in the county and maximise resource efficiency.
- 2.4 This will also allow the local authorities to look beyond their plan periods and link into conversations regarding Gloucestershire 2050 to seek to meet aspirations for growth and infrastructure. Furthermore, effective cooperation enables strategic policy-making authorities and infrastructure providers to establish whether additional strategic cross-boundary infrastructure is required. The SCG would be evidence that the strategic policy-making authorities have sought agreement with the relevant bodies and, in relation to the Community Infrastructure Levy, it can form part of the evidence base for the Infrastructure Funding Statement.

3. STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

- 3.1 The NPPF 2018 sets out the details expected to be covered within a SCG. These are as follows:

1. A spatial portrait and narrative of the geography of the area and the key strategic matters being addressed by the statement, for example meeting the housing need and economic growth for the area and key environmental issues such as flood protection, climate change impact reduction, air quality etc.;
 2. Details of the plan-making authorities responsible for joint working detailed in the statement, along with any others engaged in the process and the associated governance arrangements for the cooperation process, including how the statement will be maintained;
 3. The housing requirements in any adopted and (if known) emerging strategic policies relevant to housing within the area covered by the statement as well as a view of the future growth necessary;
 4. An understanding of the distribution of housing and economic growth needs in the area as agreed through the plan-making process, or the process for agreeing the distribution of need (including unmet need) across the area;
 5. A record of where agreements have (or have not) been reached on key strategic matters, including the process for reaching agreements on these; and
 6. Any additional strategic matters to be addressed by the statement which have not already been addressed, including a brief description how the statement relates to any other statement of common ground covering all or part of the same area.
- 3.2 The detail and scope in the SCG is expected to be proportionate to the matters being addressed but would seek to tackle the key issues facing the County and the aspirations for strategic growth and infrastructure requirements.
- 3.3 In addition to the NPPF requirements, the Leaders Board consider that a SCG for Gloucestershire will:
1. Draw from existing and developing local plans and plan development processes to provide an agreed joined up picture of growth within Gloucestershire
 2. Include the broad aspirations of partners for the promotion of growth within Gloucestershire
 3. Provide an agreed approach between all agencies to allow cooperation in delivery of plans and infrastructure
 4. Improve strategic planning coordination, cooperation and communication to avoid potential conflict between plans and partners ensuring Gloucestershire can speak with 'one voice',

which is so important for Government dialogue and associated funding bids

4. SCG DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- 4.1 The Leaders Board has concluded that, given the importance of this partnership work, all the individual local authorities and GFirst LEP should be asked to approve the principles of this planning partnership work as set out in this report at the outset of the project. This report therefore is being presented to all Gloucestershire councils and GFirst LEP for consideration within the meeting cycles for February and March 2019.
- 4.2 This project is in its earliest stages, therefore this report concerns the principles of this project only and much further detail will need to be developed as the project progresses. As work on this project progresses Members will be updated. Further reports will be presented to individual local authorities and GFirst LEP as further decisions are required. Final adoption of the SCG for Gloucestershire will need to be agreed by each constituent authority.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Statement of Common Ground will be subject to a level of consultation which will need to be in accordance with the Statements of Community Involvement of each constituent local authority.