

Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee Wednesday 20th January 2021 at 1.30 pm

1. Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC) Update

Cllr. Patrick Molyneux gave an update on that morning's meeting:

1.1 Taxi Licensing

Kate Haigh presented a report from the Taxi Licensing Scrutiny Task Group. The Joint Committee noted the importance of safe and reliable taxi services for economic growth and of having a consistent approach to taxi services across the county. There were some comments about the need for taxi services within the rural areas as well as within the more urban areas such as Gloucester and Cheltenham. This report was presented later on in this meeting.

1.2 Cyber Growth

Officers from Cheltenham Borough Council provided a presentation on cyber growth in Gloucestershire. They gave a summary of how the project would benefit the county in terms of business and employment growth. They also provided an overview the progress of the project and described how the project fits in from a local, national and international perspective.

The presentation can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMV-8ivbnfU> (from 11:30 mins.).

STRATEGIC FIT BENEFITTING GLOUCESTERSHIRE & UK

Local Industrial Strategy



"To exploit Gloucestershire's position as the 'cradle of cyber-tech innovation'"

UK Cyber & Industrial Strategy



"Cheltenham – established home of cyber security / excellence"

International



UK as the world leader in Cyber Security

The difference between and overlap of digital (connectivity of homes and people and city) and cyber (e.g. GCHQ, software businesses and international opportunities) was commented upon. This resulted in an action to ensure that the county's cyber and digital strategies were developed in a co-ordinated and harmonised manner.

1.3 Strategic Planning - Statement of Common Ground

The seven 7 local authorities within Gloucestershire and the GFirst LEP have produced a draft statement of common ground from a spatial and planning perspective.

Please refer to the document at the following link:

WinchcombeWard.com/gsocg.pdf

The committee agreed in principle to the report's overall direction. They have asked the senior officer's group to refer it to the leaders' board for further analysis. Once all districts within the county are comfortable with the report's content, the final version will be produced and shared with the GEGJC and the 7 authorities.

1.4 Gloucestershire's COVID Economic Recovery Update

A verbal update on Gloucestershire's economic recovery planning was received.

The committee noted that since the last meeting the action plan had had costs applied. Approximately £500k of funding per year has been requested to support the first 3 years of the plan.

People, Place and Connectivity -£150K to 200K per annum
Skills and Employment - £100K per annum
Infrastructure, Economy and Growth -£150K per annum

On the 27th January, this planning documentation will be going to cabinet for approval.

Members were informed that as part of the plan there has already been indicative approval to roll out further innovation labs into 5 district libraries during 2021.

It was explained that a good example of one such lab is in Coleford where, for example, the online provision of basic training and 3D modelling has been provided. In addition, Coleford library provides suitably targeted digital training to 5 and 7 year olds. 10 year old children are able to use scanners and 3D printers. This equipment is also used by start-up companies and those in their early stages of development. The Department of Work and Pensions also runs courses for young adults to help them access jobs. A Further objective is to provide various training courses at local district level rather than centrally at Gloucester.

For your information, please visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0mT-d5h6i9CwkEypggexJQ/playlists>

Although the COVID situation remains very fluid, the committee is happy with the progress that has been made to date.

1.5 GFirst LEP

Dev Chakraborty provided a GFirst LEP update.

Since before Christmas, the LEP has been looking at pooling central government's discretionary grant funding across the county. Each local authority has had in the region of one and a half to two million pounds from central government. Of the ideas that were proposed, central government only accepted that a pooled fund could be used to help small to medium sized enterprises (SME's) trade online.

The LEP are also looking to obtain funding for an online apprenticeship “matching service”. This is a portal where businesses that are looking for apprentices can directly link to young people who are looking to be apprentices - and vice versa.

The committee wants to make sure that discretionary funds are used in the best possible way by targeting businesses that really need this assistance. This is to ensure that the county as a whole gets through the pandemic in the best possible shape.

1.6 Business Rates Pool

Andrew Cummings provided an update and report on the business rates pool.

Questions were asked about how the pandemic may affect the future of the pool. This is something the committee needs to continue to examine closely

The committee approved strategic economic development funding requests. The first was for a city region prospectus - £50K. The second was for cyber and digital growth in Gloucestershire - £200K. The committee asked that details related to the bids goes through the senior officer group so that all districts are comfortable that the money is being spent in the right ways to benefit the whole of Gloucestershire.

2. Social Mobility

2.1 Social Mobility Task Group

John McGinty stated that there was no universally agreed definition of “social mobility”.

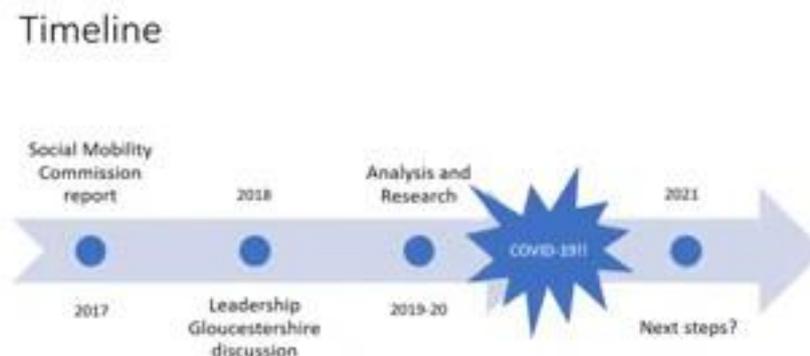
He said there were various dictionary definitions but colloquially it could be regarded as *“making sure everyone has the opportunity to make a good life for themselves regardless of their background”*

Or

“Making sure people have a fair chance of reaching their potential”.

He said that successive governments have tried to improve social mobility. However, in Britain, he suggested that *“unfortunately where you start from still has a very big influence on where you end up in life”.*

He explained that social mobility is affected by income, class and geographic location. He said there were income differential between London and the rest of the country and between urban and rural settings. Also, some of the most affluent areas of the country deliver much worse outcomes for their disadvantaged children than places that are much “poorer”.



The Life Chances act of 2010 saw the creation of the Social Mobility Commission who produces reports each year. In 2017 the commission produced a report entitled "Social Mobility in Great Britain" where for the first time approximately 16 indicators of social mobility were defined. These indicators were based on the life stages of individuals. Each local authority was then ranked against these indicators.

In the 2017 social mobility report, the Cotswolds was one of the least socially mobile places. In 2018 a Social Mobility Task Group was set up within Gloucestershire to research the educational life stages of children and young adults. The Task Group produced a report just before the first COVID Lockdown arrived in March 2020. All work then came to a standstill.

Subsequently, in September 2020 the Government produced a report entitled "The Long Shadow of Deprivation". This report used different criteria (earnings over time) and the Cotswolds appears as one of the most socially mobile places.

The Task Group's work was shared with the Social Mobility Commission in late 2020. The commission were very interested in the group's work. They have invited it to join a number of local authorities with the intention of meeting up in 2021 to reinvigorate this work across the country.

Gloucestershire appears to be one of the few places in the country that has done work based on the 2017 report and remain interested in the issue of social mobility.

2.2 The Power of 3

Representatives from the Matson, Robinswood and White City Community Partnership then provided a presentation referring to the "Power of 3" initiative.

WinchcombeWard.com/Sm.pdf

3. Local Housing

Mike Dawson provided an update regarding the strategic and local plans in the county. The same report had been presented to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee at a previous meeting.

WinchcombeWard.com/LH.pdf

4. Taxi Licensing Task Group report

Kate Haigh provided a verbal update on the work of the Taxi Licensing task group. A copy of the group's final report can be found via the following link:

WinchcombeWard.com/Taxi.pdf

The district Chief Executives are to take this report forward.

5. Governance of the LEP

A report describing the governance of the LEP was provided for information. A copy of this report can be found via the following link:

WinchcombeWard.com/GovLep.pdf

6. Executive Director's Report

An update report was provided by Colin Chick, Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure on Economic Growth issues in the county.

WinchcombeWard.com/EdrJan21.pdf

Cllr John Murphy – January 2021