

Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 9 June 2021

1. Introduction

This was the first committee meeting that had been held since the County Council elections in May 2021. As the result of these elections several new County Councillors became members of the committee. The meeting was chaired by a new Chair person. In addition, a new Vice Chair was elected at the meeting.

To provide an introduction to new committee members, several organisations provided presentations regarding their role and responsibilities in relation to Gloucestershire's economic growth. They also described their involvement in Gloucestershire's economic recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Representatives from the following organisations delivered presentations:

- **GFirst LEP** - Chief Executive
- **Gloucestershire County Council** - Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure
- **Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC)** - Chair of the GEGJC Senior Officer Group

NOTE: Where a link does not automatically work, please copy the link and paste it into your browser.

2. GFirst LEP Presentation

2.1 Overview

GFirst LEP was approved by the Government in 2011. The LEP works to promote economic growth in the county by creating jobs and providing opportunities for businesses in the region.

They do this by:

- Developing roads and transport infrastructure throughout the region.
- Launching organisations like "The Growth Hub" that offer valuable business advice.
- Building training and education facilities to promote Gloucestershire in the future.

2.2 Growth Deal

In 2015 GFirst LEP secured the Gloucestershire Growth Deal which has seen an approximate £500m investment in Gloucestershire. Further details on the growth deal programme can be found at:

<https://www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/our-vision/gloucestershire-growth-deal/>

2.3 Local Industrial Strategy

In early 2020 the Gloucestershire Local Industrial Strategy was finalised by GFirst LEP + partners and presented to Government. The Local Industrial Strategy can be found at:

https://www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/2020/gloucestershire_draft_local-industrial-strategy_2019-updated.pdf

2.4 Covid-19 Response and recovery Plan

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the economy of Gloucestershire. The response to the pandemic and the recovery plan can be found at:

<https://www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/2020/gfirst-lep-covid-economic-restart-interventions-finalversion---july-2020.pdf>

3. Gloucestershire County Council Presentation

This presentation provided an overview of:

- The current economic growth agenda for Gloucestershire, highlighting progress against the Gloucestershire County Council Covid-19 recovery plan
Please follow this link:
<https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s71717/Colin%20report.pdf>
- The Gloucestershire economic growth dashboard.
Please follow this link:
<https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s72108/Economic%20Dashboard%20May%202021.pdf>

4. Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee Presentation

The Chief Executive of Tewkesbury Borough Council said that all the districts (including the County) work best when they work together as an effective partnership.

He provided some background on the origin of the joint committee as well as this scrutiny committee. He said that in 2015 the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee was set up to be a partnership capable of making binding decisions for Gloucestershire concerning the local economy and its growth. The Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee was established at the same time to provide scrutiny arrangements for the joint committee.

The joint committee has made a lot of decisions in the past that have been very helpful around business rates and the coordination of bids for economic development funding around Gloucestershire.

The joint committee and this scrutiny committee are supported by a body called the Senior Officer Group. This is made up of representatives from GFirst LEP, Gloucestershire County Council and all the districts at senior level. Group members tend to be people who are involved in economic growth and/or planning. The work of the Group is to support the efforts of the joint and scrutiny committees.

As far as this scrutiny committee is concerned, he said that two very important documents have already been mentioned:

- The Local Industrial Strategy
- The Local Transport Plan

However, the four local plans also need to be considered. These are for:

- Cotswold
- Stroud
- Forest of Dean
- And collectively, Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Gloucester who have a joint core strategy (JCS)

From 2011 to 2031, 61,500 homes are planned to be delivered across the county. This is in addition to the plan to deliver 340 hectares of employment land - which equates to over 52,000 jobs.

The local planning authorities are also working on plans to 2041. These look like bringing forward a further 30,000 new homes and about 140 hectares of employment land – equating to another 18,000 jobs.

An aim is to try to get an agreed way forward for development in Gloucestershire beyond 2050. This is so that the location of planned housing can be integrated with both employment growth and the emerging transport system.

COVID-19 led to district councils across Gloucestershire paying out about £200 million to approximately 40,000 businesses- to help keep them afloat. This involved a tremendous amount of extra work for local authorities.

5. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director of Economy, Environment & Infrastructure on Economic Growth, provided an update report on issues in the County (including Q3 & Q4 performance data).

The link to this report follows.

https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s71622/Directors%20Report%20EI%20Scrutiny%20-%20May%202021_.pdf