

# **Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee - 20 July 2023**

Author: Councillor Matt Dimond-Brown, 3 September 2023

Agenda: <https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/g11206/Agenda%20frontsheet%20Thursday%2020-Jul-2023%2010.00%20Gloucestershire%20Economic%20Growth%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=0>

Minutes: <https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/g11206/Printed%20minutes%20Thursday%2020-Jul-2023%2010.00%20Gloucestershire%20Economic%20Growth%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=1>

Reports Pack: <https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/g11206/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2020-Jul-2023%2010.00%20Gloucestershire%20Economic%20Growth%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

Key points:

1. The County Transport team provided an update on County's Bus Improvement Plan. There are upcoming opportunities for Tewkesbury Borough Council Officers and Members to engage with the County on studies already underway (key bus corridors and interchange bus hubs) and also the creation of an Enhanced Operator Partnership Agreement between GCC and Bus Operators. The effective hinge between GCC and TBC on these issues was far from clear.
2. The County Transport team provided an update on their Mass Transport Project. As with 1. above it was far from clear what the effective engagement process was between TBC and GCC for this critical part of making the Borough's transport system more effective and Climate-Change supporting.
3. The County provided an update of future plans for Rail improvement in the County. These weren't particularly inspiring (perhaps reflecting the troubled nature of the UK Rail sector) and didn't include anything on getting freight off the roads (especially the M5).

Details.

4. I attended my first Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee on 20 July. I was there to represent Tewkesbury Borough Council and I was accompanied by Peter Tonge.
5. The Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee (GEGSC) was set up in 2015 alongside the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC). The GEGJC is a statutory joint Committee made up of the seven Gloucestershire Councils. Its main purpose is to make sure the seven Councils co-ordinate their efforts in support of the County Strategic Economic Plan and the Growth Deal. Cllr. Stanley represents TBC on this Committee.

6. The GEGSC is responsible for reviewing the decisions of the GEGJC. It is also responsible for reviewing the overall impact and delivery of outcomes for the Gloucestershire Strategic Economic Plan and to make recommendations to the Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Community Interest Company and Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee on issues and improvements.

#### Bus Improvement Plan

7. As can be seen from the minutes, the County was unsuccessful in bidding for funds arising from the Government's National Bus Strategy; they are improving their understanding of bus priority, infrastructure and ticketing to better qualify for that funding.
8. As part of this, a study is underway to identify corridors of high frequency bus services and to use this to target where bus prioritisation such as bus lanes, traffic light priority etc could be implemented. Another study is underway to understand the 'spoke and hub' arrangements to ensure villages etc can link up to the high frequency services.
9. Both of these studies are designed, in theory, to engage with stakeholders throughout the Council. When pressed, the County Transport Team recognised that they didn't know who to engage with at Tewkesbury Borough Council and that their recent engagement with the Borough hadn't been particularly strong.

#### Mass Transit Project

10. The County is exploring whether a Mass Transit system is required within the County. A Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) will be submitted next year (2024). This SOBC would determine the preferred corridors. Again opportunities exist for more engagement from TBC - opportunities I believe we should explore to the max.

#### Rail improvement

11. Rail is not a County competence and they don't have a statutory role; they lobby DfT and Network Rail to enhance the infrastructure for residents. There are a number of schemes being considered by DfT/Network Rail – all possibly forging better connections for Gloucestershire with cities such as Bristol, Birmingham and Cardiff over the next decade or so.
12. It was disappointing to see that the County was doing no lobbying for getting freight off Gloucestershire roads (and especially that off the M5 and A46 for Tewkesbury). I was told that this was because Gloucestershire didn't have any freight terminals in the County – I don't believe that stands up to scrutiny and we could do much to enthuse the County on our behalf.

**13. I propose that we invite the County Transport Team to brief all Members and Officers about the BIP, the Mass Transit Project and also on Rail Transport and we agree how we can work closer together. There is clearly an appetite to do so from the County side. If O&C members concur, I will speak with Cllr Stanley, Lead Member for Economic Development for his views.**

Other matters:

14. A46. The project is currently being reviewed given the 9 May MP debate in the HoC and TBC decision to pause the Tewkesbury Garden Town programme.

15. 'Green'/sustainable skills. I raised a question about basing 'Green'/sustainable skills training in Tewkesbury in addition to the Cheltenham Centre being set up (this is work being coordinated between County and Gloucestershire College). I suggest that I speak with Councillor Hands about how we lobby for Tewkesbury to be included.

16. I am happy for members to contact me about any issues raised above or that arise after reading the Minutes and Reports pack

Cllr. Matt Dimond-Brown