



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB

Telephone 01453 766321 • Facsimile 01453 750932

www.stroud.gov.uk

STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MEMBER REPORT

NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY	Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee
DATE OF LAST MEETING ATTENDED	25 September 2023

BRIEF REPORT:

There were updates on the following items:

Economic Inactivity in Gloucestershire

A presentation was delivered on the latest statistics regarding economic activity in the County. Some of the main points were as follows. There is a growing number of people who are 'economically inactive', neither in work nor unemployed.

- There are more 18-64 year olds not in economic activity than before Covid
- Of the increase – 79.6% of people are in the 50-64 year age bracket
- No clear reason overall – multiple intersecting reasons at individual level
- There has been an increase in long term sickness – this actually started pre pandemic
- Most of the long term sick were already inactive but listed another reason (Only 19% were previously in employment)
- In Gloucestershire, 17.3% of 18-64 years olds are economically inactive – less than national average.
- Health appears to be a factor with those who are economically inactive more likely to say their health is not good or that they have a disability
- Caring responsibilities are another major influence
- Those with a higher level qualification are more likely to be in the workforce

There was also an update on the Employment and Skills Hub Outreach project partnership from the Skills hub who talked about their network of partners across the Districts. The partners for the Stroud District are GL11 and Stroud Valleys Project.

About 68% of the referrals come from the partners
 264 referrals to date of which 63% declared a disability or health condition. 27% BAME.
 30% inactive for over 10 years; 25% participants into employment; 13% into education.
 Most partners have good networks but the hub is also going to look beyond for additional referrals. A referral matrix has been developed to share knowledge of wider support available.



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Business Rates Pool

Councillors considered the in-year position on the Gloucestershire Business Rates pool. This is expected to deliver a gain of £4.4 million of which £874k will go to the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF).

There was also an update on a new Strategic Process for allocating the fund with a twice yearly call for bids. This was approved subject to the need for the Strategic Officer Group to consider additional wording on how the bids contribute to net zero, an amendment requested by Cllr Braun.

There was also a verbal update on arrangements for the new City Region Board. The new inter authority agreement is similar to previous arrangements. Leadership Gloucestershire will consider this and it will need to go ahead to the full Council meeting in October. The first date is not yet set but is likely to be in November.

Information Reports

Information updates were considered on the GCC Economic Dashboard and the GFirst LEP

FUTURE MEETINGS	To be determined – GEGJC now replaced by City Region Board
REPORT SUBMITTED BY	Cllr Catherine Braun, Leader Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources
DATE	04/10/2023



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MEMBER/OFFICER REPORT

NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY	Regeneration and Investment Board
DATE OF LAST MEETING	18 July 2023
ATTENDED	27 September 2023

BRIEF REPORT:

The following matters were discussed at RIB meetings on 18 July and 27 September 2023:

Economic Development Strategy

A progress update was given on all objectives of the Stroud District Economic Development Strategy:

- Improve skills and opportunities and reduce inequalities
- Create advanced and connected workspaces and communities
- Reduce carbon and ecological impacts
- Boost our market towns and rural vitality
- Support inward investment into the local economy

A response has also been provided to the emerging Gloucestershire Economic Strategy, and SDC were represented at a stakeholder event at Kingsholm Stadium on 28 September 2023. In its response, SDC had stressed the importance of being an equal partner in the delivery of the strategy, particularly in light of our planning and economic development responsibilities. The final strategy would come to GCC for approval in early 2024.

Levelling Up Fund – Round 3

No further news had been received from Government (DLUHC) in respect of LUF 'Round 3'. An announcement was still anticipated this Autumn and there was continuing speculation of a move towards a more 'allocative' approach to funding awards, rather than the competitive bidding process that had been in place for LUF rounds 1 and 2.

Stonehouse (Bristol Road) Rail Station

Government had awarded 50k for the development of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the re-opening of this station, supported by Siobhan Baillie MP. The SOBC had been developed by a Steering Group chaired by Chloe Turner and including representatives from GCC, Stonehouse Town Council and SDC. The bid had been submitted 12 months go and a decision from Government was anticipated later in 2023. If successful, a more detailed business case would then be developed which would require significant investment from Government and partners, including Network Rail and Great Western Railway.



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It was noted that Stonehouse Bristol Road served the largest conurbation without rail access to Bristol as the regional capital and that Western Gateway had specifically referenced the re-opening of the station in its Vision for Rail.

Redevelopment of Tricorn House

The Board discussed progress with the above redevelopment and noted that a planning enforcement report had been circulated in September – under the Council's Scheme of Delegation - to Development Control Committee members and Cainscross Ward Members. The report concluded that a material change of use of the building from offices to residential had occurred and that it would not be expedient to take enforcement action. These conclusions have been accepted by the Head of Development Management and no further action will be taken by the Local Planning Authority in respect of the works at the site.

The owner's agent has confirmed that internal fitout of the building is almost complete and works on communal areas and external drainage and utilities was progressing well. Marketing strategies for the 44 residential units are being formulated.

A further meeting with local ward members, Cainscross Town Council representatives and the local MP would take place later this Autumn.

Stroud Rail Station Project

A presentation was given on emerging ideas for the regeneration of Stroud Rail Station and adjacent town sites owned by Network Rail and Stroud District Council, including Cheapside Car Park and the Bath Place site (recently acquired by SDC from Newland Homes). Taken as a whole, these sites provided a major opportunity to create new homes and high quality, welcoming and accessible places for residents, businesses and visitors. The ideas also fitted well with other investments that were either planned or already happening, such as the re-opening of the Imperial Hotel (to be re-named *The Stroud*) and GWR's recent Access for All bid to create step free access for the Rail Station.

Proposals were still at an early stage and there would be engagement with key stakeholders such as the Town Council, Chamber of Commerce. A report on the development and decisions required by SDC would come to Strategy and Resources Committee in early 2024.

Project Pipeline and Highlight Reports

The Board looked at the existing pipeline of regeneration projects across the district, and an updated status report/position on each of these. The pipeline comprised of projects led by SDC as well as by partner organisations, such as the Canal and River Trust.

Highlight reports for the following priority SDC led projects were also reviewed:

- Rail Station, Bath Place and Cheapside sites (update above)



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- Brimscombe Port
- May Lane (Dursley)
- Zero Carbon Public Estate

Regarding the Brimscombe Port Project, the Board were informed that discussions were continuing with St Modwen Homes to enable the Development Agreement to be signed and that it was expected that more information on the timing of a further round of public consultation on the redevelopment plans would be made before Christmas.

FUTURE MEETINGS	22 November 2023
REPORT SUBMITTED BY	Brendan Cleere – Strategic Director of Place

