



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	Leadership Gloucestershire
DATE OF LAST MEETING ATTENDED	5 March 2024

BRIEF REPORT:

Refugees and Accommodation update

This meeting discussed progress on the topic of providing housing for refugees.

A County Council solution has now opened, which provides a capacity of 34 places to house those refugees not deemed in priority need of homeless support.

The new GCC Homes for Refugees scheme has launched, to find hosts who can provide short-term supported accommodation for refugees who have been granted leave to remain in the UK. Hosts provide a spare room for a short time as a stepping stone to help refugees, while they secure suitable employment and long term housing. Hosts are entitled to receive a payment of £600 per month. GCC officers have started by promoting the scheme to people who registered as hosts for the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The scheme has also been promoted by Stroud District Council on social media.

Discussions are ongoing between the Districts' Finance Officers in relation to potential cost sharing for additional support for refugee housing for a three month period initially.

Stronger Local Resilience Forum

The Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum (GLRF) has been selected as one of eight areas in England to be part of the two-year Stronger LRF pilot. GLRF has been working with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to develop a detailed proposal for how they intend to deliver the pilot in Gloucestershire. It is anticipated that the Government will release the pilot funding of approximately £1m in June 2024.

This project relates to UK Government Resilience Framework (2022) which emphasises the importance of a whole society approach to resilience, focusing on prevention and preparation and creating a shared understanding of the risks we face, with the LRFs being key to closer working relations with communities and business. The funding will be used for a new role of Chief Resilience Officer to oversee projects to increase community resilience, as well as two business and community engagement officers. A stakeholder event will be held on 19th March.

It was agreed that Leadership Gloucestershire, as an established body, will be the forum for ensuring political oversight and ownership of this community resilience work.

County Deals

Gloucestershire is being offered a Level 2 Devolution Deal, which would enable, amongst other things, transfer of the adult education budget, of approximately £10m to the county. There seems to be general support for this approach from the Districts. It is expected that the Gloucestershire deal will be announced by government after the local elections in May.

City Region Board Update

Each of the Districts is in the process of approving governance arrangements for the new Gloucestershire City Region Board which will replace the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee. Stroud District Council will discuss the report at our April Council meeting. The first meeting of the City Region Board has been scheduled for June 2024.

Western Gateway

An offer has been made to the preferred candidate for the role of Chair of Western Gateway. This is to be ratified by Government.

There was a successful visit by the Office for Investment (a joint venture by the Department for Business and Trade, and No. 10) to the Western Gateway region last week. This office aims to target countries and high wealth individuals who have a track record of investment. Opportunities include the cyber and hydrogen sectors and Port Talbot regeneration.

Work is ongoing on cyber super cluster mapping, to launch in April/May, and the rail strategy, to launch in the spring.

Work is also ongoing on the Severn Edge project for Oldbury and Berkeley.

Severn Estuary

The Severn Estuary Commission will be officially launched next week, 12th March in Cardiff. Dr Andrew Garrad CBE has been appointed as Chair of the Commission: <https://western-gateway.co.uk/new-commission-chair-explore-tidal-energy-potential-severn-estuary>

The commission will explore tidal energy potential in the Severn Estuary which has one of the highest tidal ranges in the world and has been estimated to have the potential to provide up to 7% of the UK's total energy. The first meeting of the commission is scheduled for next month.

One Gloucestershire ICS

Mary Hutton provided an update on issues for NHS planning and the real terms cut in funding that will need to be managed. The NHS recognises that the councils hold responsibility for the wider determinants of health, and that with an aging population, we all need to work closely together to do more on the health and prevention agenda. Agreed that Leadership Gloucestershire would discuss the demographic challenges for the county and for health at a future meeting.

FUTURE MEETINGS	18 th June, 24 September & 10 December.
REPORT SUBMITTED BY	Cllr Catherine Braun, Leader Keith Gerrard, Strategic Director of Communities
DATE	07/03/2024