



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	30 September 2021

BRIEF REPORT:

The meeting considered reports on the following:

County Strategic Leadership Group for Climate Change

Afriqnmun Lovejoy, the County Climate Change Co-ordinator, presented a paper on the launch of a new County-wide Climate Leadership Group, to include strategic representation from the member organisations of Leadership Gloucestershire, together with other organisations such as the Local Nature Partnership and potentially universities. This would include involving community groups, businesses and youth to develop action plans, as well as working closely with the existing CN2030 officer network. The proposal was supported and the Council's representatives on this new group are likely to be the Chair of Environment Committee and the Strategic Director of Place.

The name, governance, terms of reference, frequency of meeting, chair and work plan creation will be developed by the new group and the ToR will come back to Leadership Gloucestershire for agreement. The work plan is likely to be shaped around key strategic themes such as transport, water management, land management (including ecology and biodiversity), carbon reduction and adaptation, will focus on actions necessary to make progress on mitigation and adaptation at countywide level and will involve other ad hoc attendees at meetings to help develop these. The launch of the new group is likely to coincide with COP26 this Autumn.

Covid-19 update

Siobhan Farmer, the Deputy Director of Public Health, gave an update on the latest position. The Government has released its Autumn / Winter Plan with a Plan A, currently in place with few restrictions, and a Plan B if the situation changes. Current infection rates have fluctuated greatly over the past fortnight, and largely relates to the return to school. While county infection rates at 220 per 100,000 people remain below the regional rate of 288/100,000 and the national rate of 330/100,000, schools are facing a very challenging situation with rates of 725/100,000 in the 10-14 age group. A greater tolerance of Covid infections is emerging but when infection rates reach a threshold of 10% of a school's students, further action is taken.

There are concerns about the impact that caring for ill and self-isolating children is having on the workforce, particularly the NHS, and there are reports of anti-vaccination activity targeting schools, with Police supporting NHS staff to deliver vaccinations in schools. There is also a fake parental consent form in circulation and action is being taken to promote accurate sources of information.



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Hospitalisation rates remain steady with 1 ward taken up by Covid patients (currently 38 patients). It is difficult to establish a pattern related to vaccination / non-vaccination as many patients are fully vaccinated adults. Deaths remain low at 6/7 per week over the past fortnight. There are concerns about the continued pressure that Covid-19 is putting on hospitals and media stories about people not being able to access primary care – in Gloucestershire NHS staff have been taking 20% more primary care appointments than in 2019-20 and elective recovery and cancer treatment is going particularly well, but staff are still subject to abuse.

Vaccination rates in the county are high with 95.2% of those in the highest 12 risk groups (ie the most vulnerable and elderly) having received both doses. A booster will be offered when 6 months has elapsed after the second dose, and people asked to await invitation.

Public Health England (PHE) ceases to exist tomorrow, 1 October, and will be replaced by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) which will also combine NHS Test and Trace and the Joint Biosecurity Centre under new leadership arrangements.

County Devolution Deals

Pete Bungard, CE of GCC, updated that counties had received in an invitation from the previous Secretary of State (Robert Jenrick) to submit expressions of interest for county deals, but few had done so. Gloucestershire CC and many of its neighbours had not.

There is speculation that county deals will be close to city deals, but the details will be in the Levelling Up White Paper, and are expected to include the elements of strong local leadership, improved local governance and directly elected leaders although it is interesting to note that only a couple of recent expressions of interest have included the last of these. With the change of Secretary of State to Michael Gove and a change of direction, it is uncertain how many of these will be progressed and it is recommended that we wait for further news and the White Paper.

The levelling up agenda is likely to drive the content of county deals, on which the county council will take the lead working closely with the districts. Housebuilding and other aspects of growth may feature, and the county will need to be clear about what it would like devolved from Government, for example, around skills.

Western Gateway

Pete Bungard updated that Jo Dally has been appointed Director of the Western Gateway Partnership from August 2021 and it was agreed that she would be invited to a future meeting.

The Independent Economic Review 2 launch event was held on Tuesday 28 September, looking at the prioritisation and delivery of collaborative projects in the Western Gateway.



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The Western Gateway has made some funding requests of the Comprehensive Spending Review:

- £1.5m of further core funding
- £100m for digital acceleration, to be match funded by industry.

Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee Governance Review

Chief Executives Gareth Edmundson and Mike Dawson presented a paper prepared by the CEs group which had been looking at the future of the Committee and governance of related meetings in the county.

Essentially, GEGJC was set up in 2015 and has already been extended for 18 months beyond its original lifespan but will end in March 2022. Next steps need to be agreed. If it is to be extended again then a formal decision will be needed early next year. Currently the GEGJC agrees how the Strategic Economic Development Fund, formed from the business rates pilot pool, is spent to support development in the county.

The future of business rates may well be addressed in this Autumn's Comprehensive Spending Review, which is likely to be published at the same time as the Levelling Up White Paper. This will also have implications for the future governance structure that the county will need to ensure it is best placed to work together on any county deals and fulfil the ambitions of the Western Gateway. Currently there is a plethora of officer and Member groups in the county that address the 'growth' agenda, although it was agreed that 'growth' might not be the right term to continue using in future, and considerable overlap, particularly in relation to the Gloucestershire City Region Board. It was agreed that streamlining is needed.

It was agreed to await the publication of the White Paper, task the CEs group with reviewing the arrangements for handling GEGJC beyond March 2022 in relation to reviewing the wider governance in Gloucestershire and bring back proposals to a meeting of Leadership Gloucestershire in January 2022.

International Resettlement

Jon McGinty presented a paper prepared by Ben Challis, the Gloucestershire Housing Partnership Programme Manager who has taken the lead on co-ordinating the Afghan resettlement programme.

Currently 20 people from 5 Afghan families have settled in the county, at 4 properties in Cheltenham and 1 in Gloucester. A further 4 families are due to arrive in October and 2 in November, which will total about 45 people overall. A further 12 properties beyond that are in the pipeline and so the county is making steady progress on accommodating the 35 families it pledged to take. It is considered that Government may well ask councils to take more.



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The proposal to restructure staffing and gear up to co-ordinate the current Afghan, Syrian and Global resettlement programmes in one place under the Housing Partnership Team was supported. The Strategic Directors group would provide oversight of the delivery of this work and report to the Health & Wellbeing Board, and this would be kept under review.

One Gloucestershire – Integrated Care System

Mary Hutton updated the meeting on progress. The statutory ICS will be in place from April 2022 and CCG functions will be transferred to it and added to. Priorities will be recovery and delivery. The outcome of the legislation as it progresses is awaited.

Dame Jill Morgan has been confirmed as the Chair of the ICS.

Issues around the relationship of the Health and Wellbeing Board with the new Integrated Care Board and Partnership are being explored to avoid duplication.

Care Leavers Covenant

Jon McGinty, CE of Gloucester City, presented the care leavers' covenant prepared by the Strategic Housing Group, to add to the current offer of the district and county councils and join that up. This is being piloted in Tewkesbury for 6 months. The covenant was endorsed to progress with care leavers.

Leadership Gloucestershire Terms of Reference

Cllr Tim Gwilliam, Leader of Forest of Dean DC, requested a review of the ToR and it was agreed that this could be taken up at a future meeting when governance is discussed further.

FUTURE MEETINGS	2 December 2021
REPORT SUBMITTED BY	Cllr Doina Cornell, Leader Kathy O'Leary, Chief Executive
DATE	30 September 2021