



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORT

NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY	Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee
DATE OF LAST MEETING ATTENDED	19 May 2022
BRIEF REPORT:	
1. Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool Update and SEDF bids	
<p>Andrew Cummings reported that the current forecast was as reported last time, a slight increase in pool gain to £4.17m, with £833,000 provisionally to be added to the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF) for the next financial year following the completion of year end accounts for the financial year 2021-22. At present there is £259,000 of unallocated funding in the SEDF.</p> <p>Previously, £2m of SEDF funding had been allocated to the City Region Board, of which £410,000 had been allocated for a Multi Modal Transport study. At present there is £1.59m of unallocated funding in the City Region pot.</p> <p>Three funding proposals were unanimously agreed by the Joint Committee. Two of these were from the SEDF and were agreed on condition of confirmation from the Gloucestershire S151 Officers Group of the receipt of the anticipated £833,000 funding. It is usual to wait until there is funding in the SEDF pot before allocating it. The third bid was to use funding from the City Region pot, which contains sufficient funding to support the bid. The three successful bids were for the following:</p>	
2. <u>Berkeley Low Carbon Training Centre</u>	
<p>The joint bid from South Gloucestershire and Stroud (SGS) College, sponsored by Stroud District Council, for £450,000 from SEDF was unanimously agreed. This represents a £300,000 capital investment for the installation of training rigs and redevelopment of room works, and £150,000 revenue funding for a 2-year project manager post to pump-prime low carbon and retrofit training skills and promote retrofit at scale. This is a pilot project that can be replicated across other districts.</p>	
3. <u>Central Gloucestershire Mass Transit bid from GCC</u>	
<p>A bid for £850,000 of City Region Board pot funding from GCC for a further two stages of feasibility work on a mass transit scheme to deliver public transport to the most populated areas of the county, with connectivity to outlying areas, was unanimously agreed. This had been rejected at the last meeting, when it was requested from the SEDF pot, largely on the grounds that it would have left little funding for any other projects. Further work had been carried out to justify the benefits of this project.</p>	



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4. World-leading Innovation Village at Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester

£100,000 of match funding from the SEDF for specialist project management support for the RAU to develop this project, sponsored by Cotswold District Council, was unanimously supported. The plan is to achieve outline planning permission in 2022 for the RAU's 12 hectare University Gate site for a carbon-neutral innovation village to lead on food security and agri-tech. The aim is to start on site in 2024.

5. **UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

Lisa McCance of Shared Intelligence, who provide economic development consultancy support to GCC, presented a paper to outline the two UKSPF streams – Multiply, ring-fenced to GCC to deliver adult numeracy improvements and core UKSPF to each district. In respect of the latter, Gloucestershire districts receive £1m - £1.5m each (SDC £1.3m) over 3 years, with the GFirst LEP requesting a third of the districts' funding to support projects for which their own funding has diminished.

Shared Intelligence has been commissioned by GCC to develop an evidence base, look across all strategies in the county to build up an investment framework picture and look at opportunities for collaboration. Work is being co-ordinated through the Economic Development Officers' Group.

It was acknowledged that further strategic conversations would be needed to co-ordinate the development of investment plans by the districts by 1 August.

6. **Decarbonising Transport**

Luisa Senft-Hayward, GCC Transport Manager reported on the need for and the aim to create a Decarbonised Transport Plan by the end of 2022 / early 2023. A Climate Change Transport Forum has been organised for July to consider how to address the need to significantly reduce carbon emissions by reducing the need to travel (by creating 20 minute neighbourhoods, improving digital connectivity and travel planning), encouraging mode shift (out of cars and onto public transport or active travel) and improving vehicles (shift to electric and effective network management).

7. **Covid-19 and Economic Intelligence Dashboard**

Kate Martin of GCC gave an update on GCC's Covid-19 Recovery Dashboard. Headlines included:

- The numbers of those claiming Universal Credit has continued to decrease (this was 6% of the workforce in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic, 12% in August 2020,



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2.7% in March 2022 and 2.5% now). This suggests that either pandemic recovery in the county has been faster than the national picture or that it was not as badly affected in the first place.

- Pre-Covid the biggest group of UC claimants was 18-24 year olds, however, post Covid 30-34 year olds are the largest group of claimants. In older age groups the rate of UC claimants had remained steady which suggested that it was harder for them to find work. There might be a link with this age group having school age children.
- The post-pandemic growth in the number of employees in the county has been relatively low, although pay has increased by about 11% across the board. There has been a higher number of job postings compared to pre-pandemic.
- The Kickstart scheme ended in April; 193 participated through the GCC portal with a further 28 employed by GCC, and over 60% of those in work today.

8. GFirst LEP Update

Dev Chakraborty gave an update, the highlights of which were:

1. Over 3000 jobs had been created by the Growth Fund projects.
2. Inward investment - there have been many overseas investment enquiries, particularly from the manufacturing, aerospace and food, drink and agritech sectors. Cyber has been identified as a high potential opportunity in the county.
3. The LEP annual review is coming up.

FUTURE MEETINGS	7 September 2022 16 November 2022
REPORT SUBMITTED BY	Cllr Doina Cornell, Leader Kathy O'Leary, Chief Executive
DATE	23 May 2022