

GESSC report for O&S, March 2025

Cllr Angus Jenkinson

Re item: GCC “engaged with Cllr Angus Jenkinson to identify stakeholders in the agricultural sector.”

I met with the lead officer responsible for GCC farms, Mark Parker. The rural estate manager is Jill Mathew, who I understand is very competent. Resources for the task are limited. There are currently some 75 tenant farms occupying 7000 acres (average size <100 acres, c40ha). The county intends to reduce this to 5500 acres to release capital to cover the considerable costs, especially in social care which absorbs the majority of the budget. In this sense, it can be said that shortage of funding and scale of problem mitigate the ability of GCC’s agricultural sector assets to perform the roles that they might. I discussed such roles as contributing to a) mitigating climate and ecology crises; b) providing one or more agricultural equivalents of the employment hubs to disseminate progressive farming methods (like FarmED); c) education and learning for young farmers who go on to do regenerative farming; d) providing a resilient and nutritious source for short chain food supply for county activities (schools, hospitals...); e) providing a home for local small abattoir(s) for regen and organic farmers needing a traceable source. GCC has developed a GIS system available at CDC.

Forthcoming

- Environment and climate change considerations in the SEDF decision making process has been added to the work schedule.
- Following a request, a focus on the key metrics of the key Economic priorities from the Strategy will be included in every meeting’s Economic Dashboard.
- Digital infrastructure will be discussed in September.

Local Growth Plan

The Gloucestershire City Region Board is planning to produce a Local Growth Plan for Gloucestershire. 2 targeted surveys have been launched to address underrepresented groups (the private sector and one targeting 18-15-year-olds).

Table A – Emerging economic sectors supporting Gloucestershire’s Economic Growth

	Sector	Definition
National Growth Sectors	• Cyber (Digital)	Security and Resilience
	• Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing	Innovative technologies - automation, AI, Robotics, traditional methods of fabrication.
	• Green energy generation	Renewable, low-carbon and clean energy.
Local Economic Strengths	• Future of Agriculture	Sustainable Agriculture, Regenerative Agriculture/Agri-tech/Food Production (growing)
	• Creative industries	Advertising and marketing, architecture, crafts, design: product, graphic and fashion design, film, TV, video, radio and photography, IT, software and computer service, publishing, museums, galleries and libraries, music, performing and visual arts Arts/events/culture/ Festivals
	• Sustainable Tourism/Hospitality	Visitor Economy/Slow Tourism/Hospitality Industry/Leisure/recreation (Regeneration/Town Centres)

The following existing workstreams will be added:

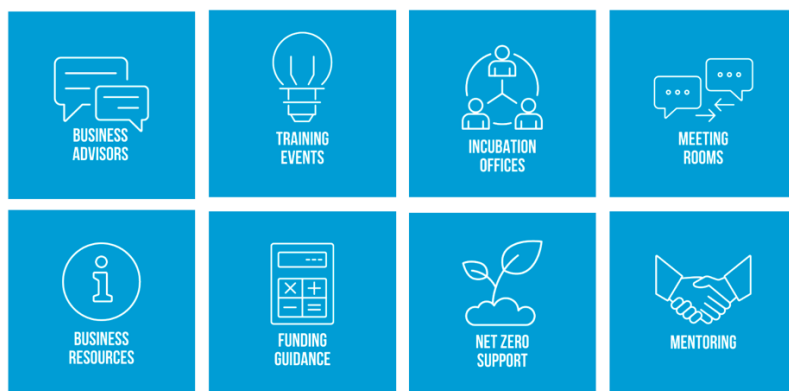
- Tewkesbury Borough Council’s study to assess the opportunities for the Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing sector in the Borough.
- Plexal’s work to produce a narrative to unlock Gloucestershire’s economic potential in the security and resilience sector.
- Western Gateway’s energy proposals for Oldbury and Berkeley and Tidal.
- The River Severn Partnership work on digital connectivity as part of the Advanced Wireless Innovation Region commission.
- Progress made in the production of a Countywide Strategic Development Plan.
- Gloucestershire County Council’s commission to outline Gloucestershire’s Story with a view of identifying shared priorities and outlining why Gloucestershire is different to other shire areas.
- Emerging Green Skills Strategy.

A draft will be presented in July.

Local Growth Hubs

A report on the Growth Hubs was given. I can provide a copy.

Set up in 2014, they are supported by the 6 Strategic Partners and delivered through 6 Growth Hubs, 1 per district - the only network in the UK with a physical presence at district level.



Performance outcomes

Include:

- Jobs created
- New businesses created
- Businesses engaged in knowledge transfer
- Adopting new to firm technology
- Innovation active SMEs/Innovation plans developed
- Adoption of new products/services
- Early-stage firms increasing revenue
- Engagement in new markets
- Increasing export capability
- Increasing business sustainability
- Business start-ups

Businesses supported since transition to GCC, 1 April 2024

District	Support Requests via Website	Growth Hub Visitors (Footfall)	Training Events (121, Online, Workshops)	Event Attendees	Growth Plans (inc. Event Only)
Cheltenham	218	603	23	159	261
Cirencester	119	1960	60	254	232
Forest of Dean	196	594	22	64	122
Gloucester	197	2100	20	162	254
Stroud	170	645	46	185	200
Tewkesbury	195	554	52	186	218
Totals	1,095	6,456	223	1,010	1,287

1 April 2024 – 10 March 2025

They sponsor the *Top 100 Businesses Listing* recognising and celebrating local business success across a variety of award categories.

St. James's Place Wealth Management comes #1 (2024 awards based on 2023 results) as the biggest company in Gloucestershire by turnover. Also appearing high up is Nuvias Global Services Limited t/a Infigate, Hercules Real Estate Limited, Derek Raphael (Holdings) Limited, Sodra Wood Limited (22), Procurri Europe Maintenance (refurbishment, trading and remarketing of computers), Pegasus Planning Group (consultancy), IT and Cloud Solutions, Lodge Service International, Shipton Mill (which supports farmers who promote biodiversity), Woodlodge Holdings (garden furniture), Barons Eden in Moreton (spas and hotels)...

Ubico is at £50m for 2023 data.

<https://www.soglos.com/hot-list/business/the-top-100-businesses-in-gloucestershire-2024/23148/>.