



Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET – MARCH 2024</b>
Subject	<b>GLOUCESTERSHIRE CITY REGION BOARD</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Tony Dale Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation Email: <a href="mailto:tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk">tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
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Report author	Robert Weaver Chief Executive Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	<p>To consider the emerging form and function of the Gloucestershire City Region Board, the nature of its authority, terms of reference, membership, and joint scrutiny arrangements.</p> <p>To enable the Council to play an active part in the formalisation of a new Gloucestershire Region Board to support the delivery of developing a vision for the future growth of the economic success for the whole of the Gloucestershire economic area.</p> <p><i>Note - reports with similar recommendations are being taken to the Cabinet/ Executive of each principal Local Authority in Gloucestershire, in parallel.</i></p>
Annexes	Annex A – Terms of Reference. Annex B – Principles for the administration of the SEDF Fund
Recommendation(s)	<p>That Cabinet resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Agree to the establishment of the Gloucestershire City Region Board (GCRB);</li><li>2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Council Transformation, to finalise and complete the Inter-Authority Agreement (including the Constitution) and other key documentation and to take all necessary</li></ol>



	<p>steps to create the GCRB, including finalising the terms of reference for the GCRB;</p> <p>3. Agree that the above recommendations will not be effective until all Gloucestershire Councils pass equivalent resolutions;</p> <p>4. Agree upon the establishment of the GCRB to;</p> <p>4.1 Delegate this Council's functions as are necessary for the delivery of the functions identified in the Terms of Reference at Annexe A to this report to the GCRB;</p> <p>4.2 Confirm the appointment of Gloucestershire County Council as the Administering Authority;</p> <p>4.3 Appoint the Cabinet member for Economy and Council Transformation of Cotswold District Council to the GCRB as the nominated member of the Board and to nominate a deputy to be agreed.</p>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supporting the Economy</li></ul>
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Leadership Gloucestershire (a group comprising the Leaders and Chief Executive Officers of all Councils in Gloucestershire) has considered and supports the proposal to establish the Gloucestershire City Region Board.



## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers the emerging form and function of the Gloucestershire City Region Board, the nature of its authority, terms of reference, membership, and joint scrutiny arrangements.
- 1.2 **Reasons for Recommendation:** To enable the Council to play an active part in the formalisation of a new Gloucestershire City Region Board to support the delivery of developing a vision for the future growth of the economic success for the whole of the Gloucestershire economic area. Similar recommendations are being taken to the Cabinet/ Executive of each principal Local Authority in Gloucestershire, in parallel.
- 1.3 **Resource Implications:** The Gloucestershire County Council will act as Administering Authority in the overall management of the Board. This will involve Gloucestershire County Council's Democratic Services and its Legal team supporting the Committee formation process and ongoing Committee Secretariat function, plus additional lead Officer input, including SI51 and Monitoring Officer, as required, in support of the Council's role as Administering Authority.  
Future resource requirements over and above these commitments will be duly considered through the Board.  
Note: [CRB PROSPECTUS EOI.pdf](#) (gloucestershire.gov.uk) - £50K funding for the City Region Prospectus
- 1.4 **Timeline:** January 2024: Inter-authority Agreement finalised and agreed by all Gloucestershire Local Authorities.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Gloucestershire local authorities have worked jointly together through membership of several Boards (Severn Vale, Rural Ambitions and Central Gloucestershire City Region) together with the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC) for several years. Following a review of the joint working arrangements, Leadership Gloucestershire agreed that the three boards and the Joint Committee should be merged into a single forum under the name of Gloucestershire City Region Board serving the whole of the county. This report sets out the emerging form and function of the Gloucestershire City Region Board, the nature of its authority, terms of reference, membership, and joint scrutiny arrangements.

## 3. THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE CITY REGION BOARD

- 3.1 The overall aims of the new Board will be to develop and deliver a vision for the future growth of the economic success for the whole of the Gloucestershire economic area. The



new City Region Board will also provide an opportunity to establish the City Region as a nationally defined single economic functional area. The 'City Region' will include urban and rural areas that have inter-related economic activities which have the potential for increased success through coordinated interventions which benefit the whole. Gloucestershire is a county with significant growth aspirations and ambitions which integrate with and support the national and regional growth agendas.

#### **4. PRINCIPLES OF THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE CITY REGION BOARD**

- 4.1** The proposed terms of reference set out in **Annex A** provide details of the Board's purpose, powers, and administrative arrangements.
- 4.2** The following detailed matters explain the nature of the authority given to the Board which 'empowers' the Board to make binding decisions but subject to the following governance arrangements:
- Whilst the Board's remit is as wide as possible, partner Councils will not 'delegate' economic development or other broader functions to the Board. These will remain within the remit of the district council.
  - Leaders will still need to operate within the authority delegated to them by their own Councils when participating at the Board's meetings. Leaders and officers will therefore need to work with their own Councils to secure the necessary authority to facilitate the Board's decisions.
  - A partner Council will be free to undertake any economic activity it deems necessary within its own area. Notwithstanding this, it will be necessary for partner Councils to agree a protocol that they will not decide or undertake any activity which is contrary to those decisions made by the Board.
  - In order to protect the interest of partner Councils it will be necessary to agree a protocol that although the Board's decisions are by majority, the Board will not make a decision which impacts upon one council's area, without that council's agreement.
- 4.3** The following principles for the operation of the Gloucestershire City Region Board were developed, following consultation and engagement with Leadership Gloucestershire and all the Gloucestershire authorities:



- The proposed membership of the Board will be through elected representatives from each of the seven Gloucestershire Local Authorities. Each member will have an equal vote at the Board.
- The proposal is for the Chair of the Board to be a Gloucestershire County Council Cabinet Member. This supports the Governments arrangements through the levelling up agenda where the upper tier authority in a two-tier county, such as Gloucestershire, is given the lead role in negotiation of any county devolution deals. Therefore, Gloucestershire local authorities recognise the opportunity for a county deal is more about providing devolution from central government to Gloucestershire, rather than a mechanism for realigning and removing powers from an individual Gloucestershire local authority.
- Meetings will remain in public and external attendees will be invited to present and engage in the discussion about the economy and growth in Gloucestershire.
- The future development of the Board will be dependent on any County Deal that is negotiated and agreed with Central Government.
  
- The Senior Officer Group comprising of nominated senior officers from each of the seven Gloucestershire local authorities will continue to support the work of the Board. The County Council's GEGJC Scrutiny Committee will be re-constituted and reviewed to re-focus it on having oversight if the activities of the GCRB. This will potentially include monitoring the delivery of projects that have received investment from the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF) or making suggestions to the GCRB on potential areas of future investment of the fund.

**4.4** The proposed Board's operational arrangements between the Gloucestershire Authorities will be the subject of an inter-authority agreement. The agreement will include (amongst other things):

- the establishment of the Board (as a Joint Committee),
- agreed terms of reference (as set out in Annex A)
- the operational arrangements mentioned above,
- the Board's resourcing and the role of the County Council as administering authority
- business -plan formulation



- the arrangements should the Board wish to widen its powers (which would require all the Gloucestershire authorities to agree such a change) and
- the overall constitutional arrangements for the Board

**4.5** Article 12 of the County Council's Constitution already recognises the Cabinet's power to establish joint arrangements with other Local Authorities to exercise Cabinet functions, including the appointment of joint committees, whose members may include elected members of other Local Authorities.

**4.6** The exercise of the Board's powers will, as mentioned above, require each constituent council to provide the authority to exercise such powers at the Board, together with amendment to the County council's Constitution to include details of the new Board. The County Council's Monitoring Officer proposes to exercise his delegated powers under the Constitution's Scheme of Delegation, to update the Constitution to include the Board's governance arrangements set out in Annex A.

## **5. STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND**

**5.1** The Gloucestershire local authorities established the Business Rates Pool which enabled part of the Pool to create the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF). The former GEGJC administered the fund through an approved eligibility and project approval process in November 2018.

**5.2** At the GEGJC's final meeting in September 2023, members welcomed the reported growth of the Business Rates Pool and fund. The GEGJC asked whether a more strategic approach could be taken when considering and allocating SEDF funding. The fund operated under the GEGJC on an ad hoc approach – on a first come first served basis. GEGJC noted that projects are not always strategic in nature which risks funding being allocated to projects that may not maximise economic benefit and growth to the county.

**5.3** The proposal is for the Board to administer the SEDF. This will enable the Board to reconsider the approach to the allocation of bids by developing a longer vision and a portfolio approach to assessing funding bids in the pipeline. This will enable the Board to apply a more rigorous selection of projects that would deliver and add value in supporting the growth of the local economy through a more strategic approach.

**5.4** The former GEGJC considered it was important to establish a new strategic process in advance of the inauguration of the City Region Board. It was suggested that this strategic approach could be lined up with the Economic Dashboard data and the emerging

Countywide Economic Strategy. (Led by the County Council, with each district contributing/collaborating)

- 5.5 The former Joint Committee Senior Officer Group proposed an approach to the Board's administration of the SEDF Fund as set out in Annex B, which will be considered at the Board's inaugural meeting.

## **6. SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS**

- 6.1 The activities of the previous GEGJC were scrutinised by the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Scrutiny Committee. (GEGSC). This was a County Council scrutiny committee whose membership comprised seven County Councillors and 6 Co-opted District Councillors.
- 6.2 Through consultation with all Gloucestershire Authorities, it has been agreed that a joint scrutiny function will continue to exist to scrutinise the work of the GCRB. As before each local authority will be able to nominate a representative to that committee
- 6.3 The creation of a new GCRB provides a timely opportunity to undertake an appropriate review of the GEGSC to ensure that it aligns with the future activities of the GCRB
- 6.4 The review of the scrutiny function is proposed to include (not an exhaustive list):
- Scope the committee
  - Review of scrutiny's oversight and monitoring of SEDF Bids
  - Development of devolution and the implementation of any agreed County Deals
  - Monitoring outcomes and benefits through the implementation of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy
- 6.5 It is proposed that following this review a report is provided to the GCRB and Leadership Gloucestershire to ratify and agree the future scope and activities of the GEGSC.

## **7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7.1 As part of the development of the GCRB alternative options were discussed and discounted
- 7.2 Retaining both a GCRB and a GEGJC was deemed to create significant duplication and would not be effective
- 7.3 Disbanding any joint governance for Gloucestershire authorities to operate individually was also not considered as an option. Without a collective decision-making forum to invest pooled business rates funding via the SEDF and Gloucestershire Authorities would be



significantly financially worse off without a joint forum in place. In addition, disbanding a joint decision-making forum and not proceeding with the GCRB would likely limit Gloucestershire's ability to proceed with and secure further devolution and county-wide powers.

## **8. OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

**8.1** It is recommended that Cabinet Member(s) agree to

- the establishment of the Gloucestershire City Region Board through the creation of a Joint Committee in accordance with Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972
- give the delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Cabinet member for Economy and Council Transformation of Cotswold District Council, to finalise and complete the Inter-Authority Agreement (including the Constitution) and other key documentation, on terms to be approved by the Council's legal advisers as set out in the recommendations at the beginning of this report.

## **9. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – FOLLOW UP.**

**9.1** The Gloucestershire economic Growth scrutiny Committee will provide overarching scrutiny of the work of the Board and the Scrutiny's overall remit will be taken forward as set out in this report at sections 6.1 – 6.5

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**10.1** The inter-authority agreements (IAA's) provide for a contribution towards the County Council's Administering Authority role, which includes committee administrative support together with the statutory officer responsibilities.

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**11.1** Statutory Authority: Section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 enables two or more local authorities to discharge any of their functions jointly and arrange for the discharge of those functions by a Joint Committee.

**11.2** Section 9EB of Part A Chapter 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 Act enables the Secretary of State to make Regulations permitting arrangements under Section 101 (5) where any of the functions are the responsibility of the executive of the authority. The relevant regulations



are the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012/1019.

- 11.3** Regulation 11 makes provision for joint arrangements to involve a joint committee under Section 101 (5) of the 1972 Act and the Council's constitution (Paragraph 11.02.3) allow the decision to establish the Joint Committee and determine the number of members to be appointed to the Joint Committee and their terms of office to be made by the Cabinet. (Set the context for the report and refer to any previous relevant decisions.)
- 11.4** An Inter Authority Agreement between the participating Authorities is necessary to formalise the arrangement. A draft has been agreed with the Head of Legal Services for the Council.

## **12. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 12.1** If the GCRB is not established there will be no mechanism to take decisions on the investment of SEDF
- 12.2** If the GCRB is not established, it will limit Gloucestershire's potential for future devolution
- 12.3** If the GCRB is not established there will be no Gloucestershire-wide forum to support and drive and monitor the implementation of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy.

## **13. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 13.1** There are no specific implications in relation to the above matters in establishing the Board. However, the Board will consider such implications in making its decisions and in administering the SEDF.

## **14. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1** There are no specific implications in relation to the above matters in establishing the Board. However, the Board will consider such implications in making its decisions and in administering the SEDF.

## **15. DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA)**

- 15.1** There are no DPIA implications in relation to this decision There are no DPIA implications in relation to this decision

## **16. BACKGROUND PAPERS**



COTSWOLD  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

**16.1** The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee: 9 February 2023
- [GEGJC Future Governance Update V2.pdf \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](#)
- Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee: 25 September 2023
- [GEGJC Pool Update Sept 2023.pdf \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](#)

**16.2** These documents will be available for inspection online at [www.cotswold.gov.uk](http://www.cotswold.gov.uk) or by contacting democratic services [democratic@cotswold.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@cotswold.gov.uk) for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting.

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