



Agenda Item 2 (a)

Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 noon
Date: Thursday 6 September 2012
Venue: Members' Room

Notes of the meeting of Leadership Gloucestershire held on 21 June 2012

1. Welcome, introduction and apologies.

| Name | Organisation | Substitute |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Cllr Mark Hawthorne (Chair) | Gloucestershire County Council | |
| Cllr Carole Topple | Cotswold District Council | |
| Cllr Geoff Wheeler | Stroud District Council | |
| Cllr Rob Garnham | Gloucestershire Police Authority | |
| Cllr Paul James | Gloucester City Council | |
| Cllr Patrick Molyneux | Forest of Dean District Council | Cllr Brian Robinson |
| Cllr Robert Vines | Tewkesbury Borough Council | |
| Cllr Steve Jordan | Cheltenham Borough Council | |
| Dr. Helen Miller | Clinical Commissioning Group Chair, NHS Gloucestershire | |
| Jan Stubbings | Gloucestershire NHS | |
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| Chief Executive Advisers | | |
| Pete Bungard | Gloucestershire County Council | |
| Mike Dawson | Tewkesbury Borough Council | |
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| Secretariat | | |
| Jane Burns | Gloucestershire County Council | |
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| Visitors | | |
| David Hagg | Stroud District Council | |
| Sandra Cowley | Stroud District Council | |
| Nigel Riglar | Gloucestershire County Council | |
| Jo Walker | Gloucestershire County Council | |

2. Localisation of Council Tax Benefits and consideration of Business Rates Pooling.

David Hagg, Sandra Cowley and Jo Walker gave a presentation on the changing landscape of local government funding and the implications for Gloucestershire. They explained that the Finance Directors had presented to Chief Executives and discussed the key issues in detail. Their advice was included in the presentation.

On Business Rates the proposed approach was explained, including the fact that information is incomplete with further consultations due in July and whilst Central Government is encouraging local authorities to pool local contributions the timescale is tight: 27th July 2012. The benefit of rates retention for an area has been reduced in recent consultations whilst the risk transfer will increase compared to current funding risks.

Members raised a number of questions about rates retention and pooling, including administrative costs, how benefits might be distributed, local incentives and whether everyone needed to be involved.

Agreed Actions:

- (1) All local authorities are willing to sign up to the principle of pooling local business rates subject to further analysis proving it would be beneficial, and agreed that an expression of interest should be submitted by 27 July 2012.
- (2) Finance Directors to produce a timeline setting out the more detailed work required.
- (3) A further report to be brought back to Leadership Gloucestershire in due course.

(Action: Sandra Cowley, Jo Walker).

On local support for Council Tax, local authorities were expected to develop and implement new schemes from 1 April 2013 which delivered a 10% reduction in funding. Pensioners are protected and consideration must be given to the impact on vulnerable people. Furthermore, the scheme must be subject to consultation before approval.

As part of other changes in the Finance Bill, Local Authorities are also able to review their Council Tax exemptions.

Members considered a number of options to deliver the required savings. They also raised questions around the impact on the property market and equalities considerations.

Agreed actions:

- (1) All District Authorities to adopt the default scheme for year 1.
- (2) The scheme to be reviewed following the introduction of Universal Credit.
- (3) A joint approach to consultation and communication be developed.
- (4) A joint approach to showing 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty to be developed.
- (5) District Councils to review Council Tax exemptions, to implement at the 25% level to achieve the necessary funding gap identified.

(6) A progress report be brought back to Leadership Gloucestershire in due course.

(Action: Sandra Cowley and Jo Walker).

3. Notes of the previous meeting held on 22nd March 2012.

The notes of the meeting held on 22 March 2012 were approved.

All matters arising had been pursued or were reported back elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Infrastructure and Economic Growth Update

Nigel Riglar presented an update which drew together a number of strands.

- Commissioning Economic Development Services – the legal and procurement difficulties outlined at the last meeting had been overcome.
- Broadband – a decision on the provider was due at the end of July. The intention was to hold a Digital Services Event in the Autumn – open to all local authorities and partners.
- Growing Places - £8.4m was available to help tackle infrastructure constraints and unlock stalled development sites. A core requirement is that this should be a sustainable “revolving” fund. As yet, there were no live propositions. A small working group had now been established to pursue the project. The County Council is the Accountable Body.
- Funding Major Transport Projects – the Government wished to see greater influence of the LEP in the decision making arrangements of local transport bodies. Current infrastructure projects included: Cinderford Northern Quarter Spine Road, Junction improvements at Elmbridge, A417 missing link, full movement at Junction 10 M5, Kemble Swindon Rail line redoubling and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.
- Carole Topple was concerned about the issues over air quality and car parking at Kemble Station.

A number of questions were raised about progress with key schemes. Robert Vines was keen for Tewkesbury Borough Council to facilitate a discussion to pursue full movement for Junction 10.

Agreed actions:

(1) Tewkesbury Borough Council to convene a meeting to discuss Junction 10 improvements.

(Action: Mike Dawson)

(2) A further report be brought in due course.

(Action: Nigel Riglar)

5. Night Time Levy

Rob Garnham introduced the report which provided an early marker for a new piece of legislation. The Late Night Levy would allow local authorities to charge a levy to any premises open after 12 midnight that sells alcohol. The Levy is designed to pay for the prevention of crime and disorder. Local authorities, as licensing authorities, administer the scheme and the revenue would be split 70% to the local police and 30% to the local authority (net of administrative costs).

Members raised a number of questions about the proposal and have mixed views about its usefulness/deliverability.

Agreed actions:

(1) Chief Executives be requested to look into the issue in more detail and report back to a future meeting.

(Action: Mike Dawson)

(2) Further detail is provided on the scheme.

(Action: Rob Garnham)

6. Asset Management Task Group

Steve Jordan introduced the report which contained a formal programme mandate for the work of the Asset Management Task Group. Good progress was being made in this area. Appreciation was expressed about Andrew McCartney for the County Council who was driving this forward.

Agreed actions:

(1) the programme mandate is approved; and

(2) Cllr Steve Jordan is reaffirmed as Leadership Gloucestershire Sponsor.

7. Community Mapping Proposal

Pete Bungard explained the origin for this proposal. It came from the Health and Well Being Board's aspiration to empower and encourage (geographical) communities and to produce a needs assessment of community assets. Pete explained that whilst the county and district 'units' of geography were well established, the picture at a more local level was very different, for example 55 neighbourhood policing areas, 200 plus parish and town councils, GP practices, neighbourhood working etc.

Members raised questions about the timescale and cost of the work. It should be completed by December 2012 and cost @ £20k. NHS Gloucestershire and GCC would share the costs.

Agreed actions:

- (1) Leadership Gloucestershire supported the proposal to undertake/commission further work to establish a map of natural communities.

(Action: Dr Shona Arora)

8. Gloucestershire Total Place Conference

Pete Bungard introduced the report from the successful conference held on 15th May 2012. This had involved over 40 leaders and senior managers from across the public and voluntary sections. The key points of learning for the two projects – Families in Gloucester City; and Older People in Stroud – were the importance of a people centre approach (not service focussed) and the need for local flexibility. The report set out the next steps now that the projects had come to an end. Both would be taken forward in new programmes – Living Well and Troubled Families.

Leadership Gloucestershire welcomed the update and were supportive of the next steps. They wanted to continue to oversee developments; particularly how the cultural changes were being embedded and staff empowerment.

Agreed actions:

- (1) A further report be brought back in 6 months.

(Action: Jane Burns)

9. Work Programme 2012/13

Jane Burns explained that a draft Work Programme had been circulated for comments. Thanks to those who have commented. The updated version was presented for approval.

Members supported the Work Programme subject to clarification on the outcomes sections and the addition of the implications of the Changing Local Funding Landscape.

Agreed actions:

- (1) the Work Programme is agreed, subject to the amendments outlined above.
- (2) quarterly reports on performance be brought to future meetings.

(Actions: Jane Burns)

10. Progress Reports

- (a) Gloucestershire Health and Well Being Board – Mark Hawthorne reported back from the recent meeting. The key points were: the co-option of David Hagg to represent housing; the emergence of the draft Health and Well Being Strategy and the planned communication and engagement exercise; and the links with scrutiny.
- (b) Countywide Strategic Planning Issues Group – Paul James explained that the group had not met recently. He would provide a written update.

(Action: Paul James)

11. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 6th September 2012 10.00 am – 12 noon

Key Messages

The Changing Landscape of Local Government Funding – Leadership

Gloucestershire agreed in principle to express an interest in pooling local Business Rates. They also agreed to adopt the default scheme for Local Support for Council Tax.

Community Mapping Proposal – Leadership Gloucestershire supported the proposal to develop a map of natural communities in Gloucestershire. This would be used to encourage and support multi-agency working.

Work Programme – the Work Programme for 2012/13 was approved, with the addition of the implications of the implications of the changing local funding landscape.

The meeting ended at 11.55 am.