



<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>24 March 2022</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Continuation of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee until 31 March 2023</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
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<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. Report to Council, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To consider a request to extend the operation of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC) until 31 March 2023 and to delegate authority to the Head of Paid Service to amend the Inter-Authority Agreement (dated 4 September 2014) accordingly.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** to:

- (i) Agree to the GEGJC continuing to operate until 31 March 2023, and
- (ii) delegate authority to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Leader of the Council to agree and complete the appropriate legal documentation to allow the Inter Authority Agreement to be extended until 31 March 2023.

**3.0 Background**

3.1 Members at the time will recall that the Council considered and approved a report in July 2020, extending the operation of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC) for a period of 18 months to expire on 4 March 2022. A copy of the report is set out in Appendix 1. Members will note that the decision in 2020 removed the requirement for 12 months' notice for any future changes to the agreement.

3.2 The eighteen-month period was to allow Gloucestershire local authorities to continue to work collaboratively together on Gloucestershire's economic development through the Joint Committee. At its June 2020 meeting, the Joint Committee also identified

that it will be supporting the economic recovery of the County because of the economic impact of Covid-19. The 18-month extension was to enable the Joint Committee to oversee the strategy development and delivery, as the principal partnership based economic co-ordination forum.

3.3 Implicit in the previous extension was the need to review the operation of the GEGJC and whether it remained the appropriate forum to consider joint working on Economic Growth and managing the funds held for Economic Growth generated by the Business Rates Pooling arrangements in the County.

3.4 Gloucestershire Authorities considered the future governance arrangements for leading economic growth in the County at its Leadership Gloucestershire meeting in June 2021. Leadership Gloucestershire was mindful that the government would be publishing the 'Levelling Up' white paper which would potentially impact the future governance and partnership arrangements. It was anticipated, at that time, that the White Paper could be available before Christmas which would allow Officers and Members time to consider the issues raised by its proposals and develop governance proposals in respect of the future economic agenda for Gloucestershire.

3.5 Unfortunately, the anticipated White Paper was delayed and was only published in February 2022. Consequently, at its meeting in January 2022 Leadership Gloucestershire considered three options in respect of the continuation of GEGJC pending publication of the anticipated White Paper:

- Do nothing and let GEGJC terminate in March 2022 – this will mean there is no formal partnership decision making body on economic issues and specifically no joint administering body for the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF). Unless alternative governance arrangements were established for the SEDF, the funds would need to be handed back to the business rates pool authorities.
- Extend the life of the GEGJC for say 12 months, or for as long as needed, and carry on as at present. This is the simplest option and will not require significant work to amend the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA). It will simply require a resolution from each local authority to continue GEGJC for the period agreed.
- An alternative to option 2, would be to extend the life of the GEGJC, but limit agenda items to SEDF decisions. The Gloucestershire City Region Board could then be used for all other strategic discussion, offering a wider partnership forum for these items. This option could be delivered by simply managing the GEGJC agenda and could be done without the need for significant amendments to the IAA.

3.6 Gloucestershire Authorities at the Leadership Gloucestershire meeting favoured option 2 as the simplest and least disruptive. The further extension of the IAA to continue until 31 March 2023 to enable the GEGJC to continue until that time, and review of the governance arrangements in respect of the future economic agenda for Gloucestershire to take place during that period.

#### **4.0 Alternative Options Considered**

4.1 Not to agree to the Joint Committee continuing until 31 March 2023 will result in there being no other formal joint decision-making arrangements across Gloucestershire local authorities in place to promote the economy and support the economic response to COVID19.

## **5.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 5.1 To enable the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee to continue to operate until 31 March 2023.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The inter-authority agreement between the Councils provides for the administration costs of the Gloucestershire Economic Joint Committee (capped at £5,000 per annum) to be paid from the Strategic Economic Development Fund.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report)

## **7.0 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The IAA no longer includes a provision requiring 12 months' notice being served by any of the partner authorities to any proposal to extend the life of the committee. Therefore, it is permissible to extend the agreement if all the Gloucestershire local authorities agree.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation of this report)

## **8.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

- 8.1 The proposed extension of the IAA until 31 March 2023 to enable the Joint Committee to continue to operate until that date does not present any particular risks to the authority.

## **9.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA)**

- 9.1 The proposed continuation of the Joint Committee until 31 March 2023 will not have any significant equality implications therefore a PIA is not required.

## **10.0 Other Corporate Implications**

### Community Safety

- 10.1 None

### Sustainability

- 10.2 None

### Staffing and Trade Union

- 10.3 None

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