

**Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Group report for O&S
19th October 2017**

Today was the first of the new-style outreach sessions. It was held in the Council Chamber at TBC. The Scrutiny Group meets six times a year. Four of these are at Shire Hall in the afternoon of the quarterly Economic Growth Steering Group morning meetings and two per year are stand-alone meetings.

The first thing to say is that the meeting was a great success; Tewkesbury have set a high bar.

The main event was a 30 minute presentation by Cllr Rob Bird (Deputy Leader) and Mike Dawson (Chief Executive).

The title was:

**Tewkesbury Borough Presentation
Gloucestershire Growth Engine**

They aim to become the Primary growth engine for Gloucestershire's economy. But essentially, they argue that their strategic location straddling the M5, together with their huge allocation of employment land (roughly 33% of all Glos strategic employment land) and housing land (50% increase in housing in TBC and 40% of new housing across Glos) in the JCS makes Tewkesbury the ideal place for expansion. Their current unemployment rate is less than 1%, so they need more houses for new workers if their economic plans are to come to fruition.

This was a really inspiring talk, capped off with a 4 minute promotional video of what Tewkesbury offers to incoming businesses. The session plus Q&A was scheduled to take just 1 hour, but we took two as there was a lot of discussion not least on the JCS and the SEP.

The Video is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnxgeLpZZt4> It is just 4 minutes and well worth watching.

I was left feeling that I needed to see the presentation from the other 5 districts. (Yes, I do include Cheltenham as I don't recall ever seeing such a wide-ranging yet succinct 30 minute presentation of Cheltenham's Economic vision.) As things currently stand, it will take the Scrutiny Group two years to get around the six districts. That is far too long for the Scrutiny Group to wait to get a better understanding of what each District is doing. There was a suggestion that the Scrutiny Group should scrutinise implementation of the SEP. Probably so, but to do so we would need to get to see all six District presentations first. And we probably should set aside a day to do it. At our November meeting, we will be updating the workplan to reflect the outcomes of today's meeting.

Next Away meeting (February) we will be in The Cotswolds and it will be Cheltenham's turn to host in the Autumn. So, could we please take an Action Point to agree a date/time with Jo Moore at GCC when the Cheltenham Council Chamber

will be available. Currently 31st October is scheduled. The aim is to open the session up to all CBC Borough Councillors. Not that this is a competition, but no-one from The Cotswolds was there today to see the effort Tewkesbury had put in. We will see how Cotswold perform in February. Cheltenham needs to at least match Tewkesbury, and we should be starting to implement the JCS by then so there will be a lot to shop-window. Might I suggest that a few key players need to start thinking about the format of the event before the summer break so that the date is in all key players' diaries (Pat Pratley, Steve Jordan, Tim Atkins.....).