

Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGSC) and GEGSG Scrutiny Group – Report to O&S

I've changed the title as it can be difficult at times to focus entirely on the goings on at the Scrutiny Group without the context of what the GEGJC is doing. The crucial distinction is that GEGJC is the Judicial Body that brings together GCC and the 6 Districts to make collective decisions on the way forward for Gloucestershire (at least as far as Economic Growth is concerned). A significant part of the afternoon agenda is concerned with what happened in the morning.

For Cheltenham, the most important news was that the £22million for the Cyber Hub is now de-retained [by Government]. i.e. it is now Gloucestershire's money.

SUB NATIONAL TRANSPORT BODIES (SNTBs)

Four Sub National Transport Bodies have been set up in England. The South West Region has yet to establish one. There are 120 Transport Authorities in England, and the Government has told the 120 to join together and co-operate on funding bids if they want any money. It seems likely that the South West Region will be split into two parts, with the South West peninsula doing its own thing, whilst the rest work together. A surprise addition is Bournemouth & Poole who are somewhat remote but they have a strategic interest in the transport links between Bristol Docks and Poole Harbour. They are looking for more resilience hence their interest in the A303 and the A350. At the moment, any problems on the M5 cause significant problems.

The key growth corridor is the Bristol/Birmingham corridor, and this is rising up the National agenda but it will be two years before any Parliamentary time is available to get a Statutory Instrument to make any new SNTBs.

John Baker has been appointed as Gloucestershire Strategic Planning Co-ordinator. He will be building up a relationship with Local Planning teams and hoping to produce a work plan for September.

Most of the Scrutiny Group meeting was taken up with a debate on the possibility of the AONB becoming a National Park. Cllr Lyndon Stowe, Cotswolds Leader and chair of the Joint Committee had asked the Scrutiny Group to undertake a study to determine the implications of the AONB becoming a National Park. There was complete agreement that such a study was important and necessary; the concern was whether or not the work should be commissioned by the GEGJC and scrutinised by GEGSG or actually undertaken by the scrutiny group. After a tied vote, resolved by the chair's casting vote, it was decided that the scrutiny group should undertake the work.

The AONB covers 15 districts, in several counties and a briefing note is attached.

The Scrutiny Group is looking to set up a task and finish group on the impact of Brexit, particularly on women and minorities in the County, and also to review the quality of mobile coverage across the county.

Councillor Paul McCloskey

21st June 2018