

Gloucestershire Vision 2050

Concordat: 22 October 2018

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Concordat is intended to capture some two years of thinking and contributions from the Gloucestershire community in a single place; to set out a mandate that we believe exists for taking forward a Gloucestershire Vision 2050; and the way in which we might take this work forward.

2. Background and Context

- 2.1. A project to develop a vision for Gloucestershire in 2050 arose from a number of developments and discussions in 2016. Under the guidance of an Expert Advisory Group (which consisted of a cross-section of all stakeholders in Gloucestershire) an initial Vision was developed. This Vision identified the need for an ambitious, innovative, coherent, and cohesive long-term development plan for the county.
- 2.2. Separate to this process, the University, with the County Council, enrolled on Leading Places in 2016, a programme developed in partnership between the Local Government Association, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, and Universities UK. The Gloucestershire Leading Places project focused on how to improve the long-term, strategic leadership of the county, most specially to ensure that Gloucestershire fulfils its potential for economic and social development.
- 2.3. Although separate in origin, the two projects came together around a central theme of enabling decision makers and advocates to step outside of the status quo, current development plans, short-term political pressures, frameworks, and initiatives, to consider where Gloucestershire needs to be in 2050.
- 2.4. In July 2017 the University was asked to lead further work around the Vision. This work eventually became three connected activities:
 - a) Development of the Validity Framework: a process to assess the relative impact of different ideas or projects against an agreed set of ambitions as a way of informing judgements about priorities.
 - b) A report on Delivery Vehicles: the creation of guidance for leaders in the county about the structures necessary to deliver transformational change.
 - c) The Big Conversation: a broad public engagement exercise to seek views on the initial Vision and the set of ambitions set out in the Validity Framework.
- 2.5. More than a series of proposals, the intention of Gloucestershire Vision 2050 is to set ideas that collectively can transform the county for tomorrow while embracing, retaining, and nurturing the values and assets that are the central strengths of Gloucestershire today.
- 2.6. The purpose of this Concordat is to record the commitment of Leadership Gloucestershire to develop the work that will actively create a positive future for the county. As part of this work Leadership Gloucestershire:

- a) Welcomes and notes the development of the Validity Framework, the report on Delivery Vehicles, and the outcomes of the Big Conversation as set out in sections 4 to 6. [October 2018]
- b) Agrees the Gloucestershire Vision 2050 as set out in section 7, including the amended ambitions. [October 2018]
- c) Acknowledges that there are critical medium and long-term issues relating to health, community, skills, safety and culture, for which existing partnerships provide governance, but which should be seen in future as integral to an inclusive Gloucestershire Vision 2050, as set out in section 8. The current governance structures should be mapped as part of the county-wide infrastructure, including their major projects of medium or long-term significance. [December 2018]
- d) Agrees, using the governance mapping, to scope further the establishment of three Boards to move forward the realisation of that Vision as set out in sections 9 to 12. [February 2019]
- e) Agrees to determine the most advantageous county-wide structure that would support the activities of the three Boards as set out in section 13. [March 2019]

2.7. This will not be the only work undertaken to realise the Vision, and Leadership Gloucestershire therefore commits to review progress with the realisation of the Vision and may from time to time establish such other groups or initiatives as may be thought necessary.

3. **The Need for Change**

- 3.1. Gloucestershire is a fantastic place to live with bustling towns, a historic city, innovative businesses and beautiful countryside. But the county faces some major challenges that will impact on all our lives if we don't take action.
- 3.2. These challenges include a shifting demographic, with people living longer and young people leaving. A stark regional difference, for example, is that on average Bristol attracts 4,000 young people every year while Gloucestershire loses 400. If nothing is done to increase the attractiveness of the county as a place to live and work across all age groups then on current estimates by 2039 there will be 79,000 more people over 65, but only 7,000 more people aged 18 to 64, and 4,000 more people under 18.
- 3.3. We have a great strategic location and a strong, competitive economy but are falling behind in terms of productivity and innovation. Over the next 20 years and depending upon UK growth prospects, there is estimated to be demand for up to 100,000 new jobs in the county, but only 7,000 more people of working age to fill them – and this is in a context where 77% of employers already report 'hard to fill' vacancies.
- 3.4. Gloucestershire also faces those issues which affect other places, including climate change and the need to increase levels of sustainability in all we do. Social inclusion must be addressed and gaps in educational provision filled.
- 3.5. Leadership Gloucestershire has therefore accepted the responsibility of owning a long-term vision for our county, so we are fully prepared to overcome the obstacles that threaten our future and our children's future.

4. **Big Conversation Report**

- 4.1. Leadership Gloucestershire welcomes and notes the report on the Big Conversation, which engaged people across the county and attracted over 2,500 responses.

- 4.2. The responses to this exercise demonstrated the existence of a real desire to plan for a better future for the county. Leadership Gloucestershire accepts that that desire should be harnessed and continued through a structured programme of work that seeks to deliver inclusive benefits to all parts of the county. The Big Conversation has therefore provided a clear mandate to continue with the development of the Vision.

5. **Validity Framework Report**

- 5.1. Leadership Gloucestershire has welcomed the Validity Framework Report. The 8 ambitions described in this report, with the suggested inclusion of 'safe' in the ambition for a healthy and happy county, are accepted as a foundation for decision-making in future, and have equal weight in Leadership Gloucestershire's eyes. It is also recognised that through the Big Conversation, the community prioritised the Inclusive, Healthy, Sustainable ambitions. Leadership Gloucestershire will therefore use the Validity Framework Report as an adaptable tool and consider new metrics and recalibration of weightings where necessary.
- 5.2. This report will be one point of reference to help inform the development of the Boards mentioned below and will support thinking about future county-wide structures.

6. **Delivery Vehicles Report**

- 6.1. Leadership Gloucestershire will consider the Delivery Vehicles Report. This report provides options for a structure for decision-making about the establishment of appropriate vehicles to realise transformational change. The examples of actual delivery vehicles are limited, so Leadership Gloucestershire will, over time, build a pool of further examples.

7. **The Gloucestershire Vision 2050**

- 7.1. Having considered the feedback provided by the Big Conversation, Leadership Gloucestershire has endorsed the following Vision for Gloucestershire 2050.

Gloucestershire: a great place to live, work and do business, with a thriving future.

And what does a thriving future mean? [Present in future as horizontal bubbles if poss]

- a) *An inclusive county: we will ensure that the economic and social benefits of growth are felt by all.*
- b) *A magnet county: we will see a growing working age population, by keeping and attracting more 18-40 year olds with high level qualifications, who want to live and work in the county.*
- c) *An innovative county: we will see more businesses starting up, growing, and investing in research and innovation.*
- d) *A skilled county: we will see more people with high-level skills and jobs in skilled occupations.*
- e) *A prosperous county: we will see rising productivity and household income, offering higher living standards.*
- f) *A healthy, happy and safe county: we will ensure people have a good work/life balance and see improved health and wellbeing.*
- g) *A connected county: we will see improved transport and internet connections so that people and businesses can connect with each other more easily.*
- h) *A sustainable county: we will see more efficient use of resources and more use of sustainable energy.*

7.2. Leadership Gloucestershire owns this Vision and the Ambitions. It will establish such mechanisms as may be needed to ensure the Vision is realized. Any project developed with the intention of furthering the realisation of the Vision will be tested against the ambitions through use of the Validity Framework.

7.3. It is recognised that these ambitions should be seen as sufficient for now, but there remains scope for further adaptation as we consider wider aspects in this report. The inclusion of 'safe' in the ambition for a healthy and happy county will require the adoption of new metrics into the Validity Framework. The inclusion of new ambitions (or new elements to existing ambitions) will likewise require a reappraisal of the underpinning metrics.

8. Existing structures to realise the Vision – to be captured fully by December 2018

8.1. There is already in existence a well-established multi-agency governance framework which can be built upon to provide robust strategic leadership for many of the ambitions in the Gloucestershire Vision 2050. These include:

- a) The **Health and Wellbeing Board**, which is currently undertaking a refresh of the joint health and wellbeing strategy for Gloucestershire.
- b) The **Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee** which has recently commenced work to coordinate strategic spatial planning in the county to advise developing local plans in the period to 2050.
- c) **Safer Gloucestershire**, a partnership body created to enhance public safety in Gloucestershire, working closely with the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- d) The **Gloucestershire Employment and Skills Board**, which provides a link between the workforce and training needs of local employers with the provision of local education, training and skills providers in the county, to ensure there are strong matches between them.
- e) The **Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership**, which drives positive change in the local natural environment, taking a strategic view of the challenges and opportunities involved and identifying ways to manage it as a system for the benefit of nature, people and the economy.
- f) The **Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership**, led by the business community, in partnership with voluntary, education and public sectors, and which drives sustainable economic growth throughout the county.
- g) The **Gloucestershire VCS Alliance** champions and supports voluntary sector organisations, aiming to make a difference to the quality of life for local people and contributing towards a sustainable future for Gloucestershire.

9. Realisation of Gloucestershire Vision 2050 – for further consideration and resolution by February 2019

9.1. Leadership Gloucestershire acknowledges that Gloucestershire Vision 2050 encompasses the full range of health, social, cultural, community, physical and technical infrastructure projects. While much relevant action is already in train (STP, Industrial Strategy, Joint Core Strategy) there is more to do.

9.2. The initial Vision discussed through the Big Conversation included six ideas. The feedback on these ideas was invaluable in shaping the potential Boards outlined below, and raising the importance of county-wide transport, skills development, affordable housing, and culture as additional elements identified for greater importance.

9.3. Leadership Gloucestershire has agreed that the idea to develop an international airport in

the Cotswolds will be dropped. However, the development of better international connections will be vital in 2050 so work should progress to create stronger strategic links and better sustainable transport connections with existing major international airports including Heathrow, Bristol, Birmingham, and Cardiff.

- 9.4. In the central area of Gloucestershire we found on balance a rejection of ‘merger’, loss of identity, and unchecked growth, but there is strong support for greater coordination and supportive development that addresses the issues faced by Gloucester and Cheltenham while enhancing their valuable and unique characters. There is little doubt that to have any impact on the younger person demographic will require a change to the offer in this central area.
- 9.5. Leadership Gloucestershire has therefore agreed to scope further the establishment of Boards for three projects. Leadership Gloucestershire recognises that the scoping exercise for each Board will need to start with defining and affirming their own potential remit and goals. Public engagement will be crucial in all cases. These three potential Boards are described in section 10 below.
- 9.6. Each Board will consider how to frame its scope so that it best delivers against each of the eight ambitions. Initially each Board will therefore be asked to complete a scorecard using the Validity Framework which shows how it has capitalised on proposed developments within its remit to have maximum positive (and minimum negative) impact on the ambitions.

10. Central Gloucestershire Growth Board/Central Gloucestershire City Region Board

[Title of Board to be confirmed at February 2019 Leadership Gloucestershire meeting]

- 10.1. The purpose of this Board is to provide the vision and strategic context for the area currently covered by the Joint Core Strategy: this includes Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Borough. It is important that this vision covers all aspects of community life and business ambition, rather than just a development focus.
- 10.2. A successful future for this area will require support from key government agencies, particularly Homes England and Highways England. Evidence from other areas shows that recognition of the government’s Cities and other agendas will assist in maximising the government support available.
- 10.3. However, the sensitivity of the ‘City’ word is recognised, and is not intended as a descriptor of wholesale urbanisation. There are existing and emerging areas in England which use the ‘City Region’ brand to capture a geographical area with common purpose, often including market towns and significant rural hinterland. Use of this phrase needs to wholly respect that there is strong support for co-ordinated development, but no appetite for urban merger, loss of identity or unchecked growth.
- 10.4. One of the key areas of focus for the Board will be the creation of a vision and masterplan which will set out how this area will respond to the Vision 2050 ambitions. The masterplan vision will also complement and support growth plans in other parts of Gloucestershire.
- 10.5. The Board’s vision will be shaped to set out the kind of ambitious growth that will integrate business growth opportunities, high quality and affordable new homes, and infrastructure with ready access to sustainable green space and first-class leisure and cultural opportunities.
- 10.6. The masterplan vision will advise the future development of the Joint Core Strategy which

will ensure its incorporation into formal spatial planning processes.

- 10.7. The vision will have a particular focus on the following issues:
- a) Increase the area's ability to act as a central magnet and for the Cyber Park to become the UK hub for cyber security, a cyber hub of national and international importance
 - b) Ensure that the valuable and unique identities of Cheltenham and Gloucester are not diminished through a co-ordinated agenda for a wider area.
 - c) Ensure that developments in the area are of a high quality and of international standing.
 - d) Ensure that inclusive economic growth is of equal benefit to both existing and new communities, and that health inequalities are a focus for action.
 - e) Recognise the critical role that M5 junction improvements at 9, 10 and 11 will have in terms of delivering any significant growth, including cyber, wider business and housing.
 - f) Ensure that the approach to transport includes improved connectivity within and to and from the area.
 - g) To support new and existing communities, strategic development in the area will need to include high quality accessible green infrastructure.
- 10.8. This vision for innovative growth will be a vision to put Gloucestershire on the map as a centre for success, a magnet in central Gloucestershire to draw in new people and businesses to a world-class county.

11. **Severn Vale Board**

- 11.1. The role of Gloucestershire's Severn Vale is critical in terms of infrastructure and connectivity beyond the county, including issues such as rail improvements, the M5 corridor upgrade (and particularly junction capacity at 12, 13 and 14) and wider national transport links. But for this Board to respect the Vision 2050 concept and ambitions, it must consider all aspects of community life and business ambition rather than just an infrastructure focus.
- 11.2. In addition to upgrading existing infrastructure, Vision 2050 has considered the potential role of a third crossing of the River Severn between the Forest of Dean and Stroud districts. Whilst to date this has been described as a Lydney-Sharpness bridge, other locations have been suggested through consultation to date, and the Severn Vale Board should explore all options for a new crossing.
- 11.3. Wherever a new crossing is promoted it is recognised that this development should be more than simply an element of local transport infrastructure. Within Gloucestershire, this development would create stronger links between the Forest of Dean and Stroud districts, and even Gloucester, but beyond that it would connect much of England to South Wales in a new way that takes pressure off the M4 and M5. The local dividend will be the potential for new communities and economic growth based on the ambitions set out in the Vision. The Severn Vale Board should aim to seize the potential to make this part of the county not just a destination in its own right but also a new gateway to South Wales and critical to the operation of South Wales, the West of England, and the West Midlands
- 11.4. The Board should consider how to ensure local connectivity needs are informed by national developments, recognising that infrastructure development will be driven by where the volume of people want to get to both in and out of county; so, for example, local rail services will only be improved if Gloucestershire can work with others to get the strategic rail network serving city regions and tying into major national infrastructure investments such as HS2, west side of Heathrow, East-West Rail, and Crossrail.

12. Rural Ambition Board

- 12.1. As the title suggests, this Board should be looking for a positive vision of a vibrant rural economy, which allows market towns and villages, communities and businesses to be as proud of their contribution to Gloucestershire as they are already proud of their landscape. It should be looking at ways in which a vision for our rural assets compliments the vision for growth elsewhere in the County.
- 12.2. This Board will be asked to consider how to take forward regional parks and rural county-wide connectivity issues, which will include roads, rail, public transport and digital connectivity. There are many transport challenges to consider: within rural areas; connecting to the facilities of our urban areas; and connectivity beyond the county.
- 12.3. This Board should consider how to address what impact the overall development of the county will have on the rural areas, and how that can, if necessary, be mitigated as well as the contribution the rural areas can make to that development. The latter may include ecosystem services such as upper catchment flood management, high quality accessible green space, provision of key corridors allowing climate change adaptation for bio-diversity, and additional land for new 'garden' communities. This Board must have regard to the economic contribution that rural areas will make, noting that within 2 years something like 35% of premises in our rural areas will have world leading digital connectivity – with 1GB fibre to the premise. This will drive further investment including agri-tech, which has an enormous global potential and is already emerging through the RAU's Farm 491 Innovation and Incubation Hub.
- 12.4. As an additional issue, this Board should also consider how to include within its potential remit support for an aspirational vision for the Cotswold Water Park.
- 12.5. An example of a live long-term issue is the Government's willingness to look at amendment of AONB and National Park designations. Whilst pursuing enhanced landscape status would initially sound very positive for say the Cotswolds or the Forest of Dean, its impact needs to accommodate appropriate economic growth, adequate housing provision within low wage rural economies, and an existing infrastructure deficit.

13. Future County-wide Structures – for further consideration and resolution by March 2019

- 13.1. Any board charged with the delivery of a defined project(s) will only succeed if it can relate to a relevant over-arching structure that has an appropriate remit and relevant powers. On the presumption that Leadership Gloucestershire currently holds the county-wide architectural role, it is suggested that it would need to significantly stretch its functionality for it to sit above ambitious change projects. Looking at successful models elsewhere in the UK, this could include:
 - a) Executive capacity (and funding) to function at all times, rather than to the episodic nature of its meetings.
 - b) Be prepared to be a single point of accountability in the eyes of Government, which is almost certainly key to any devolution of national functions and finance.
 - c) Be prepared to take on any responsibilities that the public bodies of Gloucestershire want it to hold collectively on their behalf.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1. Leadership Gloucestershire has agreed to move forward with a Vision of an exciting,

vibrant, and prosperous future for the county. It will be important to continue to engage with the public as the Vision is developed further, especially with the young people who will continue to be the main beneficiaries of life in 2050 and beyond. In that sense, and alongside the scoping work of the potential boards outlined above, the Big Conversation continues.

- 14.2. Leadership Gloucestershire has therefore committed to review, and report publicly from time to time on, progress in taking forward the commitments in this Concordat.