

LEP Business Group Update – 30 June 2016

Banking & Finance

- A Banking and Finance Clinic was held at the Growth Hub on 15 June. The panel included leading industry experts from Banking, Grant Specialists, Crowdfunding, Venture Capital, Business Angels and the Growth Hub.
- Once again the feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive. Comments included *“This is the first time that I feel as though someone really understands what I am trying to achieve with my business”* and *“You have provided me with the knowledge, contacts and confidence to approach, alternative routes to access the finance my business requires”*
- Another **free** Banking and Finance Clinic will be held on **Growth Hub on Tuesday 20 September**. In a 30 minute, one-to-one session, the panel will be able to offer advice on a variety of funding issues to help businesses grow. Further information, including an application form for a **free** session, can be found [HERE](#)

The next Banking and Finance meeting is at the Growth Hub on 12 July

Construction and Infrastructure

- At the meeting on 22 June the group considered the Inspectors interim findings of the Joint Core Strategy published on 31 May. A copy is [HERE](#). On the employment land front they reflected on their role in increasing the amount to a total figure of circa 200ha – treble the 64ha originally proposed. Whilst an allocation at J10 sought by the SEP is now unlikely, it is likely there will be a large allocation at West Cheltenham, near GCHQ, to accommodate any expansion they require as well as a facility for a Cyber Innovation Centre.
- The Inspectors problems on the housing numbers and locations were also acknowledged. They thought that the Inspectors recommendations had turned out as well as could have been reasonably expected.
- The proposed Community Infrastructure Levy rates (CIL) were discussed. It was felt that those propose for Tewkesbury and Cheltenham in particular were excessive when compared to places such as Bath and Wiltshire. The group will make representations before the CIL consultation period expires on 24 June.

- Sarah Danson from GFirst LEP gave an interesting and informative presentation on the proposed roll out of the Growth Hub Network. The group were also provided with an update on the progress of all the bids made for funding under Growth Deal 3 initiative.
- At their next meeting they wish to brainstorm problems with common planning issues they all encountered. The will include points such barriers to development in the county, the apparent lack of planning resources in the local authorities, excessive pre conditions and delays in dealing with appeals etc.
- Other issues to be considered in due course are the delays in providing utilities, including broadband, on new sites. In addition the problems with recruitment and skills were highlighted. The demographics arising from the baby boomer generation was causing real problems. The Construction and Infrastructure sector simply can't train people fast enough.

The next meeting is at Roberts Limbrick on 13 July

Transport & Logistics

- The group met on 30 June to oversee progress of the £44.5m in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) allocated to 14 Road Schemes. All are currently on target. Consideration is being given to the LEP Assurance Framework following the move of 5 schemes from the Gloucestershire Local Transport Board (GLTB) to the LEP from 1st April.
- Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) has commissioned the external company CH2M to undertake a review of J9 west on the A438 to Tewkesbury and J9 East on the A46 to Teddington. Meanwhile an A46 Working Group is looking at a long term solution from M69 junction in the North to M5 J9 junction in the south involving Worcestershire LEP, Coventry and Warwickshire LEP and various local authorities.
- Work in conjunction with other stakeholders on a solution to a 4 way junction at J10 is on hold pending availability of the "Saturn" traffic model. It is hoped this will be ready by mid-summer. Meanwhile the LEP propose to make a bid for £1m to the recently announced DfT "Large Local Major Schemes" fund for development funding for J10 by 28 July. Considerable support is on the application is being provided by GCC. The group is looking for letters of support for the initiative, particularly from local businesses. There will be promotional activity in the local press and radio.
- A meeting of the Highways England (HE) Project Board took place recently to start the funding process for the A417 Missing Link. GCC have allocated £4.5m towards feasibility costs There seems momentum to ensure that the scheme would be contained within funding in HE Road Investment Strategy (RIS) 2 (2020 to 2025) as HE have recently appointed a dedicated Project Manager for the scheme.
- The LEP are still waiting to hear the result of their bid for (£2.5m + £2m) £4.5m under the HE Growth & Housing Fund for road schemes at Elmbridge and the Gloucester South West Bypass. However, the informal indications are that it is unlikely to be successful.

- The Group are also heavily involved in all aspects of the Growth Zone theme of the SEP regarding opportunities for economic growth along the M5 corridor from J9 at Tewkesbury to J13 at Stroud/Stonehouse. Brief highlights of these are:
 - J9: Covered above
 - J10: Impact of possible expansion of GCHQ and supply chain Cyber Innovation Centre
 - J11: Impact of possible Expansion of GCHQ and supply chain Cyber Innovation Centre
 - J12: Impact of Incinerator.
 - J13: Ecotripty: New Eco Park and Football Stadium.
 - J13A: An aspiration has been flagged up by Stroud DC with HE

The next meeting is at the Growth Hub on 8th September

Creative

- The sector members have been working on a survey to help map the creative sector in Gloucestershire. Working from an outline put together by Chris Isaac, the group has been submitting amendments. Once the final details are agreed Chris will post the survey on a website. A publicity campaign using the network connections of the various Business Group members will ensure the survey reaches its target market. The survey has been devised so that it applies to businesses that have creative skills employees as well as those who are businesses in the creative sector. The group invited all LEP Business Group members to support this fact finding activity by spreading the word and ensuring that they also consider the creative roles within their own businesses and complete the survey where appropriate.
- The next meeting plans to look at the Growth Deal application process, to consider potential for funding of projects which would support the creative industries.

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed

Energy

- This month the energy Business Group welcomed Andrew Webster from the Growth Hub. Andrew explained the plans for Growth Hub expansion and was able to respond to questions from the Business Group. The group was particularly interested in how the Growth Hub is able to support businesses by encouraging them to review their energy use as part of a business diagnostic. The group offered to assist the Growth Hub with suitable questions to include this as part of the diagnostic approach with Growth Hub clients.
- Mike Brain of Severn Wye Energy Agency reported that he has confirmed funding for work to develop a local energy strategy. This work will need to engage with a wide range of businesses and organisations across the county and will provide an opportunity for the Business Group to work with other GFirst Business Groups. The group has also started to consider other Business Group aims and objectives to identify opportunities for cross sector working. The members are particularly interested in speaking with the Land based sector with regards to biomass use by farms; construction and infrastructure and transport and logistics on the potential for developing innovative approaches to energy use within these sectors.

The date of the next meeting is 2 September

Technology

- The technology group has now confirmed a date before the schools summer holidays, with All Saints Academy in Cheltenham for the virtual job briefing sessions. Members of the group are lining up younger employees to talk to school students about their jobs and the type of work they do. This will all be delivered via skype conferencing facilities, so that the presenters will be able to take part from their own workplace and the students from the school conference suite. One of the main benefits is the reduction in time commitment for both the school and the businesses. The group is keen to hear from other Business Group members who have people working in technology roles that would be interested in supporting this innovative approach, to giving young people the chance to find out more from their near contemporaries about what it is really like to work in technology.

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed

Business and Professional Services

- The Group met on 25th May 2016 at the Growth Hub. The meeting was split whereby the first section was spent discussing the future planning of the Growth Hub Network with Sarah Danson, GFirst LEP Senior Project Manager, who also clarified some aspects with the Group that were raised during the last meeting.
- The second part of the meeting focused on delivering feedback to the Promoter of the Cirencester Enterprise Quarter Project and his team. The Business Group members had reviewed the revised Business Case and gave feedback and critiqued the content ensuring that the Business Case gave clarity and provided the evidence and justifications to support its' claims.
- This is the second time that the Group had reviewed the project and the collective feedback was that the revisions were an immense improvement on the original.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 13th July at the Growth Hub

Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing

- The Business Group have been working closely with Festomane, GFirst LEP and GFutures on organising an event that will take place at the Growth Hub on Thursday 14th July from 3:30pm. This event "Encouraging Careers in STEM", is aimed at all teachers and careers leads from all schools across Gloucestershire.
- It will include talks from management, current apprentices and graduates from local businesses to show the range of jobs and routes into the sector.
- Participating schools will be entered into a draw to win prizes and opportunities to have real-life hands-on experiences and inspiring opportunities to develop the understanding of the wide range of career options that is available in this sector.

The next meeting will take place on Monday 18th July

Land Based

- It has been decided that we will host a Land Based Business Event at the Royal Agricultural University in Cirencester, immediately following the LEP's Annual Event that morning.
- The event will be aimed at providing an insight into the work of the LEP and the Growth Hub to encourage more rural business interaction and engage.
- There will be a presentation from a rural business that has diversified and this will give the opportunity to hear their journey to success.
- The event will also have the opportunity for the rural community and businesses to 'have their say' in facilitated round table sessions so that we can ensure that the work we undertake is shaped according to their real life business needs.
- At the next meeting shaping the event will be the main topic on the agenda

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 14th July

Retail

- The Retail Laboratory (£400k from the Growth Deal) continues to be an ongoing project for the group to feed into – the location has been secured, and we are now looking for a commercial sponsor.
- The Digital Retail Pilot is moving forward under the banner of the Great Gloucestershire High Street campaign – a B2B and consumer campaign will be launched shortly. The retail Business Group again feed into this – Polly Barnfield, Maybe* has been invited to sit on the group and provide regular updates.
- The group is starting to address 'retail as a serious' career and is currently an area of discussion – Katherine Johnson, GFutures was invited to the last meeting to talk to the group about her work involving schools, and ways that the group could get involved. Ways to move this forward will be addressed at the next meeting.
- Cheltenham have recently been successful in securing the BID, the group will continue to receive updates on its progress and offer help and support. They will also support any other potential BID areas in Gloucestershire. Gloucester is hoping to become a BID and hope to go to ballot in spring next year.

The next meeting is on 21st September