



## GFirst LEP Business Group Update July 2016

### Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing

- The Group met on 18<sup>th</sup> July at the Growth Hub.
- The Encouraging Careers in STEM event took place on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July. From initial feedback it appears to have been a great success with many different schools taking part. Teachers really enjoyed hearing the individual and inspiring stories from the apprentices that represented the different companies.
- A BEng Integrated Engineering Open Evening took place on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July. Feedback on the interest and uptake of this course will be passed back to the group.
- *The next meeting will take place on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September.*

### Banking & Finance

- The group met on 12<sup>th</sup> July with a presentation from Martin Quantock and Sarah Tyler on the £400k capital the LEP has secured to deliver a Retail Laboratory to develop retailers of the future. Premises had been negotiated in a prime position at Gloucester Quays. The project is now seeking sponsors to fund the revenue expenditure to help deliver the project.
- Simon Sheldon spoke about [The Expert Advisors for Manufacturing \(TEAM\)](#) and their desire to work closer with the AEM Business Group in the delivery of an event later in the year.
- It was agreed to run another **free** Banking and Finance Clinic will be held at **Growth Hub on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> 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 group are also considering running an Access to Finance type event similar to that provided at the Gloucestershire Business Show. The possibility of a joint event with the LEP Business & Professional Services Business Group with a focus wider than just pure finance will be explored.
- *The next Banking and Finance meeting is at the Growth Hub on 20<sup>th</sup> September.*



## Business and Professional Services

- The Group met on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016 at the Growth Hub.
- Sarah Danson joined the group to give a detailed update on the Growth Hub Expansion and Network. The process for calls for Expressions of Interest from partners wishing to set up a Growth Hub centre is underway.
- Mark Gale from the Gloucestershire Gateway Trust had been invited along to the meeting to talk about Gloucestershire's 'Building Better Opportunities' initiative – **Going the Extra Mile GEM.**
- *The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September at the Growth Hub.*

## Construction and Infrastructure

- At their meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> July the group considered the housing issues arising at the Examination in Public (EiP) of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury EiP. The view was that Inspectors recommendations had turned out as well as could have been reasonably expected given the difficult circumstances.
- There was widespread concern at the length of time all planning issues took and the need for a more positive, proactive approach. It was acknowledged that there were resource issues in Local Authorities and the group were keen to help, as effective planning is a key ingredient for economic growth. A compendium of planning issues is being collated for discussion at the next meeting where practical solutions would be sought as a precursor to seeking a meeting with senior officials within the Local Authorities.
- The group discussed the possible impact of Growth Deal 3 schemes on the *Growth Zone* initiative in the Strategic Economic Plan. Although detailed information was not provided it was acknowledged that the proposed Cheltenham Cyber Park, Ecotricity Development, Longford A40 Housing Plan and the Airport Expansion schemes in particular would have a major impact if they were successful.
- The group received an update on the Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Fund (GIIF) and the recently approved loan funding award of £3.5million. The group had also been approached by the Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) who wished to provide a presentation focused on the Construction Industry and funding opportunities. Externals had also sought help from the group to provide input into the economic performance of Cheltenham included looking at the evidence and stock of employment land. Another request was to work with the JCS on the Affordable Housing Partnership, in particular to explore links within the LEP in construction skills.
- *The next meeting is at Roberts Limbrick on 17<sup>th</sup> August.*

## Creative

- The group members have been working on a survey to help map the creative sector in Gloucestershire. Once finalized, a publicity campaign using the network connections of the 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 members invite 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 of the group 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

- The group welcomed Andrew Webster from the Growth Hub to explain the plans for Growth Hub expansion. 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 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 group to work with other LEP 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 Group 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<sup>nd</sup> September.*

## Land Based

- The group met on 14<sup>th</sup> July at the Growth Hub.
- Sarah Danson joined the group to give a detailed update on the Growth Hub Expansion and Network. The process for calls for Expressions of Interest from partners wishing to set up a Growth Hub centre is underway.
- The Land Based Business Group event ([Innovation in Gloucestershire's Rural Businesses](#)) will take place after the LEP Annual Review at the Royal Agricultural University on 16<sup>th</sup> September.
- The group discussed the frustrations with national government and represented bodies with the delay in decision making and the effects it was having on the rural economy since the BREXIT decision.
- *The next meeting will take place on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September.*

## 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](#) – a B2B and consumer campaign. The retail Business Group 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’. Katherine Johnson from GFutures was invited to the last meeting to talk to the group about her work with schools and ways that the group could get involved. Ways to move this forward will be addressed at the next meeting.
- Cheltenham has recently been successful in securing the Business Improvement District vote and 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.*

## Technology

- On 19<sup>th</sup> July, the group delivered the first of the technology careers workshop sessions. 15 students at All Saints Academy took part in this innovative session chaired by Ian Bourne of Cloud 2020. A panel of four people working in the sector talked about their roles, the work they do, how they came to be working in the technology sector and what inspired them. The session took place via Skype, with the students sat in the school conference room and the panel all at their own workplaces. The group hopes this is the first of further sessions and perhaps a model that other business groups could also use.
- *The next meeting is to be confirmed.*

## Transport and Logistics

- The group discussed progress of the £44.5m in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) allocated to 14 road schemes; all of which are currently on target. The LEP Assurance Framework is being changed following the move of 5 schemes from the Gloucestershire Local Transport Board (GLTB) to the LEP from 1<sup>st</sup> 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.
- On 28<sup>th</sup> July the LEP bid for £1m to the DfT “Large Local Major Schemes” fund for development funding for J10. Considerable support is on the application was provided by GCC and their framework suppliers. The group was grateful for the large number of letters of support from MPs, Local Authorities, local businesses and other key stakeholders.
- 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.
- Unfortunately the LEP were unsuccessful with 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.
- The Group is 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 Cheltenham Cyber Park
  - J11: Impact of possible Cheltenham Cyber Park
  - J12: Impact of Incinerator.
  - J13: Impact of possible Ecotricity Eco Park and Sports Stadium
  - J13A: An aspiration has been flagged up by Stroud DC with HE
- *The next meeting is at the Growth Hub on 8<sup>th</sup> September.*