

GFirst LEP Business Group Update – August 2016



Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing

- The Group met on 18th July at the Growth Hub.
- Encouraging Careers in STEM event that had taken place on Thursday 14th July. From initial feedback it was a great success. Many in the Group were delighted to see so many different schools taking part. Teachers really enjoyed hearing the individual and inspiring stories from the apprentices that represented the different companies.
- Integrated Engineering Open Evening took place on Thursday 28th July and University of Gloucestershire will be contacted for some feedback on the interest and uptake of this course and pass this back to the group.

The next meeting will take place on Monday 19th September at the Growth Hub. For questions about the group please contact Barry Bodin-Jones: barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com.



Banking & Finance

- The group last met on 12 July. Simon Sheldon spoke about “The Expert Advisors for Manufacturing” (TEAM) www.expertadvisorsmfg.co.uk 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 and will be held in the **Growth Hub on Thursday 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 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 meeting is at the Growth Hub on Tuesday 20th September. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com.



Business & Professional

- The Group met on 13th July 2016 at the Growth Hub.
- Sarah Danson joined the Group to give a detailed update on the Growth Hub Expansion and Network Update and discussed that the process for calls for Expressions of Interest from partners wishing to set up a Growth Hub centre was 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 14th September at the Growth Hub. For questions about the group please contact Barry Bodin-Jones: barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com.



Construction & Infrastructure

- At their meeting on 17th August the group expressed widespread concern at the length of time all planning issues took and the need for a more positive, proactive approach. It was acknowledged however, that there were resource issues in Local Authorities and the group were keen to help as effective planning was 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. 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 Inward Investment Fund (GIIF) and the recently approved loan funding award of £3.5million. It was agreed that the Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) should provide a presentation focused on the Construction Industry and funding opportunities at the next meeting.
- 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 Joint Core Strategy on the Affordable Housing Partnership, in particular to explore links within the LEP in construction skills. Further assistance had been sought from Cotswold District Council in conjunction with their Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy.

The next meeting is at Roberts Limbrick on Wednesday 14th September. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com.



Creative

- In July the sector members arranged an impromptu meeting to consider an Arts Council funding opportunity. The application to the Arts Council has to be submitted by the end of August. The purpose of the meeting was to consider opportunities for collaboration across the county. Given the tight deadline, two of the represented organisations have been working flat out on their respective applications.

This has been the first opportunity for such collaboration since the group was formed and complements the groups stated aim to- “Create a countywide approach to art and design, from funding to promotion”.

Members are currently being consulted for a suitable meeting date in September/ early October.

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed. For questions about the group please contact Martin Bruton: martin.bruton@gfirstlep.com.



Energy

- The Energy business group will reconvene on 2nd September. The meeting will pick up items discussed at the July meeting, most notably the LEP board’s response to Gloucestershire County Council’s climate change scrutiny committee recommendations for the LEP.
- The group will also consider developing ideas for an energy theme to feature as part of the Gloucestershire Business Show and whether this would be of benefit to the local business community.
- The group has previously suggested that energy matters should be a key element in business support activities delivered through the growth hub and will be given an opportunity to suggest some content for Growth Hub business sessions.

The group has confirmed Friday 2nd September as the next meeting. For questions about the group please contact Martin Bruton: martin.bruton@gfirstlep.com.



Land Based

- The Group met on 14th July at the Growth Hub.
- Sarah Danson joined the Group to give a detailed update on the Growth Hub Expansion and Network Update and discussed that the process for calls for Expressions of Interest from partners wishing to set up a Growth Hub centre was underway. The Land Based Business Group event has been planned to take place after the LEP Annual Review at the Royal Agricultural University on 16th September. An electronic flyer has been created and circulated widely and the members have spread the word amongst their professional networks so businesses have been able to register for the event.
- The Group discussed the frustrations with national government and represented bodies with the delay in decision making and the affects it was having on the rural economy since the BREXIT decision.

The next meeting will take place on Monday 5th September at the Growth Hub. For questions about the group please contact Barry Bodin-Jones: barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com.



Retail

- 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. Ways to move this forward will be addressed at the next meeting – Peter White has been invited to update the group on apprenticeship schemes and any Gloucestershire College initiatives that could help.
- Cheltenham have recently been successful in securing the Business Improvement District (BID) proposal. 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.
- Cheltenham Festivals will be joining the retail business group in September to talk to the group about the festivals and how they can get involved.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 21st September. For questions about the group please contact Sarah Tyler: sarah.tyler@gfirstlep.com.



Technology

- The Technology group will reconvene in September after a summer recess when they will review the careers project delivered in July. The group will also do a review of progress against agreed aims and objectives as we are at the halfway point for the year. Members are currently being consulted for a suitable meeting date in September/early October.

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed. For questions about the group please contact Martin Bruton: martin.bruton@gfirstlep.com.



Transport & Logistics

- At their last meeting the group discussed progress of the £44.5m in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) allocated to 14 Road Schemes. All 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 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 the autumn. Meanwhile on 28 July the LEP bid circa £1m to the Department for Transport “Large Local Major Schemes” fund for development funding for J10. Considerable support 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
- 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 Highways England

The next meeting is at the Growth Hub on Thursday 8th September. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com.