

GFirst LEP Business Group Update – September 2016



Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing

- The group met on 19th September and were joined by Phil Townsend from The South West Manufacturing Advisory Service (SWMAS) to give an update on their service offerings, and to discuss how the demand has changed and the focus on supply chain and providing solutions is most important to clients.
- There was discussion that the group needs to work together on a Manufacturing Strategy for the future in line with the Gloucestershire Vision 2050 project.
- The next meeting will focus on ‘heat mapping’ the county’s schools and determining where there are interactions on STEM delivery, as well as identifying further schools that can be engaged with to encourage and stimulate STEM discussions with pupils.
- Moving forward, the group’s feedback has determined they will meet every six weeks and will focus on key themes for each meeting. Clear actions and progress delivery will be measured and captured.

The next meeting will take place on Monday 17th October. For questions about the group please contact Barry Bodin-Jones: barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com.



Banking & Finance

- The Banking and Finance Group met on 20th September and welcomed Chris Barry, Area Director from the Royal Bank of Scotland as a new member to the group. The group received an interesting presentation from Steve Williams a Loan Fund Manager from www.impetus-marches.co.uk on their offer as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI).
- We also received useful updates on the Growth Hub activities, progress on the roll out of the Network Centres across the county and a useful summary of the LEP bid under Growth Deal 3.
- At the next meeting we will be looking at possible future activities for the group in the wider Access to Finance field and how we can use this to support the local economy.
- A Banking and Finance Clinic was held at the Growth Hub on 20th September. 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 “*We really enjoyed our meeting. It gave us a chance to understand the processes required to search for funding, and also the confidence that our company could get some funding!*”

- Another **free** Banking and Finance Clinic will be held at the **Growth Hub on Tuesday 13th December**. 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 8th November. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com.



Business & Professional

- The Group met on 14th September 2016 at the Growth Hub.
- There was discussion among the group about potentially joining the Banking and Finance Group to deliver enhanced Business Advice Clinics. Some further developments of this concept need to be outlined to determine the USP of the clinics and to avoid repetition of Growth Hub Clinics currently delivered.
- We discussed in detail GFirst LEP's Growth Deal 3 submission to Government and the group was delighted to see that the projects that they had reviewed were included in the submission.
- The group are very enthused about working with the LEP on these exciting future projects and feedback from all members present was that they felt they were able to have a sense of pride, contributing to building a better county and helping to positively drive economic growth.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 26th October at the Growth Hub. For questions about the group please contact Barry Bodin-Jones: barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com.



Construction & Infrastructure

- At the meeting on 14th September the group considered the current position of the Joint Core Strategy. Whilst there are still issues on housing sites to be resolved, the position on employment land is far clearer. The group 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 group will now look at how the employment land can be documented and promoted. They are looking at websites and directories of other organisations with a similar aim to see what lessons can be learned.
- Mike Moseley, Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) Manager for Construction, provided an interesting presentation on what the KTN do, their core communities, special interest groups, cross cutting programmes, Innovate UK, (ex TSB) other stakeholders, smart specialisation hub and i3P. Further information is at www.ktn-uk.co.uk.
- Chair of the group Stephen Limbrick collated a paper entitled “*Considerations of Barriers to Development*” from feedback previously provided by the group members. The next meeting on 20th October will be extended, and devoted entirely, to a review of the paper. The aim is to come up with constructive solutions to common problems encountered. When completed this will be shared with the relevant stakeholders.

The next meeting is at Roberts Limbrick on 20 October. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com.



Creative

- The group members have been working on a survey to help map the creative sector in Gloucestershire. 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.
- Members of the creative group recently attended a workshop arranged by Create Gloucestershire to discuss strategies to ensure young people are made aware of the career opportunities that exist within the county in the creative industries. The challenge of attracting and retaining young creative talent in Gloucestershire continues to be an area of concern for the group.

The date of the next meeting will be in November. For questions about the group please contact Martin Bruton: martin.bruton@gfirstlep.com.



Energy

- The group has recently welcomed two new members with specialisms in biomass and industrial energy solutions. At the September meeting the group reviewed the progress against agreed aims and objectives. From this discussion the group is keen to further understand the role that low carbon energy plays in LEP project development and will arrange for the LEP projects manager to attend a future meeting to discuss this.
- The group also discussed enabling the Growth Hub to include energy management as part of the growth hub diagnostic and will be undertaking further work to support this.
- Members also reviewed the aims and objectives of the other sector groups and identified Construction and Infrastructure, Technology and Land Based groups as having complementary aims. The group are keen to meet with members of the identified groups to further explore complementary activities.

The date of the next meeting is 21st October. For questions about the group please contact Martin Bruton: martin.bruton@gfirstlep.com.



Land Based

- The Group met on 5th September at the Growth Hub and discussed the final plans for the ***Innovation in Gloucestershire's Rural Businesses Event*** which took place on 16th September, immediately following the GFirst LEP Annual Review.
- We had an excellent attendance at the event, with more than 40 delegates. The LEP's Vice Chair Adam Starkey gave an interesting insight to his business and drew on the challenges he faced during the early stages of developing his successful business. Liz Mc-Nab Jones, from Godsell's Cheese, gave an account of her business diversification and the support received from the Growth Hub in marketing and sales enhancement strategies.
- The latter part of the event gave the audience an opportunity to share their view and highlight areas of support and development they require and the unique challenges and hurdles that face rural and land based businesses. All this valuable data was captured in facilitated groups and members of the Business Group will be discussing this feedback in more depth during next month's meeting. The aim is to deliver a report to the LEP Board to ensure that the creation and development of a rural Growth Hub is truly in line with the rural businesses' needs.

The next meeting will take place on Monday 31st October. 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. 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 also feeding into the Digital High Street Hub project, which is at an early stage.
- 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. At the last meeting the group agreed to form a sub group, who can look at this area of discussion in more detail and formulate a plan to put to the group.
- Cheltenham has 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.
- Fourgates of Gloucester will be presenting at the next retail business group meeting, updating the group on what they are currently doing.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 9th November. For questions about the group please contact Sarah Tyler: sarah.tyler@gfirstlep.com.



Technology

- The group reviewed the schools technology activity delivered in July. The group agreed that the activity had been successful and offered a model which could be used by other business groups interested in offering schools insight sessions on roles and work realities of their respective sector. The project has the advantages of being time efficient as it is delivered remotely via skype, enables students to ask questions of young people working in roles within industry and can be readily fitted in around other demands of time on both the schools and the businesses. The group are keen to offer the project to more schools in the future and want to work with GFutures to complement the current range of activities offered.
- The group also considered the list of planned information and advice activities planned at the Growth Hub. Members expressed interest in offering clinics on using IT at the Growth Hub for businesses.

The date of the next meeting will be 7th November. For questions about the group please contact Martin Bruton: martin.bruton@gfirstlep.com.



Transport & Logistics

- The group met to oversee progress of the £44.5m in the Growth Deal 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 in April 2016.
- 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.
- On 28th July the LEP bid circa £1m to the DfT "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 Ecotripty Eco Park and Sports Stadium.
 - J13A: An aspiration has been flagged up by Stroud DC with HE
- Highways England have recently appointed a dedicated Project Manager to manage the A417 *Missing Link* project. The LEP have been invited to sit on the Steering Group. The inaugural meeting is on 5th October. Further information will be provided in the October update.

The next meeting is at Sharpness Docks on 18th October. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com.