

GFirst LEP Business Group Update – October 2016



Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing

- At the recent meeting on 17th October, we were joined by Rod Hebden and David Reid from Cheltenham Festivals. They discussed the current schools engagement and the future innovative ideas and discussed ways in which the LEP can engage and co-ordinate efforts.
- We discussed the heat mapping exercise that was proposed for the meeting. As not all members had sent through details of their schools' engagement and interactivity, this will be followed up offline and strategies can then be co-ordinated as to maximising effective STEM engagement with pupils.
- The group members discussed that we need to broaden the reach of the topics discussed in the meeting as the dominant subject is skills development and school engagement. This is something that we can focus on the agenda at the next meeting.

The next meeting is at the Growth Hub on 5th December. 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. We welcomed Chris Barry, Area Director from RBS as a new member to the group. The group received a presentation from Steve Williams, Loan Fund Manager from www.impetus-marches.co.uk, on their offer as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI).
- 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.
- Another **free** Banking and Finance Clinic will be held on **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 13th December. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com



Business & Professional

- The last meeting discussed the detail of GFirst LEP's Growth Deal 3 submission to Government.
- The group were delighted that the projects that they had reviewed were included in the final 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, helping contribute to building a better county and helping positively drive economic growth.

The next meeting will take place at the Growth Hub on 7th December. For questions about the group please contact Barry Bodin-Jones: barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com



Construction & Infrastructure

- At their 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.
- Now that the picture of the extent and location of the employment land is much clearer the group is looking at how this can be documented and promoted. They are looking at websites and directories etc of other organisations with a similar aim to see what lessons can be learned.
- Mike Moseley the 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 <http://www.ktn-uk.co.uk/>.
- The Chairman, Stephen Limbrick, collated a paper entitled "*Considerations of Barriers to Development*" from feedback previously provided by the group members. The next meeting on 20 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 16th November. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com.



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.
- 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 sector group.

The date of the next meeting will be 8th December. For questions about the group please contact Martin Bruton: martin.bruton@gfirstlep.com.



Energy

- The energy group has recently welcomed two new members to the group 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 are 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 2nd December. For questions about the group please contact Martin Bruton: martin.bruton@gfirstlep.com.



Land Based

- The Group met on 31st October to discuss the success of the recent Innovation in Gloucestershire's Rural Businesses Event held in September. The main focus on the meeting was discussing the key discussion points and issues that came out from the event are shared effectively with the GFirst board so that the rural businesses have a voice.
- There was also great deal of conversation on the subject of what the Group should be named as it is apparent that many rural businesses do not identify themselves as 'Land Based' and we want to ensure that we are not alienating anyone from participating in any dialogue with the LEP.
- We had a discussion on a proposal produced by Cotswold Taste regarding the Craft Brewer's sector and trying to ensure that there is an opportunity in the county to ensure that there is adequate training to support this growing sector of the food and drink market.
- The next meeting will be focused on the skills aspect and its implications on the rural business community and the wider land based economy of the county.

The next meeting is on 8th December. 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 retail business group are also feeding into the 'Digital High Street' hub project, which is in its fairly early stages.
- The group is starting to address retail as a serious career. 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 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.
- 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 18th January. For questions about the group please contact Sarah Tyler: sarah.tyler@gfirstlep.com.



Technology

- The technology group recently responded to a national industry sector survey on entry level roles with the intention of developing an occupational map for the tech sector. The map is designed to provide any organisation that works with young people with an easy-to-understand way of describing entry level digital roles. This activity complements one the aims for the group of supporting schools to understand the variety and nature of roles for young people in the industry.
- The November meeting will review the draft sector map and consider how it can be used locally.
- The meeting will also consider the digital high street project and its impact and links to the technology sector.

The date of the next meeting will be confirmed. 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 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.
- 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 Sharpness Docks on 30th November. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com.