

## GFirst LEP Business Group Update – March 2017



### Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing

- At the last meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February we discussed the business landscape in general and explored matters affecting businesses following the Brexit decision. There was focus on the government's new industrial strategy and issues and frustrations relating to connectivity and mobile infrastructure were aired.
- We discussed the next meeting a heat mapping exercise showing details of businesses' school engagement and interactivity, and strategies can then be co-ordinated as to maximising effective STEM engagement with pupils.
- The next meeting will include members from the GFirst LEP Education Team so that a clearer focus on schools programmes can be more effectively undertaken.

*The next meeting is at the Growth Hub on 24<sup>th</sup> April. For questions about the group please contact Barry Bodin-Jones: [barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com](mailto:barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com)*



### Banking & Finance

- At the last meeting of the Banking and Finance Group on 7<sup>th</sup> March we welcomed Penny Martin, Business Development Manager from Folk2Folk as a new member to the group representing the peer to peer market.
- 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 25<sup>th</sup> April** 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 will be involved in making presentations at the Gloucestershire Business Show on 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> May on different aspects of finance for businesses. Further details will be published shortly.
- The group is running its **annual charity quiz on 23<sup>rd</sup> May**. [Full details are available here](#). We would welcome your support and that of any of your colleagues.

The next Banking and Finance meeting is at the Growth Hub on 25<sup>th</sup> April. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: [mike.curran@gfirstlep.com](mailto:mike.curran@gfirstlep.com).



## Business & Professional Services

- The last meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February discussed the Growth Hub service provision and members of the group were asked to comment on any further support and opportunities that the Gloucestershire Growth Hub should be providing.
- We discussed the future of the Growth Hub Network and Expansion and discussed some possible options for the long term future financial sustainability of the Growth Hub.
- The group are very enthused about working with the LEP on 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 26<sup>th</sup> April. For questions about the group please contact Barry Bodin-Jones: [barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com](mailto:barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com)



## Construction & Infrastructure

- The group are working on refining their paper “*Considerations of Barriers to Development*” from feedback previously provided by the group members. The aim is to come up with constructive solutions to common problems encountered. When completed this will be shared with the relevant stakeholders. Considerable help has been provided by Cotswold District and Cheltenham Borough Council in particular.
- A meeting has been arranged with Senior Officers in the Highways Authority to discuss problems encountered by developers and look at potential solutions.
- The group are preparing a response to the recent white paper - Fixing our Broken Housing Market.

The next meeting is at Roberts Limbrick on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: [mike.curran@gfirstlep.com](mailto:mike.curran@gfirstlep.com).



## Creative

- The members have been working on a strategic document that sets out a road map for releasing the full potential of the creative economy, the destination economy and of talent development in Gloucestershire in support of the 2050 Vision for Gloucestershire.
- Jennie Evans attended the last meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March to provide an update on the progress and the feedback from the Gloucestershire 2050 Vision Project, so that the findings and proposals can tie in effectively to the groups' paper.
- David Owen will be attending the next meeting to discuss the progress of the paper in more depth.

*The date of the next meeting will be 4<sup>th</sup> April at the Growth Hub. For questions about the group please contact Barry Bodin-Jones: [barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com](mailto:barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com).*



## Energy

- A decision taken by the LEP Board that has been discussed and agreed by the Energy Group members is that strategic partner, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, will be taking over the co-ordination of and chairing the Business Group, with a clear focus and steer from the LEP.
- The LEP are meeting with the college on 19<sup>th</sup> April to discuss the future strategic objectives of the group, the desired energy related players it needs to engage with, as well as outlining the activities the group will undertake to develop a comprehensive Energy Strategy for the county.
- The Government Department BEIS are also very keen to be working with us to provide a steer on the direction of travel and to ensure that we are encompassing and undertaking the right actions.
- It is envisioned that the group ties in activity surrounding an Energy Summit that will be held at the Gloucestershire Business Show in May.

*The date of the next meeting is yet to be confirmed. For questions about the group please contact Barry Bodin-Jones: [barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com](mailto:barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com).*



## Land Based

- A decision taken by the LEP Board that has been discussed and agreed by the Land Based Group members is that strategic partner, the Royal Agricultural University (RAU), will be taking over the co-ordination of the group, with a clear focus and steer from the LEP.
- The LEP met with the RAU on 31<sup>st</sup> March to discuss the future strategic objectives of the group, to focus on what specific business support provision needs to be delivered at the Rural Growth Hub and to work on ways of enhancing the awareness of the Growth Hub and LEP to the rural and farming businesses in the county as well as reinforcing the positive and tailored support that can be offered to these individuals.
- The aspiration is to obtain higher engagement and interaction with rural and diversified businesses so that we can ensure the provisions and support offered is truly in line with helping their businesses survive and thrive.

*The date of the next meeting is yet to be confirmed. For questions about the group please contact Barry Bodin-Jones: [barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com](mailto:barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com)*



## Retail, Tourism & The High Street

- A decision has been taken to rename the group to Retail, Tourism and the High Street so that it encompasses a wider brief than retail alone.
- An interim report has been provided to government on The Digital Retail Pilot (#WDYT) demonstrating how this pilot has proven the Business Case for a National Campaign by validating the ROI of digital investment by a Place. Furthermore, it is recruiting a growing following of National Brands that are collaborating on an extended rollout to more towns. Now live in 7 towns.
- The group discussed ways of how to address, highlight and raise the profile of retail as a serious career. The group all agreed that this needs to be championed and has to come from an employer's voice, from national as well as independent businesses in the county. John Lewis, for example, could be a big draw. It was discussed that we need to take an all-encompassing approach to this and adopt an 'RAF model' which shows the diverse and richness of opportunities in the sector as well as focusing on highlighting senior retail executives who have climbed the career ladder, many through an apprentice route.

*The next meeting is on 7th June at Gloucestershire College. For questions about the group please contact Barry Bodin-Jones: [barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com](mailto:barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com).*