

## GFirst LEP Business Group Update – May 2017



### Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing

- We feel that the Group is not necessarily achieving its maximum potential and we need to address wider issues within the Group's scope and remit, and focus on other issues in addition to the skills aspect, which has dominated discussions over the past few years.
- The Group has worked hard and has been significant in the development of a number of activities to support, raise awareness and overcome elements within the skills agenda and we value the support and involvement of each representative.
- It is proposed that GFirst LEP will seek to work closely with Circle2Success ([www.circle2success.com](http://www.circle2success.com)) to combine the efforts in strategically developing the sector and try and reach out to a plethora of businesses across the county in this way, having a stronger and cohesive voice.

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



### Banking & Finance

- Very successful Banking & Finance clinics were held at the Gloucestershire Business Show on both 17 and 18 May. The feedback from those businesses that attended the clinic was extremely positive. Typical comments were: "good advice given and priorities established" ... "great people to meet, good friendly and constructive atmosphere"
- Another **free** Banking and Finance Clinic will be held on **Growth Hub on Tuesday 18 July**. 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 at [HERE](#)
- The group is ran its annual charity quiz on 23 May at Manor on the Lake This was highly successful with 126 attendees and raised well over £3000 for the National Star charity. It was a tremendous effort by the entire group, but particular thanks are due to Phil Mitchell, Karen Campbell and Andrew Kirk for their sterling efforts.

*The next Banking and Finance meeting is at the Growth Hub on 18 July. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: [mike.curran@gfirstlep.com](mailto:mike.curran@gfirstlep.com).*



## Business & Professional Services

- The next meeting includes Jennie Evans who will provide a detailed update on Project 2050 and a wider Group discussion will follow.
- In addition Jeremy Williamson has been invited to discuss the Cheltenham Cyber Park project that provides the opportunity for the Group to have an influence in its development and provide guidance on the project's formulation and wider commercial engagement.

*The next meeting will take place at the Growth Hub on 19 June. 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 formulated a response to the Government white paper on "Fixing our broken housing market." This was submitted to the Government on 2 May.
- The group are working on refining their paper "Breaking Down 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 most informative meeting was held on 3 May with interesting presentations on Vision 2015, Cheltenham District Council Economic Development plans and Modular Housing and the impact of these 3 areas on the businesses represented by the group.

*The next meeting is at Roberts Limbrick on 14 June. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: [mike.curran@gfirstlep.com](mailto:mike.curran@gfirstlep.com).*



## Creative

- The sector 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.
- This document is currently being re-developed for discussion in the forthcoming meeting.
- The Group is keen to work closely to enhance the strength, richness and diversity of the county's cultural heritage and offerings. They are looking to embed activity with other sector groups to widen its reach to enliven the cultural economy and its impact on Gloucestershire.

*The date of the next meeting will be 13 June 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

- We had a very positive meeting at SGS Berkeley GREEN on 10 May. The Group discussed the formulation of a county wide energy strategy. Further actions in relation to the draft strategy document presented will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Ruth Binny from BEIS attended the meeting. It was great to have National Government support, however, due to the election and Purdah ruling, Ruth was unable to comment fully on the long term government agenda, but is fully supportive of the Groups' ideas and vision.
- Members of the Business Group were present at the Gloucestershire Business Show, where a successful Energy Summit and Forum was held, where activity and discussion is in line with the Groups' objectives.

*The date of the next meeting will be 11 July at SGS College Berkeley site. For questions about the group please contact Barry Bodin-Jones: [barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com](mailto:barry.bodin-jones@gfirstlep.com).*



## Land Based

- The last meeting was held on 9 May at the RAU. The new Chair, Jo Price, asked for everyone to give an introduction and a brief synopsis of their thoughts on the group and aspirations for the Group moving forwards.
- It was suggested that the Group members think about coming up with a revised Group name that is truly representative and the broader sector can relate to.

- It was discussed that a Strategic Planning Day should be held in September, offsite, on a farm location, to thrash out ideas on a more proactive approach to help the Group make a difference, be more influential in their approach and to be outcomes focused in their activity.
- All agreed that a strap line is needed to encapsulate what the group stands for. This could be a focus for the strategic planning day.

*The date of the next meeting will be 27 July at Hartpury College. 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

- The Group met on 7 June at Gloucestershire College and had a general business update around the table. Following the recent tragic terror events, retailers are focused on staff safety and training for potential terror attacks.
- The Group continued the discussion on highlighting retail as a serious career. The work that the Group members have been doing in their own areas and as project collaborations is very positive and many synergies were detected and several initiatives need to be morphed to align activity and objectives for a stronger cohesive approach and effect, which will also avoid duplication of effort.
- Integrating digital and social media into the retail experience has proven to increase footfall and consumer spend, and the #WDYT campaign project update gave strong evidence support its ongoing success.

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