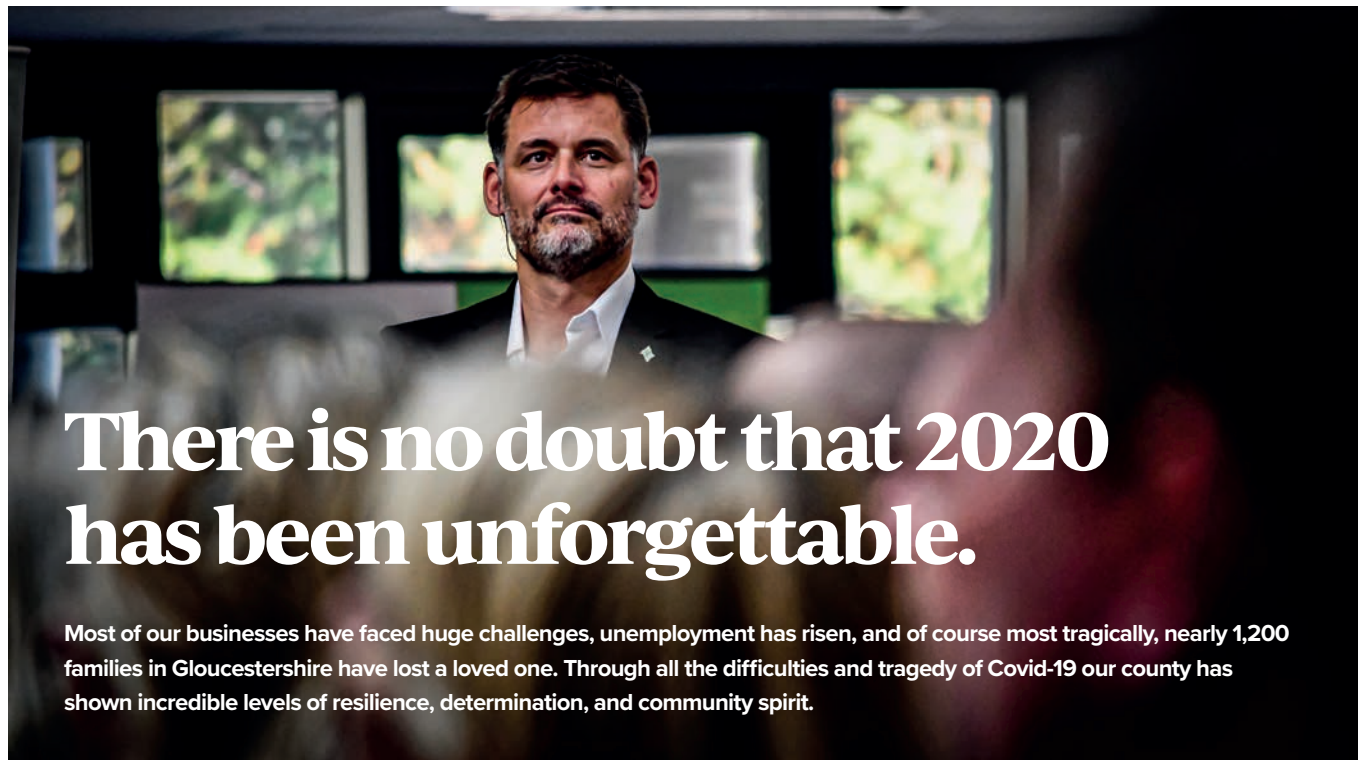


ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE:
FUTURE-PROOFED**



The efforts of our frontline workers in Gloucestershire have been nothing short of incredible – and we all owe them a huge thank you. I’m also incredibly proud of the huge effort the GFirst LEP team has made to support businesses across the county, and so impressed by the way in which so many businesses in our county played their part - delivering PPE, supporting charities and the most vulnerable, and adapting and pivoting their businesses to trade through Covid-19 restrictions.

Throughout the pages of this Annual Report you’ll be able to see the enormous progress made in developing Gloucestershire’s economy. New investments by GFirst LEP with our partners at KW Bell, Hartpury University and Hartpury College, Cirencester College, Cheltenham Borough Council, and Gloucestershire College will mean our eco-system for cyber and digital, agri-tech, and construction continues to develop. The progress on delivery of Golden Valley, the home of Cyber Central

from both Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council is making great strides. Our Growth Hub offer continues to develop and flourish and has been at the forefront of offering support to businesses and gathering information and data to influence government policy to support our businesses.

We’ve launched a Business Recovery Toolkit to help businesses on the road to recovery, a Skills Portal to provide much needed support to those who find themselves unemployed, a Careers Hub to guide and inspire the next generation of talent, and specialist advisory services to guide our businesses through the exit from the European Union.

Our Business Groups have provided vital input that has directed our response to the economic crisis and the GFirst LEP Board have provided the vision and direction for our recovery planning and the immediate response to the crisis. The newsletters the GFirst team have

provided have never been so well read – in particular those that offered advice and guidance on mental health and resilience for individuals.

This is a pivotal time for Gloucestershire, and GFirst LEP is in a strong position to help lead the local economy as it emerges from the pandemic. The immediate priority is to protect jobs, create opportunities for new employment and upskill workforces to move to a more digital and environmentally sustainable Gloucestershire.

It is time to look to the future and it is fantastic that Gloucestershire will be able to draw on the wealth of experience and vision from Ruth Dooley; I am delighted to welcome her as Chair of the LEP Board and look forward to delivering on our projects and priorities collaboratively for the county.

David Owen CEO



GFirst LEP appoint Ruth Dooley as new Chair

Gloucestershire’s Local Enterprise Partnership has appointed Ruth Dooley as its new Chair. This is the first ever change in its leadership as Dr Diane Savory OBE steps down after 10 years at the helm.

Ruth Dooley is a partner and head of the litigation support team at Hazlewoods LLP, an accountancy firm based in Cheltenham and Staverton with 412

staff and partners. She is a chartered accountant and tax adviser for a wide range of companies and private clients and is a previous winner of South West Accountant of the Year. During her thirty years in Gloucestershire, she has contributed to the Prince’s Trust, Fredericks Gloucestershire, BBC Radio Gloucestershire, the Honourable Company of Gloucestershire and is a Visiting Fellow at the University of Gloucestershire.

Ruth’s role as chair will be to lead the LEP Board who represent a wide range of private, public, education and voluntary sector organisations from across the county, and work with partners to engage government and realise the LEP’s ambitions for Gloucestershire. Ruth was previously a Growth Hub Board member and has been a GFirst LEP Board member for the last two years.

Commenting on her appointment, Ruth said; “I am honoured and excited to be

taking on the role of Chair. In the decade since it was established, GFirst LEP has secured more than £112m in capital funding to invest across the county,

“ *I am honoured and excited to be taking on the role of Chair.* ”

it has launched a hugely successful Growth Hub network along with a whole host of fantastic projects including the Gloucester Transport Hub, the Gloucester M5 Services, Cyber Central in Cheltenham, Farm 491 in Cirencester and the GREEN Skills centre in Berkeley. I am determined that the LEP will build on this impressive legacy over the coming years, continuing to deliver the sustainable economic growth that Gloucestershire needs and deserves.”



Covid-19

During the pandemic, GFirst LEP has been providing essential and regular labour market intelligence to Leadership Gloucestershire, providing accurate and up-to-date information on how the Gloucestershire jobs market has been impacted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

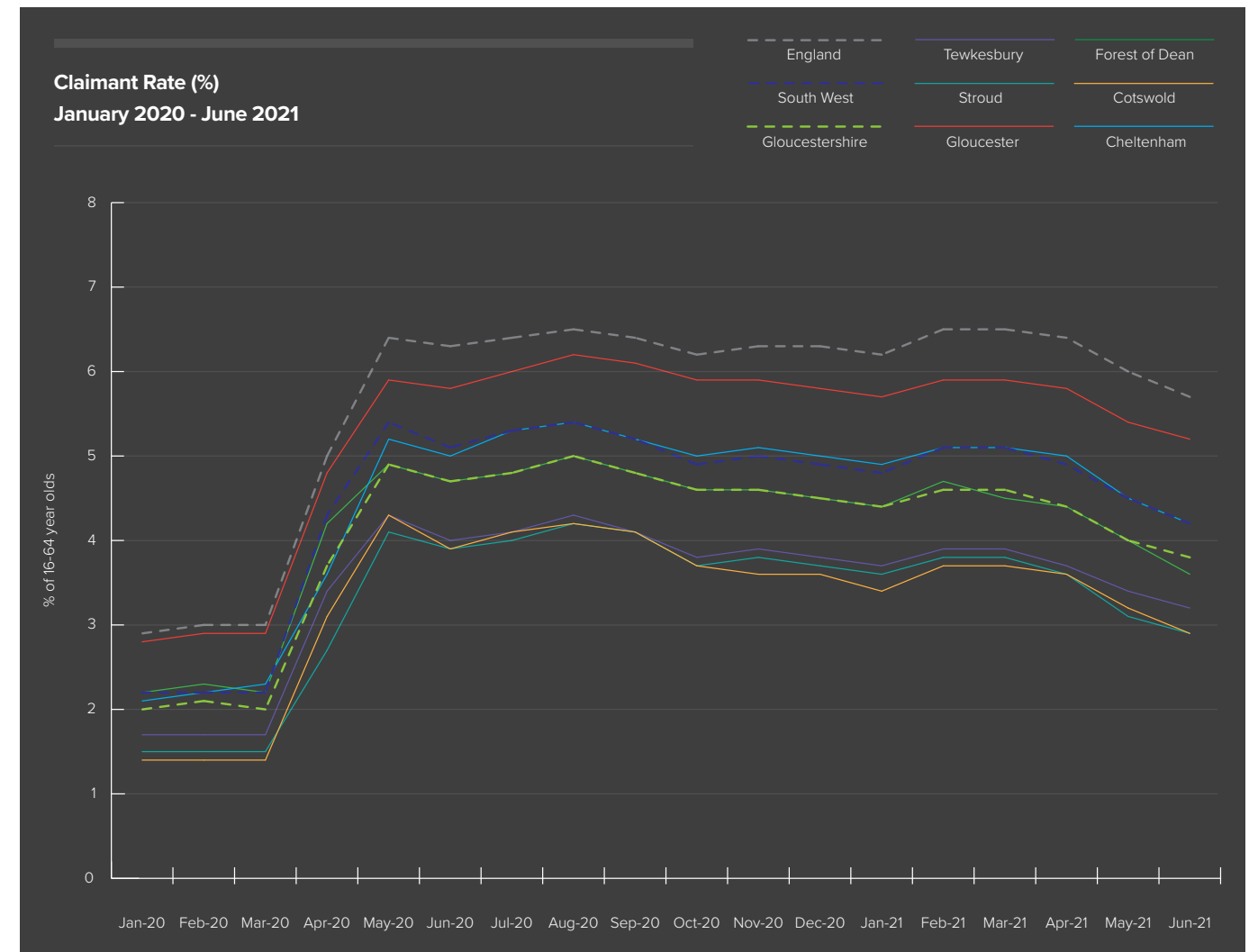
The information has included monthly Claimant count rates, which provide information on the number of 16 to 64 year olds who have been claiming unemployment benefits across the county, as well as throughout the South West region and England as a comparison.

Claimant count

August saw the publication of the July Claimant count figures: Gloucestershire has seen a **decrease** to **3.6%** (the

value is expressed as a proportion of residents aged 16-64). The July total now stands at **14,060** compared to the June figure of 14,210 which is a monthly **decrease** of **150** persons. All districts saw a decrease in the number of claimants, except Forest of Dean which saw a small increase.

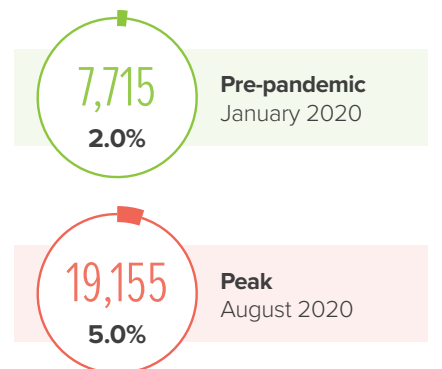
The July figure for the South West was 4.0%, England was 5.5% and the UK figure was 5.4%. The below graph shows the claimant rate for Gloucestershire compared with all six districts, the South West and England. The rate for Gloucestershire continues to be below that of England and the South West.



Working age population claiming benefits in Gloucestershire

Pre-pandemic rates for Gloucestershire were 2.0% in January 2020 when 7,715 of the working age population were claiming unemployment benefits, peaking in August 2020 to 5.0% when 19,155 of the working age population were claiming benefits.

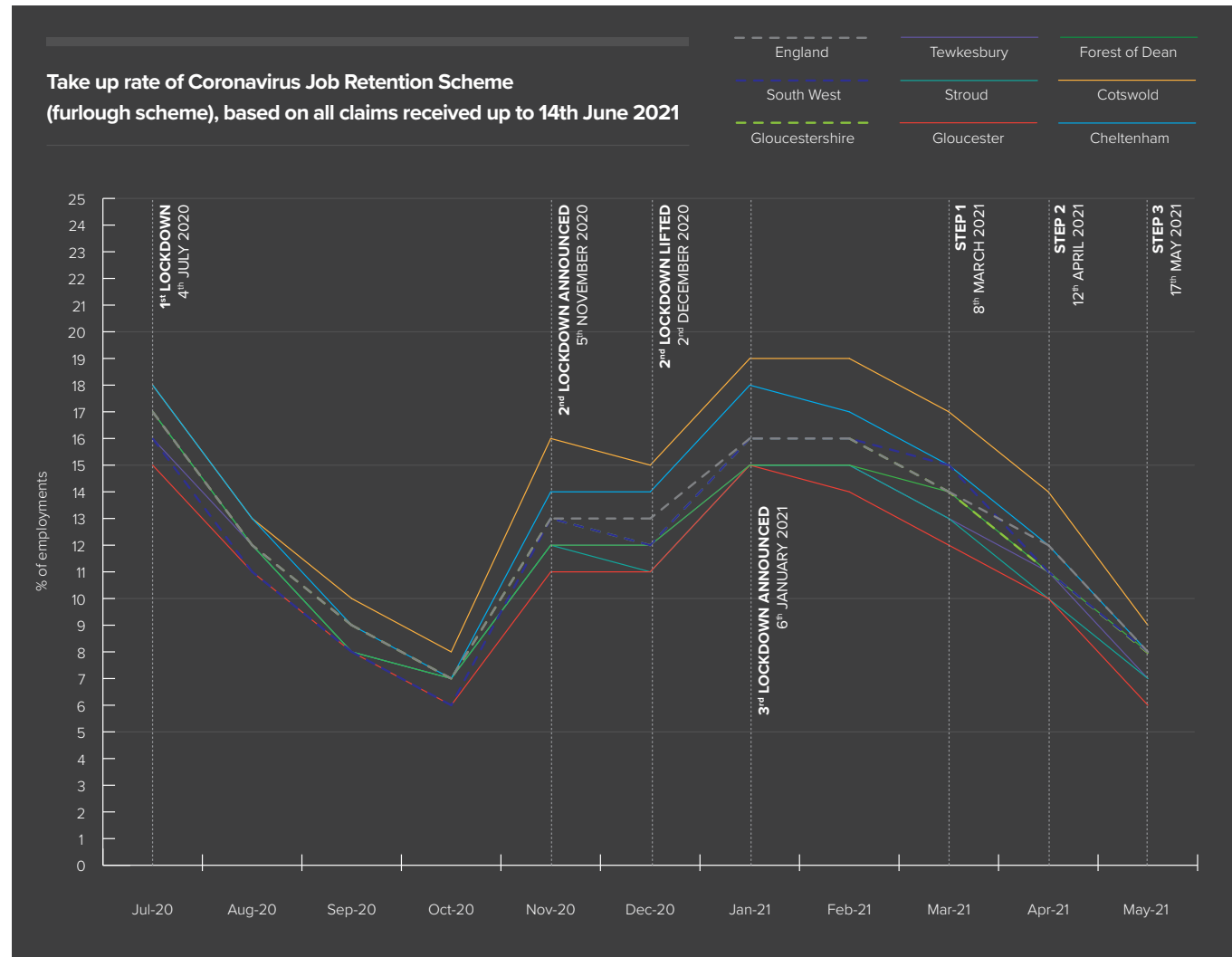
In addition to the number of Gloucestershire residents claiming unemployment benefits, we have been providing regular updates on the number of people who have been on furlough through the government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).



Furloughed workers

Latest provisional figures from HMRC show there to be an estimated **14,900** workers furloughed in Gloucestershire as at the **30th June 2021**, which includes claims made up to the 14th July 2021. Gloucestershire has now seen a **cumulative total** of **112,900** employments supported by the CJRS at various times.

The below looks at the proportion of employments furloughed from July 2020 through to May 2021, comparing the take-up rates to the South West region and England.



Note: extensions to the furlough scheme were introduced in October 2020 and May 2021 which resulted in changes in eligibility

Gloucestershire saw the highest take-up rate in July 2020 when 17% of the workforce was furloughed. Cotswold has seen some of the highest rates with 19% of workers furloughed in January and February 2021, with Cheltenham also seeing some of the highest numbers in early 2021.

Latest provisional figures for June show the take up rate for **Gloucestershire** to be **5%**, with all districts seeing this decrease since January 2021.

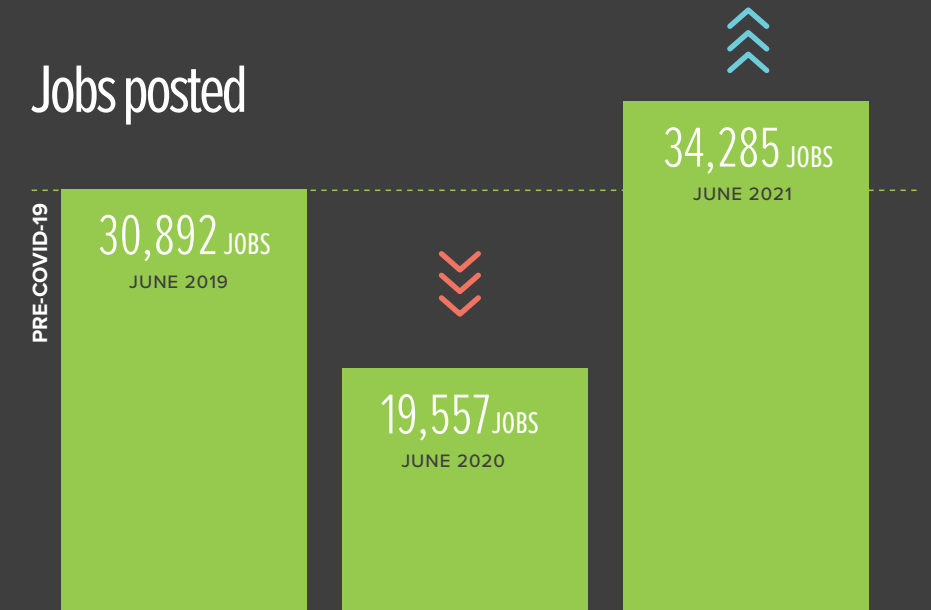
The sectors that have seen some of the highest numbers of furloughed workers have been **accommodation and food**

services, wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles and manufacturing. Cheltenham and Cotswold have seen the highest numbers of furloughed workers in the accommodation and food services sector.

Gloucestershire's job market

The pandemic has had a big impact on Gloucestershire's job market, with total unique jobs posted in 2020 being at around **284,000** compared to total jobs posted in 2019 at around **331,000**.

Latest job posting information for June 2021 shows there have been around 34,285 jobs posted this month alone, which is an increase of around 500 job postings when compared to May. June 2020 saw just 19,557 jobs posted and June 2019 saw 30,892 which shows the current jobs market is bouncing back and gaining lost ground.



When looking at the greatest change in job postings by occupation and comparing February 2020 to June 2021, some of the occupations that have seen the **biggest decrease** are:

- Solicitors
- Nurses
- Marketing associate professionals
- Routine inspectors and testers
- Managers and directors in retail and wholesale

While some of the occupations that have seen the **biggest increases** are:

- Programmers and software development professionals
- Van drivers
- Care workers and home carers
- Elementary storage occupations
- Metal working production and maintenance fitters

Reporting to government

In addition to labour market intelligence, we have been reporting each week to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on any known local issues relating to Covid-19 and Brexit, but more recently on how the Gloucestershire economy has been recovering.

Intelligence has been based on key observations, as well as key conversations. The Growth Hub have had with local businesses and the number of interactions the team have had through the website, face to face or telephone.

Local intelligence and feedback have helped government make informed decisions on how to act throughout the past 18 months.

Please note that job postings are collected from various online sources and does not capture postings that are not advertised online, which might result in undercounting for some occupations. The information is continually being cleaned and validated, but job posting numbers provide a good indication on how the job market is performing.

Key Projects

Gloucestershire's Local Enterprise Partnership, GFirst LEP, successfully bid for £11.3 million of funding from central government to kick-start the economy.

The funding is part of central government's £900 million nationwide 'Getting Building Fund'.

GFirst LEP worked closely with public, private and voluntary sectors to submit bids that were 'shovel ready', would create jobs, aid recovery and support the green agenda. Many of the ambitions were identified in GFirst LEP's draft Local Industrial Strategy that was published in late 2019.

There were five key infrastructure projects that have received funding;



1



The 'Minster Innovation Exchange' with Cheltenham Borough Council

Allocated £3.114 million

This low carbon modular construction will deliver innovative co-working space in central Cheltenham. It will provide a purpose-built performance, event and community venue, and connect to the High Street through upgraded historic linkages from the Cheltenham Minster grounds. It will also act as a pilot for developments at the Cyber Central campus and be home to the new Cheltenham Growth Hub.

2



'The Gloucestershire Applied Digital Skills Centre' with Cirencester College

Allocated £4.48 million

Opening early 2022, The Gloucestershire Applied Digital Skills Centre at Cirencester College will be a landmark building for learning. Modelled on digital industries rather than traditional classrooms, this inspiring space will provide resources, equipment and skills needed in both the Cyber and Digital sectors. Students will be connected to routes into the exciting new cyber industries here in Gloucestershire.

3



'Cyber Incubation Units' with Gloucestershire College

Allocated £950,000

Gloucestershire College has formed a partnership with Hub8 to create a new incubation space specifically for high-tech, cyber-based entrepreneurs and innovators. Hub8 GC will provide over 10,000sqft of innovation space complete with offices, shared and dedicated laboratories, workshops and co-working facilities. Hub8 GC will be a co-location platform for businesses, academic staff and students to interact, facilitating placement and graduate work opportunities for the College's students.

4



'The Digital Innovation Farm' with Hartpury University and Hartpury College

Allocated £1.25 million

Hartpury's Digital Innovation Farm is set to further enhance Gloucestershire's position as a leader in agri-tech. The new innovation and demonstration workspace is designed for high growth SMEs in the growth phase already operating within the agri-tech sector. The innovation space will allow businesses to explore, test, trial, research and develop products, or enhance existing ones.

5



'A Construction Education Centre' with the KW Bell Group Ltd in Cinderford

Allocated £1.956 million

A brand new multipurpose conference and training facility to be based in the heart of the Forest of Dean, the Centre has been thoughtfully designed to link the construction industry with education by providing a learning environment that is digitally advanced, safe, interactive and relevant. The Centre will be co-funded by a privately-owned family business, which has been in operation for over 50 years, founded in, and operating within, the Forest of Dean.



David Owen
GFirst LEP's Chief Executive

"In these challenging times this is welcome news for the county's economy. The LEP team have worked hard with partners to ensure our pipeline of creative and innovative infrastructure projects is always up to date. A lot of work went into producing our draft Local Industrial Strategy in 2019 and it included extensive consultation, and the strategy was warmly welcomed across all areas of the business community. The list of projects that we are now able to fund focus heavily on the cyber, digital and agri-tech sectors, sectors that were identified in our Local Industrial Strategy as the top growth opportunities in the county."



Mark Bretton
LEP Network Chair

"As business led partnerships with a ready made pipeline of projects, LEPs responded swiftly to the Prime Minister's call for infrastructure projects with more available when government is ready. "LEPs 'can do' business attitude has created a proven track record of complex delivery, landing projects at scale, on time and to budget. The foundations they are building for local recovery in their Five Point Plan will underpin our national recovery."

In summary

This announcement has been confirmed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), and will see **959 new jobs** being created and a further **82 jobs being safe-guarded**, as well as a further **£4.875 million being invested into these projects** from both the public and private sector within Gloucestershire.



Business Groups

As individuals and businesses adapt to new ways of working, by holding virtual business group meetings, our members have shared their experiences and strategies for a new future; from business diversification, flexible working, accessing Growth Hub support, through to re-writing business plans for a prudent future.



Our **Business & Professional Services group** are honing their skills and expertise within the group to develop an event with The Growth Hub, designed for SMEs to look at ways in which companies can keep in touch with their employees and customers through various digital channels - both internally and externally. As we move into a highly digital way of communicating, this group will use their specialist skills which range from data protection, GDPR, legal, recruitment, flexible working, business streamlining, time management, and improving profitability through various communications channels.



Our **Energy business group** are working together to help us achieve a greener Gloucestershire, without this being a barrier to growth. It will enable Gloucestershire to engage in the renewable and clean energy market and provide opportunities for individual businesses to reduce energy consumption and save money to reinvest to improve productivity.

The county's green ambitions are a key cornerstone in our **Local Industrial Strategy**, with a focus to include efficient housebuilding that supports 'green' construction and biodiversity. It encourages the boundaries to be pushed on green development and to make opportunities for greener housing development easier to achieve. By building on Gloucestershire's Sustainable Energy Strategy, we aim to protect and improve our natural environment whilst at the same time exploiting the productivity improvements to be gained by businesses adopting greener approaches.

Following a collective commitment from all Gloucestershire's Local Authorities and other public bodies to take urgent action to cut carbon emissions, **Afriqnmun Lovejoy** took on the role of **County Climate Change Co-ordinator** this summer. This unique and pioneering collaborative post will provide strategic leadership, empowering key stakeholders to successfully plan and achieve their carbon neutral journeys. Working with our Energy business group representatives as well as a wider pool

of stakeholders, Afriqnmun plans to encourage and facilitate capital projects that deliver on the climate emergency response, ensuring economic growth is a strong and consistent theme within actions that deliver on the climate emergency agenda.

The Active Building Centre are working with energy experts in the county to help activate the UK's green Industrial revolution.

“By aligning with government plans on low carbon hydrogen, greener buildings and public transport, green finance and innovation, a strategic and accelerated deployment of Active Buildings across the UK will stimulate and drive the government’s green industrial revolution at speed.”

The group are also looking to showcase Gloucestershire's green credentials in the form of a COP26 local 'fringe' event in October, joining thousands of businesses nationally to help the Race to Net Zero campaign.



In the last 18 months, we have welcomed 25 new business group members, with 80% of these coming from private sector businesses, ensuring that as a LEP, we can continue to disseminate relevant, business-rich feedback to inform



strategies at a local and a national level. This has been even more vital over the last 18 months than ever before. This year we have created an interactive **e-newsletter** detailing the latest news from each business group, together with useful facts, figures, opportunities and updates. Issued quarterly, you can access the latest update by heading to the business group page on our website: www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/business-groups.



The **Agri, food and rural business group** raised concerns about the lack of awareness and misconceptions within rural planning. An online seminar attracted over 50 participants ranging from planners, councillors, Local Authorities and wider rural businesses, the workshop looked at the barriers, delays and misconceptions within rural planning applications and processes. With speakers from planning backgrounds, rural community housing, and behaviour change experts, it illustrated the impact of planning delays on the wider rural economy and how cohesive, well communicated planning procedures can lead to fewer delays, and a more positive, inclusive rural landscape. The Question and Answer panel proved very stimulating with lots of interaction from the attendees. The group is now looking to hold another workshop to drill down on subjects raised during the event.



Working alongside The Growth Hub Network and a wider stakeholder team, the **Cyber-tech group** fed into a report entitled 'Understanding Gloucestershire's Cyber-tech ecosystem'. This analysis identifies the short and long-term needs of the sector and outlines suggested targeted business support solutions which aim to enable accelerated growth and innovation. The group will be involved in the development of sector-specific advisor training, events and programmes and cross sector engagement with other business industries to broaden the application of cyber-tech.



One of the business industries that has been hardest hit by Covid-19 is the **tourism and visitor economy** industry. Developed collaboratively by a core group of partners representing a wide range of public, private and third sector bodies, this group have been invaluable in the development of the county's Tourism Strategy.

Worth £966 million a year to the county in 2019, recovery from the Pandemic demands a new approach to underpin future success within the tourism industry. The strategy focuses on achieving sustainable growth - by encouraging existing visitors to stay longer, by spreading the benefits of tourism to all parts of the county, and

by making stronger and beneficial connections to other policy areas, such as transport, zero carbon, food and drink, digital, skills and business support.

10 Sector Groups, One Voice

As businesses plan for re-growth and look to the future, GFirst LEP's business groups have been, and continue to be, a key contributor in the development and implementation of the Gloucestershire Economic Recovery Plan. Their valuable contributions have enabled us to create a business-rich plan which reflects the county's character, business needs and economic priorities.

Working with The Growth Hubs, schools and a wider network of stakeholders, our business voice is louder than ever - informing local and national strategies, as well as supporting schools and employment opportunities, members are harnessing their skills and employment requirements to future-proof the county's business economy.

If you are interested in joining one of our Business Groups, please email Business Group Manager Elizabeth Weaver at elizabeth.weaver@gfirstlep.com

Inward Investment

Invest in Gloucestershire is a four-year ERDF funded initiative set up in early 2019 by GFirst LEP with the strategic ambition of facilitating international businesses to relocate or grow in the county.

This project is delivered in partnership with the seven Local Authority partners to act as the ambassador to promote Gloucestershire as one of the best investment locations in the UK.



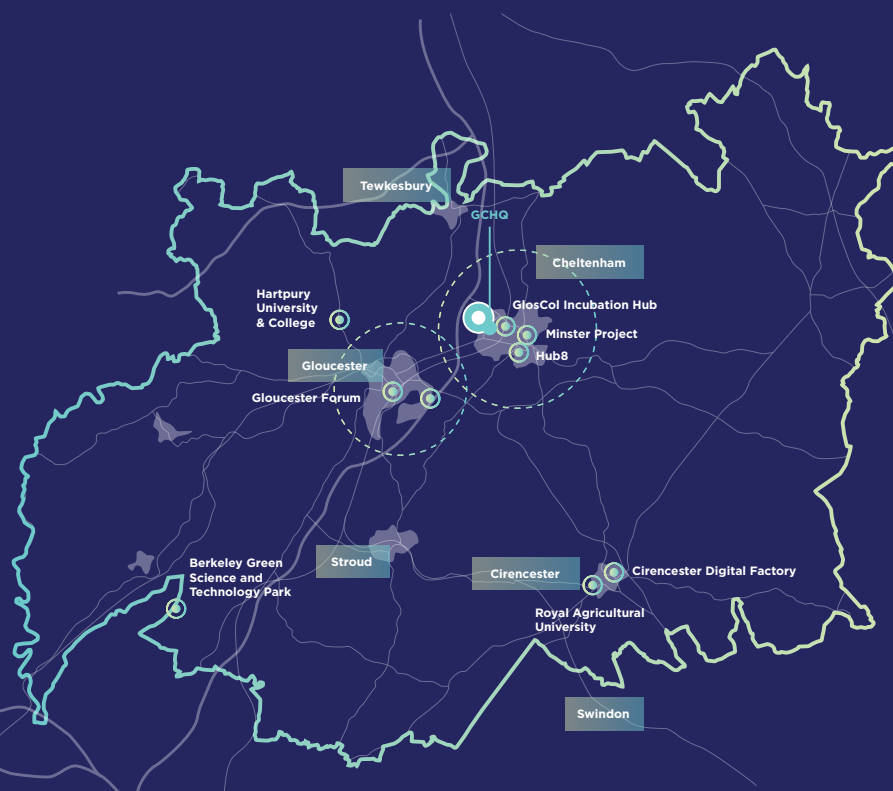
Introduction

The project, now in its third year, continues to progress with the team proactively supporting existing investors, conducting lead generation initiatives and promoting the county internationally. Despite the backdrop and challenges around Brexit and Covid-19, the project has in the 2020/21 financial year achieved Gloucestershire's third best year for FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) in a decade with investments secured across all the key sectors of Advanced Engineering, Agri-Tech, Cyber-Tech and Renewables.

The ambition of this project is to be the first point of contact for any existing or new international companies that may be considering establishing or expanding their business in Gloucestershire. The ultimate vision of the project is to create high value jobs and grow the county's economy as a whole.

The Inward Investment team's core service objectives for potential new investors are:

- Free and confidential consultation by one of our dedicated business advisors
- Building the investment business case with access to demographics, skills and economic data
- Sourcing suitable business premises and hosting site visits
- Access to recruitment, apprenticeship and training support
- Familiarisation visits with introductions to sector specific contacts
- Introductions to professional, legal and accountancy services
- Soft landing packages for new investors to Gloucestershire
- Ongoing after-care business support
- Access to Invest in Gloucestershire grants scheme



Project highlights

The last 12 months have seen the spotlight shift from the team attending lead generation industry events, to focusing on seeking out these leads through the various networks the project has access to.

Lockdown naturally presented itself with its own challenges but the previous two years of proactive account management and building networks within the Inward Investment arena paid off with securing into the county, the US investor of ZeroAvia, a leading innovator in decarbonising aviation using hydrogen. ZeroAvia who built the world's first hydrogen plane will now be delivering their future R&D and testing at Cotswold Airport, and looking to create over 30 new jobs before the end of 2021.

With the burgeoning digital and cyber sector, this is the year of Cyber for Gloucestershire. The Golden Valley project continues to build momentum with HBD X Factory being announced as the developer.

The next 12 months look very encouraging for the project with a number of projects in the pipeline, online marketing activities and lead generation campaigns.





Aerospace

With its unique aerospace history, Gloucestershire continues to be a place of innovation for the sector. The Inward Investment Team is pleased to have supported the re-investment from Moog and Dowty Propellers with their new equipment and facilities and retaining the highly skilled engineering jobs in the county.

Significant innovation is happening in the county as the sector pivots its focus towards low carbon emission. A cluster of future flight mobility is forming with the likes of Electroflight at Gloucestershire Airport that aims to break the world speed record for an electric aircraft; to ZeroAvia that will be building the world's first 9-19 seat hydrogen plane which will deliver 300 to 500 mile zero emission flights, that can be used for commercial passenger transport, cargo and agriculture. The Inward Investment Team will focus on attracting other cutting-edge companies to bolster this cluster.



Agri-Tech

A dedicated Invest in Gloucestershire Agri-Tech Proposition has been produced highlighting the changing landscape of Agriculture in Gloucestershire. The 20 page visually impressive document presents the regions eco-system, R&D assets, thriving SMEs, talent, connectivity, equestrian and thought leadership. The proposition has been widely circulated at events and within the industry and drives the message that Gloucestershire is the place for innovating Agri-Tech businesses.

The team welcomed a delegation of ten Agri-Tech companies and educative institutions from New Zealand. The visit was delivered jointly with Campden BRI, Hartpury University and Hartpury College, The Royal Agricultural University and The University of Gloucestershire.



Cyber-Tech

Invest in Gloucestershire works closely with the Department for International Trade (DIT), and has submitted a successful bid for a High Potential Opportunity (HPO) programme. This programme will focus on attracting international Cyber businesses into Gloucestershire. Due to be completed in September 2021, this programme will be delivered in collaboration with DIT's overseas network around the world.

The Cyber eco-system is flourishing at an incredible pace, with a number of new property assets being developed to support the companies. Since its inception, the Inward Investment team has worked closely with Cheltenham Borough Council on the Golden Valley project. Despite MIPIM in 2020 being cancelled, the team hosted engagement meetings with potential developers and investors from London in March 2020 to promote the project.

The Inward Investment Team have also promoted the Forum development; Hub 8, Digital Innovation Skills Centre and Hartpury Tech Box Park amongst others.

The team anticipates investor's interest in the sector to pick up. An Invest in Gloucestershire Cyber Proposition is also in the pipeline and due to be launched later this year to promote the region to occupier investors.



Publicity

Following the Covid-19 disruptions to business conferences and shows, Invest in Gloucestershire has focused its attention towards online marketing. The team now regularly publishes spotlight stories on the Inward Investment website, each with a theme surrounding our districts. A lot of focus has also been put on our social media engagement, which has doubled in the first half of 2021.

The Invest in Gloucestershire website has also been upgraded and now features a live property search page, featuring available commercial and employment space for the region.

Henan Trade & Cooperation Event

Invest in Gloucestershire has also looked to build partnerships internationally for the county. In May 2021, partnering with the Foreign Affairs Office of the Henan Provincial Government in China, the team hosted a virtual Trade & Co-operation event featuring key businesses from

both regions. Positively received, the event has created links between organisations to explore opportunities and prospects for co-operation.

The event was also supported by the Department of International Trade, British Consulate-General Wuhan and the Henan Provincial Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

Featuring five industry champions from both regions, Gloucestershire was represented by motion control pioneers Renishaw; graphene experts Versarien, specialist education Hartpury University and Hartpury College; global food technology & research centre Campden BRI and Britain's greenest energy provider Ecotricity.

Indonesia Ambassador visit

Working closely with Gloucester MP, Richard Graham in June 2021, the Indonesian Ambassador, HE Dr Desra Percaya paid a special visit to Gloucester. The Invest in Gloucestershire team supported an Export Round Table where local companies looking to explore exporting opportunities with Indonesia met the Ambassador at the Gloucester Growth Hub. The visit was successful

in highlighting the opportunities and exciting developments in the city.

Job creation

This continues to be the key objective for this initiative and the team remain confident that this project will create more jobs here in Gloucestershire.



For more information, please visit: www.investingloucestershireshire.com



Advanced Manufacturing



Cyber-Tech



Renewables



Agri-Tech



Employment & Skills

Responding to the pandemic

The GFirst LEP Employment and Skills team has worked hard throughout the year to support local businesses and individuals impacted by the pandemic with a range of challenges, from recruitment to redundancy, from career changes to upskilling whilst on furlough or working from home.

*We have a further commitment at the end of 2020/2021 from **2 schools** to transition to become a Careers Hub school in 2021/2022.

1

Careers Hub



We're proud the GFirst LEP Careers Hub serves and supports over 30,000 students in mainstream education and over 1,000 in special education provision throughout Gloucestershire.

The Careers Hub was created to inspire and prepare young people throughout Gloucestershire for the

world of work. In partnership with the Careers and Enterprise Company the team launched the Careers Hub for Gloucestershire in November 2020. To watch our launch video and access more information, please visit our website: www.gloscareershub.com



In partnership with:



The composition of the GFirst Careers Hub is:

59 schools and colleges worked with in 2020/2021 (excluding public schools)

43 Careers Hub schools and colleges

Of the 59 schools and colleges:

- 1 University Technical College (UTC)**
- 2 F.E. colleges**
- 5 Alternative provision schools**
- 11 Special Schools**
- 40 mainstream schools**
- 15 11-16 schools**
- 25 11-18 schools**
- 7 selective grammar schools**

The team are excited to continue to raise the aspirations of young people throughout the county, support the implementation of the Gatsby Benchmarks and put opportunities with local employers at the heart of young people's education.

We couldn't do this without our committed team of Enterprise Advisers and volunteers within the county who are a pivotal part of the Careers Hub connecting local business and education, making a lasting impact on the futures of young people.

We're delighted to support 48 Enterprise Advisers (EAs), who come from a wide range of industries and backgrounds to our network. Currently, 40 of our EAs are matched with institutions and work strategically with a school or college, supporting them to deliver high-quality careers education and guidance.

We would also like to thank our Cornerstone Employers - Gloucester Services, Kier, K.W. Bell and Renishaw - for their commitment and passion to ensuring that young people in Gloucestershire have the opportunities they need to be prepared for the future world of work.

These employers have worked collaboratively and in conjunction with the Careers Hub to develop initiatives and best practice. We are excited to grow our dynamic Cornerstone Employer group over the next academic year and would love to hear from you if you represent an employer that wants to work with us and improve careers support for young people. Please contact us at education@gfirstlep.com

The Careers Hub is also supported by a Steering Group made up of key stakeholders within the county. The Steering Group supports the strategy, implementation, impact and sustainability of the Careers Hub and is chaired by Sarah Poultny who is Head of Education Transformation and Post 16 Lead at Gloucestershire County Council.

During the 2020/2021 academic year the schools and colleges in our Careers Hub were adversely affected by Covid-19.



At the start of the academic year following the ending of some of the lockdown conditions during summer 2020, schools and colleges returned with a greater preparedness to provide virtual lessons and support than they had been in early 2020 at the start of the lockdown.

However, from September to Christmas 2020, many schools and colleges had to isolate groups of students and whole year groups, or temporarily close. 38 of the 43 Hub schools and colleges were disrupted in this way, and the disruptions peaked during October. From January 2021 to the end of the academic year, the main disruption was the unplanned closure of schools and colleges following the Christmas holidays, and the effects of this have reverberated during the year. This has meant that our access to Careers Leaders has often been limited, sporadic and subject to last minute changes and challenges, including staff needing to be available to support lateral flow testing.

Although virtual employer encounters have been the saving grace for careers education over the course of this year, many students in alternative provisions and specialist institutions have struggled to engage in this method of communication fully. Many struggle to access information in front of screens or simply do not comprehend that what they are seeing on a screen is real,

therefore reducing how meaningful the encounter has been. We are hopeful that virtual employer encounters will continue in the future for those who will benefit from them, but where at all possible, face-to-face interaction and off-site activity will be the preference.

With that in mind, to support young people with transitions, pastoral support and training options the GFirst Careers Hub team developed a new online portal named NexusGlos (www.nexusglos.co.uk) and this will be further developed in 2021-22 to offer virtual work experience, industry focus weeks and live events. Our partnership with Adviza has allowed NexusGlos to host free-for-users 1:1 support from trained Careers Advice and Guidance Advisers over a three-week period.

Despite the difficulties during the year, school and college careers staff have worked with us to provide online activities and alternatives to the type of face-to-face careers education activities they would normally deliver to their students. We'd like to thank them for their dedication, commitment and resilience during a hugely challenging year.

To get updates about our newest initiatives and the latest education, careers and skills news please don't hesitate to contact the team on education@gfirstlep.com



2

Skills Portal

The Skills Portal was launched in November 2021 using funding from Gloucestershire County Council, to bring together into one place and make it easy for anyone to find out more about careers, jobs and training support, both local and national. The platform provides seven different scenarios for the user, called 'journeys' to swiftly direct them to the most appropriate support for their specific requirements. To visit the portal please go to www.skillsportalglos.com

We have been very pleased with the feedback and the positive response from our business network and partners within the county who



indicated it was very easy to use and very informative. We have received support from our partners at the county and district councils who have helped promote the Skills Portal on their websites. The response has been terrific and from launch to July 2021 we have had over 5,000 visitors to the site.

3

Career Coach

In February of 2021 we were excited to launch a new platform called Career Coach. Career Coach was added to the Skills Portal to help individuals find out which jobs and careers suit them, with information and links to live job vacancies in Gloucestershire.

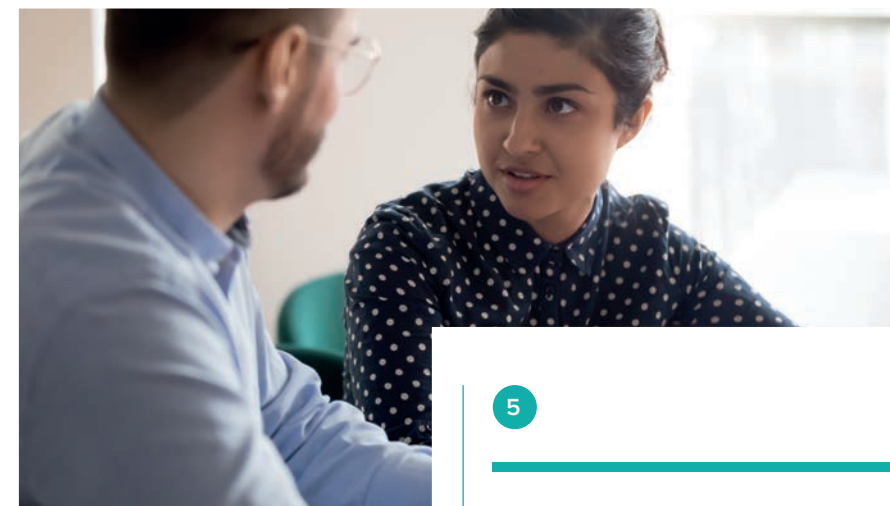
Career Coach brings together everything you need to know about jobs in Gloucestershire and helps you to find out which job or career may suit you best. It's ideal for students and anyone who is looking for a new job or career path. To use Career Coach please go to www.skillsportalglos.com/career-coach

It provides you with an opportunity to complete a short assessment to find out which jobs or careers would best suit, then find out more about them, from typical pay, salaries and qualifications needed to what the job involves.

The platform will also help you find a job. Whether you take the Career Coach assessment or not, Career Coach displays live job postings for your preferred jobs and career choices, so you can apply straight away using the links provided.

Career Coach also provides an easy to-follow CV builder which helps you structure your CV and makes sure you don't miss out anything important. Even if the job you're applying for needs you to fill in a form, having an up-to-date CV makes completing applications much easier.

The feedback has been tremendously positive and we understand that mentors, advisers and work coaches are using the career coach platform to help them with their clients. By July 2021 there have been nearly 900 visits to the platform with over 300 assessments started.



4

Redundancy taskforce

As a result of the economic impact of Covid-19 on local businesses we created a redundancy task force to support employees at risk of redundancy in the county. We began with a review of what resources were currently in place via Jobcentre Plus/Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Adviza, who provide the National Careers Service support in the county. We also engaged with local training providers and unions who have dedicated programmes of support for those faced with this type of scenario.

It has been essential to create an 'early warning' system to identify and signpost to local employers forced to make redundancies. We have done this via local partners such as the District Councils, business membership organisations and Growth Hub Partners so that we can follow up on these 'early warning' signs with a speedy and supportive multi-agency response.

If you are aware of any organisations or employees in local organisations who need help through the challenges and uncertainties of redundancy, please let them know about our skills portal and make contact with Paul Woodhouse at GFirst LEP Paul.Woodhouse@gfirstlep.com

5

Employment and skills programmes to support those affected by the pandemic

Whilst the pandemic resulted in 45,350 people being furloughed in Gloucestershire when these figures peaked in January 2021, we have been working with a range of local and national employment and skills providers to ensure that people seeking work and those affected by furlough have been able to get the support they need to get into/back into work.

Working closely with Gloucestershire County Council, the Kickstart Gateway organisations, Jobcentre Plus/DWP and other partners, we have supported the commissioning, set up or extension of the following local and national schemes:

- Kickstart
- Going the Extra Mile (GEM)
- JETS
- Restart
- Workstart

We have also contributed to bids to secure further digital and cyber skills provision in the county through the **Digital Skills Bootcamps** programme.

All of the above programmes will continue to support many thousands of people in Gloucestershire wanting to get into/back into work in 2021-22 and beyond.

6

Longer-term Employment and Skills work this year

Whilst we've been working so hard on providing immediate and relevant support for young people and those faced with unemployment, we have also been shaping and leading the work of the **Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel** to ensure that local employers get the employees and training that they need and that the local colleges, universities and independent training providers understand the training and recruitment needs of local employers. Successes this year include the creation of an employment and skills evidence base, a Local Skills Report, and the development of a Skills Strategy for Gloucestershire.

Finally, in an immensely busy year for the employment and skills team, we have also chaired and supported the **Transition to employment workstream of Child-Friendly Gloucestershire Coalition** which seeks to make Gloucestershire a better place for children and young people and involve them in the co-creation of effective careers support and work experience opportunities in the county.



For further information about the wider employment and skills work the LEP Team does and how we do it, please visit www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/skills-for-business



Stats and highlights

This has been an exceptional year for Growth Hub delivery in Gloucestershire, demonstrated both in terms of high levels of business engagements, and our ability to rapidly adapt our services in response to business and government requirements.

4,500 BUSINESS ENGAGEMENTS

The foundations established since The Growth Hub launched in 2014 and our incredible Network of Growth Hub partners, ensured we could respond to the direct and sometimes desperate needs of businesses as a result of the pandemic, whilst maintaining focus on business recovery and growth.

£9.4m INVESTMENT SECURED

The last year has seen the final commitment of the £9.4 million capital investment secured for the Network in the Strategic Economic Plan. As of July 26 2021, all six Network facilities will be operational and by September 2021 we hope all of our facilities will reopen to the public.

3,734 BUSINESSES REACHED

The EU Transition project was a huge success, the first time we had undertaken outreach activity of this scale and reaching 3,734 businesses.

148 BUSINESSES WORKED WITH

Over the last year we have worked closely with 148 businesses, partners and stakeholders to develop our economic recovery plan. After reviewing the wealth of information being promoted during lockdown, we developed a Business Recovery Toolkit that businesses of all sizes could apply as a road map for post-pandemic recovery.

55+ PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS

Our private sector partner business portfolio now includes over 55 organisations who support our delivery. Drawing primarily from the professional services sector, these businesses play a critical role in the delivery of our mentoring, training and workshop programmes, provide expert content for thought leadership activities and also assist with student experience and entrepreneurial initiatives. Providing their services at no cost and throughout the pandemic, we are hugely grateful for the role they play in supporting the Gloucestershire economy.

A series of articles, communications and training around Wellbeing and Health were particularly well received by businesses, local stakeholders and our own teams.

#HubatHome

www.instagram.com/p/B_FTJLbgFYn

We have invested in specialist advisor support for Covid-19 recovery, change management, strategic planning, digital implementation, skills and sustainability, reinforcing our determination to ensure that we are still providing support to businesses that are growing rapidly. In addition to this we undertook projects focussing on supporting higher levels of innovation and our high growth Cyber Tech sector businesses.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE GROWTH HUB INDEPENDENT EVALUATION 2020-2021

The Growth Hub team was viewed as having done a “fantastic” job given the rapid change in circumstances and their own personal considerations and new ways of working, of moving The Growth Hub to a largely digital service. **“They have responded very well to the new business demands of businesses impacted by Covid-19.”**

The qualitative assessment from partner organisations was that it worked incredibly well, adopting a “putting out fires” approach and coped well with the “tsunami of business enquiries at the outset of the pandemic.”

In comparison with other Growth Hubs in neighbouring areas, the Gloucestershire Growth Hub was regarded as “the stand out, gold service Growth Hub in the West of England.”

Peer Networks



Harnessing the power of your peers

On 3 August 2020, in a brief summer respite between the UK’s first and second national lockdowns, the now-revolutionary Peer Networks programme was launched across England.

Introduced by the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), Peer Networks was designed as a way to combat the impacts of Covid-19 on businesses, and help them to recover by harnessing each other’s expertise and experience. It grouped together business leaders in similar sectors or situations who, under the guidance of a trained facilitator, would troubleshoot one another’s problems with the benefit of a hive mentality.

With Peer Networks launched, the baton was handed over to The Growth Hubs to deliver. GFirst LEP was chosen to lead one of the 10 national clusters of Growth Hubs, meaning it was responsible for the programme’s rollout and management not only in Gloucestershire, but also South Gloucestershire, Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, Swindon, and Wiltshire.

Treated as a pilot phase, the first year of the programme ran between August 2020 and March 2021, at which point a decision would be made whether it was having the desired impact. It was feedback like the below which unveiled just how transformational it had been:



Nick Eden
Chief Executive Officer
CloudTamers

“On a basic level, it is an incredible tonic for the loneliness of being in charge. But more practically, I get to crowdsource my challenges for free. When it was my turn to present my problem to the group, firstly I realised that it was very different to what I thought it was. The act of being forced to think on it, write it down, and speak it aloud made me completely reevaluate it. I wouldn’t have done that otherwise. But secondly, when I presented the new problem I got 15 points of feedback which all offered some form of solution. It has been a groundbreaking experience. One of the most helpful exercises I have been through as a business leader.”



Karen Taylor
Managing Director
Gloucestershire Airport

“I approached The Growth Hub and found out about Peer Networks, which seemed tailor-made for my situation. Having the chance to network with other leaders, share my challenges confidentially, and find solutions from other leaders in other sectors - it’s exactly what I was looking for. Sometimes when you’re so close to something, you can miss the obvious, so having a sounding board will be invaluable. Plus, it helps to speak to other bosses and find out they’re experiencing the same emotions, especially the loneliness of leadership.”

Join a Peer Networks cohort

Who better to turn to for advice, guidance, and support than fellow business leaders who’ve been there, done that? Join Peer Networks today for free:

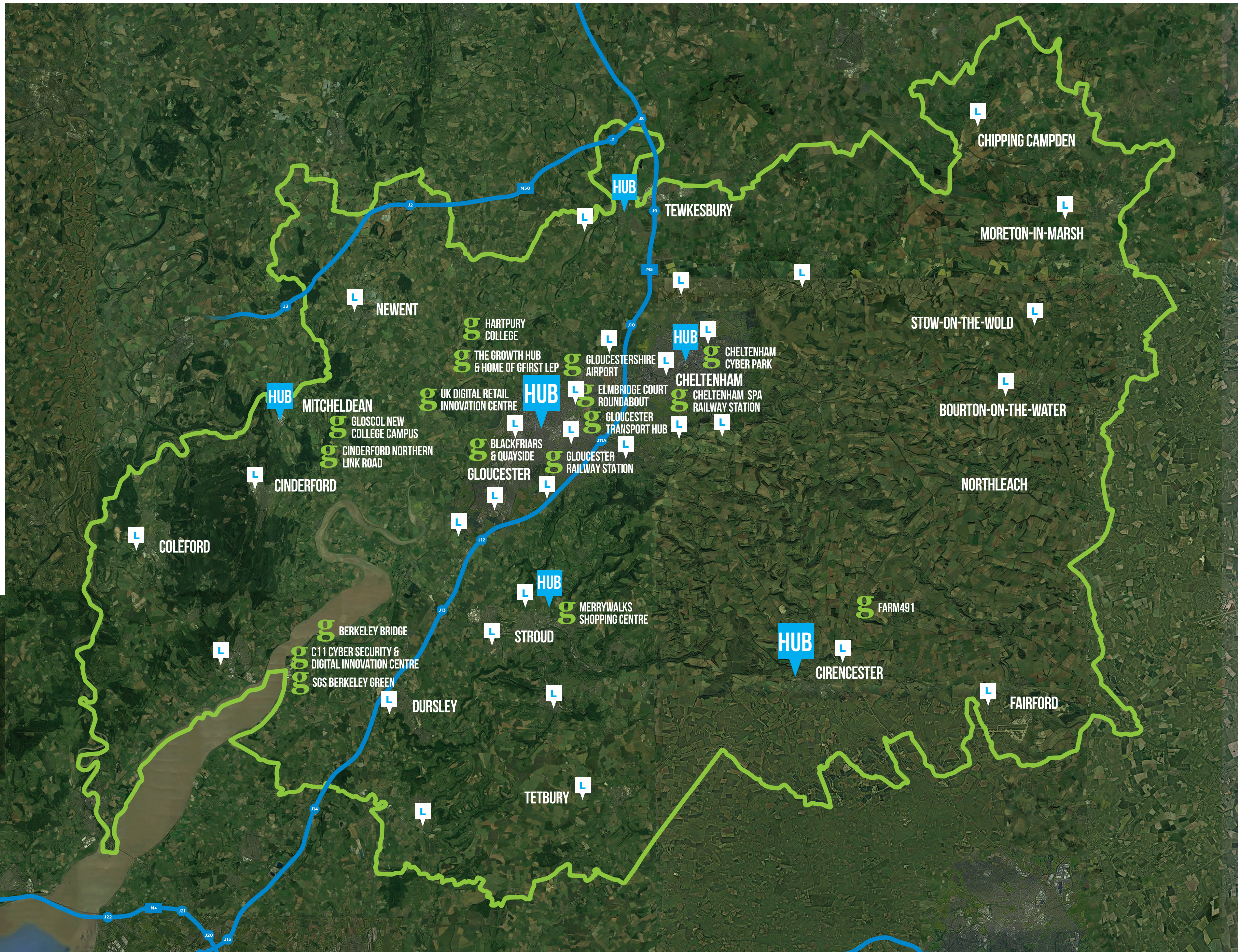
www.thegrowthhub.biz/peernetworks

Growth Deal Projects

Since 2011 GFirst LEP have brought £101.69 million into the county through the Gloucestershire Growth Deal, and €41 million in European funding through our EU Structural and Investment Funds Strategy. Thanks to these deals, we're funding cutting-edge projects, fuelling innovation and facilitating change, laying solid foundations for Gloucestershire's next steps to economic growth.

Over the next 12 pages in this annual report you'll see how these projects are continuing to future-proof Gloucestershire.

- KEY:
-  PROJECTS
 -  THE GROWTH HUB NETWORK
 -  GROWTH HUB LIBRARIES





GROWTH DEAL

Cheltenham Cyber Park

Cheltenham's Cyber Park is an ambitious private-public initiative which will create the UK's first dedicated cyber security hub, to support the growth and development of specialist businesses, technology, research, and skills.

What is the Cheltenham Cyber Park project?

You may know it as Cyber Central, or the Golden Valley Development, but by whichever name, Cheltenham Cyber Park is one of the largest and most ambitious projects ever undertaken in Gloucestershire.

The £23.6m Growth Fund investment is being met by ten times that amount from Cheltenham Borough Council, to realise the vision of this full-scale specialist business park project. By bringing forward improvements to the highway system, this project will unlock 45 hectares of employment land, focussing on cyber industries and creating new jobs. The park will also be home to the Cyber Central Innovation Zone and 3,000 new homes.

The LEP funding will pay for an extensive highways upgrade programme, the 'West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme', which will create the infrastructure and access needed to make the Cheltenham Cyber Park possible:

GROWTH DEAL FUNDING:	£23.6m	PROJECT PARTNER:
PROJECT STATUS		
CONTRACTED	IN DELIVERY	

- Arle Court Roundabout and Benhall Roundabout remodelling
- Hatherley Lane and Telstar Way widening
- B4063 bus priority to Arle Court
- A40 Park and Ride access
- Badgeworth Road Bridge extension
- Arle Court carriageway extension for M5 J11
- J11 Southbound slip road capacity improvements
- Cycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements from Arle Court to Cheltenham Spa railway station.

The project will also deliver new shared use infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists to access the railway station from the town centre.

Who benefits from this project?

The overall Cheltenham Cyber Park will benefit the whole of the Gloucestershire economy, and individuals living or working in or near the area, bringing an uplift in high value jobs, new housing and exciting transport improvements.

The transport and infrastructure project will relieve existing congestion along the A40 and accommodate future development to the west of Cheltenham. This includes Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury's

strategic allocations, such as the nationally important Cheltenham Cyber Park.

It will contribute to accelerating the release of the employment land, along with the other strategic allocations adjacent to GCHQ, which includes the proposed Cyber Park and Cyber Central Innovation Zone. It will deliver significant transport benefits by improving traffic flows on the A40.

The cycling element of the scheme is designed to contribute to improving cycleway facilities which will promote alternative travel options and enable modal shift, remove traffic from the network and reduce stress on congestion hotspots whilst improving physical health, mental health and wellbeing.

What stage is the project currently at?

The scheme is progressing on target for completing the Arle Court section of improvements by the end of Summer 2021.



- Construction of the retaining walls on the subway is moving forward on the north east side, and the aim is to have the subway back open in Summer 2021, if not sooner.
- Work is complete on the Arle Court roundabout itself, and the aim is to complete the final resurfacing and traffic signals by the end of Summer 2021.
- The A40 eastbound arm is nearly complete too, and is also waiting for final resurfacing, along with new signs and lighting.
- The A40 westbound road widening is over halfway there, with electric and internet diversions complete. The Park and Ride slip road is progressing well and from the air the site here has changed a lot.
- Electricity and water main diversions have finished at Hatherley Lane. Kerb line changes at the KFC corner are underway in preparation for reconstructing the road and laying a new footway here.
- The East Splitter Island is really taking shape; a temporary surface to the new lane extension has been laid and new kerbs are nearly complete here.

Why is the project important to Gloucestershire and the local community?

Cheltenham Cyber Park will deliver a nationally, and internationally, important cluster of innovative and creative businesses putting Gloucestershire at the heart of the UK Cyber sector.

It will also completely redevelop the west of the town, creating a significant number of new homes and job opportunities in one of the fastest growing industries in the country. The transport improvements will also benefit the employment market, both by making it easier for residents to access jobs in the wider region, and for those living outside of Gloucestershire to commute in.

The scheme will deliver transport benefits to people living and working in Gloucestershire by improving traffic flows and lessening journey times on one of the most important and busiest sections of Gloucestershire's road network.

The cycle routes deliver on Gloucestershire's ambitions for a shift to sustainable transport and will provide residents with accessible and usable cycle links to employment, retail and transport hubs along the A40 corridor.



What are the final results of the project?

The infrastructure enhancements scheme will deliver:

PHASE 1

Enabling capacity improvements to the A40 Arle Court Roundabout to alleviate existing issues at the junction and to future proof against the impact of expected increases in demand.

- The provision of an additional lane to the circulatory of the signalised roundabout;
- Corresponding additional lanes to the A40 on the approaches and exits to and from the junction;
- Providing a bus lane on the B4063 approach to the roundabout;
- A new controlled pedestrian crossing across Fiddler's Green Lane;
- Widening the Hatherley Lane arm to the south-side of the roundabout, improving access to the Arle Court Park and Ride (P&R);
- A new 'bus only' slip road providing Park and Ride access/egress directly with the A40 westbound;
- Relocating the bus stop at the P&R and building a new one on the other side of the road to take advantage of the 'bus only' slip road.

PHASE 2

Enabling capacity improvements for traffic travelling in an eastbound direction from the M5 Junction 11 to Arle Court Roundabout.

- A40 eastbound merge from M5 Junction 11 upgraded to a lane gain with ghost island merge;
- A40 eastbound carriageway upgraded to three lanes from this lane gain all the way to Arle Court Roundabout.

PHASE 3 + 4

Phase 3 and 4 seeks to provide capacity improvements for traffic on the west-side of Cheltenham on the A40 between Arle Court roundabout and the TGI Fridays junction.

- A40 eastbound widening from Benhall roundabout;
- Benhall roundabout re-modelling;
- Telstar Way junction re-modelling; and
- TGI Friday Signal Improvements (at the junction between the A40 and B4633).

The scheme will also create a mix of segregated and shared use cycling and walking routes along the A40 from Arle Court roundabout to the Triumph Traffic Lights, providing a direct route for users to access Cheltenham Spa Railway Station and the town centre. Secondary routes are included to provide alternative routes and choices for less experienced or confident cycle users.

Where can I find out more?

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/major-projects-list/west-cheltenham-transport-improvement-scheme-uk-cyber-business-park

www.goldenvalleyuk.com



GROWTH DEAL

Gloucester Railway Station

Gloucester Railway Station is receiving a much-needed boost, with £4.3m of Growth Deal regeneration funding. The new station will provide increased connectivity for residential, employment, retail, leisure, and tourism in the city.



GROWTH DEAL FUNDING: £4.3m

PROJECT STATUS

CONTRACTED IN DELIVERY COMPLETED

PROJECT PARTNER:

Gloucester City Council
Transforming Your City

What is the Gloucester Railway Station Improvements project?

The current Gloucester Railway Station needs a new lease of life, to both keep up with, and drive forward, the ambition and momentum of Gloucestershire's only city. This regeneration project aims to provide an improved railway station and underpass, to act as a catalyst for investment and growth, enabling and connecting new homes, and in turn underpinning and creating new jobs through enhancing commercial values and creating a connected city.

This investment will deliver place improvements to facilitate growth, improving connectivity between 9,000 existing jobs helping to underpin and facilitate an £80m investment proposition at Kings Quarter, and further job creation.

The improved aesthetic of the station building will provide a bolder and brighter gateway for the city, and complement the investment made at the Transport Hub opposite.

Who benefits from this project?

Gloucester's 150,000 residents will hugely benefit from the regeneration of their railway station, as it improves public transport in the city and creates an easier, more accessible, and more pleasant experience.

The aim of creating a more 'connected' city will also help both residents and visitors to attend new parts of Gloucester, including a boost to shopping and leisure facilities. It also makes the act of commuting into Gloucester a more pleasant experience, which will increase the competitiveness of the city's job market, and therefore improve the quality of talent working in the area.



What stage is the project currently at?

The project is still underway, with works remaining on all 4 of the main areas:

Subway: The two sides of the railway are linked by a subway, which will benefit from improved accessibility, as well as new lighting, decoration, improved drainage and full CCTV coverage.

Forecourt: The outside of the station will facilitate new bus routes to Metz Way, as well as a new bus layby. Real-time rail and bus information will be provided on displays. New car parking, cycle parking, and electric vehicle charging points will be installed.

Building: The building itself will benefit from new cladding, transforming the aesthetic of the station.

Highways: The Bruton Way junction will be improved, and a new junction to Metz Way will be constructed.

Why is the project important to Gloucestershire and the local community?

Designed to provide a new 'gateway' to Gloucester, the improved railway station will be of vast benefit to both the city and county, by attracting more visitors and tourists to the area. It will also improve the experience for commuters, increase property prices in the regeneration area, and act as a catalyst for private sector investment. All of this, in turn, will deliver an economic boost for Gloucester.

What are the final results of the project?

Upon completion, this project will provide: Gloucester city itself with an economic boost, as improved public spaces around the station (and Transport Hub) will attract more development of residences and businesses, further increasing the amount of money flowing into Gloucester. This has been referred to as a 'context of confidence' for private sector investment.

Where can I find out more?

Keep an eye on GFirst LEP's News page for updates:
www.gfirstlep.com/news

A40 Innsworth Gateway Scheme

The A40 Innsworth Gateway Scheme, which includes the improvement and construction of roundabouts and roads around Innsworth, was awarded £4.53m in Growth Deal funding in 2017.



What is the A40 Innsworth Gateway Scheme?

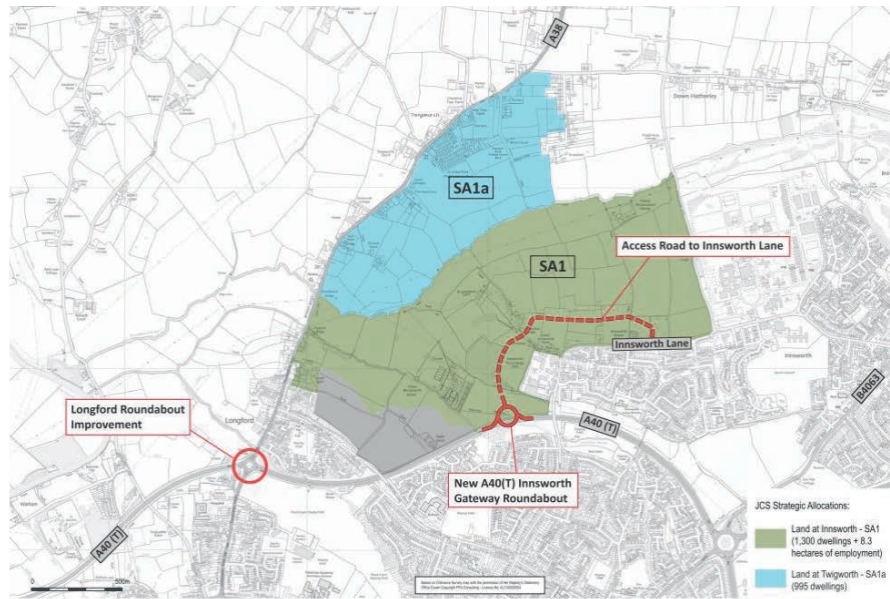
Often referred to as the 'Innsworth Gateway Project', this is a programme of improvements to roundabouts and roads around the village of Innsworth in Gloucester.

The project will improve capacity of the A40 Longford Roundabout, and build a new roundabout on the A40 Gloucester Northern Bypass, to enable the construction of thousands of new homes in Innsworth and Twigworth.

A new access road will also be constructed, connecting the new roundabout to Innsworth Lane. All of these improvements seek to reduce delays along the A40 corridor.

Who benefits from this project?

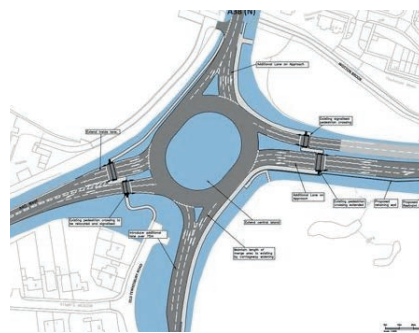
The developments at Innsworth Gateway (1,300 dwellings) and Twigworth (725 dwellings) will contribute towards the Joint Core Strategy housing target. Capacity improvements at Longford roundabout also aim to improve journey times on the A40 and aims to reduce the number and severity of vehicle collisions especially at Longford Roundabout, which has seen a cluster of collisions in the past five years.



GROWTH DEAL FUNDING: £4.53m

PROJECT PARTNER: Robert Hitchens
The Complete Development Solution

PROJECT STATUS: CONTRACTED IN DELIVERY COMPLETED



What stage is the project currently at?

The Innsworth Gateway project began in 2019, and will be completed in 2021.

Why is the project important to Gloucestershire and the local community?

The A40 is one of the busiest roads in Gloucestershire, and this project's capacity improvements at Longford Roundabout aim to improve journey times for commuters in the region. This development also aims to reduce the number and severity of vehicle collisions in the area, particularly at Longford Roundabout.

With more than 2,000 new homes being built, it will also facilitate the growth of the housing market for local residents.

What are the final results of the project?

This project will deliver:

- Capacity improvements for the A40 Longford Roundabout
- New construction of a roundabout on A40 Gloucester Northern Bypass
- New construction of an access road connecting Innsworth Lane
- New construction of 1,300 dwellings at Innsworth Gateway
- New construction of 725 dwellings at Twigworth

As well as relieving traffic in the area, these developments will contribute to the Joint Core Strategy housing target.

Where can I find out more?

Keep an eye on GFirst LEP's News page for updates:

www.gfirstlep.com/news

Cheltenham Spa Railway Station

Cheltenham Spa Railway Station is currently undergoing an extensive development, to provide easier access, and an improved travel experience.

What is the Cheltenham Spa Railway Station project?

Cheltenham Spa Railway Station ferries more than 2.5 million passengers every year, and as a tourist destination for festivals and horse racing, undergoes significant seasonal traffic increases. With its heritage dating back to 1840, originally called Lansdown, it's safe to say that the station has needed a number of improvements since then. This new project is another such development.

Cheltenham is an expanding town with ambitious plans for economic growth, based around the cyber security industry, particularly the establishment of a National Cyber Security Centre. Over 10,000 homes are planned around the town in coming years as well as major employment locations. Enhanced rail connectivity to London will be an important part of this growth, and this project will deliver sub 2-hour journey times, with 12,000 additional seats.

Who benefits from this project?

Residents of Cheltenham will welcome the much-needed improvements to the railway station. Car parking has been an issue for some time, both in the amount of spaces available and the convoluted route around the space. Improvements to this, and the forecourt experience, will help residents and commuters of the town to enjoy their business and leisure journeys. The improvements will also offer better facilities for cycle provision with a brand new cycle hub and cycle route connecting the railway station with Lansdown Road. Ultimately commuters will be able to cycle from Gloucester Railway Station to



GROWTH DEAL FUNDING: £1.497m

PROJECT PARTNER: Multiple Partners

PROJECT STATUS: CONTRACTED IN DELIVERY COMPLETED

Cheltenham Railway Station on a new and enhanced dedicated cycle route.

Increased capacity and connectivity will also drive business growth in the area, both in the ability for existing businesses to attract employees from further afield, and for new businesses considering the viability of basing their operations in the spa town.

What stage is the project currently at?

Cheltenham Spa is currently undergoing redevelopment, and this phase is expected to be complete and open for business during Spring 2021. The cycle route connecting the railway station to Lansdown Road aims to be complete by the end of 2021.

Why is the project important to Gloucestershire and the local community?

Cheltenham is an important economic hub for Gloucestershire. The upcoming Cyber Park is projected to create thousands of new homes and new jobs, but better connectivity is needed to realise the ambition of the development.

Better railway facilities will also improve the quality of life for anybody travelling into and out of Cheltenham. With the proposed improvements including more security surveillance, better lighting, and an expanded platform - railway users will enjoy a much more pleasant experience than the current outdated format.

Potentially the most important of these improvements, however, is the considerably

increased connectivity with London. With double the amount of daily trains, a 1hr 55m journey time to Paddington, and 12,000 additional seats each day - the potential for Cheltenham-London collaborations will become significantly more feasible.

What are the final results of the project?

Once the redevelopment is complete, the final results will include:

- Improved journey quality, parking availability, and safety in the car park;
- Improved capability for major events at the station as a result of provision in the car park to safely manage large volumes of queuing customers, with buses managed on the highway and forecourt;
- Increased revenue, from improved station access and journey quality;
- Reduced congestion, notably on the A417 and A419, as a result of London travel and abstraction from parking at Kemble and Swindon stations.

Where can I find out more?

Business website

www.gwr.com/plan-journey/stations-and-routes/cheltenham-spa

Business case

www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/projects/full-business-cases/cheltenham-spa-railway.pdf

A40 Elmbridge Court

The Elmbridge Court project was a large-scale ambitious transport programme, centred around a number of improvements to an important commuting roundabout which connects Cheltenham, Gloucester, The Forest of Dean, and other routes around the county.

What is the A40 Elmbridge Court project?

Elmbridge Court is a large and busy roundabout, comprising entry and exit to five key routes (A40 Golden Bypass, A417 Barnwood Link, B4063 Cheltenham Road, A40 Northern Bypass, and B4063 Cheltenham Road East) for travel in Gloucestershire. Economic, residential, and business growth in the area over the last decade have made this juncture a common bottle neck for traffic coming into and out of both Gloucester and Cheltenham - the county's largest and busiest zones.

With such rapid growth in usage, the area had become a congestion hotspot, a road traffic accident risk, and unfit for purpose for future growth plans in Gloucestershire. The proposal from Gloucestershire County Council set out to increase capacity, cut congestion, and improve journeys at peak times. Lanes would be widened, traffic signal technology improved, and a new straight-on 'hamburger lane' to improve the flow of traffic.

Two years of intensive research informed the proposal, which was accepted and fully-funded by GFirst LEP and the Department of Transport. The scheme was granted £9,070,000 and given the go-ahead for construction.

Who benefits from this project?

This project benefits everybody who travels between Cheltenham, Gloucester, the Forest of Dean, or accesses the motorway from inside



GROWTH DEAL FUNDING:

£9.07m

PROJECT STATUS

CONTRACTED	IN DELIVERY	COMPLETED
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PROJECT PARTNER:



Gloucestershire. Improvements benefitted all types of vehicle, from public transport to private cars to commercial vehicles. Any journeys which incorporate Elmbridge Court now benefit from faster travel time, less congestion, and a safer experience. By extension, the improvements have allowed for both business and residential growth in the area.

What stage is the project currently at?

The project was completed on time and on budget, opening on 22 September 2017.

Why is the project important to Gloucestershire and the local community?

Elmbridge Court is a key commuting, leisure, and business route for Gloucestershire and the South West. Residents will benefit hugely from the improvements, as journey times incorporating this route have often been frustratingly congested at peak times.

Businesses, such as those on the Elmbridge Court Business Park, will enjoy much easier access for customers, employees, and deliveries. These improvements will help fuel growth and attract new businesses into the area, feeding into economic growth plans for the county.

Businesses reliant on physical trade, like retailers, will also benefit from shoppers who are more enthusiastic about taking this route

to get to retail areas. This includes both within and without the county, due to the key M5 access from the A40 Golden Valley bypass.

What are the final results of the project?

The scheme delivered a series of improvements to Elmbridge Court roundabout to improve its capacity:

- 'Hamburger' through lane;
- Widening of approaches;
- Installation of the latest traffic signal technology.

The end result is a far more pleasant journey through this intersection, and significant reductions in both congestion and commuting times.

? Where can I find out more?

Business case

www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/projects/full-business-cases/a40-elmbridge-court.pdf

Gloucestershire Airport

Gloucestershire Airport (formerly known as Staverton Airport) has an ambitious 10-year growth plan, and in 2019, GFirst LEP approved a £1.885m Growth Deal investment to support this.

What is Gloucestershire Airport Anson Park?

Gloucestershire Airport is situated mid-way between Cheltenham and Gloucester, near the M5 and A40. It uniquely offers charter and pleasure flights, as well as flight training and lessons. Gloucestershire Airport is a vital economic hub in the county.

On the North of the complex lies Anson Park, a business park which is home to a number of companies, and which provides additional commercial potential for the airport.

This funding is a contribution to the provision of new infrastructure, including an access road and site services, to enable further development through an extension to Anson Park.

Who benefits from this project?

This project will provide additional operating space for businesses in Gloucestershire, and will allow for 570 jobs, 450 of which will be new and additional, to be created.

What stage is the project currently at?

Development of Gloucestershire Airport Anson Park began in 2020, and will be completed in 2022.



GROWTH DEAL FUNDING:

£1.885m

PROJECT STATUS

CONTRACTED	IN DELIVERY	COMPLETED
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PROJECT PARTNER:



Why is the project important to Gloucestershire and the local community?

Gloucestershire Airport acts as an economic pillar for the region. During Cheltenham Race Week, the airport becomes incredibly busy, and the airport is required to impose a slot allocation for all visiting aircraft. The generation and improvement of the airfield, therefore, will provide an economic boost across the whole of Gloucestershire.

Anson Business Park, alongside neighbouring Meteor Business Park, provides crucial space for businesses to operate, in a desirable location with good transport links around the county and country. The provision of extra space will create 450 new jobs.



What are the final results of the project?

By January 2022, Gloucestershire Airport Anson Park will have been expanded by:

- 7.5Ha of land will be serviced for development
- 36,646m² of internal floorspace will be created
- 700m of road will be constructed.

Ultimately, this will support the airport's 10 year plan and contribute to the growth of the Gloucestershire aviation sector, and overall economy.

? Where can I find out more?

Business website:

www.gloucestershireairport.co.uk

A40 Over Roundabout

The A40 Over Roundabout is an important entry point for those travelling to Gloucester from the west, particularly the Forest of Dean. This project delivered a series of improvements to help the route keep up with demand.

What is the A40 Over Roundabout project?

The A40 Roundabout is one of the busiest entry points toward Gloucester, providing access from the west of the county and the Forest of Dean. Use of this important route has increased significantly over the years, and improvements were made to it in both 2009 and 2015.

This round of improvements sought to future proof the area and either avoid the need for redevelopment should traffic volume continue to increase, or make them much less disruptive.

The main areas of focus for this project were upgrading both southbound and westbound approaches from two to three lanes, and adding a third circulatory lane to the roundabout itself.

Who benefits from this project?

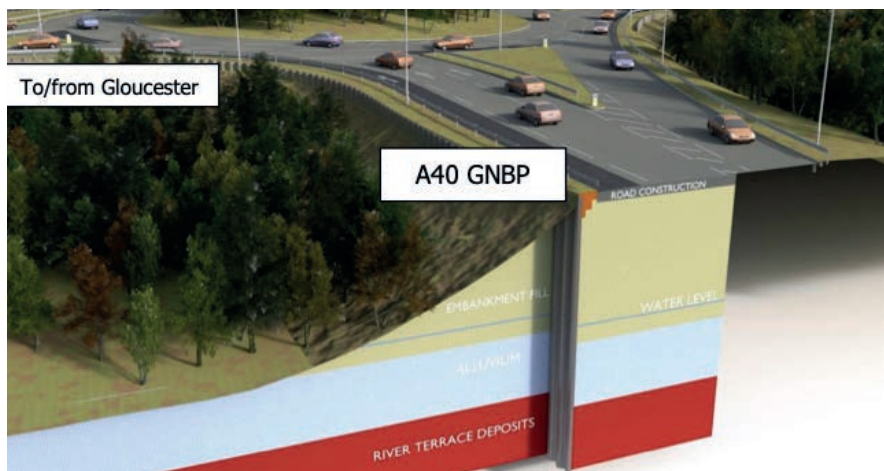
Drivers travelling between Gloucester and the Forest of Dean have benefited most from this project, with reduced peak journey times and a more pleasant driving experience.

Public transport users, particularly those commuting, have also been provided with a much friendlier travel schedule as buses enjoy reduced journey times also.

Residents living along this long stretch of road will also have benefitted from a reduced amount of standing traffic, and easier access to their homes.



GROWTH DEAL FUNDING:	£2.23m	PROJECT PARTNER:
PROJECT STATUS		
CONTRACTED	IN DELIVERY	



What stage is the project currently at?

The A40 Over Roundabout has now been fully developed, and was reopened to traffic in September 2018.

Why is the project important to Gloucestershire and the local community?

With a number of recently completed, ongoing, and future developments in both Gloucester and the Forest of Dean - good transport links between the two areas has never been more important. Greater employment opportunities and residential projects in both areas means commuting between the city and the Forest is likely to increase, leading to more traffic using the route.

The A40 Over Roundabout is also a key route for intra-county tourism, particularly those

from Gloucester and Cheltenham accessing the Forest of Dean's leisure facilities. These improvements will help ease peak tourism travel, on weekends and in school holidays.

What are the final results of the project?

The A40 Over Roundabout has now been upgraded with:

- A third circulatory lane, increasing traffic potential by 33%
- A third lane on both the southbound and westbound approaches.

Where can I find out more?

Business case:

www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/projects/full-business-cases/a40-highnam-roundabout.pdf

Lydney Cycling Improvements

Through the award of a £1m fund, this project has created a pleasant, safe and accessible network of pathways, linking Lydney town centre to Aylburton, the railway station, Dean Academy, and the local residential areas.

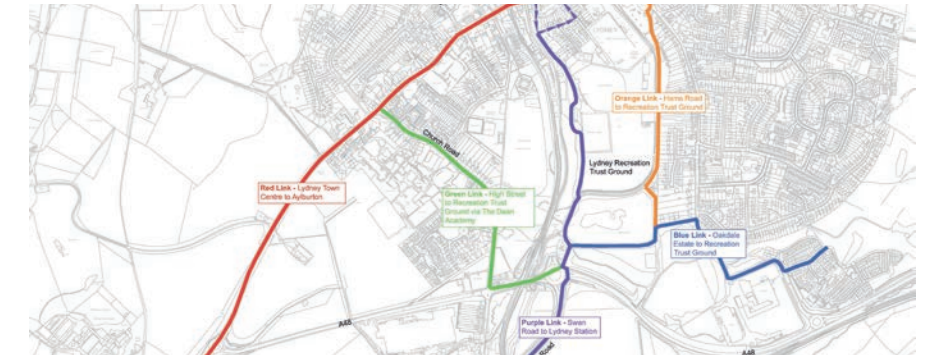
What is the Lydney Cycling Improvements project?

This project was made up of the improvement and development of 5 key routes in and around Lydney, in the Forest of Dean:

- Purple Link: Lydney Railway Station to Swan Road
- Blue Link: Oakdale Estate to Purple Link
- Orange Link: Blue Link to Hams Road
- Green Link: Purple Link to Red Link via Dean Academy
- Red Link: Lydney Town Centre to Aylburton.

The overall objective of the project was to improve cycle access and usage, and reduce car journeys in the area. By focusing on cycling routes to key destinations, the improvements will provide alternative routes that can be taken by bike, rather than by a motorised vehicle. Lydney and the wider Forest of Dean area can benefit by an overall increase in cycling, both for the local residents and by enhancing the offer for cycling tourism in the area and for longer-distance leisure routes.

These improvements will boost the local economy offering greener travel choices that will make it easier for both residents and visitors to access jobs, services, education, shopping and visitor attractions. They will also contribute, in the long term, to a greener, healthier Forest of Dean.



GROWTH DEAL FUNDING:	£1m	PROJECT PARTNER:
PROJECT STATUS		
CONTRACTED	IN DELIVERY	

Who benefits from this project?

With more people cycling, and less people driving, Lydney will become a greener and healthier town. The encouragement of active lifestyles will benefit residents both physically and mentally, and reduce the amount of cars on the road (and therefore emissions.)

It will also provide a better public transport experience for commuters and visitors, as locals use cycles more often and lighten the load of trains, buses, and taxis.

What stage is the project currently at?

The project is now complete, having met all of its objectives, by Autumn 2020.

Why is the project important to Gloucestershire and the local community?

Both the Lydney Transport Plan and the Strategic Economic Plan seek to address a number of issues through developments like these, which encourage more active lifestyles. The benefits to mental and physical health, alongside making the scheme areas more green, are substantial for anybody living in, working in, or passing through one of these regions.

The Forest of Dean relies heavily on tourism income, which itself is dependent on the region remaining green, healthy, beautiful, and tranquil. The encouragement of more cycling and less cars will help maintain this vital economic anchor.

What are the final results of the project?

This project has now been completed, and made improvements on 5 routes in the area of Lydney, with the long-term intention of:

- Increasing connectivity and reduce congestion within the town
- Increasing connectivity between the town centre and the railway station
- Improving off-road cycling/walking routes between the town centre and railway station
- Improving safety for users of active transportation modes.

And the overall objectives of:

- Maximising economic productivity and efficiency
- Improving access to skills, jobs, goods and services.

Where can I find out more?

Full business case:

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2084418/lydney-cycling-improvements-full-business-case.pdf





GROWTH DEAL

Gloucestershire Airport South Camp

Gloucestershire Airport (formerly known as Staverton Airport) has an ambitious 10-year growth plan, and to help achieve its numerous aims, GFirst LEP assisted with an expansion project via £550,000 of Growth Deal funding.

GROWTH DEAL FUNDING: £550k

PROJECT PARTNER: Gloucestershire Airport - Staverton

PROJECT STATUS: CONTRACTED IN DELIVERY COMPLETED

What is the Gloucestershire Airport South Camp project?

Situated in the heart of Gloucestershire's growth zone, mid-way between Cheltenham and Gloucester, and with easy access to both the M5 and A40: Gloucestershire Airport is an economic and transport hub for the county.

The south camp of the airport is a fully functioning aviation hub, but it was identified that further facilities would help boost the performance of the airfield. A number of new hangars, and an access road connecting them to the other provisions at the airport, was put forward and accepted.

The airport is home to more than 180 aircraft, 30 companies, and employs more than 500 people. This new development would provide the potential for growth in all three areas.

Who benefits from this project?

This project will provide additional space for aviation activities at the airport, and further expand the potential for growth. As a large

employer and business landlord, growth of the airport provides an economic boost for the whole of Gloucestershire.

What stage is the project currently at?

The project is now complete, with both the access road and hangar construction having completed in 2018.

Why is the project important to Gloucestershire and the local community?

Gloucestershire Airport's prominence as a business aviation centre for the county continues to grow; the airport now handles around 90,000 aircraft movements each year, many for business purposes.

With Anson Park and Meteor Park on the north of the site, the airport is also a substantial hub for 30 businesses, and 500 employees. The generation and improvement of the airfield, therefore, will provide an economic boost across the whole of Gloucestershire.

What are the final results of the project?

The Gloucestershire Airport South Camp project was completed in 2018, and included:

- 4,000m2 of new hangar space
- 500m of new access road.

? Where can I find out more?

www.gloucestershireairport.co.uk



GROWTH DEAL

Merrywalks Centre

With £3m of Growth Deal funding, and an additional £1m of GIFF funding, Dransfield Properties Limited is revitalising the centre of Stroud's shopping experience with a full renovation of Merrywalks Shopping Centre.



GROWTH DEAL FUNDING: £3m

PROJECT PARTNER: Dransfield PROPERTIES LIMITED

PROJECT STATUS: CONTRACTED IN DELIVERY COMPLETED

What is Merrywalks?

Merrywalks, now known as Five Valleys, has undergone a large scale renovation of its site at King Street in Stroud. As the primary shopping centre in the market town, it represents vast potential for economic growth, increased visitor numbers, higher gross value added, and new job creation. The increased value of the centre will also generate additional business rates, which can be used for further development of Stroud.

New retailers who have joined include; JoJo Maman Bébé, fashion store Sub Couture, Medulla Hair Salon and Sandersons Department store.

The building boasts 6 luxury apartments above the retail units, and a basement apartment below. These are accessed by an attractive new stairway and access courtyard.

Who benefits from this project?

Five Valleys will provide a more complete and enjoyable shopping experience in Stroud, as well as benefiting from a raft of aesthetic changes. For residents and visitors of Stroud, this will provide a much-needed boost to the town centre's offering, and maintain retail spend within the area.

Residents will also benefit from the anticipated economic boost of the project on a wider scale, with the higher business rates providing more budget for public improvements around the town.

The opening and expansion of new stores will provide jobs for Gloucestershire residents living within commuting distance of Stroud, and increased career opportunities will provide more incentive for young people to stay.

What stage is the project currently at?

The first phases of works focussed on much needed improvements to the centre's multi-story car park and the King Street elevation as well as the mall area.

A new indoor Borough Market style indoor market with a range of local food producers and artisans is now open and plans have been approved for a new £4.9m medical centre in the town.

The final phase included a full remodelling of both the mall and car park.

Why is the project important to Gloucestershire and the local community?

The Merrywalks project feeds into a number of regional and national strategies, not least of all GFirst LEP's Strategic Economic Plan. The provision of additional business space and the creation of new jobs will result in greater wealth in the area, and the aesthetic and experiential improvements will attract more visitors to the town. With the vast challenge of post-Covid-19 retail recovery, a vibrant new shopping centre will be an invaluable asset.



What are the final results of the project?

The project has delivered:

- 1.37ha of renovated total space
- 20,292m² of renovated and new shopping experiences
- Significant enhancements in Stroud town centre making Five Valleys a great detail destination, positively contributing to the visitor and local economy.

? Where can I find out more?

Partner page: www.dransfield.co.uk/property/five-valleys-shopping-centre



Dr Diane Savory OBE DL

Gloucestershire is in a ‘brilliant position to prosper’

While towns and cities nationwide scramble to find their new place in a post-pandemic world, Gloucestershire is in a ‘brilliant position to prosper’, says its most powerful businesswoman of the last decade.

These are the words of Diane Savory OBE who, as she chairs her last ever GFirst LEP board meeting, has a better picture than most on where the county is economically.

The united spirit onlookers to the county see, and the transformative infrastructure projects pending which gave hope through the pandemic, have the LEP’s fingerprints as catalyst of change all over them.

Diane led GFirst LEP as its business plans won £100 million-plus of government cash for the county and helped open an ongoing dialogue between Downing Street and the county.

Bigger cities, she agreed, were facing their own battles with their future

identities – not least around what home-working might do to their business areas – but Gloucestershire was on the front foot and driving forward.

It is not just the aforementioned infrastructure projects made possible by the £11.3 million the LEP secured from the Getting Building Fund – the Minster Innovation Exchange, Cheltenham, the AccXel construction training centre, in the Forest of Dean, the Applied Digital Skills Centre at Cirencester College, The Digital Innovation Farm at Hartpury University and Hartpury College or the Cyber Incubation Units at Gloucestershire College.

What excites her is what that will do for the county and the new thinking that is behind each project.

‘People really believe now. It is not just about digital either. It is also about the culture and creative element,’ she said.

The Innovation Exchange will be home to Cheltenham’s Growth Hub – a countywide networking of business support centres – as well as headquarters of Cheltenham Festivals,

of which she is also chair. It is another move designed to create a meeting of minds.

“It has been quite a journey.”

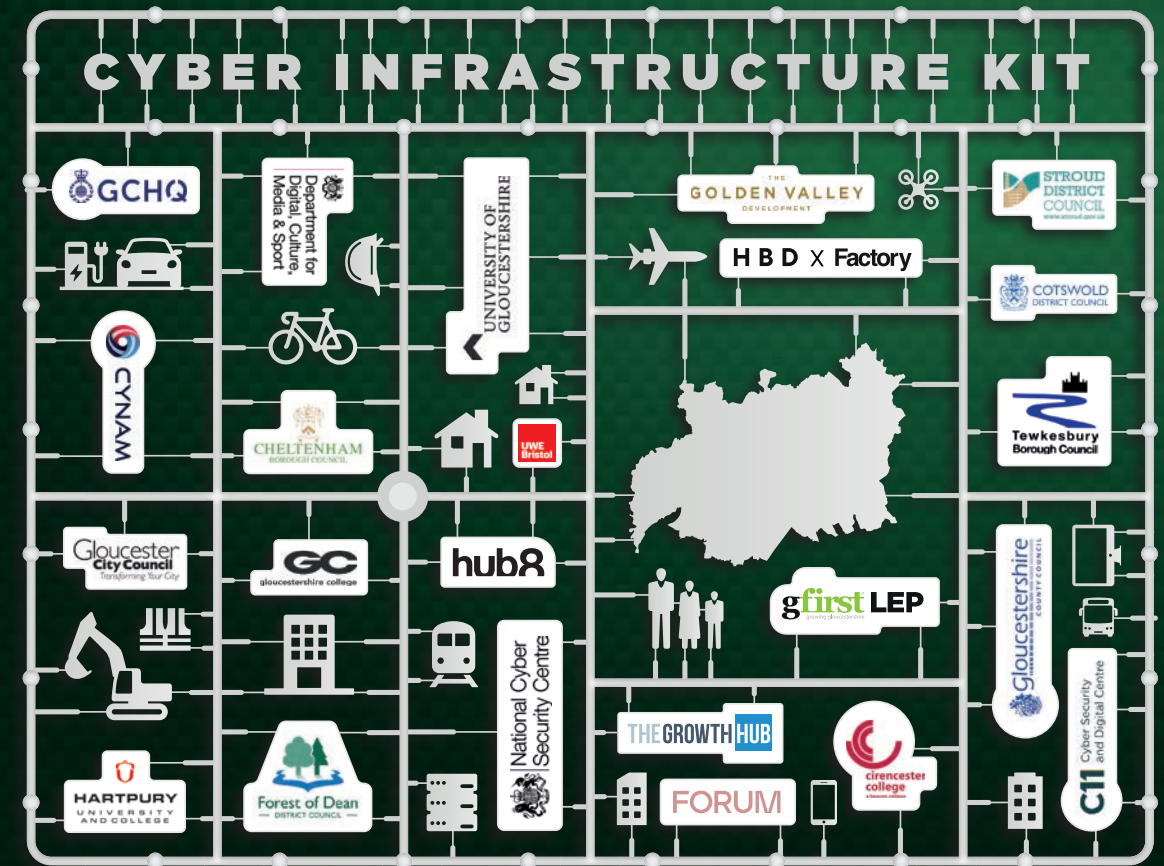
Her eyes light up most when she thinks of the future. She famously left one job successfully done before the LEP called – helping take Superdry from scratch to flotation and its record share price.

‘When I told friends I was thinking of helping set up a local enterprise partnership for Gloucestershire they said ‘don’t do it, it will sink your reputation’.

But joining her now to reflect on the legacy of a decade dedicated to the county’s economic success, her own stock is arguably at an all-time high.

Written by Andrew Merrell, SoGlos

A MODEL OF THE FUTURE



You don’t have to be a computer whizz to see how Gloucestershire’s cyber infrastructure will benefit the region.

And with a sector worth an estimated £8.3 billion set to call the county home, the knock-on effect for local businesses will be enormous.

So, as we take our place at the heart of Britain’s digital economy, you could say our future is building.

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To find out more, visit:
www.gfirstlep.com



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