

GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership

Board Paper – 20 April 2021

1. **Agenda Item 8**
2. **What is this item for: Skills and Employment Update**
 - a. To update the Board on elements of recent skills and employment undertaken by GFirst LEP
 - b. To ask the Board to approve the appointment of Jim Grant to the role of LEP Board Champion for Skills and Employment
 - c. To answer any questions that may arise

3. **Background:**

- 3.1 **LEP Board seminar on Skills and Employment**

At the Board seminar on Skills and Employment on 6th January 2021, Board members indicated that owing to the range and complexity of the skills and employment landscape, they would welcome updates at future LEP Board meetings to highlight progress and focus on a smaller number of topics.

4. **Progress achieved since skills and employment seminar on 6th January 2021**

- 4.1 **Strategic documents**

Considerable time and resource have been put into preparing the following documents, partly a requirement of Department for Education (DfE) and which underpin the work of the Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel: Employment and skills evidence base; Skills priorities for economic recovery; Employment and skills action plan; Local Skills Report; Local skills report core data.

These have now been completed and published on the revised and updated LEP website skills page (<https://www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/skills-for-business/>)

These make up the majority of a suite of documents to inform and co-ordinate employment and skills in the County and take forward the skills priorities already identified in the Local Industrial Strategy. The suite of documents consists of:

Employment and skills evidence base - provides updated data and analysis on which the Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel (GSAP), and other stakeholders, can base their recommendations/actions

Employment and skills strategy - longer-term focus, being prepared for publication in June-July 2021

Employment and skills action plan -linked to LEP recovery plan and interventions, GCC strategy and action plan, District recovery plans

Local Skills Report - Explains the work and impact to date of the Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel (GSAP) and main skills needs and strengths of the County, DfE requirement to feed into national Skills & Productivity Board. Update of this required by DfE for publication in November 2021 to help skills providers plan their curriculum/training offer.

4.2 Actions to support local economic recovery

4 main workstreams are underway:

- Information and signposting
- Apprenticeships
- Unemployment/redundancy support
- Cyber County - Digital and cyber skills

These are being supported by members of Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel (GSAP), co-ordinated by LEP and GCC and implemented by partner organisations. Please see action plan for detail and progress (<https://www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/skills-for-business/>)

4.3 Careers Hub

Our Careers Hub launched in November 2020 <https://www.gloscareershub.com/>

The team is working with 43 schools, colleges and alternative provision settings to achieve the eight Gatsby Benchmarks, which is a proxy measure of the quality of the careers education in these establishments.

A Steering Group, Cornerstone employers group, and labour market information working group have all been set up and are operational.

School closures and Covid measures have impacted on the Hub's performance against targets (see risks below) but the team is working hard to rectify this and provide the support that the schools need.

4.4 Links with GCC and District recovery workstreams/groups

We are supporting 4 main priorities emerging from GCC and District recovery plans:

Social Value – underpins the employment and skills gains from construction and infrastructure projects

Construction – The Forum, Quayside House in Gloucester; Golden Valley and housing developments in Cheltenham

Green/renewables/retrofit – Strong focus for several Districts, little hard evidence/pathways into this 'sector' yet

Cyber and digital – wide range of work in expanding HE provision, work in schools, Cirencester College digital skills centre, Institutes of Technology, CYNAM, Digital Bootcamps bid with Institute of Coding

4.5 Working with GCC and District economic development leads and Growth Hub Network partners on:

Early intelligence of businesses at risk of making redundancies

Redundancy taskforce - incl. Adviza, DWP, unions, employment agencies, training providers

Better **local labour market information** (LMI) including new Careers Coach [Career Coach Gloucestershire](https://www.gloscareershub.com/) and via our Careers Hub www.gloscareershub.com/

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Skills Portal - For employment, redundancy and skills support please visit www.skillsportalglos.com

Employment initiatives e.g. Kickstart, Restart

Improved co-ordination of local and national employment and skills 'ecosystem' in Gloucestershire to provide an integrated service for the benefit of all the community to support people into work – GCC have made £100k funding available to initiate this work, with a further £400k secured by GCC from One Gloucestershire to achieve employment and skills outcomes. Detail on these is currently being scoped.

5. **Risks / Issues:**

Funding – The match-funding for the four Enterprise Co-Ordinators in the GFirst LEP Careers Hub for academic year 2021-22 is not yet secured. This equates to approx. £60k. Options are being explored but without this match-funding, Careers Hub operation could be negatively impacted.

Careers Hub targets impacted by school closures/remote working - the Careers performance is below targets, mainly because of a combination of the Hub still being under development and the downgrading of the priority given by schools to careers work during the Covid-19 pandemic. Plans are in place to rectify this and work is underway with the Careers Hub team and relevant schools. This work is being overseen by the Careers hub Steering Group.

5. **Recommendations:**

The Board is asked to:

- a) note the update on GFirst LEP employment and skills activities
- b) approve the creation of an LEP board 'Champion' for Employment and Skills and for Jim Grant to take on this role.

6. **Further information:**

Further information will be presented at the meeting or is available from Pete Carr (peter.carr@gfirstlep.com)