

Meeting title	GFirst LEP Board
Date/time/venue	15/02/2022 – 9.00am to 11.00am Venue: Room 8A/8B, Business School, University of Gloucestershire, Longlevens GL2 9HW and via Microsoft Teams
Attendees	<u>Members:</u> Ruth Dooley (RD) <i>Chair</i> , Ian Mean (IM) <i>Vice Chair</i> , Tyler Attwood (TA), Matt Charman (MC), Doina Cornell (DC), Jim Grant (JG), Emma Hanby (EH), Russell Marchant (RM), Deborah Potts (DP), Jenny Raymond (JR) and Joe Roberts (JRo) <u>In attendance:</u> Richard Cook (RC), David Owen (DO), Karen Campbell (minutes), Pete Carr (PC), Dev Chakraborty (DCh), Carl Creswell (CC), Sarah Danson (SD), Neil Hopwood (NH) and Anwen Jones (AJ)
Apologies	Mark Hawthorne (MH), Steve Mawson (SM), Emily Manser, Nicola Bird (NB) and Neill Ricketts (NR)

No.	Item	By	Who
1)	Welcome & introduction		
2)	Minutes of: Minutes of the last LEP Board meeting on 7 th December 2021 - were approved as a true and accurate record.		
3)	Declarations of interest available on the GFirst LEP website – https://www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/the-board/register-of-members-interests/ Please declare any pecuniary or personal interests relating to specific matters on the agenda. No conflicts of interest were raised.		
4)	Board Member ‘Champion’ roles Emma Hanby has taken on the Net Zero Champion role. Ian Mean has stepped down as Small Business Champion as he has taken on the Vice Chair role. Nicola Bird will now be the Small Business Champion in his place. Ruth Dooley will continue as the Risk Champion.		
5)	Levelling up White Paper AJ gave a presentation summarising the key points of the Levelling up White Paper published last week. The paper brought with it welcome news for LEPs, and a positive conclusion to the LEP Review. <i>To quote from the white paper, “For the last decade, LEPs have acted as important organisational means of bringing together businesses and local leaders to drive economic growth across England. They have also been responsible for the delivery of a number of major funding streams. It is important</i>		

	<p><i>to retain the key strengths of these local, business-oriented institutions in supporting private sector partnerships and economic clusters while at the same time better integrating their services and business voice into the UK Government's new devolution plans."</i></p> <p>Government encouraging the integration of LEPs and their business boards into Mayoral Combined Authorities and County Deals, where these exist. Where a devolution deal does <i>not</i> yet exist, LEPs will continue to play their vital role in supporting local businesses and the local economy.</p> <p>DO - Letter to be sent out from BEIS in the coming weeks that will confirm in more detail the function and form of LEPs moving forward, along with confirmation of funding for both LEPs and Growth Hubs. The paper reiterates the important convening role of LEPs, the importance of the voice of business and how that feeds into future County Deals.</p> <p>RD – Number of targets are set at 2030. It's not that long in the grand scale of things. Ambitious targets from my first reading. RM – from an Educational point of view, devil will be in the detail. DCh – The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will be delivered by second tier local authorities, each district unlikely to receive the same amount.</p> <p>Devolution discussion – all agreed that there will need to be considerable collaborative work in the coming months/years to look at the various devolution options/framework and what would be the best outcome for the county.</p> <p>AJ – suggested taking a watching brief to see what a County Deal looks like elsewhere in the country eg Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, before making a final decision.</p> <p>Agreed to have the priority areas for LEPs that come out of the Levelling up White Paper and the Devolution discussion as the main items on the agenda for the Board Away Day on Wednesday 30th March.</p>		
6)	<p>Board Member feedback on Growth Hubs</p> <p>SD – the involvement of LEP Board members has been welcomed by the Growth Hub network. A Development Plan to be circulated.</p> <p>MC – has recently visited the Minster Exchange in Cheltenham that will be the home for the new Cheltenham Growth Hub, said it was shaping up nicely, a good size space.</p> <p>Gloucester TA will provide update at next meeting as has been unable to visit Gloucester Growth Hub.</p> <p>Cheltenham JRo is arranging to go and visit the new site soon.</p> <p>Tewkesbury A positive update from EH on her visit to the Tewkesbury Growth Hub – a new apprentice started in November, the meeting space and office space was busy, a good cross-section of businesses (sizes and sectors) use the Hub. There were expansion plans for this Hub discussed prior to Covid, perhaps a good time to</p>	<p>SD</p> <p>TA</p> <p>JRo</p>	<p>1/3/22</p> <p>17/5/22</p> <p>17/5/22</p>

	revisit now? The Growth Hub team were passionate about what they do and keen to work with the network to share best practice.		
7)	<p>Board member feedback on Business Groups</p> <p>Energy Business Group (RD) - Great wealth of knowledge around the table. Rachel Brain (Stroud District Council) and Simon Pickering (Ecotricity) co-chair this group. Theme for this particular meeting was Net Zero. Matt Rigby (The Growth Hub) gave presentation about the Growth Hub Net Zero project. The group led the work on the LEP's Countywide Energy Strategy and continue to work on this.</p> <p>Retail and High Streets Business Group (TA) – Good spread of local knowledge with representatives from both the private and public sector. All agreed that November and the first half of December had seen increased footfall and increased sales, but that then fell away due to customers being cautious about Omicron. There was a good discussion on the various footfall count methods used across the county. Dorian Wragg (Bruton Knowles) has now taken over as Chair of this group from Nigel Jobson who was the Chair for 10 years. Dorian is planning on visiting each group member individually.</p> <p>Construction and Infrastructure Business Group – NB has had to send apologies today but the first meeting of this group will take place on the 16th February and Nicola will be in attendance.</p> <p>Proposal to circulate a short survey to all Business group members to continue to look to improve the content, format and diversity of each group.</p> <p>Action – Lists of members for each business group to be circulated to all Board Members. https://www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/business-groups/</p>	KC	DONE
9)	<p>AOB</p> <p>i) IM highlighted the recent successful local consultation for the Severn Edge, Fusion power project https://wg-severnedge.co.uk/.</p> <p>Over 400 people attended drop-in and virtual sessions, the vast majority of whom were very supportive. The UK Atomic Energy Authority's (UKAEA) visit to Berkeley and Oldbury sites went very well. Mark Harper will be leading a House of Lords presentation next week. The bid led by Western Gateway is now down to the last five to be considered by government with a final decision to be made later this year.</p> <p>RD – I have been assured that they will look at the Business/Technical sides of bids first. Please use the link above to add your support to the project.</p> <p>ii) RM added that the Agri-tech modular units had arrived at Hartpury University/College this morning. This relates to a successful Getting Building Fund bid secured by GFirst LEP.</p> <p>iii) Board Away Day on Wednesday 30th March – venue confirmation and agenda to follow soon.</p>		

Future Board meeting dates for 2022:

Board Away Day;

Wednesday 30th March – 9.00am to 1.30pm

Board meeting dates for 2022;

Tuesday 17th May

Tuesday 20th September

Tuesday 6th December

Timings for all Board meetings are 9.00am to 11.00am

Meeting	Growth Hubs	Business Groups
<i>May</i>	Forest Stroud Cirencester	Cyber Tech Agri Food and Rural Construction and Infrastructure
<i>September</i>	Gloucester Tewkesbury Cheltenham	Business Membership Group Business and Professional Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing
<i>December</i>	Libraries Forest Stroud Cirencester	Banking and Finance Tourism and Visitor Economy