

Meeting title	GFirst LEP Board
Date/time/venue	29/06/2021 – 8:30am to 10.30am Via Zoom
Attendees	<p><u>Members:</u> Diane Savory (DS) <i>Chair</i>, Adam Starkey (AS), Deborah Potts (DP), Emma Hanby (EH), Ian Mean (IM), Jenny Raymond (JR), Jim Grant (JG), Mark Hawthorne (MH), Mike Warner (MW), Neill Ricketts (NR), Rob Loveday (RL), Russell Marchant (RM) & Ruth Dooley (RD)</p> <p><u>In attendance:</u> Carl Creswell (CC), David Owen (DO), Dev Chakraborty (DCh), Anwen Jones (AJ), Sarah Danson (SD), Neil Hopwood (NH) & Karen Campbell (minutes)</p> <p>Guest speaker: Esther Croft, Reef Development</p>
Apologies	Lorrin White (LW), Pete Carr (PC), Steve Mawson (SM), Richard Cook (RC), Cllr Doina Cornell (DC) & Emily Manser (EM)

No.	Item	By	Who
1)	Welcome & introduction		
2)	<p>Minutes of: Minutes of the last LEP Board meeting on 20th April 2021 - were approved as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>CC – Will be attending a meeting about the LEP Review later today. Concentrating on reopening. Roadmap stage 4 announcement shortly. Have been working on backstop for mandatory arbitration between landlords and businesses. DS really pleased to hear about arbitration, landlords need to be more flexible.</p> <p>Welcome to Anwen Jones, our new Area Lead for Cities & Local Growth Unit (BEIS).</p>		
3)	<p>Declarations of interest available on the GFirst LEP website –</p> <p>https://www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/the-board/register-of-members-interests/</p> <p>Please declare any pecuniary or personal interests relating to specific matters on the agenda.</p>		
4)	<p>The Forum Development in Gloucester – presentation by Esther Croft, Reef Development</p> <p>See here for concept art of the project https://reefgroup.co.uk/project?id=gloucester-city</p> <p>Two new planning consents, first one underway which will be the New Tesco Express, with 19 residential apartments above and featuring a Rooftop Garden.</p>		

Environment – Excellent BREEAM rating and net zero carbon in operation. 10% electric charging points in the new car park and 100% future enabled. Naturally ventilated offices. Smart building technology. Largest green wall in the South West. Brown roofs throughout + Blue roofs and rainwater gardens. Renewable electric supply and no gas. Sensor enabled technologies. Air source heat pumps.

Social – The Forum will be the new gateway to the city. Will be a place to attract new talent. Everything available within a 15-minute walk around the city. Unique campus style feel, offering vibrancy and the opportunity to reconnect with colleagues. Newly refurbished square.

Governance – Buildings have been designed to be responsive to their users. Smart passes for visitors. The Forum will be a community in its own right. A Forum App will be created. Cross fertilisation of business opportunities will be encouraged. Users of the Forum will be able to take advantage of special deals in the shopping centre/hotel and gym. 5G network capabilities and shared cloud storage.

Gloucester City Council have invested £5m into the project. Kings Square is being refurbished to a really high standard. Jolt and The Music Works have taken up residence close by.

DS – This is a transformational project for Gloucester. UOG has bought the old Debenhams building, will this be integrated with your project?

EC – We are already talking to UOG. Delighted that they have taken this building on. Believe there are some very exciting links that could be made. Mentioned the transformation that has taken place in Kings Cross, this project could have the same effect in Gloucester.

RD – This is really exciting; can I ask about timescales?

EC – Phase 1 (New Tesco and apartments) should be complete by Summer 2022. Phase 2 - initial part will complete end of 2023 and the rest of project by end of 2024.

JG – Increasing number of T level students, is there a contact I can reach out to?

EC – Already talking to Cirencester College, really want to try and ensure that we engage with students and maximise apprenticeship opportunities.

IM – You mentioned the Hotel; how can you encourage visitors?

EC – Strong interest for the Hotel. Currently negotiating with 5 excellent businesses. Also in talks with Rugby Club, delighted to see their training facility is coming forward, only 5 minutes away. Genuinely think the planned Cocktail Bar on the roof of the Hotel will work really well! Lots of people talking about it!

DP – How are you continuing to include young people? City of Culture Bid is back on, really important for Gloucester.

EC – We would strongly support City of Culture Bid. Culture is really important, this is one of the lynch pins of the city. Keen to involve young people within all of this. Need to set up a network around the city, I could do with some help.

DP – Community Builder has new CEO, I will make introductions.

MW – Fabulous scheme – How does residential impact on this scheme?

EC – 19 Apartments in first phase, 25 in separate block, but need to acquire land. 25 to rear of Northgate Street, these will be affordable housing. We need to get

	people living and working back in our city centres. For this scheme, really high-quality office space was the first priority.		
5)	<p>Risk Register – verbal update by Ruth Dooley</p> <p>Last comprehensive update was April 29th. Project Manager, Neil Hopwood has returned to the LEP following a successful secondment to Cheltenham Borough Council, replacing Barry Bodin-Jones who has now left.</p> <p>Forest of Dean Growth Hub to open later this month.</p> <p>All other issues under control.</p> <p>Arranging meeting with Neil in July and will give a formal update at next meeting.</p>		
6)	<p>GFirst LEP Strategic update – verbal update by David Owen</p> <p>Board recruitment – Currently in the midst of recruitment, had over 30 applicants. Intense day and a half of interviews next week. Chris Gaskill will Chair the interview panel.</p> <p>LEP Review – Slight stalling of process, the team from BEIS have been side-tracked by sheer volume of enquiries after Levelling up Fund announcement. ‘Purpose’ paper has been completed – Economic Strategy, Innovation and Business Support.</p> <p>‘Geography’ is taking longer. Issue seems to be overlaps. Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP refusing to get rid of their two overlaps. The LEP Network now putting pressure on them to sort this out. DO and DC briefed local MPs within the last few weeks, very positive session. LEP Review decision looks to be announced now in early autumn.</p>		
7)	<p>Growth Hub Network update – verbal update from Sarah Danson</p> <p>The Forest of Dean Growth Hub at Vantage Point will soft launch on 26th July and be open for visitors. Training of the team will take place alongside the opening. LEP team are being encouraged to visit and support throughout July and August. Formal opening celebration planned for late September.</p> <p>Tewkesbury Growth Hub plans to reopen for appointments only on 19th July, subject to new announcements.</p> <p>Cirencester Growth Hub is now open, but only for members and will gradually relax this from 19th July all being well.</p> <p>Gloucester Growth Hub is likely to open on an appointment only basis through July and August and then fully reopen in September.</p> <p>Stroud Growth Hub has a new manager following the retirement of Jill Jones. Mel Packham took over last week and has already attended a Network meeting. Unlikely to open until September, then looking at formal opening celebration following this.</p> <p>Cheltenham Growth Hub have appointed another Navigator and are using Hub8 as their base.</p> <p>Outputs for last year 405 - light touch (less than 3 hours) or couldn't be counted as re-engaged businesses</p>		

258 - 3 plus hours
104 - 12 plus hours
2,496 - successful outreach calls for EU Exit support and intelligence gathering
63 - businesses on Peer Networks
Total business engagements **3,326** last year

Operational Board progress

Following the last Board meeting, Sarah Danson developed draft strategic programme for the newly formed Growth Hub Operational Board.
Jenny Raymond's summary of the programme – *'We are looking to bring the county network together, review its models in the current climate alongside the LEP objectives, government objectives and business needs, and then consider / identify new opportunities / objectives going forwards, alongside funding mechanisms, in order to create an overall plan for the county network.'*
Sam Hoad and Sarah Danson have met with all managers to discuss the programme. With their input the programme has been finalised and the workstreams in the programme allocated across the Network.
Next steps have been agreed and Jenny will attend the next operational board on 20th July.

Progress in other areas

Local Industrial Strategy – Growth Hub 4.0

Prioritising support for the county's many small and micro businesses, Growth Hub 4.0 will help them:

- Adopt emerging technologies including digitalisation, and other factors that increase productivity; - We recruited a specialist digital guide that has been supporting business growth by analysing their digital activity and developing improvement plans. Digital grants of up to £3,000 for small businesses will launch 1st July. All applicants – whether successful or not - will be offered wrap around support to help their digital activities. Digital October will form a key part of this support with all Network centres running activities. Cyber security advice will also be integral to the programme.
- Develop leadership and management skills; - Alongside specialist Guide Support, Hub Mentors and Peer Networks are supporting this area.
- Access to finance; - The GFirst LEP Banking and Finance Group are still supporting businesses in this area. The group operates very well and there were suggestions that other speciality groups could be established.
- Innovate and invest in research and development; - we undertook a piece of work in February/March looking how to support greater levels of innovation and are now looking at how to roll out a programme around this.

Scale Up 4 Growth - an ERDF funding grants programme received 120 applications totalling £5 million worth of grants. Final panel selection took place on Friday to award £1.1 million.

- Reduce energy and waste in their business to make it more sustainable – our Sustainability Guide has been in post since November last year. We are now looking at additional support in this area.

LEP Board Seminar – Future of Growth Hubs December 2020

- Development of the cyber-tech sector should remain a priority - a review of business support for the Cyber Tech sector was undertaken in

	<p>February/March by CyNam. Working with CyNam and Hub8 this has now been put into an action plan. CyNam are now looking for funding for an additional post to support this work alongside the Growth Hub team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting businesses online and supporting digitalisation of businesses in its broadest sense will be key to business recovery – covered above. • There should be a review of the partnerships with Gloucestershire County Libraries to realise the full potential of this arrangement - this is underway as part of the Strategic Development Programme. • What is the scale of support for CICs (Community Interest Company's) and Social Enterprises? – Rod Horrocks has been supporting Peer Networks with the sector, Sam Hoad is in contact with the VCS Alliance, Sarah Danson has a meeting with GCCR. • Local Authority Covid 19 Grant Schemes have led to a greater understanding of the business community in the districts. How can we ensure closer connections and data-sharing between LA's Economic Development and Growth Hubs? – not progressed • Should there be engagement/provision for the Health and Social Care Sector - already supported and looking at a dedicated Peer Networks cohort. • Growth Hub Operational Board are keen that we explore the possibilities of a Youth Hub with local delivery specialists eg Young Glos, FE, HE – Tewkesbury Growth Hub have started working with DWP on a pilot for this. <p>DS – Growth Hub team deserve a round of applause.</p>		
8)	<p>Education and Skills Team update – verbal update from Rob Jenkins</p> <p>RJ spoke about the newly launched website NEXUS www.nexusglos.co.uk .</p> <p>The platform evolved after it was decided to create a central point of reference for all students from all areas to use.</p> <p>Online and face to face events have been planned, but owing to the rise in Covid cases across the school population recently, the first face to face event has had to be postponed.</p> <p>The idea is not to replace careers events but to support them with this platform. Very much a work in progress, it will develop as time goes on.</p>		
9)	<p>AOB</p> <p>Deborah Potts offered up 'The Music Works' new premises in Gloucester as potential meeting venue.</p>		

Future Board meeting dates for 2021:

- Wednesday 25th August 2021, 8:30am to 10.30am
- Tuesday 28th September 2021, 8.30am to 10.30am
- Tuesday 7th December 2021, 8.30am to 10.30am