

GFirst LEP Business Group Update – July 2017



Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing

- GFirst LEP is working closely with Circle2Success (www.circle2success.com) to combine the efforts in strategically developing the sector and try and reach out to a plethora of businesses across the county. The aim is to provide a stronger, more cohesive voice and a more focused, effective LEP Business Group.
- To aid this, the LEP are planning a Gloucestershire Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Summit. Invitations to this breakfast summit have been circulated to our mailing lists. The event is to be held on **Thursday 14th September 2017**, at the Growth Hub. If you have not received an invitation and would like to register for the event please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com

For questions about the group, please contact either Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com or Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Banking & Finance

- The group met on 18 July at Trent Lodge, RAU (part of the Farm 491 project). Simon King and Nick Holyoake provided an interesting and informative presentation about the Farm 491 project which was partially funded by GFirst LEP.
- The group considered what additional, practical activities they could undertake to support businesses and economic growth within the county. Ideas to be taken forward included increasing the wider access to finance (AtF) representation on the group, creating a bespoke support fund to be administered by the group, provide “on the road” AtF workshops, advice to other LEP business groups and input into the new GFirst website.
- The meeting was preceded by another Banking and Finance clinic which provided advice to 4 separate businesses. Once again these were extremely successful and the feedback received was very positive. The next one on 19 September is already fully subscribed.

- Another **free** Banking and Finance Clinic will be held on **Tuesday 31st October at the Growth Hub**. In a 30 minute, one-to-one session, the panel will be able to offer advice on a variety of funding issues to help businesses grow. Further information, including an application form for a **free** session, can be found at <http://www.gfirstlep.com/home.aspx?LevelID=51&EventID=1616>

The next Banking and Finance meeting is at the Growth Hub on the 19th September. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com



Business & Professional Services

At their last meeting on 13 June the group enjoyed interesting presentations on the:

- Gloucestershire 2050 Vision Project from Jennie Evans
- Education Developing Gloucestershire's Employability (EDGE) Project www.gottheedge.co.uk from Katherine Wagstaff on improving the Labour market relevance of education and training systems within Gloucestershire
- Cheltenham Festival of Cycling www.cheltenhamcyclingfestival.org.uk on 18 September from Alex Lawson.
- In addition, Jeremy Williamson discussed the Cheltenham Cyber Park project that had made a successful bid for £22m from the LEP towards the infrastructure requirements for the project. It was agreed that the group would act as a critical friend providing professional guidance and influence in etc the development of the business case, funding agreement etc as the project matured.

The next meeting will take place at the Growth Hub on 20th September. For questions about the group please contact either Mike Curran mike.curran@gfirstlep.com or Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Construction & Infrastructure

The group had a full and productive meeting on 12 July which covered the following matters

- Their paper "*Considerations of Barriers to Development*" was finalised. It was agreed that this should go the LEP Board in the first instance and then to the Senior Officers Committee [SOC] of Local Authorities and then to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee [GEGJC]
- John Kulasek provided an update on the Blackfriars and Quayside project being funded by the

LEP and sought the advice of the forum on a solution to practical technical problem that had arisen.

- The group is keen that the Districts have a representative on the Group as well as the County Council that is currently represented. Rob Weaver from Tewkesbury Borough Council [TBC] is talking to the Districts to see if they are content that he fulfils this role.
- The Chairman, Stephen Limbrick, has accepted an invitation from TBC to represent the group on the work that TBC is undertaking on their J9/A46 Masterplanning Project.
- The group expressed serious concerns about the forthcoming changes to parking in Cheltenham, particularly on its impact on the local economy and the way its implementation had been dealt with
- The current JCS position was considered. It was agreed that there was nothing the group could usefully contribute at this stage.

The next meeting is at Roberts Limbrick on 13th September. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com or Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Creative

- At their last meeting it was agreed that the Creative Group takes a step back and take a more county-wide vision in terms of strategic intent and activity and be inclusive of the whole cultural scene and not focus on the already well established activity alone.
- Work has commenced on putting together a county wide database of creative and culture within the county.
- We are aiming to increase the membership of the Group from the entire cultural sub-sectors across Gloucestershire with the ambition of re-energizing the Creative Business Group with plans for a late autumn summit hosted by the LEP.
- The Group is keen to enhance the strength, richness and diversity of the county's cultural heritage and offerings. We are looking to embed activity with other sector groups to widen its reach to enliven the cultural economy and its impact on Gloucestershire.

The date of the next meeting is yet to be scheduled. For questions about the group please contact either Mike Curran mike.curran@gfirstlep.com or Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Energy

- At the last meeting on 11 July a general update on business given by all members.
- There are many positive things happening including launch of ERDF programme to encourage SME's to install low carbon tech, programme launched on the 1st July and will run for 3 years.
- Possible opportunity to get involved in International Business Event as organisers are

interested in coming to Gloucestershire. Further details will be provided in the next update.

- Overview of new ERDF funding opportunities provided by Kate Hull, GFirst LEP. If you require further information please contact kate.hull@gfirstlep.com.
- We look forward to welcoming new members to represent the Energy Business Group. Our strategic partners SGS College will be assisting in contacting and attracting wider representation from a number of key industry players in the county.

The date of the next meeting will be 12th September at Spirax Sarco and will include a facility tour. For questions about the group please contact either Mike Curran mike.curran@gfirstlep.com or Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



- At their meeting on 27 July the Group members unanimously agreed that the new name for the former 'Land Based' group should be 'Agri Food and Rural Business'. It is believed that this name is truly representative of what is happening currently within the rural sector.
- A date is yet to be confirmed for a Strategic Planning Day but it is hoped to hold the event offsite, at a farm location, and work through ideas which will help the group become more focused and proactive across the sector.
- All agreed that once ideas are formulated during the Strategic Planning Day, consideration be given to holding an event whereby Stakeholders could offer up their input as well.

The date of the next meeting to be confirmed but will take place at Trent lodge, RAU by kind permission of Jo Price, VC. For questions about the group please contact either Mike Curran mike.curran@gfirstlep.com or Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



- The Group are focusing on highlighting retail as a serious career. The work that the Group members have been doing in their own areas and as project collaborations is very positive and many synergies were detected and several initiatives need to be morphed to align activity and objectives for a stronger cohesive approach and effect, which will also avoid duplication of effort.
- Integrating digital and social media into the retail experience has proven to increase footfall and consumer spend, and the #WDYT campaign project update gave strong evidence support its ongoing success.

The date of the next meeting is 23rd August at Stroud District Council Offices. For questions about the group please contact either Mike Curran mike.curran@gfirstlep.com or Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com