

# **GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership**

## **Growth Hub Network Project Update**

### **1. Purpose**

To update the Board with regards to the Growth Hub Network project including:

#### **i. Expressions of Interests for Network Centres**

On July 5<sup>th</sup> GFirst LEP announced the first call for EOIs for Network Centres. 15 proposals from across the county with a total value of £7,612,124m were returned. A sub group of the LEP Board and Growth Hub Management Boards met to agree a shortlist that would be invited to develop full business cases. The sub group were asked to evaluate the submissions against the following criteria.

- clear evidence of the support from the business community
- support for businesses that would enable business growth
- how face to face support resulting in diagnosis and impartial signposting to business support services would be provided
- how ongoing revenue costs would be covered
- evidence that the facility would complement and not compete with existing business support services

The sub group shortlisted 5 proposals to develop full business cases –

- Forest of Dean Entrepreneurs – to be combine with Gloucestershire Libraries
- Gloucestershire Libraries
- Hartpury College
- Royal Agricultural University
- Tewkesbury Borough Council

Stroud District - Five proposals where received from the Stroud District area – the sub group have tasked the project manager to undertake stakeholder engagement activity working with interested parties and the local council to develop appropriate solutions for the area.

A further three projects were classed as ‘maybe’ and will be reviewed with the promoters based on the comments received from the sub group.

The sub group also reflected that the key fundamentals of the project should be addressed through the procurement process – Geographical coverage, sector priorities, innovation, economic growth.

## Next Steps

Full business cases will be returned by 9<sup>th</sup> September, members of the subgroup will review the full business cases w/c 19<sup>th</sup> September and make recommendations to the LEP Board 4<sup>th</sup> October.

ii. Recruitment of project managers for Digital Infrastructure

Responses to the Senior and Junior PM roles have been strong and interviews will take place w/c 6<sup>th</sup> August with the hope to have both roles in place for September 2016.

iii. Growth Hub Network funding agreement

First LEP team is working under the guidance of the Accountable Body to complete the funding agreement in September 2016.