

Meeting title		GFirst LEP Board	
Date/time/venue		Tuesday 6 th December 2022 – 9.00am to 12.00pm Venue: Room OX-BG-101, Seminar Room, First Floor, UoG Business School, Oxstalls Campus, Gloucester, GL2 9HW and via Zoom	
Attendees		<p><u>Members:</u> Ruth Dooley (RD) <i>Chair</i>, Ian Mean (IM) <i>Vice Chair</i>, Nicola Bird (NB), Matt Charman (MC), Richard Cook (RC), Jim Grant (JC), Emma Hanby (EH), Mark Hawthorne (MH), Jackie Labbe (JL), Matt Lennard (ML), Deborah Potts (DP) and Jenny Raymond (JR)</p> <p><u>In attendance:</u> David Owen (DO), Karen Campbell (minutes), Dev Chakraborty (DCh), Sarah Danson (SD), Patrick Forde (PF), Rowena Hay (RH), Jo Holt (JH), Jenna Hunt (JH), Steve Mawson (SM) and Roger Mortlock (RM)</p>	
Apologies		Tyler Attwood (TA), Joe Roberts (JRo), Carl Creswell (CC) and Anwen Jones (AJ)	
No.	Item	By	Who
1)	Welcome & introduction		
2)	<p>Minutes of: Minutes of the last LEP Board meeting on 20th September 2022 - were approved as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>Strategic review and actions update – DO spoke about his recent secondment to the County Council. DC, SD and PF have picked up the reins at the LEP and the key message as far as the LEP is concerned is ‘it is business as usual’. Plans to refresh our Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) will now merge working with GCC to produce a wider economic strategy for the county. Timeline approximately 12 months. Priority sectors will almost certainly remain as Cyber/Digital, Agri-tech and Sustainability/Green. DP asked about aligning diversity/inclusivity into the new strategy, also could we include more about the visitor economy and tourism? IM – Stand out work from the original LIS was the consultation work with 5,000+ young people, hoping that work can be done again.</p> <p>Future Funding, Autumn Statement – JH mentioned that all UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) plans have been approved and work will now move to getting the funding disseminated as quickly as possible. Levelling Up Fund round 2 announcements - hoping for an announcement before the year is out. LEP core funding and Growth Hub core funding from BEIS – no news yet, but BEIS officials are pushing for an announcement sooner rather than later, probably not before Christmas, but really keen to avoid a repetition from earlier this year when the announcement came on March 29th.</p>		

	<p>Gloucestershire has done well to have two MPs in senior roles within the government, Mark Harper (Secretary of State for Transport) and Alex Chalk (Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence).</p> <p>AccXel – 1 year on – NB – An incredibly busy year! Facilities up and running. New machinery and students have been able to have starter kits for free, due to generosity of partners. Have attended various conferences, won awards, secured partnership with Bridgend College. Winning support from many building companies who are offering up apprenticeships.</p> <p>A few challenges getting the apprentices up and running, but now have over 40 students enrolled. Working with other employers to consider potential further sites across the country, but keen to make AccXel the best it can be before starting new projects. Lloyds Bank are sponsoring the one year celebrations. Thank you all for your support.</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. No conflicts of interest were raised.</p>		
4)	<p>Gloucestershire Voluntary Sector – presentation from VCS Alliance, Matt Lennard</p> <p>Presentation ‘State of the Sector 2022’ shared with all Board Members. 5,500 VCSE organisations in the county with 7,000 people employed by registered charities plus 14,000 volunteers. Recruiting volunteers and trustees is a challenge. Challenging times on the horizon for the sector – demand is growing faster than income. There are 229 new charities in the county that have launched since 2019.</p> <p>How can the VCSE work together to reduce competition and produce efficiencies?</p> <p>MH – Keen to see how GCC can help as we can’t afford for these charities to fail. SD – Resource is going to be stretched, but very happy to look at how our Growth Hub network could help. DP – We could look at how we bring all of these together to get more value for money.</p>		
5)	<p>Net Zero/Bio Diversity net gain – presentation from GNCF, Roger Mortlock</p> <p>Presentation shared with Board Members.</p> <p>The nature and climate emergencies are inextricably linked. Currently only 19% of land supports nature’s recovery in Gloucestershire – the target is 30%. Highlighted the projected decline of both ash trees and beech trees in the county.</p> <p>Gloucestershire has led the way, lots of successes we should be proud of; Flagship green infrastructure standards ‘Building with Nature’ developed, Natural Capital mapping work and Nature Recovery Network demonstrate opportunities for nature, wider benefits and economic resilience, £8 million for urban green infrastructure projects invested in the county in partnership with</p>		

	<p>GFirst LEP and a new platform for green finance launched by GFirst LEP with LNP.</p> <p>DP – Asked about how VCS keeps green policies in the forefront?</p> <p>RM – Small number of environment focused VCS organisations in our county. Have been encouraged recently in funding coming through from new sources.</p> <p>EH – Is there any work to help with new agricultural practices?</p> <p>RM – Waiting to hear - huge issues for landowners to transition out of agricultural practices. e.g. cereal production is going down every year, becoming too expensive. Farmers will need help to transition across to better practices.</p>		
6)	<p>Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Fund (GIIF) update</p> <p>Dransfield paper had been circulated to the members before the meeting. Other projects, Adventure 270 – have reconfigured the site, work should commence very soon.</p> <p>Bakers Quay – 23rd January, 2023 Planning Committee will look at Planning application.</p> <p>Indectron – still looking to re-finance the business.</p> <p>Five Valleys project received £3million in grant and £1million loan from GIIF. Fantastic development. They have invested huge amounts into the town centre. They have now requested an extension on the loan for 10 years with initial £100,000 repayment.</p> <p>MH – Proposed, and it was agreed, to the development of a policy to be agreed at a future Board Meeting.</p> <p>DO and SM will have discussion after meeting and agree next steps.</p> <p>DO will inform the Chair and Vice Chair ASAP about action taken.</p>	<p>DO</p> <p>DO/SM</p> <p>DO</p>	
7)	<p>The future of GFirst LEP Business Groups</p> <p>Paul Woodhouse joined the meeting to discuss this topic. Paul has recently been appointed Business Group Manager after Elizabeth Weaver moved into a new role within the LEP, Anchor Institutions.</p> <p>PW explained that a survey had been recently undertaken amongst the Business Group members – positive feedback overall. Majority of the Business Groups are working well and members are engaged. PW plans to meet with all the Business Group Chairs to discuss next steps and outline an action plan for each group. Will regularly review attendance of each group. Need to work on diversity of the groups. Currently looking at sector threats. Considering how best to get business groups talking to each other, provide opportunities for cross pollination of ideas. Invaluable role of the LEP Board members on the groups.</p>		
8)	<p>Growth Hub network update (UKSPF)</p> <p>SD - Really pleased that UKSPF has been signed off and implemented. ERDF comes to an end on 31st March, 2023. Five out of six district authorities have included funding for business support (not FoDDC), but we don't know exact figures yet. The positive thing is that we won't be tied by all the regulations involved with ERDF funding. Conversations currently with Barclays Bank about collaboration with their 'Eagle Labs' initiative.</p>		

	Need to ensure that the local authorities who have invested funds via UKSPF see their funding serving their district and not topping up the service in the Forest of Dean where the Forest of Dean District Authority has not provided funding.		
9)	<p>Board member feedback on Growth Hubs (verbal)</p> <p>RD - Tewkesbury – they had 18 months before COVID hit. Have bounced back since with more than 100 visitors per month, 2/3 events per week. Receive referrals from Job Centre. They do have concerns about reputational damage of any changes to Growth Hub. Hoping to offer ‘roaming surgeries’ around Tewkesbury. New CEO of Tewkesbury Borough Council, Alistair Cunningham very supportive.</p> <p>RC – Libraries – Visited facilities at Gloucester and Quedgeley. Shown around Innovation Lab. Lots of phone calls and plenty of information about business. Staffing low at the moment due to illness. In Quedgeley you have to be a member to access any of the facilities.</p> <p>RD added that she had popped into the Tewkesbury library after visiting the Growth Hub and was able to access everything with no problems.</p> <p>SD – currently looking at what role libraries will play in the future Growth Hub model in particular the Innovation Labs.</p>		
10)	<p>Board member feedback on Business Groups (verbal)</p> <p>Visitor Economy and Tourism – DP – Chair has now stepped down. Feedback from survey highlighted the need to get more businesses from the private sector to join the group. Sustainability, Supply Chain and Skills all highlighted as recurring problems, but solutions have yet to be found. RD added that this was an important group with the amount of money that this sector contributes to the county economy.</p>		
11)	<p>AOB</p> <p>IM – Skills Agenda. Wanted to ask about Employment Charter - is it still on the back burner? DO - Resource challenges, need to work on this.</p> <p>DO – We produced a Skills strategy 18 months ago and working with Business West to input into the LSIP process.</p> <p>Action – Update on LSIP at the next LEP Board meeting from Matt Tudge of Business West.</p> <p>LEP Board member - Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Champion has been appointed, further details to follow.</p> <p>RD wanted to thank IM for the ‘Listening to Business’ event for the Cotswold district, it was a great success.</p> <p>Rural Innovation Village in Cirencester, Official launch will take place on Friday 20th January 2023.</p>	IM/KC	

Future Board meeting dates for 2023:

Timings for all Board meetings are 9.00am to 11.00am

Tuesday 7th March

Tuesday 6th June

Tuesday 26th September

Tuesday 12th December

Meeting	Growth Hubs	Business Groups
<i>March 2023</i>	Gloucester (TA) Forest of Dean (NB) Stroud (DP) Cirencester (JG)	Banking and Finance (JR)
<i>June 2023</i>		
<i>September 2023</i>		
<i>December 2023</i>		