

GFirst LEP Business Group Update – September 2017



Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing

- On 14 September we held a Gloucestershire Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing [AEM] breakfast Summit. We had a very encouraging 36 businesses attend. This was due in no small measure to Circle2Success (www.circle2success.com) who provided invaluable help in promoting the event.
- The aim of the event was to review the needs of the businesses within the AEM sector and explore how an LEP Business group can help support and provide solutions to these needs and recruit new members.
- It was a lively, informative, interactive event, expertly chaired by Nigel Cottell (www.moog.co.uk). There were supporting presentations Suzanne Hall Gibbins (www.circle2success.com). Chis Gibbs (www.thegrowthhub.biz) and Phil Halse (www.SWAMAS.co.uk)
- The output from the event will be discussed at the next meeting of the LEP AEM business group. This will be held at the Growth Hub on 30 October.

The next AEM meeting is at the Growth Hub on Monday 30 October. For questions about the group, please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Agri Food & Rural Business

- 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.
- The date for a Strategic Planning Day has been fixed for 24 October at Waterend Farm, Coaley, Dursley, GL11 5DR. The aim is for the group to work through ideas to create a strategy which will help the group become more proactive across the sector.
- All agreed that once ideas are formulated during the Strategic Planning Day, consideration be given to holding an event whereby all other Stakeholders could offer up their input too.

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 24 October. It will take place Waterend Farm, Coaley, Dursley, GL11 5DR. 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 at the Growth Hub on 19 September. An interesting presentation was provided by Angie Preece from BCRS www.bcrs.org.co.uk. It was agreed that Angie should have permanent seat on the group.
- The group looked at possible future activities for the group in the wider Access to Finance field and how we can use this to support the local economy. There was particular interest in exploring the possibility of obtaining a fund to be run by the group similar to that offered by Finance Birmingham. www.financebirmingham.com. owned by Birmingham City Council.
- 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.

Another **free** Banking and Finance Clinic will be held on **Tuesday 31 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 [HERE](#)

The next Banking and Finance meeting is at the Growth Hub on Tuesday 31 October. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com.



Business & Professional Services

- It has been agreed that the group will act as a critical friend in assisting projects in preparing their Business Cases and provide guidance on the formulation and wider commercial engagement of relevant projects.
- The two immediate projects waiting the input from the group are the Cheltenham Cyber Park and the Growth Hub rollout. As these were not quite ready to put before the group it was decided to cancel the September meeting.

The next meeting will take place at the Growth Hub on Wednesday 22 November. 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 heard that their paper “*Consideration of Barriers to Development*” has been approved by the LEP Board and considered by the Senior Officers Group [SOG] which has representatives from all the Local Authorities and the County Council. A meeting has been arranged between members of this group and the SOC to discuss a way forward.
- On a general discussion on the impact of Brexit on the sector the general consensus was that businesses were just getting on with it, although the London market was experiencing a slowdown. The help to buy scheme had been a great help but concerns were expressed about its continued viability.
- Apart from progressing the *Barriers* paper, the next meeting will have speakers to talk about utilities, road transport and sustainable development.

- A 'Place Strategy' being put together for Tewkesbury. As a separate issue, TBC have commissioned the externals BDP to provide consultancy support to develop strategic level masterplan for the M5 J9/A46 Ashchurch wider area.

The next meeting is at Roberts Limbrick on 18th October. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com



Creative

- It was discussed and agreed at their last meeting 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 working on engagements 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 work closely to enhance the strength, richness and diversity of the county's cultural heritage and offerings and is 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

- A meeting was held at Spirax Sarco on 12 September. They are the global leader in the supply of engineered solutions for the efficient design, maintenance and operation of industrial and commercial steam systems. Jeremy Miller kindly hosted an informative tour of their Technology Centre.
- Discussions were held on a number of disparate energy initiatives. These included TATA on the transfer of waste energy, ERDF funding, the Worcestershire home energy recovery unit, the WeLink modular show house now completed at Berkeley and electric vehicle charging. The next meeting will look at creating a steering group to pull these initiatives together.
- There is the potential to bid for £40k from the Department of Business Energy & Industrial Strategy [BEIS] to fund the creation of an LEP Energy strategy for the county. Further information will be provided at the next meeting.
- There are still gaps in the group for expertise in certain types of energy that need filling. It was agreed that Sorcha Anderson from www.carbonfocus.co.uk. should join the group. Sorcha is an expert in how to comply with energy and carbon legislation and improve efficiency.

The next meeting is on 7 November at SGS Berkeley. For questions about the group please contact either Mike Curran mike.curran@gfirstlep.com or Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Retail, Tourism & The High Street

- Nineteen members attended the Group meeting on 23 August which was kindly hosted by Stroud District Council. A round table discussion on the sector identified the different challenges from each of the Districts covering areas such as rents, transport and recruitment. The latter is a particular problem given pay rates and the fact that the county has the 2nd highest employment rate in the country.
- There was exciting news about the possibility of a large UK Digital Retail Lab having finally been identified. Capital funding of £400k is available to provide advice, training and incubation space for both new retailers and for established retailers wishing to develop new products and ways of working. Further information is precluded pending sanction by the LEP Board but it is hoped an announcement will be made soon.
- The Group is 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 Wednesday 15 November. It will be held at Eastgate Shopping Centre GL1 PA. For questions about the group please contact either Mike Curran mike.curran@gfirstlep.com or Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



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