



Think Gloucestershire

Interventions that enable
Gloucestershire to
Reimagine and Restart

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE:
FUTURE-PROOFED**

gfirstLEP
growing gloucestershire

Table of Contents

An introduction from David Owen	3
Overview	4
Think Gloucestershire: Five Foundations	5
Think Gloucestershire: Business	6
Think Gloucestershire: People	8
Think Gloucestershire: Place	11
Think Gloucestershire: Ideas	13
Think Gloucestershire: Infrastructure	15



An introduction from David Owen, CEO GFirst LEP

Recovery from the coronavirus pandemic represents the single biggest economic challenge since the Second World War. However, it also presents the single biggest opportunity to reshape the British economy to make it more inclusive, productive, sustainable, innovative, and resilient.

I am very proud of the GFirst LEP and The Growth Hub staff for swiftly changing to working from home and supporting businesses within Gloucestershire. Our first priority was to let Gloucestershire businesses know whatever sector they are in and whether they are a sole trader, an SME or an international company exactly what the support was for them. Our newsletters went from being circulated once per month prior to the pandemic, to almost daily newsletters for 10 weeks and our business survey was completed by nearly 700 local businesses in a matter of days.

Ourselves and all our partners directed businesses to the GFirst LEP website for the daily updates with the very latest information, advice and help. Though our Growth Hubs temporarily closed, all the Business Guides and Navigators working remotely spoke to hundreds of businesses every day.

The LEP set up a Taskforce that included a cross-section of organisations from across the county including the FSB, NFU, Circle2Success, the voluntary sector and all our local authorities. The Taskforce was set up to capture intelligence from our business community to identify exactly how the coronavirus was affecting Gloucestershire and what was likely to happen in the coming weeks and months. All of our sector specific business groups have continued to meet, virtually, again to help capture this vital information and the senior team at the LEP were having daily conversations with central Government feeding back concerns and queries from our business community.

We worked closely with our partners in the local authorities to identify businesses that had ‘slipped through the cracks’ of the funding support offered. To date over £140million has been paid out in grants to nearly 12,000 businesses right across the county.

Mental health and wellbeing was regularly featured within our communications – whether it was simple tips to help deal with anxiety, how to have a routine whilst working from home or relaxation techniques, we felt this was an important part of our messaging and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Alongside the Growth Hub, GFirst LEP created a partnership with GlosJobs to set up a ‘one stop shop’ for all things recruitment in the county. We also sponsored Punchline Magazine’s ‘Business & Community Champions’ feature that highlighted some of the amazing work being done across the county.

Our Recovery Plan is a **sector specific, economic** recovery plan which will help inform the **place-based** recovery plans being produced by our local authority partners.

In this hugely challenging time, the response of our business and wider community has been incredible, and I would like to thank all those who have gone above and beyond in their daily roles.



David Owen, CEO GFirst LEP

Overview

The cross-border Western Gateway contributes £107billion to UK plc and consists of 4.4 million people reaching across south Wales and western England, from Swindon to Swansea, and Salisbury to Tewkesbury, with the core cities of Bristol and Cardiff at its heart. GFirst LEP will continue to play its part in this Government endorsed initiative, our region's equivalent to the well-established Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine. Western Gateway will focus on three key areas to help drive export led growth; Infrastructure, Innovation and Internationalisation.

In common with all LEPs in the Western Gateway and across the country in 2018 and 2019, GFirst LEP together with a wide range of partners and consultees produced Gloucestershire's **Draft Local Industrial Strategy**¹.

The findings and content of the document remain even more pertinent now. The county is commencing on a long, complex and difficult journey in a world that has been turned upside down in just a few months. The ambition and self confidence to make Gloucestershire a dynamic forward thinking place and to "future-proof" is now more than a 'nice to have', it is an essential element for the county and its people's ongoing resilience.

"Technological change will have a huge impact on everyone's lives and livelihoods over the next few decades – indeed it has already started. Many types of jobs will disappear – others will be created; but we are yet to see whether policy and the public will keep up with the pace of change effectively. It is on all of us to get out in front of it and proactively skill-up and inform ourselves to be ready."

Foreword GFirst LEP Draft Local Industrial Strategy

Alongside existing growth programmes and widescale infrastructure commitments the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) seeks to put Gloucestershire ahead of the curve with a focus on; the digital revolution, climate change, protecting nature, improving housing stock and infrastructure. Younger people wanting to live, work and play in Gloucestershire is a key to the county's success and this too remains highly relevant. It is particularly concerning that the 18-24 year old age group are predicted to be the most significantly affected by the economic fallout from the pandemic. So, it is right that much of the focus of recovery plans should be on supporting this group without ignoring the problems that will affect people of all ages and across all business sectors.

During detailed consultations with GFirst LEP's Business Groups and a range of other stakeholders, May/June 2020², to establish the impact of COVID 19 on Gloucestershire's key business sectors, all the underlying principles and priorities in the draft LIS were confirmed to be still highly relevant during an enforced period of reimagining and restarting Gloucestershire.

These conversations alongside Economic Impact data³ have also informed the thinking on possible interventions that can be part of businesses and managing authorities' recovery planning process. Building responses from the ground up, that exploit opportunities in sectors such as; advanced engineering, cyber tech, digital business transformation, agri-tech and green technology will form a cornerstone of the county's economic recovery and ensure that people **'Think Gloucestershire'**.

¹ https://www.gfirstlep.com/downloads/2020/gloucestershire_draft_local-industrial-strategy_2019-updated.pdf

² GFirst LEP COVID 19 Sector Impact Analysis July 2020

³ Estimating the Economic Impact of Covid-19 on the Gloucestershire Economy; June 2020 HJA

Think Gloucestershire Five Foundations



“Gloucestershire produced £16.488bn of economic output in 2017, representing 12.6% of the output of the South West region, 1.08% of the total output for England, and 0.92% of the total output for the UK. In addition, Gloucestershire ranks 13th out of 38 LEPs in terms of productivity per worker.”⁴

With the depth of knowledge and understanding gained during the Local Industrial Strategy consultation and development process and the growing sector focus on; Cyber, IT, digital and technology businesses, Gloucestershire has effectively positioned itself to reimagine and restart its economy in the new economic environment. All GFirst LEP funded projects and pipeline projects are also being reviewed to establish potential areas for additional investment that will support the restart. Indeed, following a request from central government on June 10th to submit ‘shovel ready’ infrastructure projects, GFirst LEP was successful in bidding for **£11.3million for new projects**. A full press release outlining these projects will be issued separately.

Underlying the sector focuses are the five foundations of productivity⁵ which form an ideal framework for considering the interventions that will help enable Gloucestershire to reimagine itself and restart.

Business	People	Place	Ideas	Infrastructure
Understanding our sectors and business base, entrepreneurialism and employment demand. The ambition is to become ‘the best place to start and grow a business’.	Population, demography, skills, economic activity and inactivity. The government ambition is to ‘generate good jobs and greater earning power for all’.	Understanding how a prosperous place can not only drive productivity but also deliver inclusive growth across the whole geography.	Investment in R&D, new product and service development. The ability to create new ideas and deploy them is essential to becoming ‘the world’s most innovative economy’.	Highlighting the major infrastructure in the county, both physical and digital. This is key to understanding the conditions that hinder business performance.
				

6

⁴ GFirst LEP: Gloucestershire Five Foundations of Productivity Evidence Report

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-the-foundations/industrial-strategy-the-5-foundations>

⁶ GFirst LEP: Gloucestershire Five Foundations of Productivity Evidence Report



Leadership to grow our business community: starting, scaling, succeeding

Target business support at COVID recovery growth sectors

The Gloucestershire Growth Hub network is nationally recognised as one of the best in the country, with high levels of satisfaction and a wide range of support interventions for businesses at all stages of business development. This support can be tailored for and targeted to specific business sectors, e.g tourism, to support those business sectors facing immediate problems and are predicted to have the greatest potential for growth. The Growth Hub Network should develop a group of sector-specialist business advisers to support these sectors alongside the Hub Mentors programme.

Potential Project Lead:



The Growth Hub network

Support the expected growth in Start Up businesses

During recession and periods of high unemployment it is usual to see a growth in start-up businesses. This pattern is likely to repeat itself during this recession and possibly to a high degree as working from home becomes more widely spread. Existing provision of business support for Start Up businesses should be reviewed with a view to ensuring online provision meets the need to support business growth in this area.

Potential Project Lead:



University of Gloucestershire



The Growth Hub network

Work from Anywhere (WFA) Gloucestershire

As more companies announce home working policies and close offices, urban dwellers will start to make the move to predominantly rural areas to live, work and play. As well as bringing GVA benefits this means that “Blended Working”, a mixture of working from home combined with time at a co-working site, will continue to become an accepted and expected form of working. A programme to promote Gloucestershire as a ‘Work from Anywhere’ county will help the county to progress its ambitions to be a county that attracts workers and younger people. This ambition will need to be supported by the acceleration of broadband delivery and a network of WFA locations; private sector, Growth Hubs, local authorities and repurposed commercial office sites.

Potential Project Lead:



GFirst LEP



The Growth Hub network



FSB + business community

UK Inward Investment

A change of focus for the GFirst LEP Inward Investment team, for a time limited period changing the focus to supporting the county’s existing foreign-owned companies to safeguard jobs, as well as attracting new and additional business investment from UK based foreign owned companies.

Potential Project Lead:



GFirst LEP



Building the workforce of the future and boosting earning power for everyone by improving skills

Improving Skills will be one of the most important interventions for economic recovery and business restart. Training, reskilling and redeploying the significant number of people who will become redundant during Q4 2020 when the government's furlough scheme ends, loans are repaid and businesses find they cannot operate profitably in the new working environment, will need careful planning and coordination. It is essential to make the most of the funding and provider programmes available.

Apprenticeship Programmes and Clearing House

Apprenticeship programmes and job creation schemes will be essential to help the 18–24 year old age group who will be the most significantly affected in the county with regards to redundancy. This problem is not unique to Gloucestershire, although we will be more significantly affected due to the above average levels of employment in tourism and hospitality.

Although the apprenticeship schemes rules and timing will be mandated by central government, a programme needs to be established to identify where there is the potential for jobs e.g. cyber security, broadband infrastructure, agri-tech, IT, green energy and housing stock retrofits. Then to establish Career Hubs and an Apprenticeship Clearing House to help employers identify skills needs, match trainees, effectively spend the apprenticeship levy and to identify county providers capable of delivering the required skills training.

Potential Project Lead:



Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel

Degree Apprenticeships

Degree Apprenticeships are particularly suitable for mature apprentices and 18-24 year olds deciding not to attend university full time. This is an opportunity for employers to attract top level talent wishing to reskill or deciding not to attend university. We need to ensure that such opportunities are supported and where possible the associated degree courses are available from Gloucestershire Universities.

Potential Project Lead:



Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel

Adult Education

Adult Education has a diverse range of funding pots that do not always align with business need. Taking a proactive approach to identifying the gaps between funding and recovery business skills needs and then being prepared to fund the gaps will enable reskilling to happen in a timely and effective manner. Local community based and peer to peer mentoring for skills development and job searches will also play a role.

The response should include approaches that; ensure no one is overlooked, that job roles and employment are available for those who are regarded as furthest from the labour market and that those who are forced to re-enter the job market at later stages of life are well prepared despite any issues with digital awareness and inclusion.

Potential Project Lead:



GFirst LEP Skills & Education team

Higher Education Marketing Group

To promote the county's diverse education offering in a wide range of subjects, industries, and business sectors, including the identified growth sectors such as IT, Cyber & Agri-tech.

Potential Project Lead:



Engineering and Manufacturing Capability Index

To match redundancies to vacancies and contract fulfilment requests to the Gloucestershire's wider capability.

Potential Project Lead:



GFirst LEP Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing Business Group

Gloucestershire Anchor Institutions Group⁷

To promote Health & Wellbeing, access training and employment opportunities, purchasing more locally and for social benefit, using buildings and spaces to support communities, reducing environmental impact.

An Anchor Institution approach is seen as bringing recovery benefits across a wide range of recovery issues; employment, procurement, estates & workplace, environmental sustainability and building resilient local communities.⁸

Potential Project Lead:



Jennifer Taylor, Lead Commissioner (Public Health) GCC

⁷ UK Commission for Employment & Skills (2015), “an anchor institution is one that, alongside its main function, plays a significant and recognised role in a locality by making a strategic contribution to the local economy.”

⁸ <https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/blogs/how-the-nhs-can-use-anchor-strategies-to-build-a-healthy-and-sustainable>



Something for everyone in our vibrant, green county

Gloucester City of Culture 2025

Gloucester City of Culture 2025 bid could have a significant impact on not only the City, but to all parts of the county as it spreads confidence in a 'Think Gloucestershire' message and the small-scale cultural events will support an arts & culture sector severely impacted by COVID lockdown and physical distancing regulations.

A strong, distinctive 'Gloucester for Gloucestershire' bid would support and align with the strategic goals of the City and put Gloucestershire firmly on the cultural and visitor map. It will help tackle well-documented inequalities in health, wellbeing, education and skills and the county's emerging, post-COVID social and economic vulnerabilities.

Potential Project Lead:



Hollie Smith-Charles, Gloucester Culture Trust

Shop Local

"Shop Local" programmes alongside High Street regeneration schemes that are location specific and run by towns, cities together with their local authorities. Placing this under a co-ordinated banner would bring more benefits across the county and likely attract more interest from outside county visitors during a Think Gloucestershire Staycation 2020.

Potential Project Lead:



GFirst LEP Retail & High Street Business Group

Staycation 2020 & 2021

Gloucestershire has the advantage of space and being a predominately rural county. This means a Staycation campaign focussed on; outdoor lifestyle, food, localism, culture and hospitality in market towns and community cities has the potential to be a real draw in Summer 2020. This will need the support of local authorities with regards to relaxing regulations and the effective use of public realm spaces.

Potential Project Lead:

visitgloucestershire

Steve Gardner-Collins, Visit Gloucestershire Partnership

Gloucestershire food supply chain dynamic procurement system (DPS)

Gloucestershire food supply chain dynamic procurement system (DPS) as part of Gloucestershire Food strategy (GFS). The DPS gives farmers new opportunities to sell their produce locally into public sector food catering contracts e.g. schools, hospitals. GFS is currently progressing a trial with GCC schools' contracts to have this DPS system from 2021. The NFU are also progressing testing the idea of farmers accessing public procurement for food catering contracts.

Potential Project Lead:

BOOMCIRCLE

Tamsyn Harrod, Boomcircle

gfirstLEP
growing gloucestershire



**GFirst LEP Agriculture, Food & Rural
Business Group**



Building on a strong track record of innovation across established and emerging sectors

Digital Business Transformation

Digital Business Transformation has become a key to businesses operating effectively both remotely and with physical distancing restrictions. Establish a Digitalisation Programme to enable the county's economy and businesses to have a robust digital technology ecosystem, to operate online where appropriate and to effectively deliver physically distanced face to face services.

This will aid businesses to discover the routes to quick and cost-effective implementation of new business processes and bring significant business survival, GVA and employment benefits.

Potential Project Lead:



**GFirst LEP Business & Professional
Services Business Group**



The Growth Hub network

Innovation Mentoring Programme

An Innovation Mentoring Programme, alongside the Digitalisation Programme, will provide mentoring to businesses that are seeking to transform their business services and product offering to meet new & developing market needs. The programme will ensure businesses have access to the people and resources they need to identify new markets and develop services and products and to bid for innovation funding.

The mentoring programme will consist of one to one & peer mentoring and a range of innovation focussed events that will connect business knowledge and research to explore opportunities for cross-sector innovation.

Potential Project Lead:



**GFirst LEP Business & Professional
Services Business Group**



Hub Mentors

'Gloucestershire - the Cyber county'

'Gloucestershire - the Cyber county' would aim to extend the reach of the existing Cyber Central message across the county. This is in recognition of the growing importance of this sector as more businesses move online and that the number of start-ups may accelerate in the coming months.

The aims would be to offer:

- A fully integrated county offering; including the existing facilities Cyber Central, C11 Berkeley, Hub8, that can offer cyber secure space for start-ups before Cyber Central goes live Q4 2023 date.
- Further facilities across the county dependant on demand such as the proposed Forum in the Kings Quarter in Gloucester
- Cyber Fest 2021 that promotes the Cyber county to potential start-up companies and investors.
- FE & HE education programmes for a wide range of IT, Digital Transformation & Cyber skills.

Potential Project Lead:



Cheltenham Borough Council



University of Gloucestershire



CyNam

Agri-tech solutions for local food production

Agri-tech solutions for local food production that operate as full production and demonstration sites to promote Gloucestershire as an Agri-tech active company. This builds on the growing agri-tech reputation of the county, supports the needs of the DPS and the early stage advanced agri-tech "Hive" ideas in the Gloucestershire Food Strategy.

Potential Project Lead:



Royal Agricultural University



HARTPURY
Hartpury University

Think Gloucestershire
Infrastructure



Green growth, modern transport choices and better digital connectivity across the county

Accelerate Broadband delivery

Outside of Cheltenham and Gloucester, significant numbers of households and businesses in Gloucestershire still do not have access to the current industry standard high speed 30mbps broadband. The plans and timescales to resolve this and to make the next step towards full fibre are being hampered by the availability of accredited sub-contractors to undertake the work.

Sub-contractor staff undergo an initial accreditation programme against a national training framework. There are a limited number of training centres, none in Gloucestershire. People made redundant from roles in engineering and manufacturing could undergo retraining into roles where there is ongoing and likely growing demand.

This brings benefits regarding employment, GVA, 'Work from Anywhere' and productivity. Contractors and infrastructure providers have already expressed support for this approach.

Potential Project Lead:



Fastershire



Gloucestershire County Council



Training provider

Confirming existing Infrastructure commitments

In the Chancellor's Budget statement in March 2020, more than £27billion was committed to transport infrastructure between 2020 and 2025, with nearly £1billion committed to three major schemes in Gloucestershire.

These included commitments to fund; the A417 'Missing Link' scheme to build a new 3.4 mile dual carriageway linking the M4 and the M5 (£435million), creating an 'all-ways' Junction 10 of the M5 (£219million) and work to improve Junction 9 at Tewkesbury.

As we move from internal combustion vehicles to electric and low-emissions vehicles, we still need to address crucial issues of road safety and congestion.

This funding will save lives, ease congestion and boost jobs, we need to ensure all six of our local MP's help to bring these important infrastructure projects to fruition.

Potential Project Lead:



Gloucestershire County Council

Reduce planning barriers to sustainable development

The GFirst LEP Construction & Infrastructure business group have identified this need to speed the delivery of the housing stock needed for the county. It is a complex issue, with varying stakeholder needs and views. However, the impacts of COVID have increased the need to find a solution that is acceptable to managing authorities and developers.

The potential benefits on GVA, employment and the attractiveness of Gloucestershire to businesses is significant. It will take a significant act of stakeholder collaboration and consensus building to make this happen.

Potential Project Lead:



**GFirst LEP Construction &
Infrastructure Business Group**



Gloucestershire County Council



Local authority representation

Green energy & green infrastructure programmes

Green highways & enabling programmes (e.g. Electric vehicles, charging points, cycle routes etc), housing stock retrofit to meet the EPC targets and alternative energy provision will all have a significant impact on the achievement of the carbon emission targets. With regard to the housing stock retrofit, the employment and retraining potential opportunities are an additional benefit beyond the reduction in carbon emissions. This is of real significance in the recovery process and local authority drives to retrofit their own and co-managed housing stock would provide an excellent kick start to the programme.

The capital needed to make these infrastructure changes will bring GVA benefits, some of which may be in the form of recently announced Government household grants to encourage people to make the changes during a period of reduced fuel costs.

Potential Project Lead:



Gloucestershire County Council