

GFirst LEP Business Group Update: March 2018



Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing

- The Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Business Group held a lively informative meeting with a wide range of presentations on 12 March.
- Geraldine McCullagh from the University of Gloucestershire provided details of the Gloucestershire Accelerated Impact Network Support [**GAINS**] programme supported by the European Regional Development Fund. The programme is aimed at SMEs and includes subsidised access to approved business coaches to take businesses to the next level. Contact: gmccullagh@glos.ac.uk.
- Brian Fowler from **Gloucestershire College** spoke about the opportunities and success of the College in addressing apprenticeships. In a recent Ofsted inspection they had achieved an *Outstanding* for winning apprenticeships. Since 2010 they had delivered to 33k apprentices across 1200 different programmes from level 2 through to degree level. Nationally apprenticeships had decreased by 60% but the College had bucked the trend with an increase of 30%. Contact: Brian.Fowler@gloscol.ac.uk
- Kathrin Beckerleg said that this year's **Festomane** event on 8 March with the theme *Fall in Love with Engineering* was held at the Growth Hub. It had been a massive success with overwhelming numbers in the target age range of 14 – 18. Next year they were looking at a Dragons Den for employers with a non-cash prize of business support, eg access to a patent lawyer FOC. See <https://festomane.co.uk/>
- Alun James gave a brief overview of the **SWMAS** offer which includes manufacturing support, programme design and delivery and consultancy services. They currently offer small grants of 33% match funded grants. Contact: alun.james@swmas.co.uk
- Stephen Tulip provided a brief overview of the **EEF** offer. They provide a range of services from business support to championing manufacturing and engineering in the UK and the EU. Their aim is to help our industry thrive, innovate and compete locally and globally. They work with and for a whole range of people, including industry leaders, managers, professional staff, apprentices, policy-makers, and the media. Irrespective of size or field, they are eager to provide tools, campaigning and support that their members need to thrive. Contact: STulip@eef.org.uk

The date of the next AEM meeting will be 14th May 2018. For questions about the group, please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Agri Food & Rural Business

- The Agri Food and Rural held an interesting meeting at Hartpury College on 16 March. The Chairwoman, Jo Price, Vice Chancellor, spoke to the group about her recent attendance at a meeting of all the LEP Business group Chairs. She had found it very interesting to hear what the other groups have been involved with and the journeys they were on. All had agreed that the meeting of these Chairs was very useful, so the group will meet at least twice a year in future. Jo had also met with a newly formed female farmers group, GALS – Gloucestershire Agriculture Ladies Society. They are very much a fledgling group and JP was impressed with their enthusiasm and willingness to learn and hoped to nurture a closer association.
- A discussion was held on the need to complete a clear strategy for the group possibly aligned to the themes and strategic recommendations in the key findings contained in the 2017 SW Rural Productivity Commission report. The group suggested 6 core objectives as a basis for this. These were circulated to all group members for further consideration at the next meeting,
- Janet Dwyer from the University of Gloucestershire provided a most informative update on the work she was currently doing on the businesses producing Food and Drink in the county. 148 had already been identified excluding tourism already listed. It was agreed that it was paramount that this LEP group could demonstrate the importance of the rural economy within the county. We could use the information as evidence during MP's discussions.
- Bob Watters gave a really useful update on the following initiatives:
 - RDPE National Overview – March 2018 – Report to Agri-Food and Rural Business Group
 - Agricultural Command Paper
 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Ben Compton, Associate with Bruton Knowles, had asked to join the group in the future. This was agreed unanimously. Future speakers will include Tamsyn Harrod from Boomcircle and Ian Nutt, Head of Development, Soil Association Food for Life.
- *The date of the next meeting is Friday 18th May 2018 at the Royal Agricultural University. For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com*



Banking & Finance

- At their last meeting the group looked at possible future activities for the group in the wider Access to Finance field, including guest speakers, and how they can use this to support the local economy.
- A sub group was set up to explore 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.

- It was agreed that the group will run their annual charity quiz at the Growth Hub on 25th April. The nominated charity is Milestone School in Longlevens. We would urge businesses to support this worthwhile event by providing at least one team of 4 people. It is a great, fun, night out. If you wish to enter a team please contact Karen karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com.
- The meeting was preceded by another Banking and Finance clinic which provided advice to 3 separate businesses. Once again these were extremely successful and the feedback received was very positive.
- Unfortunately the next Banking and Finance Clinic on 24 April is already oversubscribed. We have arranged another clinic to run on the 21st May and details can be found on our website.
- *The next Banking and Finance meeting is at the Growth Hub on Tuesday 24th April 2018. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com.*



Business & Professional Services

- At their last meeting the group was provided with a very interesting update on the Cheltenham Cyber Park project by the project manager, Jeremy Williamson. Funding of £22m is being provided toward the initial infrastructure costs by GFirst LEP through Growth Deal 3. He highlighted potential issues including a possible 18 traffic modelling scenarios alone. The aim is however to get first site occupation by early 2021.
- Geraldine McCullagh also gave an interesting presentation on Gloucestershire's Accelerated Impact Network Support [GAINS]. As part of this package SME's in the county can access 40% of the cost of 4 days of high quality business performance coaching. Further information is available at <https://spcgrowth.com/blog/gloucestershire-gains>.
- Further information was also supplied on 2 more business support packages provided by the University of Gloucestershire. They are: Gloucestershire Research and Innovation Project [GRIP]. This enables to access a package of services that are designed to enable them to accelerate their innovation plans including access to 3D software and printers. The Start and Grow Enterprise [SaGE]. This package is aimed at innovative entrepreneurs and startups in the county. It offers a range of free events, workshops, reviews, and resources, helping to turn ideas into reality and grow successful enterprises. For further information on either of these please see www.glos.ac.uk/for-business/pages/do-business-on-campus.aspx.
- The next meeting will take place at the Growth Hub on Wednesday 23 May 2018. For questions about the group please contact either Mike Curran mike.curran@gfirstlep.com or Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Construction & Infrastructure

- At their meeting on 28 March the C&I Group was addressed by Pete Bungard CEO of Gloucestershire County Council. He spoke about the Gloucestershire 2050 Vision being led by Leadership Gloucestershire and the University of Gloucestershire and the vision that currently contains six “big ideas” articulated at <https://glos2050.com/default.asp>. This sparked a lively, informative and useful debate.
- An update on “*Consideration of Barriers to Development*” paper prepared by the C&I Group was provided. Annette Roberts from Tewkesbury Borough Council [TBC] is Chairwoman of the sub group formed to suggest actions arising. There was consensus about the huge and welcome progress that had been made in improving the relationship between businesses and the local Districts in understanding each other’s problems in this area.
- Annette is pulling a seminar together of all the key stakeholders in both the public and private sector to address the issues the sub group had identified from the report. The date of the seminar is to be confirmed but will be either the 8 or 10 May.
- The group expressed their concerns about the proposed allocation of the 192ha of employment land agreed by the JCS in relation to the proposed Cheltenham Plan. They agreed to respond to the Cheltenham Plan proposals as part of the current consultation period. This expires on 9 April.

The next meeting is at Roberts Limbrick on 9 May 2018. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com.



Energy

- A meeting was held at Ecotricity, Stroud on 27 February.
- Dave Evans from Schneider gave an interesting presentation providing a fascinating look into the future of innovative work being done on renewable energy projects and how these could provide a more efficient product to the consumer ultimately at a reduced cost.
- Funding has been received from BEIS to procure an Energy Strategy from externals based on the proposal put together by the sub group led by Pete Wiggins. A procurement exercise inviting tenders are on www.supplyingthesouthwest.org.uk using the Glos County Council protocols.
- BEIS have allocated £2.7m nationally from their Capacity support fund to fund the creation of 5 Local Regional Energy Hubs across the country. Gloucestershire are in the SW Region along with 6 other LEPs: Swindon & Wilts, Solent, Heart of SW, Dorset, Cornwall/Isles of Scilly and West of England. The West of England Combined Authority [WECA] and LEP will host the Hub and 4 staff in Bristol. Details of the key objectives and tasks are being worked on.

The next meeting is on 17 April 2018 at Tidal Lagoon Power, The Quays, Gloucester. 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

- A meeting was held on 21 February at the Cheltenham Campus of Gloucestershire College.
- Jason Smith Marketing Gloucester gave the group an update on the UK Digital Retail Innovation Centre [DRIC] that will be opening up in the Eastgate Shopping centre. This will address such innovative technology such as 3D virtual reality. It was acknowledged that current retailers were woefully unprepared for the digital age. There was excitement that some very big players within the UK are very interested in this project. There had even been interest from as far afield as the USA. It is hoped that the DRIC will open in June 2018.
- Polly Barnfield provided an update on the #WDYT campaign. 37% of all retail sales are influenced by digital, by 2020 that figure will go up to 49%! Huge difference between shoppers and retailers. Over 81% of shoppers will use multiple devices to research what they want to buy, but over 90% of retailers can't connect. Feedback has been extremely positive to date, particularly from the current pilot in the Brewery. The Meadows Shopping Centre has recently started trials.

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 18th April at Bruton Knowles, Gloucester. For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com