

Gloucestershire Employment and Skills Board

Draft Terms of Reference for discussion

GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the local authorities in Gloucestershire are planning to establish an Employment & Skills Board. The Board is being created to provide a link between local economic development needs and strategic planning and it will have the mandate to address issues around skills and unemployment /worklessness in the County. The aim of the Board is to boost economic growth by creating a more appropriate, relevant and highly skilled local workforce, and its role is to shape and influence employment and skills training and support to meet the skills needs of employers in Gloucestershire. This will be done by engaging private and public sector employers, colleges, training providers and the voluntary and community sector in the development and delivery of an integrated employment and skills strategy and associated action plan.

The Board will aim to:

- ensure that employers are able to access the right skills and training to grow their businesses
- increase the level of skills of the population of Gloucestershire
- increase skilled employment opportunities in Gloucestershire

The role encompasses the skills needs of our young people, those seeking jobs and the skills of the current and future workforce. There is also a particular emphasis on helping those who are currently economically inactive for whatever reason to develop their employability skills and find employment.

The Board will report to the GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Board (GEGJC) and has a specific role to develop and inform LEP and local authority strategic plans with particular reference to skills and training needs. Gloucestershire has requested of government a devolution deal. If this is successful, the Board would oversee the skills component and budget of that deal.

GFirst LEP CIC Ltd (“GFirst LEP” or “LEP”) is a not-for-profit company and as such, any surplus or assets are used principally for the benefit of the community. It is supported by the county council and six local district councils, all of whom play an active part in economic development through the GEGJC.

The Board will:

- Develop and implement a Skills Strategy for Gloucestershire
- Develop a skills commissioning framework, monitor and review it;
- Provide GFirst LEP and other appropriate bodies/groups such as the Gloucestershire European Structural and Investment Funding (ESIF committee) with recommendations on both revenue and capital skills funding and skills projects within Gloucestershire.
- Optimise the impact of employment and skills investment for local communities, employers and individuals;

- Use experience and knowledge of Board Members and others associated with the Board to seek to shape strategy and policy on learning and skills development

Board Composition and Meetings

The Gloucestershire Employment and Skills Board will be an advisory body with no legal status but with a specific role as part of GFirst LEP and local authority structure. There will be a maximum of 14 members, including the Chair, supported by a Secretariat of two staff from GFirst LEP/GCC/Strategic Alliance.

All Board members will work or live in the Gloucestershire area and will be expected to commit approx. 1 day per month to ESB-related work. The Chair is expected to commit approx. 2 days per month to ESB-related work and to work closely with the LEP/GCC staff involved in co-ordinating the work of the ESB.

The proposed Board will comprise:

Board Roles	Number	Approx time commitment
Chair Private sector employer	1	
Vice-Chair Private sector employer	1	
Employers – private sector The 5 private sector representatives on the ESB should be representative of the key sectors in the County as well as representative of both SMEs and large employers.	3	
Employers – public sector - Gloucestershire County Council representative - District Council representative - Health	1 1 1	
Employers – voluntary & community sector	1	
Higher Education	1	
Further Education	1	
Secondary Schools	1	
Private Training Providers	1	

DWP	1	
Secretariat for the ESB to be provided by GFirst LEP/GCC/Strategic Alliance.	2	

- Meetings will be scheduled to recognise that most members will be in employment or run businesses.
- All members will be appointed through open advertising and approved by the GFirstLEP. Local authority and other public sector representatives shall be nominated by the relevant bodies (e.g. Leadership Gloucestershire/GEGJC), as will the representatives from higher education, further education, schools and private training providers.
- Board Members shall be appointed for an initial term of 3 years. Following this initial term they shall resign, subject to their being reappointed for a further term of 3 years with the consent of the LEP Appointments Board. There shall be no limit on the number of consecutive terms for which Board Members may serve the Board.
- The Board will meet 4-6 times a year in private. Members are expected to provide apologies if they cannot attend and no substitutes will be allowed.

Task & Finish Groups

From time to time it may be necessary to establish specific skills task and finish groups (e.g. for Apprenticeships) and other skills specialists may be invited to join these. Any group or panel would need to be sponsored by an Employment and Skills Board Member, who may or may not chair the group, depending on the issue under consideration.

Role of Board Members

As well as attending Board meetings, members may be asked to attend other meetings as a representative for the LEP and ESB, and will be required to read background papers and documents and input into plans.

The specific role of a Board Member will be to:

- use experience and knowledge to help shape strategy and policy on learning and skills development;
- influence the prioritisation, planning and investment in skills supply and the shape of delivery;
- Support the strategic aims of GFirst LEP
- Represent a range of people, organisations or views, not just their own or that of their own organisation

The way we do business

The Board will adopt good practice and its Members will adopt the following values:

- Championing to influence and lead by example
- Enterprising solutions that are creative
- Partnership working across the private, public and the third sector
- Sharing best practice
- Being inclusive of each locality and community across Gloucestershire

Ideally, we want Board Members who:

- Can see the 'big picture' for Gloucestershire and can set aside the interests of their own organisations for the overall good of the county
- Have an understanding of the employment and skills context in Gloucestershire
- Are empowered to speak on behalf of their sector, representative or stakeholder group and provide to the Board an agreed consensus position reflecting the views of their constituency.
- Have access to a wider network for advice.
- Have some experience or expertise in managing skills/talent development or employment of staff/volunteers so know, and can manage, some of the challenges and requirements involved.
- Have some experience of working cross-sector and with Government departments
- Are able to use their experience and knowledge to inform the commissioning of investments in the County that cover employability and skills.
- Have committee experience and are skilled at providing succinct guidance, analytical input to the issues / interventions under discussion and skilled at building consensus
- Have time available to prepare for and attend meetings as well as to review complex documents

A Code of Conduct and Register of Interest will be drawn up and all Board members and observers are required complete a declaration.

Observers (non-members)

Observers will be invited to attend Board meetings from the Skills Funding Agency. Others may be invited at the discretion of the Board.

A Secretariat, comprising representatives of GFirst LEP/Gloucestershire County Council/Strategic Alliance will also be represented at all meetings.

Specialists may be invited by the Chair to attend specific Board meetings or Agenda items where particular expertise is required.

Occasional observers may request to attend a meeting through the Chair.

Board Member Remuneration

Board Members shall not be remunerated although they may be paid expenses properly incurred by them in connection with the discharge of their duties. All potential expenses likely to be incurred by Board Members must be made known to the Secretariat beforehand and duly authorised before reimbursement.

Administration

The Gloucestershire Employment and Skills Board will be supported by a professional secretariat hosted by GFirst LEP/Gloucestershire County Council. The meetings and the papers of the Board will be prepared by Gloucestershire County Council's Employment & Skills Commissioning Team.