

Review of LEP Business Groups

As you know, following the paper provided by Mike Curran, a sub group of the LEP Board comprising Adam, Mike, Rob and David, reviewed the current LEP business groups. The aim was to ensure that they were fit for purpose, cover and provide appropriate representation from the main business sectors in the county, and are organised in the most effective way. There was a particular focus on delivering our Strategic Economic Plan [SEP] and the requirements of the Local Growth Deal Funding already agreed and anticipated in Growth Deal 3.

This was the first review of groups undertaken since the LEP was formed and coincided with a review of LEP resources brought about by funding constraints. This had meant a reorganisation within the LEP which unfortunately had resulted in the unavoidable loss of members of staff. This in turn meant that working practices had to change. As part of the review it was agreed that a Board Member be attached to each business group to increase Board engagement and provide a direct link from the group to the Board. Where this already existed it worked extremely well and the groups have found the support to be positive and encouraging. The proposals are as below.

Transport and Logistics.

The sub group felt that the work currently undertaken by Transport and Logistics Business group was, to a large extent, duplicated by work carried on elsewhere in the LEP and GCC. Given this, and the problems in recruiting a wider representation from this sector of business community, the Board reluctantly decided that the group should be dissolved. Input sought from this sector would, in future be direct with the relevant businesses and GL Ambassadors as had been the case for the recent J10 lobbying in support of the J10 funding sought for the Outline Business Case. It was agreed that the Chairman, Mark Ryan, should join the Construction and Infrastructure Group to ensure some form of continuity. Mike Curran will remain as the first point of contact within the LEP for all T&L issues that have not been funded.

Business Membership Group

The sub group agreed that as the BMG was unable to agree on its purpose and articulate its aims and objectives it should be dissolved in its current form. Its main role had evolved into one of communication which could be dealt with more effectively by other methods. It was agreed that there should be a 6 monthly round table event [similar to that recently convened for Margot James, MP] with representatives from FSB, IoD, Chambers etc

Land Based: Proposed Board Representative – Mike

In view of the LEP investment in Farm 491 it was agreed to approach RAU to see if they would front a Land Based Group using their existing contacts and the desire to increase business engagement in this sector and in particular with Rural Growth Hub announcement . They are delighted to do so and take over responsibility for the LEP group. The new Vice Chancellor of RAU is hugely supportive and has expressed a desire to Chair the group in its new format. There will clearly be sensitivities with Hartpurpy College which will need handling carefully.

Technology/Cyber Security: Proposed Board Representative – Diane

The technology group has limped along despite a very enthusiastic and dedicated chairman with a number of highly supportive LEP leads but without any meaningful major business representation from the sector. It was agreed to dissolve the group as it stood at present. On the assumption that GD3 will provide major LEP funding for Cheltenham Cyber Park there will be a refocus on Cyber Security. GCHQ

will be asked to front an LEP Cyber Security Group. Negotiations have not yet started. Nick Rowntree, Glos Constabulary Cyber Security Steering Committee wishes to be part of this new forum.

Energy: Proposed Board Representative – Rob

This has parallels with the Transport and Logistics Sector in that it is a vitally important sector but it lacks meaningful representation from the sector it purports to represent. Despite numerous efforts from the LEP, and the Sector Chairman personally, we have been unable to engage with major local businesses in this sector such as Horizon, EDF, Ecotricity and Tidal Lagoon Power etc. In view of the LEP Investment in GREEN it was agreed to approach SGS to see if they would front an Energy Group using their existing contacts with major local businesses and their desire to increase business engagement in this sector. They are delighted to do so and take over responsibility for the LEP group. Meetings are being scheduled to ensure that the LEP provides a clear steer on the future direction of the group.

Business Advisory Group [BAG]

This will be abolished. LEP Board members will report back to the LEP Board as appropriate on “their” sectors.

Banking and Finance: Proposed Board Representative - Adam

The group should remain in its present form

Retail: Proposed Board Representative - Diane

The group should remain its present form. However they wish to be called **Retail, Tourism and High Street**. At the last meeting of the group Diane said that she was content with this proposed new name

Creative: Proposed Board Representative – Matt

The group should, for now, remain in its present form. The group are preparing a paper for Board for consideration at their April meeting. This will articulate their purpose from their perspective. They wish to focus on collaborative working and a collective Gloucestershire offering which is in line with the LEP objectives.

Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing: Proposed Board Representative – Rob

The group should remain in its present form but to increase its interest on all aspects affecting the sector, beyond the historical focus on skills. Neill will remain as Chairman. Rob will support as necessary in providing a defined focus and clear purpose for the group.

Business & Professional Services: Proposed Board Representative – Roman

The group should remain in its present form. The focus of the group will be to support and act as the critical friend to the LEP in the shaping and development of project proposals ideas and proposals. Their anticipated work on the results of the GD3 bid, when announced, will be invaluable.

Construction and Infrastructure: Proposed Board Representative – Mike

The group should remain its current form