

GFirst LEP Business Group Update: April 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 2 July 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 the 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 13th July 2018 at the Growth Hub, Oxstalls Campus, UOG, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester, GL2 9HW. For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com*



Banking & Finance

- At their last meeting on 24 April the group received an interesting presentation from Simon Cunnington, Senior Relationship Manager of The British Business Bank. Simon explained this was a Government owned business development bank dedicated to making the finance markets work better for Start Ups, Scale Ups, how to Stay Ahead and how this worked in practice for these 3 areas.
- The group also received a similarly interesting presentation from Terry Burke, Head of Sales from Bibby Financial Services. They are the UK's leading independent invoice finance provider who writes one in six of every invoice finance deal in the market.

- The sub group 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 was making good progress. Potential funders had been identified and expressed a strong interest. The principle was fully supported by Alex Chalk MP. He requested that the sub group provide him with a paper to endorse and take to BEIS also seeking funding from them.
- The meeting was preceded by another Banking and Finance clinic which provided advice to 4 separate diverse businesses, all with excellent potential. Once again these were extremely successful and the feedback received was very positive. Another **free** Banking and Finance Clinic will be held on **Tuesday 24 July 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 at [HERE](#)
- The group's annual charity quiz was held at the Growth Hub on 25th April. The nominated charity was Milestone School in Longlevens. As usual it was a great fun night out. The figures have not yet been finalised but we hope to have raised in the region of £2000.
- *The next Banking and Finance meeting is at the Growth Hub on Tuesday 24th July 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 Tidal Lagoon, The Quays, Gloucester on 17 April.
- Dr Simon Pickering, Principal Ecologist at Ecotricity provided an interesting insight into Ecotricity. Simon pointed out that Green electricity didn't exist in the world back in 1996. They chose this focus because conventional electricity is responsible for 30% of Britain’s carbon emissions. Current research includes battery storage, an integrated home charging process for electric cars and possibly a mobile phone network.
- Neil James, Distribution Manager at Wester Power Distribution [WPD], provided a fascinating presentation on the impact of its transition from a passive Distribution Network Operator [DNO] to an active Distribution System Operator [DSO]. The transition will cost £125m and see the scope of services WPD provides expand and incorporate areas such as flexibility, services procurement, grid resilience improvements and drive greater network efficiency. It will impact in five main categories which include data integrity, market integration, IT systems, customer propositions and equipment.
- The procurement exercise to appoint an external to assist in writing an Energy Strategy has been concluded. It was a close run competition with high quality bids. The contract was awarded to Centre for Sustainable Energy [CSE] based in Bristol. A small Steering Group will oversee the contract. Their first meeting with CSE is on 4 May.

The next meeting is on 12 June 2018 at UOG, Oxstalls Campus. 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 18 April at Bruton Knowles, Gloucester.
- Jason Robinson, Eastgate Shopping Centre, 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. Lease has been signed/completed end of February. Tender documents have been released and 3 companies short listed. The deadline for costings is 25th April. The Steering Group will meet the week after to make final decision. Building work should be straightforward as the units are currently in good condition. However technology will take longer. It is hoped the Grand Launch will take place in September.
- Polly Barnfield provided an update on the #WDYT campaign. This is now gaining ground with Kettering, Nottingham, Isle of Wight, Lichfield, and Penzance now using the App. The company is in talks with River Island. Last month proved very challenging in light of the press about Mark Zuckerberg Facebook. It has meant that there has been a lot of activity behind the scenes putting together a project that will enable people to own their own information.

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 27 June at Soho Coffee Company Ltd, Head Office, Unit K, Ashville Trading Estate, The Runnings, Cheltenham, GL51 9PT. For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@qfirstlep.com