

GFirst LEP Business Group Update: May 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.
- On 8 May the group sent a comprehensive response to the Defra consultation paper on “ *Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit*”
- *The date of the next meeting is on 13 July 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 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 [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.
- On 15 May the group hosted a presentation on Access to Finance under the headings of loans, grants and equity. This was aimed primarily at staff employed in financial services, including the banks. Sixteen alternative funding providers each gave a 2 minute elevator pitch of their offer to an audience of over 40 people. This was supplemented by Growth Hub presentations on their SAGE, GAINS & GRIP products. The event was hugely successful and will be repeated again later in the year.
- *The next Banking and Finance meeting is at the Growth Hub on 24 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.
- It was agreed that the group act as a critical friend in the development of Business Cases for Growth Deal projects where funding is being provided through the LEP. This has been very successful on the Farm 491 Project. Jeremy Williamson welcomed such support on the Cyber Park project but it was agreed that the time was not quite ripe. Another 2 projects were identified for this type of support in the near future.
- *The next meeting will take place at the Growth Hub on 11 July 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 9 May the C&I Group was addressed by Rod Horrocks from the Growth Hub. He spoke about the Gloucestershire Research & Innovation Programme [GRIP] Rod explained that this was a fully funded package of activities to support local businesses that considered innovation as the key to growth. GRIP can provide expert support, advice and resources. Rod provided current examples. For further information email grip@glos.ac.uk
- The Group agreed the wording for a response to the draft text for consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] to be submitted before the deadline on 10 May. A brief discussion on the impact of Hinckley Point C on C&I resources in the county revealed that, currently, they were negligible.
- It was agreed to monitor the implementation of the Local Plans including those within the JCS. Concern was expressed about the potential impact of Community Infrastructure Levy [CIL] across the county, particularly on large developments. The group will make representations as necessary.
- On 10 May a full day workshop was held on “*Consideration of Barriers to Development*” paper prepared by the C&I group. The turnout of over 30 key stakeholders from the County, all the Districts and the C&I group was testament 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 Roberts from Tewkesbury Borough Council facilitated a very productive day resulting in an agreed action plan to be taken forward by a joint sub group. The specific agreed areas identified were
 - Early wins
 - Pre applications
 - Planning Performance Agreements
 - Community Led Planning
 - Legal agreements incl Sec 278

The next meeting of the C&I group is at Roberts Limbrick on 27 June 2018. For questions about the group please contact Mike Curran: mike.curran@gfirstlep.com.



- 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.

The next meeting is on 12 June 2018 at The Growth Hub. 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 also 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 on 27 June 2018 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@gfirstlep.com

VISITOR ECONOMY & TOURISM

The group met on 23 May

- The members provided an update of highlights within their own Districts. This included details of the various events in Gloucester to mark the 1100th anniversary of Aethelflaed, Lady of Mercia's death. Sir Geoffrey Clifton – Brown is hosting a food and drink event on 6 July. Cheltenham are considering a bid to host the Explore GB event on behalf of the county at the racecourse in 2019. The Forest of Dean are currently working on Trails and packages. Cotswold are very busy with press visits with over 40 already. They are also organising a delegation to 'Visit Japan'. They also have 130 Hare's out on the Cotswold AONB Hare Trail.
- It was agreed to review running a Tourism Forum on the back of another but that a clear theme was required. Previous events have always had national partners attending. We would need to be full partners with whoever we were partnering with to ensure proper control and coverage. Cotswolds used to run an annual forum and had over 300 people attending. Unfortunately however, they had to step back due to funding restraints.
- Aims and objectives are being drafted for consideration at the next meeting. The LEP is waiting for publication of the LEP Review. This had been promised before the summer recess of parliament. This will be followed shortly thereafter with guidance from the Government on the content of the Local Industrial Strategy for Gloucestershire. Mally Findlater – Head of Strategy LEP – will visit all groups to find out more information from them as appropriate.

The next meeting is on 4 July 2018 at The Growth Hub. For questions about the group please contact either Mike Curran mike.curran@gfirstlep.com or Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com

CYBER SECURITY

The inaugural meeting of the newly formed Cyber Group was held on 30 April.

- There was a very encouraging attendance at the meeting including representatives from GCHQ, National Cyber Security Centre and a wide representative cross section of business, academic and other public service sectors. The need for such a group was agreed. Draft aims and objectives were provided for consideration to be finalised at the next meeting.
- Martyn Cartwright from the Barberry Group said that Barberry were currently working on a Masterplan Vision. They expect the park to accommodate a wide spectrum of businesses of different maturity, scale and capacity with high quality, bespoke accommodation for the larger corporation through to start-ups and SMEs; delivered through a range of business options – design & build, lease or joint venture. At the heart of the park will be GCHQ and the NCSC's Cyber Innovation Centre, a dedicated facility to harness government expertise to develop UK cyber capability and businesses.
- Professor Richard Benham provided details of the National Cyber Awards 2018. These will be held at the Manor by the Lake in November. It will showcase the achievements within the Cyber and Digital Sector of organisations and individuals. The awards will focus on and give recognition to three key areas:
 - Four classes of award for innovation and cutting edge AI cyber solutions both for business benefit and national defence.
 - Two awards for the reduction of Cyber Crime both against business and the individual.
 - Five personal awards for outstanding individuals in this sector and unsung heroes.

The next meeting is on 25 June 2018 at The Growth Hub. For questions about the group please contact either Mike Curran mike.curran@gfirstlep.com or Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP GROUP

- The aim of this group is to provide a forum to enable one representative from each the Counties Business Membership Groups, other than Professional Bodies, to engage directly with the representatives from the Board of GFirst LEP. The primary purpose of the group is to provide a conduit between the LEP Board and members of their membership groups on mutual needs and solutions that enhance economic growth. The Chair of the BMG will be an LEP Board member and also fulfill the role as SME Champion for GFirst LEP.
- At their last meeting all attendees gave an update on the areas they represented. For the LEP Dev Chakraborty gave a resume of the activities of the various LEP Business Groups at outlined above. In addition Dev announced that following over 100 applications, 3 new members had been appointed to the Board of GFirst LEP. They were Russell Marchant, Principal and CEO of Hartpury College; Deborah Potts, CEO Active Gloucestershire and The Music Works and Jenny Raymond, Partner, Harrison Clark Rickerbys'.

- The estimated roll out of Growth Hub across the Districts is currently as follows:

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| ➤ Tewkesbury | June 2018 | |
| ➤ Cirencester | July 2018 | |
| ➤ Gloucester | Sept 2018 | <i>relocation to University Business School</i> |
| ➤ Forest of Dean | Nov 2018 | |
| ➤ Stroud | Feb 2019 | |
| ➤ Cheltenham | Apr 2019 | |

Meanwhile the roll out of Growth Hub Network Access Points in each of the 31 libraries in the county continues apace.

The next meeting is on 18 June 2018 at The Growth Hub. For questions about the group please contact either Mike Curran mike.curran@gfirstlep.com or Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com