



Gfirst LEP is pleased to welcome Elizabeth Weaver as their new Business Group Manager. Elizabeth's background is in events management and business liaison within the hospitality, food & drink and research industries.

Elizabeth is excited to be a part of the Gfirst LEP team and looks forward to working with the SMEs, voluntary organisations and local authorities that contribute so valuably to the economic development of the county.

"I have lived in Gloucestershire all my life and I love the community feel that exists here. I really look forward to working with companies and colleagues to identify the challenges that face the County, and to bring together the expertise within Gfirst's Business Groups, to bring economic growth and development to Gloucestershire."

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GFirst LEP Business Group Update: September 2018



- The last meeting of the Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Business Group on Monday 3rd September. Rod Horrocks from Gloucestershire Research & Innovation Project (**GRIP**) gave an update as to developments: with over 130 companies under his wing, Rod provides eligible SMEs with access to a package of services designed to enable them to accelerate their innovation plans.
- It was identified that there is a skills mis-match between the advanced manufacturing technologies sector and education and training within this area, and it was suggested that Pete Carr from the Employment and Skills Board give the group an update on the work being undertaken in this area.
- In the next meeting it was agreed that the group focus on the following questions:
 - What is required to encourage businesses into Gloucestershire? (Companies want to grow their business so we need space for them to expand to)
 - Companies want to retain skilled personnel, how do they encourage them here?
- Following exciting discussions with Drone Control, part of the Drone Innovation Centre of Excellence (DICE) and the Growth Hub, it was decided to organise a Drone Innovation event in January 2019 at the University of Gloucestershire, to highlight how Drone Technology can have cost and time benefits across all business sectors. The DICE is set to be based at Gloucestershire Airport. For more information and to attend / participate in the event, please contact Elizabeth Weaver, Business Group Manager:
Elizabeth.weaver@gfirstlep.com

The date of the next AEM meeting will be Monday 3rd December at the University of Gloucestershire School of Business & Technology (where Gfirst LEP's new offices are based)
For questions about the group, or if you would like to be considered to become a member, please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Agri Food & Rural Business

- The last meeting of this Business Group was held on 21 September at Hartpury University. Once again it was a lively, informative and productive meeting chaired by Jo Price, Vice Chancellor of the Royal Agricultural University.
- The main focus of the meeting was to discuss the agenda / invitees list for the workshop **'Let's Grow: The Future of Rural Business and Communities in Gloucestershire'**. It was agreed that the hands on workshop would measure two key topics:
 - To measure the value of the 'rural economy'
 - How we increase the promotion, purchase and understanding of locally produced food

The event will take place at the Royal Agricultural University on **Thursday 29th November** from 9.30am – 1.30pm and is free to attend. Register your attendance here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lets-grow-the-future-of-rural-business-and-communities-in-gloucestershire-tickets-50537330516>

- The workshop will also spark interest in the 'value' project which Martin Collison has been asked to undertake. Phase 1 will target areas of value and importance to the rural economy. Phase 2 will be a mapping exercise showing major developments to support the rural economy
- Bob Watters provided a comprehensive update on the LEADER programme.
- Concern was expressed about the impact of Brexit on the Farming Community

The date of the next meeting is on Friday 16th November at the University of Gloucestershire School of Business & Technology (where Gfirst LEP's new offices are based)

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Banking & Finance

- The last meeting of the Banking & Finance Group was held at the Oxstalls Campus, University of Gloucestershire on Tuesday 25th September.
- Alison Whistance from **Thin Cats** gave an interesting talk on their 'alternative to banks' lending. They help SMEs Domiciled within the UK. Alison covers South Wales and the South West and is happy to be contacted at Alison.whistance@thincats.com
- Rod Horrocks from Gloucestershire Research & Innovation Project (**GRIP**) gave an update as to developments: with over 130 companies under his wing, Rod provides eligible SMEs with access to a package of services designed to enable them to accelerate their innovation plans. Access to Research and Knowledge resources, Supply Chain Engagement workshops, Clustering and Networking, Innovation Teams, Product/Service development, Commercialisation and Bid Management. Rod can be contacted via email: rhorrocks@glos.ac.uk
- Andy Kime gave an update on the **Growth Hubs**: Cirencester and Tewkesbury are now fully open. It is hoped to have the hub in the Forest of Dean open by Spring 2019.
- The Banking and Finance Funding sub group are putting the finishing touches to a letter to go to Alex Chalk MP to seek funding for a Seed Fund to be overseen by the main LEP Banking and Finance Group. Alex had been extremely supportive in recent discussions and had agreed to Champion the proposal with the Business Secretary Greg Clark - Phil Mitchell agreed to revisit the SEED-type funding pot on behalf of the group following changes in the funding stream. He will pursue Alex Chalk MP as necessary.
- The group agreed to consider running another Access to Finance workshop for staff in the financial community later this year. This would be similar to the highly successful event held on 15 May which had attracted circa 30 presenters. Ideally it would take place in one of the new Growth Hubs which are starting to be rolled out.
- The meeting was preceded by another **Banking and Finance clinic**, which provided advice to 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 27 November 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. For more information on the Banking & Finance clinics please contact Karen Campbell.

The next Banking and Finance meeting is at the Growth Hub (Oxstalls) on 27th November 2018 at University of Gloucestershire School of Business & Technology (where Gfirst LEP's new offices are based).

For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Business & Professional Services

- It has previously been 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 had been very successful on the Farm 491 Project with the Royal Agricultural University.
- At their meeting on 11 July they critically reviewed the draft Business Case for Hangar development at Gloucestershire Airport with the scheme promoters. Once again the promoters expressed their thanks for the invaluable advice provided.
- The group have been penciled in to provide similar assistance to the Cheltenham Cyber park project when the time was ripe, as well as assisting with other projects in the pipeline.
- Since it's inception, Ruth Dooley has done a sterling job in Chairing the group. Ruth has decided to step down and has handed over the reins to the very capable Matthew Clayton, Partner with Willians Solicitors LLP. We would like to extend a huge 'Thank you' to Ruth for her support over the years, from everyone at Gfirst LEP.
- The Aims and objectives of the group will be reviewed and discussed prior to the next meeting.

*The next Business & Professional Services meeting will take place on Wednesday 28th November at University of Gloucestershire School of Business & Technology (where Gfirst LEP's new offices are based)
For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com*



Business Membership Group

- The group last met on the 18 June. Jim Daniels, the Parking Manager gave a very interesting, thought provoking presentation on parking, particularly the roadside parking for which the County Council is responsible. Parking Management is a very hot topic, with councils looking to reduce pollution and ensure people travel around the country easily and smoothly. Jim covered a wide range of issues including the fact that there is in fact no legal right to park on the road, in front of your own home, etc. The county is keen to allow parking where it is not going to cause congestion. Surveys have shown that by being able to provide parking within 5 minutes of a car's arrival into a town/city, traffic congestion can be reduced by up to 40%.
- Newly appointed LEP Board Member and small business champion Ian Mean has agreed to Chair this group.
- The membership groups provided an update of issues in these areas. The main issues included:
 - Boots corner in Cheltenham – follow the link [HERE](#)
 - John Lewis to open in November
 - Revival of local chambers wishing to become engaged with AGBG
 - 2050 project: Particular excitement about 3rd Severn crossing
 - Chamber online initiative www.chamber.online
 - Need for a "Forest Chamber"

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 17th October University of Gloucestershire School of Business & Technology (where Gfirst LEP's new offices are based).

For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Construction & Infrastructure

- The group met on Wednesday 5th September. There is now a final agreed action plan on “*Breaking Down Barriers to Development*” paper. The five agreed action headings being taken forward by the joint sub group are:
 - Early wins
 - Pre applications
 - Planning Performance Agreements (PPA)
 - Community Led Planning
 - Legal agreements.
- Paul Fong provided a draft PPA which is being considered by the Local Planning Authority – the group welcome all feedback on this.
- Work on the Tewkesbury Area Concept Masterplan and associated transport issues are well underway with Tewkesbury BC. It is hoped that they will be able to make a presentation to the C&I group in the near future.
- A presentation was given by the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) team from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. The focus was primarily on the ‘Building with Nature’ Charter. This was received enthusiastically by the group who were invited to participate and attend the **Green Infrastructure workshop on 26th October** 9.30 – 16.00 at Francis Close Hall, University of Gloucestershire (Cheltenham). To register your attendance and for more information click here: <https://gloucestershiregreeninfrastructure.brownpapertickets.com/>
- Paul Fong invited all those present and LPA representation to a ‘Planning Matters’ Forum on 28th September. The main aim was to discuss the implications of the NPPF on both businesses and Local Authorities.
- Jeremy Williamson from Cheltenham Development Task Force gave an update on the progress of Junction 10 and the Housing Infrastructure bid (HIF) to fund this. Jeremy will seek help and support from the Group as required.

The next meeting of the C&I group is on Wednesday 7th November University of Gloucestershire School of Business & Technology (where Gfirst LEP’s new offices are based).

For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



The group last met on the 25 June

- There is a lot of discussion and negotiation about this project which is not currently in the public domain. There is however, a huge amount of positive activity taking place. As soon as we are able to provide details of this, we will do so and call a meeting to update all members.

The date of the next meeting is to be agreed. For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Energy

- The last meeting was held at Berkeley Green on Tuesday 17 July. Interesting presentations were made by:
 - Prof Jeremy Miller on Home Energy Resources Unit: www.myheru.com.
 - Peter Dirken on Innovate UK funding opportunities: www.innovate-uk
 - Ian Griffiths on BPE Solicitors: www.bpe.co.uk
- The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) is leading a small subgroup in writing an Energy Strategy for the county. The new strategy will set out how Gloucestershire can contribute fully to the national shift to a very low carbon, affordable and resilient energy system while maximising the benefits for local businesses and citizens. The sub group met at Spirax Sarco on Thursday 13th September to discuss the detail for the Stakeholder workshop.
- This Energy Strategy Stakeholder workshop took place on **Tuesday 9 October at SGS Berkeley Green**. The workshop will give stakeholders from across the county a unique opportunity to shape the development of the energy strategy. It will offer a chance to contribute your knowledge of what's already happening in the county and explore the challenges which need to be overcome for the county to succeed in securing an economically-rewarding sustainable energy future. All are urged to participate.
- A South West Local Energy Hub is being created, headed up by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to cover the following LEPS:
 - Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly LEP and Cornwall Council
 - Heart of the South West and Somerset County Council
 - Dorset LEP and Dorset County Council
 - Solent LEP and Portsmouth City Council
 - Swindon and Wiltshire LEP and Wiltshire Council
 - GFirst LEP and Gloucestershire County Council
 - West of England LEP and West of England Combined Authority
- The Hub is being hosted by, and staff will be located in Bristol, at West of England LEP and West of England Combined Authority (WECA). The Chair of the SW Hub is Helen Edelstyn from WECA. Funding for the Hub is being provided by BEIS for the first couple of years. They have recently appointed Jon Rattenbury as Programme Manager who is organizing one to ones with all of the LEPS and Councils.
- The aims and objectives of the GFirst LEP Energy Group were revisited, agreed and will be updated on the GFirst website. Berkeley GREEN will host the prestigious Sustainable Energy & Environmental Protection (SEEP) global conference in September 2019. Further details will be announced in due course.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 6th November at WPD, Gloucester.

For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Retail, Tourism & The High Street

- At their last meeting on 11 July, Jason Smith gave the group an update on the UK Digital Retail Innovation Centre (UKDRIC). The fit-out is due for completion prior to Christmas. BT is particularly supportive and is considering bringing pieces of equipment to the site to be installed on a permanent basis.
- Jason mentioned that the team at Marketing Gloucester had picked up a national Association of Town & City Management (ATCM) award for **Best Digital High Street Project** for the ecosystem of projects happening in the city, including the GL Card, Touchpoints, #WDYT, apps and so-on. The Judges were impressed by the collaboration that is happening. The plan is to roll out digital model, footfall centres/digital booths/etc. It will test in Gloucester first then push out to the rest of the County.
- The remodelling of Boots corner is still causing controversy and still being ignored by some motorists. Remodelling works should be finished in time for the opening of the John Lewis store in November. Office space (350 staff) will open within the Brewery, shortly. An Urban Outfitters store will also be opening. The feeling was that office space within a retail area works really well.

The date of the next meeting is on Wednesday 10th October at the new Growth Hub in Tewkesbury Borough Council Offices. For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Visitor Economy and Tourism

- The group last met on 4 July. A successful bid has been made by Cotswold and West Oxfordshire to the Discover England Fund. They have been allocated £250k which was worth £308k with match funding. It was agreed to make a county based bid to the Arts Council Cultural Development Fund. GFirst LEP had recently made a bid for £1m to provide dedicated resources to support inward investment in the county. A response was expected shortly.
- The highlights of a brief update around the districts highlighted the positive impact that the royal wedding had provided, particularly in the Cotswolds. The Forest of Dean were working on a campaign to maximise the impact of when the Severn Bridge tolls were removed completely. Cheltenham were working on a “Branding” Cheltenham exercise to improve visual identity. Gloucester reported huge success with both their zip wire event and the 1100 anniversary of the death of Aethelflaed. The latter alone had attracted in excess of 10k visitors.
- It was agreed to explore the need for a Regional Business Plan [RBP] at a future meeting having regard to existing district strategies, visions, the SEP and the requirements of the Local Industrial Strategy [LIS] which have yet to be determined. The RBP would look at shared priorities and aspirations such as the need and location for additional hotels/bedrooms. In this connection it was agreed to invite Andrew Stokes, Director of Visit England, and Sally Balcombe, CEO of Visit Britain to provide assistance on the input into an RBP.

The date of next meeting is on Monday 12th November at University of Gloucestershire School of Business & Technology (where Gfirst LEP's new offices are based)

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