



## **GFIRST LEP Business Groups Update: July 2019**

The **Chairs of all the Business Groups** met at the University of Gloucestershire on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

David Owen outlined the importance of working collaboratively with the Business Groups in the development and delivery of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). GFirst LEP has 75% private sector representation on its Board, which provides a great foundation because the LIS is to be business-lead, whilst also getting the local Government areas engaged in the Strategy. The call for evidence for data to support the Local Industrial Strategy went out on 21<sup>st</sup> March and is open until 31<sup>st</sup> May.

Other updates from GFirst included:

- ERDF funding for an Inward Investment Team who will work to identify non EU SMEs looking to locate into the county, as well as county-based companies who are looking to expand overseas.
- The expansion of the Education team to include Enterprise Co-ordinators and a SEND co-ordinator
- The recruitment of a Senior Research Manager Jute Blackmon to support the Local Industrial Strategy data collation.
- The development of the county's sustainable energy strategy
- Update on the growth hub network
- Future High Streets funding

GFirst will encourage discussions and presentations from other sector groups, to encourage 'cross-pollination' of topics and avoid any silos. The majority of the meeting was used to discuss the Local Industrial Strategy, so more detailed discussions from the Chairs in relation to their group summaries will be prioritized for the next meeting.

*The date of the next Business Group Chairs Meeting will be **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019** at the Gloucester Growth Hub.*



## Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing

- The Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Business Group met on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019. The group thanked Helen Harrison for hosting the meeting at Stay Hydraulics, Tewkesbury and for the showround after the meeting.
- Elizabeth Weaver gave an update from GFirst LEP: Growth Hubs are proving popular with a good volume of visitors to all tiers of Growth Hub including the libraries. Forest of Dean Growth Hub is due for opening in October 2019 with Cheltenham on course for opening in 2020. Stroud Growth Hub has just been approved for development. All three new Growth Hubs will be Tier 2 in size. The GFirst Annual Review will take place at the Gloucester Growth Hub on Thursday 19th September and all are invited to attend. The focus will be on the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) with the Cyber theme playing a major part. The Call for Evidence for the LIS closed at the end of May and we have over 270 documents on file, which we are reviewing to extract the key data and messages. Our Evidence Baseline is in the final stage of review, bringing together key economic data for the county under the 5 foundations of productivity. A very helpful and positive meeting of our LIS Challenge Panel took place on June 19th and we are building their feedback into the LIS development.
- Chris Lau, Head of Inward Investment explained the role of Gfirst's new Inward Investment Team. Core sectors that are identified as areas of strength for the team are: Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing/Cyber/Agri-Tech and Renewable Energy. A minor grant scheme could be of benefit to non-EU start-ups with help in relocating to Gloucestershire. The team are currently recruiting and would benefit from someone with advanced engineering and manufacturing experience. Chris asked the group for permission to use high resolution images for the Inward Investment website, including the timelapse video of the new Dowty factory in Brockworth.
- All business group members gave an update on their business. Brexit is having an impact on longer term plans but not so much on shorter term developments. Catapult Centre set up by Innovate UK was discussed as an option to connect businesses with research and academic communities. Some of the group had worked with them in the past and had implemented positive changes resulting in higher productivity levels.
- Free resources for manufacturing skills was issued to the group from Engineering UK. They are keen on building a talent pipeline as currently the AEM industry is 59000 people short of the skills each year. Children of pre school age are being identified to develop their core skills.

*The date of the next AEM meeting will be Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October at GE Aviation, Bishop's Cleeve.*

*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](mailto:karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com)*



## Agri Food & Rural Business

- The Agri Food & Rural group met at the Royal Agricultural University on 15<sup>th</sup> July. Elizabeth Weaver gave an update on the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). Consultation will take place between 19<sup>th</sup> September and the end of November. Each business group will be tasked with answering some key questions and these will form the basis of the next round of Business Group meetings. The first draft for consultation is in progress and will be reviewed by the task & finish and evidence base groups.
- Three task and finish groups will drive forward the key areas identified in order to develop the Food Strategy. Tamsyn gave an update on the development of the Food Strategy and the work that these three task groups have undertaken: 1) People & Planet 2) Excellence 3) End to End. These are being managed by Gill Reindl, Claire Thayers, Jackie Jobses, Jeremy Davies and Tamsyn Harrod.
- Tamsyn will be holding a sub group meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> July to paint a vision of agri-food/agri-tech in the next 20-30 years. Happerley – a smart, transparent sustainable food traceability system which originates in Tewkesbury will be launching on 19<sup>th</sup> July and this will play a role in the future of food delivery.
- Productivity, profit and animal welfare, ecology and accessibility are items that are key on DEFRA's agenda according to Helen Browning (Head of Soil Association).
- Bob Watters provided an RDPE update to the group. All LEADER funding will be committed by the end of 2019 – far sooner than other RDPE programmes. By 2021-2023 we will have more future funding available, however nothing will be available for smaller businesses before then. Responses to the countryside funding opportunities have been strong.

*The date of the next meeting is on **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September** at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester.*

*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](mailto:karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com)*



## Banking & Finance

- The group met at the Gloucester Growth Hub on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May where they agreed on the appointment of Mark Wilton, Relationship Director, HSBC as the new Chair, as Chris Mears stands down but will remain an active member of the group. Chris Mears was thanked for his leadership and support over the last 5 years.
- Stuart Gibson Managing Director of Acorn Business Finance gave the group an overview on their alternative route to funding, working closely with a variety of businesses to offer a flexible approach to funding.
- Andy Kime, Business Guide for the Growth Hub Network gave an update on the Growth Hubs: focus is on high growth companies and group members are encouraged to promote the opportunities the Growth Hub can offer businesses of all shapes and sizes. Cheltenham is due to open in Spring 2020, with Stroud on track for Jan 2020. Forest of Dean Growth Hub is scheduled to open it's doors in July 2019.
- The Access2Finance event on 2<sup>nd</sup> April was so well received (with over 60 attendees), that the group have

scheduled another event for 1<sup>st</sup> October at the Cirencester Growth Hub. Speakers are confirmed from Loans, Grants and Equity. It's now seen as a high-value networking event with the 2 minute slots working very well, with a senior Director from HSBC saying that it was the best networking event they had ever been to.

- Director of Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) Katie Jenkins gave an update on our LIS. Call for Evidence closes on 31<sup>st</sup> May with GFirst Board making the final decisions on LIS priorities to steer evidence base development. A Challenge panel is in place, as well as a task and finish and an evidence base review group. Youth engagement survey has been sent out with the anticipation of 2000 and 5000 responses from 14-25 year olds. Further engagement throughout the summer with a planned first draft going to Government in October 2019.

*The next Banking & Finance meeting is at the Gloucester Growth Hub on **Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2019** and will be preceded by a Banking & Finance clinic. There will be an additional standalone banking & finance clinic in early July in Cirencester Growth Hub.*

*For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell [karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com](mailto:karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com)*



- The group met at the Oxstalls Growth Hub on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June. Elizabeth Weaver gave an update from GFirst LEP: Growth Hubs are proving popular with a good volume of visitors to all tiers of Growth Hub including the libraries. Forest of Dean Growth Hub is due for opening in October 2019 with Cheltenham on course for opening in 2020. Stroud Growth Hub has just been approved for development. All three new Growth Hubs will be Tier 2 in size. GFirst Annual Review will take place at the Gloucester Growth Hub on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September and all are invited to attend. The focus will be on the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) with the Cyber theme playing a major part. The Call for Evidence for the LIS closed at the end of May and we have over 270 documents on file, which we are reviewing to extract the key data and messages. Our Evidence Baseline is in the final stage of review, bringing together key economic data for the county under the 5 foundations of productivity. A very helpful and positive meeting of our LIS Challenge Panel took place on June 19<sup>th</sup> and we are building their feedback into the LIS development.
- The group completed the skills matrix for current members – to identify any ‘skills gaps’ that it was felt should be represented on this group. This will be approved by the Chair and sent round to the group members who are welcome to suggest new members who possess the right skills. This group will then be well equipped to act as a ‘critical friend’ to the first draft of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS).
- Any further business representatives that are interested in becoming members of the group are asked to contact Karen Campbell – details below

*The next Business & Professional Services meeting will take place on **Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019** at Gloucester Growth Hub.*

*For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell [karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com](mailto:karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com)*



## Business Membership Group

- The Business Membership Group met at the Tewkesbury Growth Hub on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May. Steve Dechan was introduced and invited to be a member of this group (Chair – Stroud Business Voice). Terry Lockwood introduced his replacement Russell Warner to the group who will be attending when Terry has other commitments now he has a more regional role.
- Director of Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) Katie Jenkins gave an update on our Local Industrial Strategy. Call for Evidence closes on 31<sup>st</sup> May with GFirst Board making the final decisions on LIS priorities to steer evidence base development. A Challenge panel is in place, as well as a task and finish and evidence base review groups. Youth engagement survey has been sent out with the anticipation of between 2000 and 5000 responses from 14-25 year olds. Further engagement throughout the Summer with a planned first draft going to Government in October 2019.
- A newly-formed group called the Gloucestershire Rural Organisation as members are keen to ensure that the 'rural voice' is listened to. They are also keen not to duplicate the work that the Agri food & Rural business group are doing.
- Dev Chakraborty, DCEO GFirst LEP gave an update on the Growth Hub Network, with the Forest of Dean due to open in July 2019 and Stroud in early 2020 with the venue to be confirmed shortly. Cheltenham is due to open it's doors in Quarter 1 of 2020. The feedback from a recent BEIS visit gained a very positive response – they were impressed with the standard and support offered across the Growth Hub Network.
- Adam Starkey reviewed the Climate Change summit which took place on 21<sup>st</sup> May at the Gloucester Growth Hub. This was a joint event with GFirst LEP and Gloucestershire County Council, to promote the County's Energy Strategy. With over 100 attendees, and support from private sector businesses as well as all 6 Districts, it was a very positive, lively day with plenty of actions for private sector as well as Government to take forward. GCC will be issuing a Press Release and plan of action shortly.
- The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) are working on a 'fair pay for fair play' campaign with a piece of work being completed on independent shops.
- The Cheltenham Chamber has over 250 members and are keen to promote the business interests of Cheltenham. The Business Show which took place on 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> May held in the town hall was well attended.

*The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September** at the Growth Hub, Cirencester.  
For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell [karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com](mailto:karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com)*



## Cyber Security Business Group

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- The Cyber Security Business group met on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July at the UK DRIC, Eastgate shopping Centre, Gloucester. Katie Jenkins explained to the group the importance of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and the importance that Cyber Security and this group will play in it's development as Cyber Security forms the 'mountain' in the LIS.
- The group were sent 5 questions for consideration prior to the meeting. Summarised discussion points for each question as follows:

1. *What type of environment do we need to create in order to attract cyber and digital businesses to the cyber park?*

Open, campus like spaces. Mixture of experts: students, public, private sector companies. Commercially competitive, have a positive knock-on effect on Cheltenham and Gloucester.

2. *What support does the cyber business community need in order to grow and thrive in Gloucestershire? (What do you want to see in the Local Industrial Strategy to support this?)*

Support in a trusted environment for learning, mentoring, space for start-ups to grow. Access to funding, talent, innovative office space, customers. Good connectivity locally and throughout UK. Support from education establishments (primary through to FE).

3. *What needs to be done to help businesses improve their cyber security?*

A supportive infrastructure, policies and procedures and personnel training. Specialist growth hub guides? A 'benchmark' approval stamp or Quality Assurance mark? A softer more tangible approach to the understanding of the importance of cyber security and protection for businesses.

4. *What does the cyber security industry look like in 2030? What does this mean for Gloucestershire?*

The threat landscape is ever-changing and the cyber security industry needs to have the knowledge to anticipate the changes before they happen. Gloucestershire will be recognized as a clear brand within the sector. Cyber security companies on the Cyber Central location will be accessible and open to the public.

5. *How can the skills system in Gloucestershire support and create the cyber workforce of the future?*

Businesses and education teams designing the courses together, having an influence on the learning environment, live project delivery, allowing students to offer advice to businesses under mentor guidance. Experts from the cyber education establishments in the county to work collaboratively to complement offerings. Ensure teachers are fully trained. R&D.

- Neil Hopwood gave an update on the developments of the Cyber Business Park. Avison Young will be producing the planning document as concept designs have now been commissioned. Project will go before GFirst LEP Board in October for the first two phases of the transport plan.
- £2 million of investment for cyber training facilities at Gloucestershire College through Institute of Technology Programme will build on the existing partnership with the University of West of England (UWE) Bristol and the College to deliver cyber degrees.

*The next meeting of the Cyber Security Business Group is on **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October** at the Gloucester Growth Hub*

*For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell [karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com](mailto:karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com)*



## Construction & Infrastructure

- The group met on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July at the Growth Hub, Gloucester. Colin Chick, Strategic Advisor for Communities & Infrastructure at Gloucestershire County Council gave a presentation on the Local Transport Plan. There is a recruitment drive planned, to increase officer capacity in respect of Highways Development.
- Katie Jenkins gave an update on the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). Consultation will take place between 19<sup>th</sup> September and the end of November. Each business group will be tasked with answering some key questions and these will form the basis of the next round of Business Group meetings. The first rough draft has now been completed and will be reviewed by the task & finish and evidence base groups.
- Jonathan Dibble Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Programme Manager gave an update as to the Strategy. Draft JCS plan 2020 looks at options for allocations. The consultation phase is complete and feedback can be found on their website: <https://www.jointcorestrategy.org/joint-core-strategy-review/>
- Chris Haslam from the Chamwell Centre gave an overview of the work that is going on to give opportunities for disabled children in Gloucestershire. They have two open days: 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> September 4-6pm all welcome. Further information about their work can be found on their website: <https://chamwellcentre.org.uk/>
- The next 'Barriers to Development' meeting will take place on 1<sup>st</sup> August at Tewkesbury Growth Hub. This is a sub group developed to break down the barriers, to expedite the planning process.

*The next meeting of the C&I group is on **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October** at the Gloucester Growth Hub  
For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell [karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com](mailto:karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com)*



## Energy

- The Energy Business group met on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> July at Spirax Sarco, Cheltenham. Peter Allan from Surple gave a presentation on the responsibility of sustainability within organisations. The software that Surple uses helps empower anyone in industry to identify and engage with energy-saving opportunities.
- Rachel Brain (Programme Manager for Gloucestershire and Bristol) gave an update on the South West Local Energy Hub. The hub is currently looking to recruit a funding Manager. Once they are in place, the hub will be able to support and identify funding streams for energy projects. £1.65 million Rural Community Energy Fund for community led energy projects in the South West Region is available via the South West Energy Hub. This has been promoted through various channels at GFirst LEP.
- Elizabeth Weaver, Business Group Manager GFirst LEP gave an update on the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) Consultation which will take place between 19<sup>th</sup> September and the end of November. Each business group will be tasked with answering some key questions and these will form the basis of the next round of Business Group meetings. The first draft for consultation is in progress and will be reviewed by the task & finish and evidence base groups. Further engagement throughout the summer with a planned first draft going to Government in October 2019.
- Mike Craggs gave an update on the application of modular housing into Winchcombe (with battery storage). Tewkesbury is hoping to put forward a planning application soon for off-site construction of modular houses.

- The Heat Decarbonisation sub group met following the meeting. They will put together a vision statement.

*The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October** at Western Power Distribution, Gloucester.  
For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell [karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com](mailto:karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com)*



- The Retail & High Street business group met on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June at the UK Digital Retail & Innovation Centre, (UKDRIC), Eastgate Shopping Centre, Gloucester.
- The call for Evidence for the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) closed at the end of May and we have over 270 documents on file, which we are reviewing to extract the key data and messages. Our Evidence Baseline is in the final stage of review, bringing together key economic data for the county under the 5 foundations of productivity. A very helpful and positive meeting of our LIS Challenge Panel took place on June 19<sup>th</sup> and we are building their feedback into the LIS development.
- The floor was opened to each area representative including guests from the Market Towns Forum for an update on developments:
  - Chipping Campden:** there is an increase in the number of American visitors and a reduction in European visitors. Large coach trippers arrive and spend a very short amount of time in the town and spend very little. They are working to encourage longer stay visitors.
  - Winchcombe:** are looking to engage better with Sudeley Castle visitors and capitalize on this opportunity to get them to visit more of the town.
  - Cheltenham:** £1.8m further funding has been approved for the pavement areas in Brewery Quarter. Night time economy continues to grow. General Manager of John Lewis Cheltenham store Martin Bundy gave an update on the new Cheltenham store: Whole store is doing very well. They are undertaking some work on consumer behavior. Waitrose 'loose food' offering trial in Oxford is working well, and may be rolled out on a wider scale.
  - Gloucester:** A turbulent start to the year. Retailers need to adapt quickly to the changing customer demands. Owen Ackland has recently been appointed centre manager for the Quays. Tall Ships event was a great boost to the area and there are several events in the pipeline which should further boost footfall.
  - Tewkesbury:** The Growth Hub continues to help many independent retailers, as well as a microbrewery just opened. There is a good level of interest from clients looking to open up businesses in town.
  - Stroud:** Progression with Phase 2 of Five Valleys is going well, with lots of interest from exciting brands. The developments of this phase are flexible as Dransfield are working with the community to meet their expectations and to have the right level of retail, office and residential space.
  - Forest of Dean:** Shop Vacancies are in line with the national average. Coleford may put in a bid for the Heritage Zone Action funding.
- Other updates included those for the **UKDRIC:** Diane Savory and Margot James MP officially opened the UK DRIC on 30<sup>th</sup> May and phase 2 is now being planned and UKDRIC are looking at sources of funding to support this. This is a unique opportunity for Gloucestershire and next generation technology development. There has also been real interest in the use of the meeting spaces.
- Forest of Dean Growth hub is due to open in October 2019 with Cheltenham on course for opening in 2020. Stroud Growth Hub has just been approved for development. All three new Growth Hubs will be Tier 2 in size. Hub8 in the Brewery, Cheltenham is a brand new, purpose-built, work and cyber security space for small companies and will also offer a flexible working space.

*The date of the next meeting is on **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September (venue TBC)**. This will be a joint meeting with the tourism and visitor economy group.*

*For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell [karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com](mailto:karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com)*



## Visitor Economy and Tourism

- The group met on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March at the Gloucester Growth Hub. Elizabeth Chaired the meeting in Dev's absence. If anyone is interested in Chairing this group, all expressions of interest are to be emailed to [Dev.Chakraborty@gfirstlep.com](mailto:Dev.Chakraborty@gfirstlep.com)
- Round table updates included: **Marketing Gloucester**: US Ancestry increasing interest, work on Tall Ships Festival, accommodation in the City Centre. **Cotswold Edge & Severn Vale Tourism Network**: attempting to join up smaller Market Town areas with integrated Tourism offering. **Stroud District Council**: looking at joining up websites to local areas and to add value to overnight visitors. **Cotswolds Tourism**: feedback from 'uncover the Cotswolds' project funded by Visit England's Discover England Fund. More details are available on the [www.Cotswolds.com](http://www.Cotswolds.com) website.
- Guest speakers Hannah McDonnell from Creative Sustainability gave an update: working with Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway (GWR) to add value to each station stop. They are also developing a tourism strategy for the Stroud canal restoration project. Wendy Walton from Sudeley Castle and Gardens also gave an update: realisation that the Castle was working in solo to the rest of the town. They are now connecting up and adding events that encompass the town into their portfolio.
- Elizabeth gave an update on GFirst developments: Future high Streets fund, the Inward Investment team, the development of the energy strategy and the Call for evidence for the Local Industrial Strategy which closes on 31<sup>st</sup> May.

*The date of next meeting is **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September** – a joint meeting with the Retail & High Street group.*

*For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell [karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com](mailto:karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com)*