



GFirst LEP Business Groups Update: September 2019

The following Business groups met in September 2019:

- Banking & Finance**
- Retail & Visitor economy (joint meeting)**
- Business Membership**
- Agri, Food & Rural**

The **Chairs of all the Business Groups** met at the University of Gloucestershire on Monday 25th 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 21st March and is open until 31st 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 14th October 2019** at the Gloucester Growth Hub.*



Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing

- The Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Business Group met on Monday 3rd 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 time-lapse 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 7th 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



Agri Food & Rural Business

- The Agri Food & Rural group met at the Royal Agricultural University on Monday 20th September 2019. Tamsyn Harrod and the sub-group team gave an update on the Gloucestershire Food Strategy. The Agri-tech strand in the draft Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) has helped to shape the direction of the Food Strategy. The Strategy will look at a 'whole system' food chain approach with the aim of creating value and reducing costs whilst identifying productivity gains. It is intended that a relevant proportion of the food strategy will be included into the draft LIS. Additional funding and non-monetary support options were discussed in support of the delivery of the Food Strategy.
- Elizabeth Weaver from GFirst LEP gave an update on the Growth Hubs: Forest of Dean is due to open in spring 2020. Stroud have decided to complete the work in stages. They plan to open officially in February 2020. Cheltenham is planned to open in spring 2020. [Hub8](#) an incubation space for cyber-tech startups has now opened in the Brewery Quarter, providing Cheltenham with a co-working space. Tewkesbury, Cirencester and Gloucester are going from strength to strength, with Gloucester considering reaching out to businesses with a view to sponsorship, enabling start-ups to use the office space for free.
- The group were informed about the Brexit Readiness Grant – a £10 million fund for Businesses to help them prepare for the impacts associated with a No Deal Brexit. The funding call closed on 30th September.
- The group discussed the Agri-tech piece of the draft Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) with a round table discussion forming most of the meeting. The draft LIS is open for consultation from 19th September, so due to the timeframe of the draft LIS being launched, and the date of the meeting, the group agreed to read the draft LIS as a complete document, and will feedback before the consultation closes at the end of October. Feedback can be sent to LIS@gfirstlep.com

*The date of the next meeting is on **Thursday 21st November** at Hartpury University.*

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



Banking & Finance

- The group met at the Gloucester Growth Hub on Tuesday 10th September 2019, this was preceded by a banking and finance clinic. There was also a 'standalone' clinic run at the Cirencester Growth Hub in July, to accommodate start-ups in the area. It was considered to bring in a cyber/digital expert to offer advice in these clinics as an increasing number of start-ups are emerging who have a digital focus to their business.
- Andy Kime, Business Guide for the Growth Hub Network gave an update on the Growth Hubs: Forest of Dean is due to open in spring 2020. Stroud have decided to complete the work in stages. They plan to open officially in February 2020. Cheltenham is planned to open in spring 2020. [Hub8](#) an incubation space for cyber-tech startups has now opened in the Brewery Quarter, providing Cheltenham with a co-working space. Tewkesbury, Cirencester and Gloucester are going from strength to strength, with Gloucester considering reaching out to businesses with a view to sponsorship, enabling start-ups to use the office

space for free.

- The group were informed about the Brexit Readiness Grant – a £10 million fund for Businesses to help them prepare for the impacts associated with a No Deal Brexit. The funding call closed on 30th September.
- Dr Polly Pick, Director of Business Engagement for the University of Gloucestershire updated the group on the various relevant degrees being offered, as well as incentives for businesses to host an apprentice which can be supported partially by Levy funding. Apprenticeships are a flexible way for people already in work to upskill in management, finance, offering study solutions alongside their day job.
- Access2Finance offers alternative funding solutions to businesses and individuals who have been refused a loan elsewhere. The events offer a short, sharp ‘get-to-know what else is available’ networking event, so lenders of all shapes and sizes can refer clients to the most appropriate form of funding. It’s now seen as a high-value networking event with the 2-minute slots working very well, so the next event will be held in the Cirencester Growth Hub on Tuesday 1st October, 2019.
- The draft Local Industrial Strategy had not been launched at the time of the meeting, so the group will review and comment on the draft LIS at the next meeting, commenting via the LIS@gfirstlep.com email in the interim.

*The next Banking & Finance meeting is at the Gloucester Growth Hub on **Tuesday 19th November 2019** and will be preceded by a Banking & Finance clinic.*

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



- The group met at the Oxstalls Growth Hub on Wednesday 26th 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 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.
- 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 2nd October 2019** at Gloucester Growth Hub.*

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



Business Membership Group

- The Business Membership Group met at the Cirencester Growth Hub on Wednesday 18th September, 2019. Yesim Nicholson gave an update on the Cirencester Growth Hub which has over 30 businesses as paying members. They are averaging 3 workshops a week open to members and non-members.
- An update was given on the timeline of the other Growth Hubs: Forest of Dean is due to open in spring 2020. Stroud have decided to complete the work in stages. They plan to open officially in February 2020. Cheltenham is planned to open in spring 2020. [Hub8](#) an incubation space for cyber-tech startups has now opened in the Brewery Quarter, providing Cheltenham with a co-working space. Tewkesbury, Cirencester and Gloucester are going from strength to strength, with Gloucester considering reaching out to businesses with a view to sponsorship, enabling start-ups to use the office space for free.
- The draft LIS is open for consultation from 19th September, so due to the timeframe of the draft LIS being launched, and the date of the meeting, the group agreed to read the draft LIS as a complete document, and will feedback before the consultation closes at the end of October. Feedback can be sent to LIS@gfirstlep.com
- Business Member groups gave updates:
 - Cheltenham Chamber are supporting Alex Chalk MP in the campaign to protect Cheltenham Hospital from being downgraded. A conversation needs to take place as to how Cheltenham Chamber and the Cheltenham Growth Hub will co-ordinate events to ensure there is joined-up thinking and reduced repetition, as well as quality rather than quantity.
 - Wotton-under-Edge, Charfield to Kingswood green walking / cycling route has been approved. The town are finding it difficult to secure contractors for e-charge points for the car park as it's a small project (8 points for an 80 space car park) and installers are facing a backlog as larger projects take priority.
 - Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) looking at Business Rate review as second premises get no relief at all, no matter how small. This can restrict growth of businesses. Growing Gloucestershire conference to take place in the Pump Rooms, Cheltenham on 15th October, 2019.
 - Stroud Business Voice are looking for new Directors and are considering creating a Stroud Chamber. Their Enterprise Plan is looking at organic growth 'hub' for small businesses. Stroud DC are looking at developing the Tourism offering from a business perspective.
 - Country Landowner's Association (CLA) have a new Regional Director for the South West: Ann Maidment who is hosting 'younger generation' evenings.
- The group were informed about the Brexit Readiness Grant – a £10 million fund for Businesses to help them prepare for the impacts associated with a No Deal Brexit. The funding call closes on 30th September.

*The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 27th November** at the Growth Hub, Gloucester.
For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com*



Cyber Security Business Group

- The Cyber Security Business group met on Wednesday 24th 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 its 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 21st October** at the Gloucester Growth Hub*

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



Construction & Infrastructure

- The group met on Wednesday 10th 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 19th 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: 2nd or 3rd 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 1st 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 16th October** at the Gloucester Growth Hub
For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com*



Energy

- The Energy Business group met on Monday 16th 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 19th 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 15th October** at Western Power Distribution, Gloucester.
For questions about the group please contact Karen Campbell karen.campbell@gfirstlep.com



Retail, Tourism & The High Street

- The Retail & High Street business group met on Thursday 12th September, 2019 at the UK Digital Retail & Innovation Centre, (UKDRIC), Eastgate Shopping Centre, Gloucester.
- The group were reminded to register their attendance for the Annual Review on 19th September. This will mark the launch of the draft Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and its consultation period. The group will have the option once they have read the draft LIS to discuss in more details at the following meeting which is scheduled for Thursday 14th November.
- An update was given on the timeline of the Growth Hubs: Forest of Dean is due to open in spring 2020. Stroud have decided to complete the work in stages. They plan to open officially in February 2020. Cheltenham is planned to open in spring 2020. [Hub8](#) an incubation space for cyber-tech startups has now opened in the Brewery Quarter, providing Cheltenham with a co-working space. Tewkesbury, Cirencester and Gloucester are going from strength to strength, with Gloucester considering reaching out to businesses with a view to sponsorship, enabling start-ups to use the office space for free.
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- Dr Polly Pick, Director of Business Engagement for the University of Gloucestershire updated the group on the various relevant degrees being offered, as well as incentives for businesses to host an apprentice which can be supported partially by Levy funding. Apprenticeships are a flexible way for people already in work to upskill in management, finance, offering study solutions alongside their day job.
- The floor was opened to each area representative including guests from the Market Towns Forum for an update on developments:

Gloucester: Sales going well in the Gloucester Quays, however footfall levels in the city as a whole are 4% down on last year. Various events are being mooted to bring more people into the city as this has a direct impact on sales; Henson's Trail and a 'What's on' city-wide year planner is being produced.

Lots of filming taking place in **Cotswolds** area with 'gardens' as the latest project. The Cotswold's are preparing for a large media visit in collaboration with Visit Britain later in the year.

Stroud Tourism forum are completing a feasibility study as to what locals want to see on the website, with funding having been approved through the Community Infrastructure bid for an Information Room.

Heritage Action Zone Funding – Gloucester (Westgate and the Fleece Inn) and Tewkesbury have both bid for this funding. We will hear more before the end of the year if they have been successful.

- Talks from Will Foster and Matthew Lee from the Cotswolds Canals Trust, Stroud: updates on the latest developments in particular for the 'missing mile' of canal work, with 33,000 boats now registered with the Cotswold Canals Trust; Peter Allan from Surple gave an interesting talk on how businesses can make changes to become carbon neutral and reduce their energy costs – Surple have the software to enable companies to make these changes with minimum disruption.

The date of the next meeting is on **Wednesday 14th November 2019 at the Gloucester Growth Hub**. 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



Visitor Economy and Tourism

- The group met on Thursday 28th 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
- 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 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 31st May.

*The date of next meeting is **Wednesday 14th November** – a joint meeting with the Retail & High Street group.*

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