

## Summary of Draft Local Industrial Strategy Consultation Feedback

### Introduction

Following extensive engagement with Gloucestershire businesses and our partners in the public sector, and supported by both an evidence base of nearly 300 submissions and the findings of our recent Youth Survey of over 5,000 young people in the county, the draft Local Industrial Strategy for Gloucestershire was launched at our Annual Review event on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

The strategy identifies Gloucestershire's strengths, opportunities and challenges and aligns with the Government's national Industrial Strategy, which focuses on:

#### **Five foundations of productivity**

- *Ideas*
- *People*
- *Infrastructure*
- *Business environment*
- *Places*

#### **Four grand challenges:**

- *Artificial Intelligence and data*
- *Ageing society*
- *Clean growth*
- *Future of mobility*

At our Annual Review we announced a period of consultation in order to seek feedback from stakeholders.

This paper provides:

1. a summary of the responses received;
2. an overview of feedback by organisation type;
3. the common themes;
4. any significantly conflicting views;
5. recommended revisions to LIS;
6. next steps.

Appendix 1 provides summarised feedback by organisation.

## 1. A summary of the responses received

At our Annual Review back in September 2019 we opened up the conversation about the LIS more widely to help us develop our ideas further and asked key stakeholders to engage with us and get involved by telling us what they thought of our first draft.

In response we have received feedback from a significant number of diverse and wide ranging organisations from across the county:

- some have provided very detailed feedback, in particular our local authority colleagues, whilst others have made brief and specific points by email, phone call, or in a meeting.
- some have provided direct responses to the questions we asked in the consultation process whilst others have provided more unstructured responses.
- some have participated in group discussions with feedback sent to us by the group lead.
- some local business membership organisations have responded on behalf of their members, for example Business West and local entrepreneur networks.
- all of our Business Sector Groups have held meetings specifically to discuss the draft LIS, and the key points recorded.

### Respondents by Category

<b>Public Sector, Academic &amp; Voluntary Organisations</b>	<b>Number</b>
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BEIS/MHCLG Cities and Local Growth Unit (CLGU)	1
Local authorities - county, city, borough, district, or town councils	13
Other public sector organisations and key stakeholders	27
Academic establishments	7
Voluntary, community and not-for-profit organisations	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>

<b>Gloucestershire Business Community</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>(Participating businesses)</b>
Local businesses	18	
LEP Business Sector Groups	10	(139)
Business Membership Organisations	4	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	

### TOTAL NUMBER OF DIRECT RESPONSES: 91

We are grateful to everyone who provided a direct response to our request for feedback, including:

- our LEP Business Sector Groups for their lively discussions and, in some cases, additional written contributions.
- business membership groups and others who responded on behalf of their members and/or other organisations.

The overall reaction to our proposals has been very positive and encouraging, especially for the inclusion of the views of young people via the Youth Survey, with constructive and helpful feedback from the vast majority who responded to the consultation.

## **2. Overview of feedback by organisation type**

### **Government**

Key BEIS officials took part in our Challenge Panel which helped to shape the LIS and has discussed the draft. The Cities and Local Growth Unit provided informal feedback on the draft in October, prior to the announcement of the General Election. In the short-term Purdah prevents any public comment by Government.

### **Local Authorities**

There is a broad consensus of support from Local Authorities in the county with many positive comments and suggestions for improvement. Some concern is expressed that the focus on attracting and retaining young talent by definition excludes many residents of the county, and that there is insufficient mention of how we will develop and support talent of all ages.

### **Local businesses, Business Membership Organisations and GFirst Business Sector Groups**

Again there is broad consensus of support for the direction of travel outlined in the LIS with only one respondent expressing strong opposing views. In addition to the point referenced above by Local Authorities the availability of suitable development land, the need for affordable housing, an improved county-wide transport system, and the need to support businesses in our existing key sectors are highlighted by many as requiring greater prominence in the LIS, with a particularly strong response by the GFirst Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Group on this latter point.

### **Other public sector organisations and key stakeholders**

The diverse group of organisations here is mirrored in the wide range of opinions and views expressed in their feedback, which, nonetheless, is broadly supportive of the overall ambitions of the LIS. Generally speaking the feedback encourages greater attention for each organisations' own area of special interest with, for example, CPRE, National Trust, Cotswold Conservation Board, Transition Stroud, and Gloucestershire LNP all suggesting the LIS should go further with its Green ambitions.

### **Academic establishments**

There is again a high level of support for the overall ambition and general direction of the LIS with positive opinion expressed around the magnet county theme and the focus on Cyber, Green, and Agri-tech. Beyond this a broad range of helpful observations and suggestions have been provided with no discernable themes emerging.

## **Voluntary, community and not-for profit organisations**

There is again broad support for the general direction in which the LIS proposes to take Gloucestershire, with particularly strong support for greater reference to inclusivity. Feedback here is wide ranging and reflects the organisations who responded.

## **The common themes**

The following common themes emerge from the consultation feedback:

1. whilst there is generally strong support for Cyber and Green as key areas with future growth potential there is frequent reference to the need to continue to support the county's existing businesses especially those within our key sectors.
2. whilst there is generally strong support for the 'magnet county' concept, and of the need to attract and retain young talent there is strong reference to the need to recognise, support, and exploit the skills and experience of existing talent within the county – of whatever age.
3. a number of respondents feel that the LIS does not go far enough in embedding an inclusive growth approach throughout the strategy.
4. productivity needs to be more explicitly stated throughout the strategy.
5. affordable housing and effective county-wide public transport are seen by many as crucial elements to both the magnet county and inclusion aspirations.
6. Growth Hubs were generally seen in a favourable light with several suggestions for how their role could be further developed in the future.

## **3. Any significantly conflicting views**

There are no areas of significantly conflicting feedback, however the following opposing views are worthy of note:

- some consider that Agri-tech lacks sufficient growth potential to warrant its high profile within the LIS; others feel that Agri-tech is of such importance that it warrants its own section within the LIS alongside Cyber and Green.
- some regard the county's aspirations within Green as conflicting with elements of the growth ambitions of the LIS, for example:
  - growth plans at Gloucestershire Airport.
  - an aerospace industry as a key pillar of the county's economic future.

- some consider the LIS to be too narrow in its focus on a handful of key themes with many important issues missing. Others consider the LIS should focus on even fewer key themes to the exclusion of all others.

#### **4. Recommended revisions to LIS**

We recommend that revisions to the LIS should focus on:

1. articulating link between gaps in the local labour market and the need to attract and retain young talent.
2. re-drafting the Foundation chapters with greater reference to how they support the Green and Cyber-tech priorities.
3. articulating how actions, with SMART outcomes, improve productivity, with clear linkage to evidence.
4. building more around development and support for talent of all ages e.g. lifelong learning; link with flexible working, health and wellbeing, and inclusive growth.
5. including stronger reference to how the LIS will support successful business sectors.
6. better articulating the linkages between the various priorities, for example:
  - the influence of cyber-tech/digital across all our traditional sectors, and its role in agri-tech;
  - the need for innovation across sectors to address the climate change imperative.
7. making factual and technical corrections.
8. making appropriate and relevant changes proposed in the consultation feedback.

We recommend that the Board gives delegated authority to the LEP Executive team to work with Government to co-author a final version of the LIS, for final sign-off by the LEP Board in due course.

#### **5. Next steps**

- Executive team to complete recommended revisions to the draft LIS.
- (Provisional) Submit revised draft LIS to Government by 31 January 2020.
- (Provisional) Executive team to co-author final LIS with Government by end of March 2020.