

Meeting title		GFirst LEP Board	
Date/time/venue		20/04/2021 – 8:30am to 10.30am Via Zoom	
Attendees		<p><u>Members:</u> Diane Savory (DS) <i>Chair</i>, Adam Starkey (AS), Deborah Potts (DP), Emma Hanby (EH), Ian Mean (IM), Jenny Raymond (JR), Jim Grant (JG), Mike Warner (MW), Neill Ricketts (NR), Rob Loveday (RL), Russell Marchant (RM), Ruth Dooley (RD), Steve Jordan (SJ)</p> <p><u>In attendance:</u> Barry Bodin-Jones (BBJ), Carl Creswell (CC), David Owen (DO), Dev Chakraborty (DCh), Cllr Doina Cornell (DC), Emily Manser (EM), Mally Findlater (MF), Patrick Forde (PF), Pete Carr (PC), Sarah Danson (SD), Steve Mawson (SM) & Karen Campbell (minutes)</p>	
Apologies		Lorrin White & Mark Hawthorne	
No.	Item	By	Who
1)	Welcome & introduction		
2)	<p>Minutes of: Minutes of the last LEP Board meeting on 23rd February 2021 - were approved as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>CC – Re Covid-19, the situation across the country is looking a lot more positive, hopefully giving more clarity to businesses. Things seem to be going in the right direction. Variants are a concern and other countries need to be watched. Need to get grants out to help Retail and Hospitality, working closely with BEIS on this at the moment.</p> <p>DO – Welcome to Emily Manser, our new Area Lead for Cities & Local Growth Unit (BEIS). Karen Leigh is currently on secondment leading on recruitment within the devolved nations.</p>		
3)	<p>Declarations of interest available on the GFirst LEP website – https://www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/the-board/register-of-members-interests/</p> <p>Please declare any pecuniary or personal interests relating to specific matters on the agenda.</p> <p>*Ruth Dooley declared a Conflict of Interest – Item 10</p> <p>*Jenny Raymond declared a Conflict of Interest – Item 10</p>		
4)	West Cheltenham Transport Improvement Scheme (WCTIS) update – written report in advance from Gloucestershire County Council		

	<p>Work progressing very well. BBJ mentioned that any underspend on this project was to be used on B4063 & A40 schemes currently ongoing. Lockdown has not stalled work on site.</p>		
5)	<p>Risk Register – verbal update by Ruth Dooley</p> <p>Risk of inability to spend all of the Local Growth Fund (LGF) within programme by end of March 2021 <i>This is very low risk.</i> The Growth Deal Programme has been effectively managed in terms of spend and we have maintained a transparent and open dialogue with BEIS. An agreement with S151 Officer and the Accountable Body means an effective Capital Swap process will allow us to spend to profile. This will all be reported in the forthcoming Q4 20-21 reporting. The Capital Swap amount totalled c£20m.</p> <p>Risk of a project failing entirely <i>This is low risk.</i> Project evaluations are underway for many mature projects, and currently no concerns. There were previous minor concerns over the planning application for Anson Park at Gloucestershire Airport, but planning has now been obtained and this has been approved by the Secretary of State. Work is taking place on site and the first financial drawdown had been requested and subsequently funds have been transferred to the promoter from the Accountable Body.</p> <p>Management of WCTIS as this is the largest scheme. In particular, focus on managing escalating costs and slippages. Failure to meet the project’s overall objectives. <i>This risk is managed effectively.</i> All WCTIS phases have been approved by the LEP Board and all contractual commitments and out-turn have been reported to BEIS. The situation is the same for West Cheltenham Walking & Cycling Improvements project (WCWCI). Phases 1 & 2 progressing well with Phases 3 & 4 having commenced in January 2021. The WCWCI Scheme has also started, ahead of schedule. A Board Paper has been prepared for LEP Board which provides a detailed and clear update on the scheme and its positive progress to date.</p> <p>Compliance and spend in relation to the Getting Building Fund Programme <i>This risk is managed effectively.</i> Guidance received from BEIS and details on funding allocation provides for 2020-21 and 2021-22. Discussion with Accountable Body confirmed the level of risk exposure satisfactory. Detailed spend forecasting was sent to BEIS/MHCLG on 28th January which highlights that the Programme spend is being managed effectively and there are no issues with underspend by 31/03/2022. Details are currently being obtained from the Project Promoters so that BBJ can prepare the Q4 Reporting as required by MHCLG.</p> <p>Key senior personnel from promoter Leaving. Staff resource issues at key delivery partners or partner teams at the LEP/GCC This remains at Amber due to the recent Project Manager changes at Farm 491. Luke Halsey remains close to the RAU working from the Alliston Centre and Prof Louise Manning is taking the interim lead. The plan is to have a senior PM in</p>		

	<p>place with a clear scope and defined role now that the project has matured. We are comfortable there will be positive continuity however, we need to ensure the project team remain focused with the delivery objectives. Interviews took place w/c 12th April at the RAU for this position and we will await feedback once a Project Manager is appointed.</p> <p>Growth Hub (Expansion and Network) implementation, timely and effective delivery</p> <p>Delays to Forest of Dean and Cheltenham Growth Hubs are posing issues. It is understood that the Forest of Dean Growth Hub will be open imminently with staff now been recruited. As previously reported, the Cheltenham Growth Hub promoter changed to Cheltenham Borough Council as the project is now part of the broader Minster Exchange scheme funded by Getting Building Fund. On a really positive note, both these Growth Hub Network Centres have commenced virtual online support for businesses in their respective areas, which all went live during March 2021. The new staff in these brand-new Network Centre sites are being supported by existing staff members from across the Growth Hub Network, to ensure consistency in terms of processes and engagement with businesses and individuals.</p> <p>Government priorities for The Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity fund focusing on other LEP areas with higher deprivation indices</p> <p>In order to maintain momentum for capital and revenue investment for strategic and recovery plans, DO and DCh are lobbying Government through local BEIS contacts and The LEP Network and ensuring we maintain a strong evidence base for successful impact of current investments. In addition, collective lobbying with MPs, county and district authorities to influence are the current controls and mitigation actions in place.</p> <p>Government changing the mechanisms for selection and delivery of the Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund</p> <p>As these funds will not be administered and managed through GFirst LEP the consequences could mean a lack of agreement between Districts and County priorities, leading to an inability to submit strong applications and so likely to secure less funding for Gloucestershire. The controls and mitigating actions are therefore DO and DCh continuing with the proactive engagement with local authorities and MPs to influence submissions, taking every opportunity to influence through all forums.</p> <p>RD added that she will be meeting with DO, DCh & BBJ later in the week to look at the Organisational Risk Register.</p>		
6)	<p>GFirst LEP Strategic update – board paper issued with agenda</p> <p>DO gave an overview from the paper already circulated.</p> <p>National LEP Review – Role of LEPs being considered after announcements that future funds for the medium term are to be distributed through Local Authorities and not LEPs, as has been done in the past. DO has concerns about where the business input will come into the new system. Conclusion and</p>		

	<p>outcomes of the review to be ratified before the summer recess in Westminster. Any changes will be put in place for the new financial year starting April 2022.</p> <p>GFirst Board Seminars <i>Cyber Eco-system</i> – DCh leading on this activity as a member of the Cyber Leadership Board. <i>Equality, Inclusion and Diversity</i> – LW not at today’s meeting, but work continues on this. <i>Environmental Impact</i> – Local Nature Partnership working with us on this. Government about to bring forward carbon emissions reduction target.</p> <p><i>Board Member recruitment</i> – All members asked to help promote the vacancies for a new Chair and Private Sector Board members with a view to improving the diversity on the board. DCh outlined the comprehensive recruitment campaign. All members asked to have a conversation with at least one person they think would make a good board member.</p> <p>Deadline for applications is May 31st, 2021. DO and DCh very happy to speak to prospective candidates.</p>			Before May 31st	ALL
7)	<p>Growth Hub Network update – board paper issued with agenda</p> <p>Decisions required: The board were asked to consider incorporating the strategic direction for Growth Hubs in the role of the GFirst LEP board and to disband the Growth Hub board and replace it with a new operational board for Growth Hubs led by the GFirst LEP Director of Strategic Growth. In addition, the board were asked to consider the creation of a LEP board ‘Champion’ for Growth Hubs and for Jenny Raymond to take on this role.</p> <p>Both decisions were unanimously agreed.</p>				
8)	<p>Education and Skills Team update – board paper issued with agenda</p> <p>The Board were asked to: a) note the update on GFirst LEP employment and skills activities b) approve the creation approve the creation of an LEP board ‘Champion’ for Employment and Skills and for Jim Grant to take on this role.</p> <p>The new role for Jim Grant to be the LEP’s Board Champion of Employment & Skills was unanimously agreed.</p>				
9)	<p>GFirst LEP Year-end Management accounts – verbal update by Patrick Forde</p>				
10)	<p>GIIF Programme update – board paper issued with agenda</p> <p>Following the Investment Panel meeting on Tuesday 13th April 2021, the Board were asked to make decisions on two Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Fund (GIIF) projects: a) A new loan funding request by Adventure 270 Ltd to enable the purchase of land and buildings at Bentham Country Club and for its redevelopment as a</p>				

	<p>climbing and leisure activity park providing climbing facilities of Olympic standard as well as community leisure activities.</p> <p>b) The request for a further extension of the final repayment date of the loan funding by Indectron/Lightmoor</p> <p>The Board fully supported the decision to provide a loan to Adventure 270 Scheme. All agreed that this was an exciting project for the county that would create jobs, upgrade a rundown site and attract a new audience from both within the county as well as visitors to Gloucestershire.</p> <p>DP – Involved at Bentham 5 years ago. Climbing is a massive growth sport, fully support the scheme, asked if a Bursary scheme could be looked into? JG – Great scheme, asked if there could be concessions for young people with GL postcodes? DO – would suggest these ideas to the team at Adventure 270.</p> <p>Indectron / Lightmoor Repayment extension request – following a discussion, the Board did not agree to the requested extension of the final repayment date of the loan funding by Indectron/Lightmoor.</p>		
11)	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>DS – This is Steve Jordan’s last meeting. Diane thanked Steve for all his support for nearly 10 years on the LEP Board.</p> <p>Diane also thanked Mally Findlater who will be leaving the LEP at the end of April to take early retirement.</p>		

Future Board meeting dates for 2021:

- Tuesday 29th June 2021 8:30am to 10.30am