

<b>Meeting title</b>	<b>GFirst LEP Board</b>
<b>Date/time/venue</b>	07/12/2021 – 9.00am to 11.00am Room 8A/8B, GFirst LEP Offices & MS Teams – Oxstalls Campus
<b>Attendees</b>	<p><u>Members:</u> Ruth Dooley (RD) <i>Chair</i>, Tyler Attwood (TA), Matt Charman (MC), Cllr Doina Cornell (DC), Jim Grant (JG), Emma Hanby (EH), Mark Hawthorne (MH), Russell Marchant (RM), Ian Mean (IM), Deborah Potts (DP), Jenny Raymond (JR), Neill Ricketts (NR)</p> <p><u>In attendance:</u> Richard Cook (RC), David Owen (DO), Karen Campbell (minutes), Pete Carr (PC), Dev Chakraborty (DCh), Carl Creswell (CC), Sarah Danson (SD), Patrick Forde (PF), Neil Hopwood (NH), Anwen Jones (AJ), Emily Manser (EM)</p>
<b>Apologies</b>	Nicola Bird (NB), Steve Mawson (SM), Joe Roberts (JR)

No.	Item	By	Who
1)	<p><b>Welcome &amp; introduction</b></p> <p>RD welcomed everybody both in the room and those joining virtually. CC gave a quick update, no further news on the LEP Review. Covid Omicron/Government strategy – waiting to see what scientists have to say. Don't want to enforce strict guidelines without medical back up. However, mindful of burden on NHS so will ensure that is top priority. COP26 considered a success and a step forward. Net Zero strategy going ahead. Supply chains still causing concerns. DC added that it would be worthwhile if SD shared her BEIS report with CC.</p> <p>Discussion on Skills shortage; MH – Huge shortages in key sectors, employees calling the shots. Drivers/Social Care, Domiciliary Care. Low end of wage spectrum struggling as employees demanding higher pay or leaving sectors. Foreign workers not coming back. Substantial wage inflation. IM – Bus drivers being offered up to 80% pay increases to transfer to other companies. EH – Supply chain issues – parts of equipment now taking 6 months to get into country. RM – Agree, huge delays with any parts from overseas. RD – And yet the economy is still growing! CC – Skills strategy really important.</p>		SD
2)	<p><b>Minutes of:</b></p> <p>Minutes of the last LEP Board meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 - were approved as a true and accurate record.</p>		
3)	<p><b>Declarations of interest available on the GFirst LEP website –</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/the-board/register-of-members-interests/">https://www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/the-board/register-of-members-interests/</a></p>		

	Please declare any pecuniary or personal interests relating to specific matters on the agenda.		
4)	<p><b>Appointment of a Vice Chair</b>  <b>Appointment of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion</b>  RD nominated Ian Mean for the Vice Chair role and Deborah Potts to become the Board’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion.  All members agreed to the appointments.</p>		
5)	<p><b>Strategic Update</b></p> <p>a) <b>LEP Review</b> – the Government’s Levelling up white paper will now not be published prior to the Christmas break; the launch has been pushed back to the New Year.</p> <p>b) <b>LEP Income Streams and Activities</b> – 2<sup>nd</sup> half of core funding only just received from Treasury. If Core funding for 2022/23 is delayed, or not forthcoming, our Plan B is to use our GIFF fund to underwrite both LEP core funding and Growth Hub core funding.  <b>APPROVED:</b> Board members approved the use of GIFF monies to support any reduced allocation of core funding for 2022/23 from central Government.  PF – A cash flow forecast will be completed and circulated to all Board Members. A quarterly cashflow update will be sent to Board members.</p> <p>c) <b>Western Gateway</b> – Western Gateway’s future, along with any associated funding, should also be clarified in the Levelling up white paper.  The British Business Bank has announced £200 million in funding for the South West, we are in discussions with them how to help get these funds to SMEs across our patch via our Growth Hub network.</p> <p>d) <b>Programme Update</b> – NH - Minster Exchange, Cheltenham – there were concerns over ground conditions however, tests have revealed there are no problems. Supply issues as with all areas and skills shortages causing slight delays. Now looking at May/June 2022 opening.  AccXel Centre in Cinderford will officially open on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December, great achievement.  The Gloucestershire Applied Digital Skills Centre at Cirencester College is on target to be completed in March 2022.  Digital Innovation Farm at Hartpury University &amp; College – slight delay, but just awaiting modules to be delivered.  Gloucester Railway station – may have to review scope of delivery due to a potential funding gap – priority for the promoter (Gloucester City Council) is to get the underpass completed.  MH – I understand the priority, but the cladding is the most visual aspect and also important as it will tie in with the Transport Hub and new Forum buildings.  RC – Priority for us is the underpass connecting the north and south of the city but will check with Executive Officers.  Gloucester South West Bypass – works starting April/May 2022.  MH – update on major road projects. Fairly confident that A417 ‘Missing Link’ will go ahead, work starting in 2023. M5 Junction 10 has now gone</p>		<p>PF</p> <p>PF</p> <p>NH</p>

	<p>out to tender. M5 Junction 9 – continuing to work up options, which is a positive.</p> <p>NH – agreed for the LEP to produce an update on these major road schemes in a future LEP E-newsletter.</p> <p>Good news about £1.7 million underspend by County Council on the WCTIS scheme, this will now go towards the new cycle path that will eventually run from Bishops Cleeve to Stonehouse. MH added that they hope to make a major announcement on this project very soon.</p>		
6)	<p><b>Activity Updates</b></p> <p>a) <b>Growth Hub Network</b> – JR - Putting together a plan of action, hope to have it complete before Christmas or early January. Looking at all elements of Growth Hub activity; business models/sustainability, KPIs, staffing, marketing and comms, external partner engagement. From the next LEP Board meeting we will have feedback from Board members too.</p> <p>b) <b>Business Group reporting</b> – Board members have also all been allocated to a particular LEP sector specific business group and will provide feedback to colleagues at future meetings. DO – we will circulate the grid so everyone can see who is working with which group.</p> <p>c) <b>Education &amp; Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Strategy – PC presented the presentation that had been previously circulated to the Board.</li> <li>o Employment Charter – presentation from IM &amp; PC.</li> </ul> <p>There is a mismatch of people claiming benefit with vacancies available, with vacancies reaching over 54,700 whilst those claiming unemployment benefits were at 12,265. The referrals by DWP of young people into the Kickstart Programme has decreased the number of apprenticeship starts and this, combined with Covid reducing apprenticeship delivery has decreased apprenticeship uptake in the county but they are now going up. LEP may have a role to play in matching businesses with prospective students. JG mentioned T-Level placements, could the Board help with engaging businesses with education establishments?</p> <p>MH – We need to look at productivity gains. Agriculture/Care sector struggling with low wage positions. Some sectors regardless of investment won't be able to upscale.</p> <p>RM – You can have 3 or 4 employees working on a farm earning more than our lecturers.</p> <p>DO – When you are competing with big national employers who want low skills it's always going to be difficult.</p> <p>MH – There is a lag e.g. care sector, some technology just doesn't exist to help care for people in their own homes and AI/robotics will be needed in that and other sectors in order to alleviate the recruitment challenges.</p> <p>Would be good to identify those sectors where lack of tech is hindering progress.</p> <p>NR – LEP is good at lobbying. Develop the products required. LEP should be pushing towards funding for development. RD added that there is a super deduction available, but you would need to find the investment first.</p>		DO

	<p>JG – Big pressure on employers but T-Levels will mean the student is in the workplace longer learning more and becoming part of the team. T-Levels will mean a student out of class for a day and half per week.</p> <p>DP added that the Voluntary sector receive lots of requests for apprenticeship places.</p> <p>PC – The Employment Charter work will involve the matching of the needs of schools and colleges (e.g. work experience placements, careers talks, enterprise events, etc.) with the capacity of local businesses to provide support, and then these two sectors need to be joined. This work aligns with our Careers Hub but requires more resources and staff time than can be provided through the Hub so part of the pilot activity will be to review the costs of delivering the pilot and then how much it would cost to scale up to support all schools and colleges in the County. We will then need to bid for funding and/or seek sponsorship to resource the Employment Charter work alongside the Careers Hub.</p> <p>RD – Meeting of the Skills Advisory Board next week, could you flesh out what you would like the LEP Board members, Business Group members, Growth Hubs to do?</p> <p>JG – would it help if students could come along and speak about their experiences at a future meeting? I could arrange for them to join virtually?</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board members to channel any feedback on skills strategy preparation to PC or Board members who sit on the GSAP (Doina, Ian, Jim, Russell) by 13/12/21.</li> <li>• GSAP members of the LEP Board (Doina, Ian, Jim, Russell) to provide feedback on current draft of the skills strategy and action plan and on progress to date with the Employment Charter, at the next GSAP meeting on 13/12/21.</li> <li>• PC to continue editing and re-writing of the skills strategy, action plan, local skills report, core indicators and evidence base for publication at end of January 2022.</li> <li>• IM and PC to continue with pilot of the Employment Charter and report back on progress at a future LEP Board meeting tbc.</li> <li>• PC to confirm to LEP Board members in this future update, what actions are requested of LEP Board members to support the Employment Charter work when it moves from the pilot phase into wider delivery (after March 2022).</li> </ul> <p>d) <b>GIIF Update</b> – The Board agreed with the actions of the Chair of the Investment Panel in approving:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revision of the current final draw down dates for the Bakers Quay contract to January 2022 (£350,000) and July 2022 (£1,300,000) respectively.</li> <li>2. Revision of the current loan repayment date to up to 31st January 2024. Any delay thereafter would accrue interest charges.</li> </ol>		<p>JG</p>
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	<p>3. The LEP Board to ask Gloucester City Council to recognise the importance of this regeneration scheme and its progress through the planning process, as a matter of priority, to enable the construction to finally get underway.</p>		
7)	<p><b>Board Member Updates</b></p> <p>a) <b>Health Partnerships</b> – DP – Has attended ‘Enabling Active Communities and Individuals Group’ meeting. There are a number of jobs from within the care sector. Economic stability drives this. Huge link to the LEP. We need a stronger connect between LEP, Business and Health world. Healthy employee equates to less stress on business. The group is a multi-stake holder group. Lots of different organisations represented. A lot of work around volunteering. Maximise what came out of Covid – rise in number of volunteers. Gloucestershire awarded money by Kings Fund to see how health plays a part in business.</p> <p>DO – I sit on the Health and Wellbeing Board – talk around Anchor Institutions – challenge is resource and prioritisation by businesses.</p> <p>RD – Definite increase in awareness around Mental Health.</p> <p>DP – Could Sarah Scott or one of her team come along to a future meeting? MH – Maybe wait until later in the year due to current pressure on team at the moment.</p> <p>b) <b>Tackling the Root Causes of Upstream Unhealthy Urban Development</b> – seminar feedback – this item carried forward to the next LEP Board meeting due to NB and JR having given apologies.</p>		
8)	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One action for all board members to take away – Skills Board item</li> <li>• Two positive PR stories from the meeting – Highways stories and Projects updates.</li> <li>• Honourable Company Members of Gloucestershire are putting together a Cyber event in March. Tim Atkins has agreed to speak at the event. Members happy to promote and support when required.</li> <li>• Launch of AccXel on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December – 17 months from award of funding! Great achievement.</li> </ul>		

**Future Board meeting dates:**

**Board Away Day;**

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2022 – 12 noon to 6pm at The Queen’s Hotel, Cheltenham GL50 1NN

**Board meeting dates for 2022;**

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December

Timings for all Board meetings are 9.00am to 11.00am

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Growth Hubs</b>	<b>Business Groups</b>
<i>February</i>	Gloucester Tewkesbury Cheltenham	Energy Retail and High Streets Construction and Infrastructure
<i>May</i>	Forest Stroud Cirencester	Cyber Tech Agri Food and Rural
<i>September</i>	Gloucester Tewkesbury Cheltenham	Business Membership Group Business and Professional Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing
<i>December</i>	Forest Stroud Cirencester	Banking and Finance Tourism and Visitor Economy