

<b>Meeting title</b>		<b>GFirst LEP Board</b>	
<b>Date/time/venue</b>		23/02/2021 – 8:30am to 10.00am Via Zoom	
<b>Attendees</b>		<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), Mark Hawthorne (MH), Mike Warner (MW), Neill Ricketts (NR), Rob Loveday (RL), Ruth Dooley (RD), Russell Marchant (RM), Steve Jordan (SJ)</p> <p><u>In attendance:</u> Barry Bodin-Jones (BBJ), Carl Creswell (CC), David Owen (DO), Dev Chakraborty (DC), Cllr Doina Cornell (CDC), Karen Leigh (KL), Mally Findlater (MF), Matt Rigby (MR), Pete Carr (PC), Sarah Danson (SD), Steve Mawson (SM) &amp; Karen Campbell (minutes)</p> <p><u>Guests:</u> Katherine Bennett, Chair, Western Gateway and Adam Wassell, Policy and Engagement Officer, Western Gateway</p>	
<b>Apologies</b>		Lorrin White	
<b>No.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Who</b>
1)	<b>Welcome &amp; introduction from Chair</b>		
2)	<p><b>Minutes of:</b> Minutes of the last LEP Board meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 - were approved as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>BEIS data return Q3 20-21 (Written Procedure Minutes 04/02/2021) – were approved as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>SJ – Will we get an update on the WCTIS scheme from Simon Excell, GCC? <u>Action</u> – Update circulated to members 23/02/21.</p> <p>Financial Update – DO explained that Patrick Forde, Financial Director for GFirst LEP, had given an update on LEP accounts at the AGM. Patrick will give an update on management accounts and year-end news at the next meeting.</p>	<b>BBJ</b>	<b>Completed</b>
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> <p>Please declare any pecuniary or personal interests relating to specific matters on the agenda.</p> <p>*Rob Loveday declared an interest as newly appointed Western Gateway Specialist and added that he no longer works for GE Aviation.</p>		

	*Steve Jordan is no longer Leader of Cheltenham Borough Council. Steve is now Cabinet member Finance and Assets.		
4)	<p><b>Western Gateway</b> – an update from Chair, Katherine Bennett on progress to date and plans moving forward. Followed by Q&amp;A.</p> <p>Katherine thanked DS and DO for their support of the Western Gateway project. Katherine is currently Senior Vice President at Airbus but will move to a new role this year as CEO of the Government’s High Value Manufacturing (HVM Catapult). KB spoke about how the Green economy is important to Gloucestershire and is a theme running through all Western Gateway ambitions. The mission – ‘Propelling a greener, fairer, stronger Britain’. The Western Gateway team are planning a webinar to cover the work completed so far, date to be confirmed.</p> <p>A discussion took place that included Western Gateway’s support of the Fusion Reactor bid from Gloucestershire, potential future funding, increased engagement with local authorities and the recruitment of two private sector business representatives.</p> <p><b>Action - NR – Will contact KB to share his experiences of working with Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine, to inform the way Western Gateway operates with its businesses.</b></p>	NR	March 2021
5)	<p><b>Risk Register</b> – verbal update from Ruth Dooley, ‘Risk Champion’.</p> <p><b>Risk of inability to spend all of the LGF within Programme by end of March 2021</b>  <i>This is very low risk.</i> Contingency plans are in place to manage the Growth Deal Programme effectively and we have maintained a transparent and open dialogue with BEIS. An agreement with S151 Officer and the Accountable Body means an effective Capital Swop process will allow us to spend to profile.</p> <p><b>Risk of a project failing entirely</b>  <i>This is low risk.</i> Project evaluations are underway for many mature projects, and currently no concerns.</p> <p><b>Management of WCTIS as this is the largest scheme. In particular focus on managing escalating costs and slippages. Failure to meet the projects’ overall objectives.</b>  <i>This risk is managed effectively.</i> All WCTIS phases have been approved by the LEP Board and all contractual commitments and outturn has been reported to BEIS. The situation is the same for WCWCI project. Phases 1 &amp; 2 progressing well with Phases 3 &amp; 4 having commenced in January 2021. The WCWCI Scheme has also started, ahead of schedule.</p> <p><b>Compliance and Spend in relation to the Getting Building Fund Programme</b>  <i>This risk is managed effectively.</i> Guidance received from BEIS and details on funding allocation provides for 20-21 and 21-22. Discussion with Accountable Body confirmed the level of risk exposure satisfactory.</p>		

	<p>Detailed spend forecasting was sent to BEIS/MHCLG on 28th January which highlights that the Programme spend is managed effectively and there are no issues with underspend by 31/03/2022.</p> <p><b>Key Senior Personnel from Promoter Leaving. Staff resource issues at key delivery partners or partner teams at the LEP/GCC</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Growth Hub (Expansion and Network) implementation, timely and effective delivery</b> Delays to Forest of Dean and Cheltenham Growth Hubs are posing issues. Construction now resumed at Forest of Dean site with staff recruitment underway. Cheltenham Growth Hub promoters changed to Cheltenham Borough Council as the project is now part of broader Minster Innovation Exchange scheme funded by Getting Building Fund. Both these Growth Hub Network Centres will have virtual online support for businesses in their respective areas, coming on board during March 2021.</p> <p><b>Government priorities for The Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity fund focusing on other LEP areas with higher deprivation indices</b> This is a new risk identified during the last PMG meeting. Lobbying Government through local BEIS contacts, the LEP Network and maintaining strong evidence base for successful impact of current investments. In addition, collective lobbying with MPs, county and district authorities to influence.</p> <p><b>Government changing the mechanisms for selection and delivery of the Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund away from LEP's</b> This is also a new risk that came out of discussion at PMG. Lobbying Government through local BEIS contacts, the LEP Network and maintaining strong evidence base for successful impact of current investments - Maintain and communicate the success of the role played by the LEP.</p>		
8)	<p><b>The Economic impact of Brexit in Gloucestershire</b> – verbal update from Sarah Danson and Matt Rigby (The Growth Hub). Matt Rigby gave a presentation on the important work that the EU Exit team have been offering since December 2020. To date (12/02/2021) the team has delivered 2,179 successful outbound emails and telephone interactions. A report of project activity and business preparedness, issues/challenges and opportunities is reported to the BEIS intelligence team weekly. The key areas of concern to date have been around; VAT, Rules of origin, Increased costs for shipping and significant delays, Goods stuck at the border and Commodity codes.</p> <p>There is currently no indication of extending funding for this project beyond the end of March 2021. This will present LEPs and Growth Hubs with a concerning resource challenge. The phased plans for EU Exit mean that businesses are likely to require ongoing support until at least the end of 2021.</p>		

	<b>Action - CC – Will follow up with EU Exit team at BEIS.</b>	<b>CC</b>	<b>March 2021</b>
9)	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b>  IM asked what can we do as a county to help the increasing number of qualified young people from the university and our colleges who are looking for jobs and work experience placements?  DO – The LEP and partners will continue to push people in the direction of the new Skills Portal.</p>		

**Future Board meeting dates for 2021:**

- Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 8:30am to 10.30am
- Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 8.30am to 10.30am
- Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 8.30am to 10.30am
- Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 8.30am to 10.30am