

Meeting title	GFirst LEP Board
Date/time/venue	17/05/2022 – 9.00am to 11.00am Venue: The Forest of Dean Growth Hub - Ground Floor, Building Seven, Vantage Point Business Village, Western Ave, Gloucester Rd, Mitcheldean GL17 0DD and via Microsoft Teams
Attendees	<u>Members:</u> Ruth Dooley (RD) <i>Chair</i> , Ian Mean (IM) <i>Vice Chair</i> , Tyler Attwood (TA), Nicola Bird (NB), Matt Charman (MC), Doina Cornell (DC), Emma Hanby (EH), Mark Hawthorne (MH), Russell Marchant (RM), Deborah Potts (DP), Jenny Raymond (JR), Neill Ricketts (NR) and Joe Roberts (JRo) <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), Rod Goodman (RG), Neil Hopwood (NH), Jenna Hunt (JH) and Anwen Jones (AJ)
Apologies	Jim Grant (JG) and Steve Mawson (SM)

No.	Item	By	Who
1)	Welcome & introduction		
2)	Minutes of: Minutes of the last LEP Board meeting on 15 th February 2022 - were approved as a true and accurate record.		
3)	Declarations of interest available on the GFirst LEP website – https://www.gfirstlep.com/about-us/the-board/register-of-members-interests/ Please declare any pecuniary or personal interests relating to specific matters on the agenda. No conflicts of interest were raised.		
4)	LEP Strategic update post funding announcement DO presented on the funding letter received the day before the end of the financial year. In essence, there is a total 38% cut to core funding for LEP and Growth Hub activity. DO is working closely with national LEP Network colleagues to clarify detail on various aspects of the funding letter and is chairing one of five working groups within the LEP Network. A number of issues have already been raised with AJ and nationally and we are expecting clarity shortly. In some areas of the country, devolution is moving faster than expected, in some areas it's slower. Devolution process in Gloucestershire will start no earlier than		

	<p>January 2023. Until such point as a devolution deal is complete it remains 'business as usual' for the LEP with integration not likely to happen before 2024.</p> <p>In the meantime, the LEP executive are ensuring delivery of a balanced budget for this year and have taken action to reduce some costs – including moving to smaller office accommodation given changing working patterns.</p> <p>MH – Timescale stacks up. Colleagues from LAs and LEP will feed into the document as it progresses. Conversation about LEP integration closer to the time.</p> <p>CC – Don't get distracted by timetable. Don't believe there will be much movement from Levelling up White paper.</p> <p>For the September Board meeting the LEP executive will produce an outline strategy paper for further evolution of the business model.</p> <p>As previously agreed GIFF funding will make up the funding shortfall for this financial year.</p>		
5)	<p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The allocations within Gloucestershire include (over 3-years, minimum £1m): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheltenham £1,178,035 • Cotswold £1,000,000 • Forest of Dean £1,000,000 • Gloucester £1,486,352 • Stroud £1,378,985 • Tewkesbury £1,011,978 <p>A total of £7,055,350</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement sessions with local authorities and other local partners to support the investment plan process: April – May 2022 • Lead local authorities work with stakeholders to develop local investment plans: April – June/ July 2022 • Investment plan submissions window: 30 June 2022 to 1 August 2022 • Further guidance published including guidance on monitoring benefits and evaluation, assurance, subsidy control, branding and publicity: Summer 2022 • Indicative investment plan assessment period for UK government: July – September 2022 • Anticipated date for first investment plans to be approved: October 2022 onwards 		

- Funding period: April 2022 to March 2025

LEP priorities;

Growth Hub (SD) – EU contract runs up to March next year. Requesting 2 years funding from Local Districts, 2023 to 2025. We have a strong network system already set up. Some of our Growth Hubs are at the start of their journey, others are more established and coming to the end of their funding period. We have requested £270,000 from each district to maintain a central function ensuring independent, impartial advice and funding CRM and marketing activities. This would also ensure there isn't a 'postcode lottery' for business support in the county.

DC – I think I speak for all that we have had a lot of asks on the funding. Pressure on us to produce investment plan by 1st August.

RC – City Council are in 'listening mode' at the moment.

MH – The reason the Growth Hubs are in each district is that the districts requested a Growth Hub each.

IM - We have to take a visionary view. It's the independent voice of business.

DO – Really important that we maintain that impartial, independent advice.

JR – European funding has made the Growth Hub offer quite constrained.

EU funding coming to an end means we could do much more 'reach out' work.

NR – Outlook for business is quite bleak at the moment, we need to concentrate on helping businesses.

Inward Investment (DCh) – The Inward Investment team were set up to encourage foreign-owned businesses to set up in the county. DO and DCh had presented to Government offices from around the globe before the Board meeting to launch the HPO (High Potential Opportunity) for cyber inward investment.

We are asking for £0.5 million to keep the project going for a further 2-year period starting in January 2023. Four key priority business sectors; cyber, agri-tech, advanced manufacturing and renewables.

Re Agri-tech - in the process of getting an MOU signed with RAU, Hartpury, Campden BRI and CCRI at the University of Gloucestershire to ensure greater collaboration.

The main aim of the project is to create jobs within the county. Biggest success to date is securing [ZeroAvia](#) at Cotswold Airport - 80 highly skilled jobs created already.

DCh flagged that Oxfordshire/Bristol & Bath/Wales would all continue their Inward Investment projects meaning Gloucestershire could miss out.

DO mentioned a recent visit that the Head of Inward Investment, Phil Clement, had arranged for a company with major plans in Cyber/Satellite technology. They had visited a vacant site at Stonehouse and were really impressed with

	<p>what they have seen so far. Without our Inward Investment team, the company wouldn't have considered Gloucestershire.</p> <p>The Inward Investment team was a 4-year project but we effectively lost 2 years due to the pandemic. However, the team concentrated on foreign owned businesses within the county offering support as required.</p> <p>Employment Charter (PC) – The Employment Charter is a support and brokerage service for young people in education to engage with local employers and for employers to develop recruitment pipelines. This increases the capacity of the Careers Hub and the support involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • researching what education & skills providers and their learners need from industry, when this is needed and who will be involved • Sharing this information with local employers and establishing what capacity they have to support this • Brokering sustainable engagement with providers to strengthen and retain talent • Quality assurance and monitoring for continual improvement <p>Employer engagement activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q&A sessions with employers • Workplace visits • Dragon's Den Enterprise events • Employability, cv and application writing talks by employers • Practice job interviews • Work Experience • Careers Fairs <p>ASK: £483,300 over 3 years</p> <p>To work with up to 59 schools/academies that have approx 41,500 students in years 7 to 13, 4 colleges, 3 universities. The Employment Charter work is 'qualification agnostic' and therefore will be used to support a wide range of qualifications and learning programmes in the county, including the extensive work experience elements of T-levels.</p>		
6)	<p>Employment Charter update</p> <p>Presentation circulated to Board members before the meeting.</p>		
7)	<p>Board member feedback on Growth Hubs</p> <p>RM had visited Forest of Dean Growth Hub and spoken with Tom El-Shawk. Very impressed with set up. Four incubators have been rented out and keen to work on building partnerships. Consideration being given to outreach with a 'Growth Hub on the road' model being considered. Looking at what works well and sharing with other Growth Hubs. Concerned about expectations and engagement of larger businesses, how best to get them involved. Good amount of SMEs and Micro businesses already involved.</p> <p>DP spoke about the Stroud Growth Hub. Really nice space to work in.</p>		

	Had spoken with Laura Gaiger about there being lots of stops and starts after officially opening just as the pandemic hit. Capacity is biggest issue. Smallest team of all the Growth Hubs. Could Growth Hubs have different specialisms? e.g. Cheltenham – Cyber, Stroud – Green, etc. Could more things be centralised? DC also spoke with Laura and found her to be very impressive and really keen to do outreach. Would be good to understand the different set ups of all the Growth Hubs. KC will re-circulate Growth Hub information and case studies to board members for further distribution.	30/06/22	KC/SD
8)	<p>Board member feedback on Business Groups</p> <p>EH had joined the recent Agri, Food and Rural Business Group – Sub groups formed to breakdown elements. Skills side being worked on by Ben Thompson from Hartpury College/University. Addressing skills gaps but also looking to include Conservation and transferable skills. Looking at how to bring people with cyber skills into the sector, how to engage, get them interested in all things Agri. Dr Bryonny Goodwin-Hawkins from CCRI is heading up the group on Business Support. Busy identifying gaps across the sector.</p> <p>Very diverse group of members so breaking into groups will help move topics forward. Phil Clement attended last meeting to talk about Inward Investment.</p> <p>MC had joined the recent Cyber Tech Business Group meeting – A really interesting discussion. There have been less cyber-attacks during the current crisis in Ukraine. Mention of the attack of the City Council systems and how much time it is taking to recover. Member from BPE gave a talk about fraud. Mention of Data trusts and how to invest in Data trusts.</p> <p>Head of Inward Investment, Phil Clement attended this meeting too. Group members fed into recent Cyber HPO activity, really knowledgeable on all aspects of Cyber.</p>		
9)	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>DCh highlighted the LEP’s Annual Review event on Wednesday 15th June at Cotswold Airport, Kemble and asked if everyone could confirm their attendance, due to limited capacity, via the Eventbrite link asap;</p> <p>https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/gfirst-lep-annual-review-2022-tickets-325682062817</p>		

Future Board meeting dates for 2022:

Tuesday 20th September

Tuesday 6th December

Timings for all Board meetings are 9.00am to 11.00am

Meeting	Growth Hubs	Business Groups
<i>September</i>	Gloucester Tewkesbury Cheltenham	Business Membership Group Business and Professional Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing
<i>December</i>	Libraries Forest Stroud Cirencester	Banking and Finance Tourism and Visitor Economy Construction and Infrastructure