

# Gloucestershire Employment and Skills Board

## Discussion paper to inform priorities and work plan

This document is intended to reflect back to GESB members the priorities that they and other stakeholders have identified for the Board so that members can confirm them, clarify what needs to be done and inform the workplan for the Board. It will be discussed in small groups and as a whole Board at the October 2017 meeting.

1. **Emerging priorities**
2. **Additional requirements of the GESB**
3. **Ways of working**

### 1. Emerging Priorities

Emerging priorities from the group and wider stakeholders at this stage are:

#### 1.1 Apprenticeships

- 1.2 Ageing workforce and dealing with replacement demand
- 1.3 Stronger links between schools and businesses
- 1.4 Improved, impartial careers support for schools based on accurate and up-to-date Labour Market Information
- 1.5 Specific support for certain geographical areas/development areas within the county
- 1.6 **Employment and Skills support for inward investment/companies expanding or relocating**
- 1.7 **Strengthening Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) provision and encouraging more people to go into STEM careers**

*Members of the Employment and Skills Board are asked to review these emerging priorities and come to the October 2017 meeting ready to provide feedback on:*

- a) *Are these the right priorities for the Board based on the evidence base previously discussed and shared with Board members? Are there any key priorities missing?*
- b) *Do you have specific information/feedback on particular priorities that can add to the information captured in this discussion document?*
- c) *In which order should the Board tackle these priorities? Why?*
- d) *Are there areas where additional research is required? What are these?*

### 1.1 Apprenticeships

**1.1.1 Background:** Expansion of apprenticeship opportunities in the county has been a long-standing priority for both GFirst LEP and Gloucestershire County Council. The Strategic Economic Plan for Gloucestershire and the ESIF Strategy (add links) both support the expansion of apprenticeships in the County.

**1.1.2 Baseline data:** This is sourced from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) via its 'localities cube'. 2015/16 data is included in the GESB Evidence Base pages 27-28.

**1.1.3 Monitoring:** This will be done through the ESFA localities cube, monitored by GCC Skills and Employment Commissioning Team staff. There has also been a request for informal management information from apprenticeship providers to show progress ahead of the reporting cycle via ESFA.

**1.1.4 Possible KPIs:** Number of apprenticeship starts (including engineering apprenticeships); number of apprenticeship completions (including engineering apprenticeships); Number of businesses advertising apprenticeship opportunities

**1.1.5 Routes to achieving the KPIs:** Better information into schools to enable informed choice by students; having a local 'hub' for businesses wanting to know how apprenticeships work and what is available and individuals seeking apprenticeships to get connected with apprenticeship opportunities; up-to-date information about which apprenticeships are available in Gloucestershire and how many of each type are being delivered and by whom

**1.1.6 Key providers:** Clarify with GWP and via Data Cube (colleges and private training providers) – need breakdown of volumes and types of apprenticeships delivered by each provider

**1.1.7 Resource challenges/issues:** Currently, there is no specific, dedicated, permanent resource available within the county to manage work with schools and employers to promote apprenticeships and work with providers and the National Apprenticeship Service. South Gloucestershire and Stroud College has secured a £1.7 European Social Fund (ESF) project to increase apprenticeship promotion and delivery in the County but this is restricted in terms of eligible participants and in time, as the project only started in September 2017 and needs to be completed by July 2018.

**1.1.8 Good practice already identified:** mapping of apprenticeship provision across Gloucestershire (and Swindon & Wiltshire) by GWP

**1.1.9 Relevant projects/initiatives to highlight to GESB:** GCC apprenticeship taskforce – historical report; pre-apprenticeship clearing house project initiated by GCC with Prospect – no report but worth following up; new £1.7m ESF apprenticeship support programme led by South Gloucestershire and Stroud College now contracted but reduced from a 3 year project to less than 1 year so targets very challenging; Apprenticeship S K ESFA project for promoting apprenticeships in schools plus offer from GWP to undertake promotional work with schools;

## 1.2 Ageing workforce and dealing with replacement demand

**1.2.1 Background:** Many local and national businesses across several sectors have an ageing workforce and are experiencing the loss of knowledge and skills as older staff retire. In some cases, this knowledge and these skills are not being effectively transferred to younger members of the workforce. In other cases, businesses need to enable older workers to work more flexibly in order to retain them for longer. Some work on this has been done with larger national/multi-national companies but comparatively little has been done with SMEs and obviously, SMEs make up the vast majority (98% of Gloucestershire businesses).

**1.2.2 Baseline data:** None currently but opportunity to build into business skills survey led by GCC.

**1.2.3 Monitoring:** Via survey responses from businesses and monitoring longitudinal changes

**1.2.4 Possible KPIs:** Businesses with schemes in place to retain older workers; Businesses with programmes in place to transfer knowledge and skills from older workers

**1.2.5 Routes to achieving the KPIs:** project to identify and share good practice with local businesses about how to retain experience within the organisation (e.g. flexible working, mentoring, etc.), implementation of succession planning and knowledge transfer from experienced workers to younger, less experienced ones; ways of ensuring local training providers work effectively with local businesses to upskill and retrain the existing workforce

**1.2.6 Key providers:** Not yet known . There may be SMEs in Gloucestershire that have flexible working arrangements in place to enable older workers to stay on – these businesses need to be identified and key lessons learned and shared. Similarly, there may be SMEs that have effective succession planning and knowledge transfer arrangements in place. Again, these businesses need to be identified and key lessons learned and shared.

**1.2.7 Resource challenges/issues:** No group organisation currently resourced to undertake the proposed follow-on work from the business skills survey but GFirst LEP and GCC well positioned to undertake this work as links have already been made with the DWP Fuller Working Lives team.

**1.2.8 Good practice already identified:** Fuller Working Lives project managed by DWP – examples from national employers and data. DWP willing to provide some additional information/support for this.

**1.2.9 Relevant projects/initiatives to highlight to GESB:** Fuller Working Lives project managed by DWP

## 1.3 Stronger links between schools and businesses

**1.3.1 Background:** This has been a priority for GFirst LEP for several years and is included in the Strategic Economic Plan. The intentions of building stronger links between schools and local businesses include: engaging students in what local businesses do so they can be informed about possible career paths; provide more informed careers choices; assisting in reducing exclusion rates for disengaged students. The current pattern of work in this area is complex, partly because of the number of academies in the county and partly because of the range of different organisations undertaking this work e.g. GFirst LEP, schools and colleges making their own arrangements for local business links, Stroud District Council have set up and are running a 'Skills for Stroud Employability Charter'. Please also see pages 29-30 in the GESB Evidence Base.

**1.3.2 Baseline data:** Not yet confirmed. The picture is complex as GFirst LEP education Team is currently working with 18 secondary schools and colleges in the County where they have already secured the services of Enterprise Advisers (EAs) and a further 17 schools to get EAs in place. Audits of business engagement are carried out with these schools and colleges. Other schools and colleges have developed their own links with local businesses and currently there isn't an established way of finding out what these are.

**1.3.3 Monitoring:** Via audit of schools and colleges by the GFirst LEP Education team and EAN data from GFirst LEP Education Team

**1.3.4 Possible KPIs:** Number and location of schools matched with Enterprise Advisers; Number of careers teachers/leads informed by local labour market information (e.g. workshops run, downloads of sector reports, etc.); Number of schools and colleges offering work experience to students

**1.3.5 Routes to achieving the KPIs:** Expansion of the Enterprise Adviser Network across all secondary schools and colleges in Gloucestershire; regular updates and liaison with school careers teachers; sharing lessons learned through the ESF-funded EDGE project delivered by South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (see below).

1.3.6 Key providers: GFirst LEP Education Team; school careers teachers/leads; GCC and Strategic Alliance labour market information; Stroud District Council's team working on the 'Skills for Stroud' Employability Charter Mark; Prospects; South Gloucestershire and Stroud College's EDGE project reports and resource materials for improving work experience.

1.3.7 Resource challenges/issues: GFirst LEP Education Team have secured a grant from the Careers & Enterprise Company to continue working to expand the Enterprise Adviser Network to all schools and colleges in Gloucestershire but this requires 50% cash match funding and this has only been secured for the year commencing September 2017. Without this cash match the programme is at risk. The GESB is requested to suggest possible sources of cash match for this programme. Similarly, resource pressures on local authorities are requiring Stroud District Council to make cost and efficiency savings. It is likely that the Employability Charter Mark work will need to cease or be transferred to another organisation in late 2017 if funding for this cannot be secured. Conversely, if funding can be secured, Stroud DC would be willing to expand this programme across the County in order to build on the success of this programme in Stroud District.

**1.3.8 Good practice already identified:** Careers & Enterprise Company (general and Enterprise adviser pathways); 'register' of local and national enterprise support providers and provision prepared by GFirst LEP Education Team; impartial careers advice provided by SGS College and bought in by some schools in the county

**1.3.9 Relevant projects/initiatives to highlight to GESB:** EAN Network and more general work of the GFirst LEP Education Team and Careers and enterprise company: EDGE Project led by SGS College; DWP work with schools; GFirst LEP, schools and colleges making their own arrangements for local business links, Stroud District Council have set up and are running a 'Skills for Stroud Employability Charter'

## 1.4 Improved, impartial careers support for schools based on accurate and up-to-date Labour Market Information

1.4.1 Background: Effective and consistent careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) has been a long-term priority for GFirst LEP and GCC and was included in discussions with Government as part of the Gloucestershire devolution bid. It is a statutory requirement for schools to provide impartial careers guidance but there is a huge disparity in what schools are providing. Provision can range between schools employing a sole trading careers adviser to minimal compliance such as arranging visits to employers and/or mock interviews. It is up to a school's governing body to decide what is in their students' best interests in terms of careers interventions. There are quality standards which schools are encouraged to comply with, such as using a qualified practitioner but provision is very varied; in some schools a teaching member of staff is given responsibility for careers guidance provision. Different schools value careers guidance differently and there is a difference between careers education – which normally sits within the PSHE timetable – and careers advice and guidance. Careers guidance is part of OFSTED inspections but pretty low key, although more rigour is planned in future. Please also see pages 29-30 in the GESB Evidence Base.

1.4.2 Baseline data: Requires further research and guidance from GESB members.

1.4.3 Monitoring: Requires further research and guidance from GESB members.

1.4.4 Possible KPIs: Number of careers teachers/leads informed by local labour market information (e.g. workshops run, downloads of sector reports, etc.). Requires further research and guidance from GESB members.

1.4.5 Routes to achieving the KPIs: Work with current careers and IAG support providers (e.g. Adviza, Prospects, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, etc.) and careers teachers in schools (e.g. via the Careers and Employability Group) to audit/map careers support in schools and ways in which this could be strengthened, e.g.

through improved Labour Market Information (LMI), regular updates and continuing professional development (CPD) sessions for careers teachers.

1.4.6 Key providers: Adviza - <http://www.adviza.org.uk/> holds the National Careers Service contract for Gloucestershire and is currently in discussion with GFirst LEP's Education Team about delivery in schools in Gloucestershire, Prospects - <https://youthsupportteam.co.uk/services/careers-advice-plus> - have 6 contracts across the county's schools, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College runs SGS Schools' Careers Service to provide impartial careers services to schools/clusters of schools.

1.4.7 Resource challenges/issues: Limited and decreasing school budgets and school careers leads with other, wider teaching and management responsibilities can limit the breadth and depth of careers support available to some students.

1.4.8 Good practice already identified: twice annual meetings of the Careers and Employability Group of school careers and employability leads – an effective network to share good practice.

1.4.9 Relevant projects/initiatives to highlight to the GESB: Further research required.

## 1.5 Specific support for certain geographical areas/development areas within the county and for inward investment/companies needing help with employment and skills demands

1.5.1 Background: Within Gloucestershire there are a number of important development sites for housing and infrastructure. These sites provide an opportunity for working with developers and construction companies to incorporate apprenticeships and other provision as part of the contracts/sub-contracts for the sites. Currently, GCC and the six District Councils have differing approaches to this, with some acknowledging that more could be done to incorporate clauses in the relevant contracts/sub-contracts.

Some areas and housing estates are undergoing redevelopment/refurbishment and there is the opportunity for employment and skills opportunities and provision to be integrated into these areas at an early stage. Examples here include the redevelopment of Matson and Podsmead estates by Gloucester City Homes.

1.5.2 Baseline data: None at present, only initial discussions with District Councils

1.5.3 Monitoring: Further research and guidance from GESB members needed.

1.5.4 Possible KPIs: Number of development areas supported; number of residents supported. Further research and guidance from GESB members needed.

1.5.5 Routes to achieving the KPIs: Further research and guidance from GESB members needed.

1.5.6 Key providers: Local colleges; universities; adult education provision; private and voluntary sector education and skills providers; Adviza

1.5.7 Resource challenges/issues: Some capacity in existing GCC Skills and Employment Commissioning Team to assist with co-ordination of this work. District Councils and GCC have differing approaches to building employment and skills requirements into contracts/sub-contracts so some co-ordination and identification and sharing of good practice would be required.

1.5.8 Good practice already identified: Some GCC and District Council contracts/sub-contracts plus monitoring arrangements for these. Similarly, the affordable housing providers operating in the county (e.g. Gloucester City Homes, Two Rivers, etc. all have expertise in building employment and skills requirements into contracts and sub-contracts.

1.5.9 Relevant projects/initiatives to highlight to the GESB: See comments above re. good practice.

## **1.6 Employment and Skills support for inward investment/companies expanding or relocating**

1.6.1 Background: Companies moving into Gloucestershire (inward investment) or those seeking to expand operations or move to other parts of the county have commented that they would like help with such things as: understanding the local labour market; recruiting to fill specific skills gaps; easily accessible information about sourcing particular training programmes; being able to go to one education and training provider to source training for the company, rather than having to go to several.

1.6.2 Baseline data: None yet, only anecdotal information from those supporting companies relocating or planning for inward investment.

1.6.3 Monitoring: No system in place as yet so one would need to be established, linking the work of GFirst LEP, GCC, Growth Hub.

1.6.4 Possible KPIs: Number of businesses supported; number of businesses supported that go on to inward investment in Gloucestershire; number of jobs generated; number of jobs filled by Gloucestershire residents; numbers of staff trained

1.6.5 Routes to achieving the KPIs: GFirst LEP is seeking to secure European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to boost the resource in the county to manage inward investment. Employment and skills support for relevant companies could be linked with this project if funding is secured. Local education and skills providers could be introduced to the companies in a structured way as part of the inward investment/relocation process.

1.6.6 Key providers: Local colleges and private training providers; GFirst LEP; Growth Hub

1.6.7 Resource challenges/issues: Current limitations on resources to support this via GCC, GFirst LEP and Growth Hub so a co-ordinated response would need to be developed.

1.6.8 Good practice already identified: Research required.

1.6.9 Relevant projects/initiatives to highlight to the GESB: Research required into support approaches used elsewhere.

## **1.7 Strengthening Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) provision and encouraging more people to go into STEM careers**

1.7.1 Background: Several of the key, growth and emerging sectors in Gloucestershire require staff with strong STEM knowledge and skills. Existing staff will need upskilling/retraining in STEM subjects and young people entering the workforce need qualifications and aptitudes that will allow them to progress into STEM-related careers.

1.7.2 Baseline data: Limited data at present – please see page 39 of the GESB Evidence Base.

1.7.3 Monitoring: Further research and guidance from GESB members needed.

1.7.4 Possible KPIs: Further research and guidance from GESB members needed.

1.7.5 Routes to achieving the KPIs: Further research and guidance from GESB members needed.

1.7.6 Key providers: Secondary schools; colleges; universities; private training providers; Gloucestershire STEM Network; STEM ambassadors

1.7.7 Resource challenges/issues: The STEM ambassadors and Gloucestershire STEM Network members are volunteers. There is some confusion and disagreement over what constitutes STEM jobs, STEM careers and STEM subjects.

1.7.8 Good practice already identified: Gloucestershire STEM Network; STEM ambassadors; ‘Generation STEM’ is a project that has been delivered in a number of other areas in the country and is now able to expand into Gloucestershire. This project aims to explore whether engaging in a structured work experience programme, involving work preparation activities, support in applying for a STEM-related placement, and post-placement support improves young people’s outcomes. The delivery will take place during academic year 2017/18 to Year 10 students and is currently being scoped by the providing organisation and GFirst LEP’s Education Team.

1.7.9 Relevant projects/initiatives to highlight to the GESB: As per good practice above plus the Serco-led STEM project funded by ESF to July 2018 which is operating across Gloucestershire.

## **2. Additional requirements of the GESB**

### **2.1 Planning for employment and skills demands post-Brexit**

There is an expectation on the GESB to be forward-looking and to help the County plan for the post-Brexit period. As discussed with the GESB in induction sessions, the GESB Evidence Base incorporates data that is pre-Brexit and the expectation is that patterns of employment and skills demands will change substantially post-Brexit. The GESB therefore needs to function partly as a ‘post-Brexit think tank’ and to prepare plans for the County’s employment and skills needs into the future.

#### **Possible approaches:**

Questions about businesses’ views about Brexit and their employment and skills needs should be incorporated in the county-wide business survey. Growth Hub staff should be asked to gather and feed into the Growth Hub CRM system the likely employment and skills needs of local businesses. The GESB needs to put time and resource into this as the ‘thought leaders’ for the county on the employment and skills impacts of Brexit.

### **2.2 Industrial Strategy**

It has been agreed with the GFirst LEP Board that the employment and skills priorities for the county will be incorporated into the Gloucestershire Industrial Strategy. There would also be value in having a version of this that could be used independently of the Industrial Strategy. The timelines for this are currently being clarified and the work on the Industrial Strategy as a whole will be led by GFirst LEP. Pete Carr will co-ordinate the employment and skills section of the Strategy.

## 2.3 Careers Strategy

This is expected to be published before the end of 2017 so it needs to be considered as part of the workplan for the GESB and has been included in the agenda for the January 2018 meeting.

## 2.4 Follow-up to Post-16 Area Review

There is an expectation from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for there to be an 'implementation group' for the recommendations from the Post-16 Area review. The proposal is for a sub-group of the GESB to undertake this as two of the principals involved in the Gloucestershire & Wiltshire Area Review (Matt Burgess – GC and Russell Marchant – Hartpury) are on the GESB, along with the GFirst LEP representative (Pete Carr).

## 2.5 Institute of Technology proposals and selection

There has been some shift in policy over Institutes of Technology (IoTs) and Government published further guidance on IoTs on 21st September 2017. This will be shared with the GESB at the October 2017 meeting and links are included below. GFirst LEP has the expectation that the GESB should advise the LEP Board and the Joint Committee on which IoT proposal/s to support. Conflicts of interest for providers on the GESB will need to be managed as part of this process.

On 21<sup>st</sup> September, DfE released a [policy statement](#) and some [FAQs](#) about the **Institutes of Technology**. The Government will be launching a call for proposals to establish Institutes of Technology before the end of 2017. Applicants will be able to bid into a £170m fund to establish high quality and prestigious institutions which specialise in delivering the higher-level technical skills that employers need across England. DfE expect the first IoTs to open in 2019. More details on the bidding process will be published at the competition launch before the end of 2017. DfE are looking for collaborative approaches between employers and the FE and HE sectors. They would like interested organisations to register their interest using this [DfE proforma](#) and send to the IoT team at the Department for Education via [institute.technology@education.gov.uk](mailto:institute.technology@education.gov.uk) by **31<sup>st</sup> October 2017**. This information is for internal DfE use, to enable the IoT team to understand what type of IoT bids they can expect to receive. (You can also keep informed by joining the Institutes of Technology [LinkedIn Group](#).)

## 2.6 Future skills capital bids through Local growth fund

There is no further information on this at the moment as the focus is on funding post-Brexit rather than on the single local growth fund. Civil servants are working on proposals for a prosperity fund that will follow-on from the local growth fund. More details will be shared with the GESB when they become available. Until that point, there currently is not a skills capital fund for local providers to bid into.

## 2.7 Prioritisation of post-ESF employment and skills priorities

There is very limited information on this at present but there is ongoing liaison with ESFA and DWP on this to find out more.



## **2.8 Planning for devolution of Adult Education Budget**

Essentially the Gloucestershire devolution bid has stalled because Government is focusing on existing and further advanced devolution deals. This means the main focus for us is to find out from the early devolution areas (e.g. Greater Manchester, West of England) what is working, pitfalls to avoid, etc. as part of the longer-term goal is for the GESB to take on responsibility for determining how the AEB will be spent in the county.

## **2.9 Priorities for niche sectors in the county**

Examples include cyber and agritech. These are small but growing sectors. The GESB needs to help determine how much to and how to grow these sectors.

## **3. Ways of working**

Members of the GESB have expressed their desire for the Board to develop a clear overall strategy and approach, be action-oriented rather than a 'talk-shop', have 'teeth' and resources to make things happen and to hold local stakeholders and budget holders for employment and skills to account. There was also a desire to identify, map, share and promote good practice (from within Gloucestershire and from elsewhere).

Pete Carr, September 2017