

GFirst LEP Update for GEGJC meeting 3rd June 2020

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1) Gloucestershire Growth Deal – attachments

Attached to this report are the most up to date spreadsheets (up to 27th April, 2020) for the Growth Deal programme.

These highlight;

- i) **‘Forward Look’** – a comprehensive list of all Growth Deal funded projects with a focus on their current status.
- ii) **‘Projects Summary’** – a comprehensive list of all Growth Deal funded projects that highlights forecasted outputs from each project.

These documents are also available on GFirst LEP’s website;

<http://www.gfirstlep.com/projects/>

2) Growth Deal – ‘Headlines’ (to end of April 2020)

- **Growth Hub Network:** Concentration has now switched to support for businesses in response to Covid-19. A Business Response Survey has been distributed. Up to 21st May, 613 responses were received from Gloucestershire businesses, 48% of which requested further support. Support was given from across the Growth Hub Network by Business Guides and Navigators working remotely. Comprehensive details from the survey plus other intelligence gathered is distributed weekly to Leadership Gloucestershire. A remote events programme is in place up until the end of July 2020, with over 50 events planned across the network. There has been a good level of take up and demand for these events. Feedback on the support provided by the Growth Hub Network during this difficult period for businesses has been excellent.
- **Cyber Park (WCTIS), Cheltenham:** Public Share events were due to be held in March for Phases 3 & 4 of WCTIS and for West of Cheltenham Walking and Cycling Improvements (WCWCI) to share current proposals and seek feedback from key stakeholders and members of the public. However, regrettably these had to be cancelled due to the restrictions on social distancing, we have redirected stakeholders to provide feedback online. New website launched - www.goldenvalleyuk.com
- **Blackfriars and Quayside, Gloucester:** The Shire Hall (Gloucestershire County Council HQ) refurbishment scheme, that formed part of the regeneration

project has been shortlisted for the South West RICS (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors) Social Impact Awards 2020.

- **Farm 491, Cirencester:** The team have adapted its season of events exploring the future of British Farming to comply with the UK's Covid-19 social distancing measures. The organisation has developed a programme of webinars, many of which will be available to everyone, with a few select online events being held exclusively for its members.
- **UK:DRIC, Gloucester:** During these uncertain times with Covid-19, positive conversations continue to take place between GFirst LEP and Gloucester City Council and there is reassurance provided that Gloucester City are still very much in favour of leading the project, but currently and understandably this is not their main priority focus area.
- **Hartpury University, Tech to Plate:** Due to Covid-19, engagements have been cancelled initially until 1st July. The team have transitioned their face to face work to online with a significant 'Tech Talk' week running w/c 11th May.
- **Merrywalks Shopping Centre, Stroud:** The contractors have now put a plan in place to safely return to site week commencing May 11th. They will initially restart work on the top deck of the multi-storey car park. This phase of work will extend the area of car parking into the space previously occupied by the glazed canopy at Five Valleys.
Work is also due to start later in the year on the new £4.9 million Medical Centre which will be part of the wider improvements to the town centre, contracts were exchanged in March and tenders will be going out at the end of May. The new surgery building on King Street will entail the total refurbishment of the existing Poundland unit.
- **St Barnabas Transport Scheme:** This scheme has been withdrawn by the promoter, GCC, so the £1m funding is subject to a reallocation, with £550k being committed to the Gloucester Railway Station project.
- **A419 Stonehouse Improvements:** Works are now currently taking place at Horsetrough roundabout and Downton Road junctions. Temporary Traffic Management is working well with the current reduced traffic throughout the site.
- **Lydney Cycling Scheme:** Contractor is continuing to work through the snagging list whilst observing social distancing requirements under the Coronavirus lockdown. Positive feedback received from various members of the public now that the scheme is complete.
- **Gloucester SW By-Pass Widening:** The proposed Public Inquiry date of May 19th for the Compulsory Purchase Order has been postponed by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) as a result of the ongoing global pandemic. The promoters are in weekly contact with the DfT casework team in an effort to understand when a new date will be set. There is currently no revised date

from PINs. If all objections can be resolved/withdrawn ahead of any new inquiry date, this public inquiry will not be necessary. GCC has formally responded back to the seven objections received and is working with City Business Centre to agree Heads of Terms. The GCC project team have written to freeholders and tenants to make it clear that the council has no intention of pressurising businesses to find alternative premises at this difficult and unique time, but to also reiterate the intention to acquire the necessary land and the willingness to work now with those who have identified alternative business premises.

- **Gloucestershire Airport, Anson Park:** Due to the change of key personnel at the Airport, as well as the current pandemic, there has been a slight delay in terms of proceeding with the Funding Agreement. Detailed discussions have taken place with the promoter and reassurances have been provided that there is full commitment and enthusiasm to proceed with the project. There is now agreement to work towards the end of June deadline for completing and signing the Funding Agreement so that funds can flow and work on site commence in earnest.
- **Gloucester Railway Station:** Due to the £1m St Barnabas Transport Scheme being withdrawn by the promoters, £550k Local Growth Fund has been re-allocated to this project meaning that they will now receive a grant of £4.3m, subject to LEP Board Approval. The project is at Due Diligence stage and will be going ahead of the Investment Panel in June and then presented to the LEP Board Meeting on July 14th 2020.

3) EU Inward Investment Programme Activity Report – ‘Invest in Gloucestershire’

This is the collaborative bid with the County Council and the six District Councils supported by ERDF European funding to set up a dedicated team to focus on inward investment in the county, in particular (non- EU) foreign direct investment.

The overall project value is £1 million with 50% coming via ERDF and is for a period of 3 years – January 2019 to December 2021.

The focus is on four key sectors; Cyber, Agri-Tech, Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing & Renewables.

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all the international events through 2020 where we had planned to have a presence and ‘fly the flag’ for Gloucestershire have been cancelled. These included MIPIM in France, the Farnborough International Air Show, Hanover Messe and a trade trip to South Korea.

The project’s attention is currently focussed on working up our Advanced Manufacturing proposition for the county, as well as working with the Department for International Trade

(DiT) on High Potential Opportunities (HPO) for both the Cyber Sector and the Agri-Tech sector.

(NB - An HPO is where DiT identifies Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) opportunities that have yet to achieve their full potential. DiT's global network of sector and specialist insight is then combined with partners' local knowledge to build a much more clearly defined and differentiated proposition to be promoted by DiT staff in overseas posts.)

4) Local Industrial Strategy (LIS)

Our Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) was a matter of days/weeks away from being finally signed off by central Government. The draft had successfully passed through the Local Industrial Strategy Analysts Panel (LISA), the Logic Chains had been approved and the Commitments spreadsheet completed. Sadly then, we were all hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. Understandably, sign off has now been paused, awaiting further guidance from BEIS on next steps.

Our view would be that a Covid-19 Recovery Plan/Addendum should be included as part of our final LIS. Our LIS was evidenced based and the key priorities were widely supported by the private, public and voluntary sectors and we are comfortable that the priority sectors highlighted in the draft LIS would sit comfortably for Gloucestershire in a post Covid-19 world.

Ends