

GFirst LEP Update for GEGJC meeting 20th January, 2021

Prepared by Dev Chakraborty (Deputy Chief Executive GFirst LEP)

This GEGJC meeting is an additional meeting to the normal quarterly meetings and my report therefore will be slightly different to normal.

This is due to the fact that all our Growth Deal project partners report on a quarterly basis on the progress of their project. The most recent update was included in the GEGJC meeting on 18th November 2020 and the next quarterly returns will form the basis of my report for the next GEGJC on 10th March 2021. Also, at the last GEGJC the LEP's report included a comprehensive update on Covid Recovery activity.

So, there is just one item to flag to the Committee (for information only) and that relates to the '**Additional Restrictions Grant**' (**Discretionary scheme**) part of central Government's support to businesses as part of their Covid response.

All our local authorities have received their allocation and I sit on the group with all the County's S151 Officers each week to update on all the various grants received and any issues arising.

We raised the idea of potentially pooling some of this discretionary grant allocation and use the funds for recovery related activity on a countywide basis.

(NB – we are in the process of seeking permission from MHCLG to pool the Discretionary Scheme.)

The team at the LEP have come up with three ideas;

1) Helping to get more SMEs online

Concept - to try to encourage smaller businesses to go online and more importantly to trade online.

Delivery – to set up and run a campaign that would include running virtual seminars encouraging businesses to go online for the first time or to improve their online facilities e.g. to set up E-commerce.

Small grants of up to £3,000 would be made available to pay towards setting up a brand new or an enhanced website.

To successfully receive a grant, the business owner would need to attend at least one workshop (e.g. social media, brand management, cyber awareness etc.) and a diagnostic

would be undertaken by a Growth Hub Business Navigator for due diligence purposes and to establish their need. Thereby offering a complete package of support.

Costs;

Project Manager P/T (£30K including on costs) – this role would include understanding the current offers – there is a lot of free support for businesses to get online but it isn't set out in a format for businesses to know where to go at what stage. For example, if they have no online presence at all they need to do ABC, if they need to improve a site they do XYZ.

The Project Manager would need to develop the programme, all the resources, event programme etc. and oversee the team.

Grant administration part-time (£15K including on costs).

Navigator part time (£17K including on costs).

Deliver 100 grants @£3,000 per grant, spread evenly across the 6 local district areas.

This would also offer a programme of activity that other businesses could access to upskill.

Total investment – £362,000

(Split equally across 6 District councils = £60,333 per council)

2) Set up an Apprenticeship Clearing House

Concept – a one stop shop for apprenticeships, matching up trainees with businesses.

Delivery – to set up an impartial service to support young people and businesses within the local community. To create a recognised brand that all partners buy into. The primary goals would be to increase the number of apprenticeships in the county and to increase employer engagement.

Costs;

- Create website
- 2 fulltime employees, 1 part time and the hosting of the website and free phone number

Total investment – £250,000 for a 2 year delivery

(Split equally across 6 District councils = £41,667 per council)

3) 'Think Gloucestershire' Campaign

GFirst LEP has been running a 'Think Gloucestershire' campaign since June 2020 with a variety of different creative adverts.

The proposal is to extend and increase the profile of the campaign through Spring and into Summer 2021 (February to September 2021 – 9 month campaign) to include; paid for advertising, social media campaigns on Facebook and Twitter.

The campaign would also look to promote the night-time economy - this idea has been supported by Gloucestershire Constabulary.

Total investment – £90,000 for a 9 month campaign

(Split equally across 6 District councils = £15,000 per council)

