

GFirst LEP Update for GEGJC meeting 30th May, 2023

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1) The future of Local Enterprise Partnerships and GFirst LEP

You will all be aware of the Chancellor's announcement on March 15th on the future of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

The Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt announced that, *"The Government will 'consult' on transferring responsibilities for local economic development from Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to local authorities from April 2024.*

For levelling up to truly succeed we need to unleash the civic entrepreneurship that's only possible when elected local leaders are able to fund and deliver solutions to their own challenges that means giving them responsibility for local economic growth and the benefits from the upside when it happens."

In terms of next steps, central Government are now working with local areas to determine how the functions currently undertaken by LEPs are best delivered at a local level in future.

A four-week information gathering exercise was launched to gain a fuller understanding of the implications of this funding change. This work is being led for Government by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – working closely with colleagues in the Department for Business and Trade and His Majesty's Treasury.

This 4-week exercise has since been extended to over 8 weeks with a deadline of Friday 19th May.

Following the exercise, Government will notify LEPs and all local and combined authorities 'by Summer' of the outcome and their final decision.

Please find attached our 10-point Delivery Plan for the current financial year.

2) Inward Investment project – *Invest in Gloucestershire*

Whilst the *European Funded* Inward Investment project came to an end at the end of March, the team continue to be busy flying the Gloucestershire flag around the world and in particular showcasing our important sector strengths in agri-tech, cyber and advanced engineering and manufacturing.

Invest in Gloucestershire recently completed a **summative assessment** for the project which has identified the impressive value that has been generated for the county and local economy.

Partially funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the project supports international businesses looking to set up in Gloucestershire. It is a GFirst LEP driven initiative, run in collaboration with Gloucestershire County Council, the six district authorities and the Department for Business and Trade.

The ERDF funding finished at the end of March, and as part of the funding agreement a summative assessment report was commissioned by independent research consultants KADA Research. The extensive report assessed performance and impact for the county. Despite a number of external factors affecting the delivery of the project, including COVID and Brexit, the project has made a significant impact. KADA Research has estimated that the £1 million project has leveraged over £11 million of added value to the local economy.

The programme has focussed on attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into Gloucestershire in four strategic sectors - agri-tech, cyber-tech, advanced engineering & manufacturing, and renewable energy - to drive economic growth. The motivation behind bidding for the ERDF funding and creating the project was to address the lack of FDI landing in Gloucestershire and the absence of a coherent offer to communicate on the global stage. Businesses did not have the information and UK Government did not have a dedicated single point of contact or proposition to promote Gloucestershire's offer.

The proactive and versatile approach of the project team, reacting to the external challenges faced during the past four years, is reflected in the results of the report which highlighted a vibrant and coherent dialogue to the global audience and key stakeholders.

The team have focussed on building relationships with key partners, producing a suite of sector-specific collateral material and attending events in the UK and overseas. This has established a buoyant pipeline of enquiries from potential investors and led to 'wins' that has resulted in new job opportunities in the county.

The relationship with the Department for Business & Trade has flourished, with the project being awarded the UK's only **Cyber High Potential Opportunity** and being chosen by the Department to host a delegation of 10 high growth Canadian cyber companies, along with

Manchester and Belfast. The team has helped put Gloucestershire on the international map for investors, with the help of key partners in our cyber ecosystem such as CyNam.

In addition, the **Gloucestershire Agri-tech Partnership** (GAPT) has been formed, further catapulting the county's profile on the international stage.

As a result of the research, the report has outlined the following findings:

1. Inward Investment is a key part of the local economic ecosystem.
2. FDI is not a quick process and building partnerships and momentum is important.
3. Flexibility is key. Expanding Invest in Gloucestershire's remit can further enhance this.
4. Proactive and co-ordinated activity is crucial to ongoing FDI success.
5. Being targeted and focussed on strengths is needed to attract FDI.

As a result of the findings and the incredible impact the project is deemed to have had on the local economy financially, GFirst LEP have committed to the continuation of a slimmed-down Invest in Gloucestershire project. The team have a busy year ahead supporting the impressive pipeline already established and the existing investors recently landed into the county.

Attached you will find a full copy of the Summative Assessment.

3) 'Made in Gloucestershire' initiative continues to grow



The 'Made in Gloucestershire' initiative officially launched on July 4th, 2022. The initiative received £150,000 from the SEDF at the March 2022 GEGJC meeting to cover the first two years of running costs.

Less than a year since its launch, Made in Gloucestershire currently features **132** members and affiliates. The project also has 1,541 followers on Instagram.

We recently launched a new promotional video for the initiative and in 4 weeks it has been viewed an amazing **12,341** times!

You can view the video here;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nixzRwgYysM&t=1s>



Key objectives of the initiative are;

- to fly the flag for the food & drink sector in Gloucestershire
- to produce a directory that will help and encourage local procurement
- to promote the provenance of Gloucestershire's great food & drink
- Think local, buy local – to encourage people to shop local
- to boost sales, encourage sustainable growth, thereby driving job creation

Explore Made in Gloucestershire's directory here:

www.madeingloucestershire.com/member-directory

4) Jim Grant, Principal of Cirencester College R.I.P

As many of you will be aware, it is with great sadness that we received the news of the death of Jim Grant, Principal of Cirencester College and LEP Board member. Jim made an overwhelming contribution to Cirencester College and GFirst LEP. He leaves an incredible legacy for the county through future proofing education particularly in STEM learning; T-Levels and Digital Skills training. He will be greatly missed.

Cirencester College issued the following statement following the passing of Jim Grant. *"It is with deep regret that we inform you of the passing of Jim Grant, Principal of Cirencester College, and a beloved backbone of our community for over thirty years.*

Jim dedicated the majority of his professional life to the college, playing a crucial role in the huge success that it is today. Jim joined the college as a lecturer of history and archaeology in 1991, progressing quickly to senior lecturer, then head of faculty, assistant principal, vice principal and then Principal in 2017. He was a friend, coach and mentor for many people, staff and students alike, and his impact on all of us was profound.

Students were very important to Jim, everything he did was focused on their experience at the College and how he could make it even better. He has overseen significant growth in the popularity of the college in terms of numbers of staff and students. Thanks to his efforts leading the redevelopments, the campus is unrecognisable compared to the one he joined all those years ago, a notable recent example being our award-winning Digital Building. Our site now demonstrates a strong commitment to ecological sustainability, as well as providing a thriving and vibrant educational environment for our students.

Jim developed an effective management team who will ensure his vision of widening social mobility and providing outstanding education for everyone, continues on the trajectory he has started. Exemplified in his recent appearances in the media and upcoming visit to Parliament, Jim was a champion for our college, and for the nation's sixth form sector in general. He was a passionate advocate for T-levels and helped make Cirencester the first college in the country to offer an apprenticeship in archaeology. He has left a legacy of innovative curriculum development from which many students will benefit. Finally, he was also a published author of several works, including multiple editions of a successful coursebook for archaeology students. He will be deeply missed by us all.

Peter Holmes, Chair of Governors said, 'Jim will be missed by a great number of people who have worked with him now and over the many years he has given to Cirencester College and its community. The governors and the management team are united in their wish to ensure his legacy continues to grow and thrive.'

Our thoughts remain with Jim's family, friends and everyone at Cirencester College.