**gfirst LEP**
growing gloucestershire

**Local Industrial Strategy (LIS)**

**Questions for consideration and response from Cheltenham**

1. What are the main barriers to future economic growth and productivity in Gloucestershire?

   - Affordable housing including tenure options
   - Appropriate skills – we would ask that the LIS is clear in its evidence on understanding what is undermining future growth
   - Ageing population
   - Haemorrhaging of youngsters to other cities
   - Sufficient expansion space for businesses (both existing and new businesses) within existing travel to work areas. This needs to be based on evidential needs and not linked to administrative boundaries. Work is being undertaken by the County Planning Officers Group and it is essential that this work feeds effectively into the LIS and there is clear collaboration to ensure evidence is fit for purpose for spatial planning and LIS.
   - Sustainable and affordable public transport connecting home to work
   - Digital connectivity
   - Access to staff from abroad – research is needed on the implications on Brexit for Gloucestershire and access to wider international skills. Access to staff is cross cutting across technical sectors and the agricultural economy.

2. What skills issues are impacting negatively on economic growth and productivity in Gloucestershire?

   - Need for a University sector offer that reflects local industries – advanced manufacturing, engineering, cyber
   - Limited offer of school 6th forms focussed upon A levels and little else
   - More research needed around technical colleges/apprenticeships – what are other key areas doing well at on this agenda? Need to reflect on lessons learnt elsewhere
   - Maintenance of apprenticeship recruitment
   - Develop skills for carbon neutral ambitions – energy, construction (new and retro-fit)
   - Need to use the environment of Gloucestershire as a positive, it offers the opportunity to help define the USP for the county alongside accessibility

3. What infrastructure improvements are needed to support *'sustainable & inclusive'* future economic growth and productivity in Gloucestershire?

   - Transport needs to drive spatial allocations across Gloucestershire
   - Improvements in public transport, notably bus & rail to reduce reliance upon private vehicles. Public transport needs to be affordable, reliable and throughout the day with plenty of opportunities for modal interchange. Think bus to walk or cycle not just bus to car. Encourage car-sharing by providing car sharing points potentially at modal interchanges
   - Create more modal interchange opportunities 'Park and Interchange'.
   - The quality of 'Green infrastructure' is a Gloucestershire resource and needs to be underpinned with adoption of the 'Building with nature' standard
   - Investigate options for a freight hub to remove unnecessary vehicle movements through our towns and City,
   - Cycling & walking infrastructure needs to be prioritised particularly in urban areas
   - Existing 'pinchpoints' need addressing as they affect not just Cheltenham but wider Gloucestershire and beyond – A417, J10, J9
   - Utilities eg availability and resilience of power
   - Need for all new developments to be carbon neutral
   - Digital connectivity
   - Smart City – understanding of intelligent technology and application to Gloucestershire
   - Improve public realm to enhance existing local offers

4. What support is needed to help businesses to grow, innovate, become more productive and access new markets?

   - Affordable 'start-up' space
   - Supporting entrepreneurial spirit
   - Links to larger companies
   - Eco-systems that encourage collaboration
   - Maintain 'growth hub' support model eg export expertise
   - Incentivise new businesses – government action on rate relief

5. What specific economic challenges are faced by the urban and rural areas of Gloucestershire?

   - Rural deprivation based around lack of affordable housing, high transport costs, inaccessibility of services
   - Digital connectivity
   - Urban deprivation pockets
   - Rural isolation in some parts
   - Need for targeted resources

6.  Which industrial sectors will drive future economic growth and productivity in Gloucestershire?

    - Advanced manufacturing/engineering
    - Cyber – see Athey Report of 2014
    - Activity focussed town centres building upon creative and cultural offers as part of the leisure mix
    - Sustainable power
    - Culture
    - Creative industries
    - Changing nature of our town centres – more activity based to support core retail

7.  What can be done to ensure that all Gloucestershire residents benefit from future economic growth?

    - Clear need for Countywide leadership
    - Setting and delivering a clear shared strategy. G2050 created a potential platform but its media engagement was weak and sense of purpose appears to have dwindled
    - Clear understanding of what inclusive growth looks like
    - Clear understanding of the environmental consequences of economic growth and how impacts can be managed/mitigated.
    - Targeting resource at areas of deprivation

8.  What can Gloucestershire contribute to the four Industrial Strategy Grand Challenges (Artificial Intelligence & Data, Ageing Society, Clean Growth, and the Future of Mobility)?

    - AI & data challenges will be supported by the cyber park
    - Clean growth via local companies eg Ecotricity; Garden Town / Community status; 'Building with Nature'
    - Future of mobility needs to grasp applicable research eg utilising any rail capacity for a regional Schnellbahn type solution; need for affordable mass transit solution along A40 corridor connecting Cheltenham & Gloucester
    - Ageing Society – assess beneficial impacts of established activities eg Festivals; don't undervalue potential contribution to economy through mentoring, apprenticeship support etc; embrace retired professionals. Also need to understand deprivation issues affecting some parts of our ageing community and how the Industrial Strategy can support the key sectors/encourage talent to support long term societal needs arising from our ageing demographic profile.

9. What opportunities are there for collaboration within the M4 corridor region and/or M5 corridor region and wider UK to improve economic growth and productivity?

- Collaboration most likely to be borne out of comparable industries; Gloucestershire tends to operate within the M5 aviation corridor whereas the M4 is more manufacturing. Cyber and its presence in the Thames Valley could provide the vital 'link'.
- Recognise the importance of the West Midlands and critically the A46 corridor
- Note the strategic significance of links other than road eg Oxford-Cambridge

10. What other economic challenges, opportunities or sources of information do you think should be taken into consideration when preparing the Local Industrial Strategy's emerging priorities?

- Links to spatial strategies to deliver sufficiency of supply for employment and housing
- Recognition of the critical role of valuable green space/corridors and equally mass transit corridors, whilst also recognising that land release in the green belt can play a part in delivering strategic employment sites. This needs to be clearly linked to the wider spatial planning agenda for Gloucestershire in the context of the wider planning balance.
- Need for an effective planning process; critically for infrastructure and particularly transport to lead spatial planning. Currently infrastructure and planning responsibilities held at different 'tiers' which is not conducive to effective plan making.
- Feasibility of 3$^{rd}$ Severn Crossing
- Need for effective mass transit solutions – not just more roads

The information that the LEP is seeking may consist of, but is not limited to, the following types:

Data sets / Research papers / Surveys / Reviews / Strategies

The evidence base will need to be robust and will be subject to external scrutiny. The LEP are therefore looking for you to submit information that is accurate, up-to-date and verifiable.

We are particularly looking for information that is not already in the public domain.

The current comments in the paper have been informed by engagement with the following:

Cheltenham Business Improvement District, Cheltenham Borough Council, Cheltenham Development Task Force, Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce.