

Dear Members of the CBC Planning Committee,

I am writing to you on behalf of GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), in support of the University of Gloucestershire proposal to redevelop its Pittville Campus.

Gloucestershire is a prosperous economic area with huge potential. To help unlock that potential, our work with the University of Gloucestershire is playing a crucial role in helping drive economic growth in both Cheltenham and the wider county.

If we are to realise our plans for the county, it is crucial that our education institutions are supported to thrive and grow, so we can attract and retain talent to the county and realise the objectives GFirst LEP has set out in its Strategic Economic Plan for Gloucestershire.

Working with the University, we have already established The Growth Hub, located at the Oxstalls Campus. I believe that the success of the University's planning application is crucial to Gloucestershire's continued economic development.

In our Strategic Economic Plan, we have set the target of creating thousands of jobs within the county; with an aging population, a flexible and skilled workforce will provide the resilience required in an ever-changing economic climate, as reported in the Gloucestershire's Skills statement.

It is vital that the county can attract new talent and the University plays a crucial part in achieving this, as currently more than a third of its graduates already choose to stay and make their career in the county.

Redeveloping the near-derelict Pittville Campus to create a 794-bed student village will allow the university to strengthen and grow its position in the fiercely competitive higher education sector, by providing the kind of high quality accommodation the market demands. The funding deal will result in the release of significant funds to enable the university to invest millions in new teaching and learning facilities.

A highly skilled workforce for Gloucestershire is one of the key aims in GFirst LEP's Strategic Economic Plan, and so every effort made towards this will support the growth of the county's economy.

It is my view as Chair of GFirst LEP that refusal from the Committee will not only severely compromise the growth of the university, but negatively impact the growth of the economy of Cheltenham and the wider county.

Diane Savory

Chair, GFirst LEP