

LEP - Lancashire Innovation Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 7th June, 2022 at 2.00 pm in Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room at County Hall, Preston

Present:

Graham Baldwin - Chair

Melissa Conlon

Jane Dalton

Gaynor Dykes

Mike Kenny

Lindsay Roche

Judson Smythe

Dion Williams

In Attendance:

Andy Walker, Head of Business Growth, Business and Innovation, Economic Development, Lancashire County Council.

Matt Wright, Lancashire Universities Innovation Manager, Business and Innovation, Economic Development, Lancashire County Council.

Vanessa Robinson-Hoy Senior Project Officer, Business and Innovation, Economic Development Lancashire County Council.

Mike Neville, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council.

Presenter:

Rob Macnee, Senior Consultant, Steer Economic Development.

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Claire Whelan, Rick Holland, Michael Gibson, Matthew Spinks and Natalie Jones.

2. Constitution, Terms of Reference, and Membership of the Innovation Board

Mr Neville reported that Jane Binnion (the Start Up, Micro and SME representative) had resigned from the Board and that the membership details would be updated to reflect that Gaynor Dykes had moved to the British Business Bank. It was noted that the Terms of Reference provided for a maximum of 15 members on the Board and the Chair suggested that Officers look to identify suitable individuals to fill the two vacancies, one of which should represent social innovation on the Board.

Resolved:

1. That the membership of the Innovation Board, as set out below, is noted.

G Baldwin	Chair	UCLan
C Whelan	Deputy Chair	Corporate & Finance (LEP Board)
M Conlon	Skills & International Rep	AMRC NW
R Holland	UK RI Rep	Innovate UK
D Williams	Universities Rep	Lancaster University
N Jones	Research & Science Rep	Engineering & Physical Sciences Council
J Dalton	Strategy & Branding Rep	Groundswell Innovation Ltd
L Roche	Thematic - Energy & Environment	Westinghouse Ltd
M Gibson	Thematic – Digital & Technology	Miralis Data Limited
G Dykes	Thematic - Professional & Services	British Business Bank
J Smythe	Thematic – Manufacturing & Construction	MGS Plastics Limited
M Kenny	Thematic - Health & Life Sciences	Innovation Agency (AHSN)
M Spinks	Thematic - Manufacturing & Construction	Victrex Ltd

2. That Officers be requested to explore potential candidates to fill the two vacancies on the Board, one of which should represent social innovation.
3. That the current Terms of Reference of the Innovation Board, as set out at Appendix 'A' to the report presented, are noted and a copy placed in the Minute Book.

3. Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made regarding items of the agenda at this point in the meeting.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Board considered the Minutes from the previous meeting held on 3rd March 2022. The briefing paper on the Innovate UK event to promote clusters in Lancashire/Cumbria requested at the last meeting was included as an Appendix to item 5 on the agenda for 7th June 2022.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2022 are confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

5. Innovation Update

A report was presented on a proposed Shared Prosperity Fund programme, collaboration between the three North West Innovation Boards together with an update on the Innovate Lancashire Website.

Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)

It was reported that in June 2023 the SPF, a UK Government funding scheme, would replace the European Structural and Innovations Funds (ESIF) which historically supported many of the innovation programmes in Lancashire.

The Board recognised that Brexit, combined with the change to funding (especially as SPF would involve a reduced amount of available funds) would have an impact on innovation in Lancashire and across the North-West. However, the change also presented an opportunity to develop a single programme which would involve all the Lancashire Universities, and key partners and provide a menu of services to support innovation in business built around cyber/digital, low carbon, manufacturing, and health.

The Chair reported that discussions were taking place with District Councils in Lancashire regarding future planning around innovation. These discussions had highlighted a lack of understanding regarding the role of the Innovation Board and the need to raise awareness of the benefits of and value of innovation schemes and focus on the value of core competencies of partners.

The potential impact of reduced future funding for innovation was discussed and it was suggested that the Board should seek to lobby Local MPs, the Minister for Brexit, and the Government

Collaboration between the three North West Innovation Boards.

Mr Wright reported that the Chairs of the three Innovation Boards in the North-West (Lancashire, Manchester, and Liverpool) were due to meet to discuss current activity, priorities, best practice, and future cooperation/collaboration.

It was also noted that discussions were taking place between the 11 Local Enterprise Partnerships in the North-West, BASE and the Government's Levelling Up unit regarding clusters and the innovation accelerator pilot.

Innovate Lancashire Website

Ms Robinson-Hoy updated the Board on the innovation brand and website which went live at the end of April 2022. It was noted that officers were engaging with local businesses to gather content for the website. It was noted that links had been established in social media to direct people to the Innovate Lancashire website and suggested that specific link be provided for Board members to use in emails or networking sites such as LinkedIn to direct more traffic to the website.

Resolved:

1. That the Board be kept informed of further developments regarding the Shared Prosperity Fund programme, collaboration between the three North West Innovation Boards and Innovate Lancashire Website.
2. That Board members be provided with a formal communication from the Innovation Board Chair which can be used for collective and individual lobbying regarding the provision of future funding for innovation locally, regionally, and nationally.
3. That Board members be provided with a hyperlink to the Innovate Lancashire Website for use in emails or when networking to direct more traffic to the website.

Updates from individual Board members

At this point in the meeting that Chair asked Board members if there was any specific activity which they wished to inform the Board of.

Mr Kenny reported that he was involved in a bid for funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council to create a digital health hub to promote knowledge and skills sharing across healthcare, academia and business, and drive innovation in digital health. A total of £8 million funding was available for projects lasting up to three years with individual awards being up to a maximum of £4 million. The closing date for expressions of interest was 28th June 2022 with full proposals being submitted by 11th August 2022.

Ms Dalton referred to a project by Copeland Borough Council to establish a digital community hub in the town centre of Whitehaven in Cumbria and suggested that Officers may want to speak to those involved in the project.

Ms Conlon updated the Board on a pan Lancashire decarbonisation project and the Chair suggested that Mr Wright contact her outside of the meeting to discuss further.

The Chair suggested that future agenda for the Board include a 10-minute timeslot for roundtable feedback from individual Board members on activity.

Resolved:

1. That the feedback from individual Board members on innovation activity given at the meeting is noted.
2. That a 10-minute timeslot for roundtable feedback from individual Board members on activity be include don future agenda.
3. That Mr Wright contact Melissa Conlon directly regarding the pan Lancashire decarbonisation project

6. Innovation Plan Refresh

Mr Macnee, Senior Consultant from Steer Economic Development gave a presentation on the outcome of the previous workshop and gave feedback on further external consultations and sectoral analysis of smart specialisation for Lancashire as outlined in the report.

In considering the report members of the Board made the following comments.

- a) There was a need to develop a clear strategic narrative regarding innovation which could easily be articulated to others. Such a narrative to include reference to security resilience around cyber and defence, building on existing strengths in Lancashire but also including new areas such as energy security.
- b) Future discussions regarding Advanced Manufacturing should also include Paper and Food.
- c) Then key messages from external consultations are noted, particularly regarding the need to establish strategic and tactical alliances with others to support Lancashire's innovation economy.
- d) The proposals for 'Staying Ahead' strengths and 'New Routeways' referred to in the presentation are noted and should be the focus of a further report from Steer Economic Development (with examples) for discussion at a future workshop.
- e) Consideration should be given to developing the UK long term sovereign capability for manufacturing and energy production including the capacity of UK supply chains in critical areas, as supported by the national supply chain database.
- f) 'People skills' should be incorporated into future discussions involving the 'New Routeways' set out in the presentation.

Mr Wright also invited Board members to contact him outside of the meeting to discuss plans which partner organisations may have for the next 10 years to inform future discussions around the Innovation Plan refresh.

Resolved:

1. That the comments of Board members set out above be taken into consideration during the development of the next stage of the Lancashire Innovation Plan refresh.
2. That a copy of the presentation from Steer Economic Development be circulated to Board members outside of the meeting for future reference.

3. That arrangements be made for a further workshop to be held in advance of the next Board focussing on Smart Specialisation and expanding the 'Staying Ahead' and 'New Routeways' elements of the presentation.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Board would be held at 10.30am on 5th September 2022 in Committee Room 'B' – The Diamond Jubilee Room at County Hall, Preston.