

LEP - Lancashire Innovation Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 6th February, 2023 at 10.30 am in Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston.

Present:

Professor G Baldwin - Chair

Ms M Conlon	Mr M Kenny
Ms J Dalton	Mr R O'Neill*
Mr M Gibson	Mr J Smythe
Ms R Jenkins	Mr M Spinks
Mr T Attard OBE DL*	

*Attended the meeting remotely via MS Teams

In attendance

Andy Walker, Head of Service - Business Growth, Lancashire County Council.
Maya Ellis, Senior Project Officer – Business Growth, Lancashire County Council.
Mike Neville, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council.
Hannah Lysons, Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council.

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and presented apologies from Mr R Holland and Mr D Williams. Apologies were also received from Mr R McGrath. The Chair reminded everyone present to use the microphones provided when speaking so that the Board members who had joined the meeting remotely would be able to hear the discussion.

2. Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interests were made at this point in the meeting.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Chair noted that the appointment of Mr R McGrath, Mr R O'Neill, Ms R Jenkins and Mr A Attard, OBE DL as Board members had been approved by the Lancashire Enterprise Board on 13th December 2022.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th December 2022 are confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Spotlight Board member reports

As three of the newly appointed Board members were in attendance the Chair

invited everyone present to introduce themselves and then asked the individual new Board members to give details on their background.

Rommany Jenkins informed the meeting that as the Institutions Engagement Manager at Research England she liaised with a range of Higher Education providers in England to provide funding at an institutional level through block grant QR funding (primarily to support research), block grant HEIF funding (to support knowledge exchange) and a small number of competitive funds supporting small research units and infrastructure.

Tony Attard reported that he was Chairman of the Panaz group of companies, the Chairman of Alusid (a company spun out of the University of Central Lancashire creating commercial tiles and solid surfaces from waste streams) and an alumnus of Manchester University where he sat on the Board for Material Science. He had previously been Chairman of the Marketing Lancashire Ltd Board and High Sheriff for Lancashire and was currently a Deputy Lieutenant.

Rory O'Neill, the Director of Communications for Westinghouse in the UK, reported that his work was primarily around the nuclear fuel fabrication and manufacturing facility at Springfields where electricity generation had become increasingly significant due to the impact on the energy market of the conflict in Ukraine. However, the company was also working on driving social value into the locality through its support for recruitment/skills/training and procurement.

Resolved: That the comments from new Board members are noted.

5. Update on the Innovation Plan 2023-28.

Maya Ellis, Senior Project Lead for Business Growth, presented a report on activity following the approval of the Lancashire Innovation Plan, including the development of an operating plan, key performance indicators, marketing, and recruitment of staff.

The creation of a public facing document summarising the contents of the Innovation Plan was discussed and it was noted that this would be useful when communicating the Plan to both the public and the business community. Board members were also presented with some examples of the proposed layout and colour scheme for the PR associated with the Innovation Plan which would be formally launched in April 2023. Existing and future branding/communications were discussed and the importance of establishing a clear consistent message regarding innovation was recognised.

Funding was discussed and it was noted that the intention was to secure initial resources from Lancashire County Council and the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership and align plans with existing budgets from universities, the AMRC and others.

Ms Ellis outlined how some initial resources would be required to establish a small team to oversee implementation of the Innovation Plan, details of which were set out in the report. It was acknowledged that there would be an opportunity to recruit people who had the relevant skills and experience in

July/August 2023 following the end of existing ERDF programs and Ms Ellis confirmed that she would approach universities and other organisations. It was also suggested that the potential for others to contribute to social economic activity associated with implementation of the Plan, either through private sponsorship, benefits in kind or the use of secondments should be explored.

The need for a clear definition of innovation was discussed and the Board recognised that part of any future PR would involve an element of education on innovation in Lancashire.

Regarding the establishment of Key Performance Indicators, the Board was informed that whilst the focus would be on end technology and point development there would be an opportunity to develop KPIs around broader themes. Ms Ellis undertook to speak to Ms Conlon outside of the meeting regarding data analytics and information which could be drawn from the national manufacturing supply chain database.

Resolved: That the feedback from the Board is noted.

6. Proposed sponsors for Innovation Plan actions

Maya Ellis, Senior Project Lead for Business Growth, presented a report on a proposal for Board members to take ownership of the implementation of the Innovation Plan 2023-28 by acting as sponsors for specific actions set out in the Plan.

In considering the report the Board noted that the action around clustering activity in support of the National Cyber Force at Samlesbury had not been allocated due to the current vacancy of the Board for a member representing SMEs. It was also noted that a sponsor had not yet been identified in relation to the provision of Administration.

The Board considered the remaining actions set out in the table and individual Board members agreed to act as sponsor for specific actions as set out below.

It was also proposed that Board members consider acting as Co-Sponsor for the activities to create resilience by sharing the workload and foster collaboration between Board members

Resolved:

1. That approval is given for individual members of the Board to act as Sponsor and Co-sponsor (as set out in the table above) for the implementation and monitoring of the actions set out in the Innovation Plan.
2. That the Senior Project Lead contact individual Board members to identify and confirm sponsorship for any unallocated actions set out in the table specified in 1 above and to identify additional Co-Sponsors where appropriate.

Action	Board Sponsor
1 Grow	
1.1 Enable effective clustering activity in support of the National Cyber Force at Samlesbury.	Vacant (SME rep)
1.2 Catalyse spin-offs from Lancashire universities, and 'spin-ins' from outside the County	D Williams
1.3 Improve the availability of attractive, digitally enabled, flexible grow-on office space in city/town centres	M Gibson
1.4 Define detailed Smart Specialisation strategy	M Spinks & D Williams (to be agreed)
1.5 Secure external funding to help strengthen Lancashire's innovation ecosystem. (Partnerships & resource generation)	R Holland (to be agreed).
2 Expand	
2.1 Utilise innovation assets such as AMRC, EIC, HIC to build innovation capacity and capability in Lancashire's businesses.	M Conlon
2.2 Deliver programmes of effective innovation support to Lancashire's SMEs	M Kenny
2.3 Create 'innovation partnerships' to connect key stakeholders across public and private sector organisations to find Lancashire-based solutions to key challenges.	No Sponsor allocated.
3 Connect	
3.1 Work with adjacent regions to increase Lancashire's participation in relevant networking opportunities in/around Greater Manchester (GM), Liverpool City Region (LCR) and beyond.	R O'Neill
3.2 Establish and resource cluster organisations for identified Smart Specialisation sectors, where these do not already exist.	J Smythe
3.3 Develop a start-up pitch events programme for Lancashire.	R McGrath (to be agreed)
4 Tell	
4.1 Develop and resource an innovation marketing strategy for Lancashire.	J Dalton & M Spinks
4.2 Develop a technology and market foresight observatory to monitor Lancashire's evolving capabilities and to ensure that skills development aligns with business/technology need.	R Jenkins
5 Administration	
Support and administration	No Sponsor allocated

7. Update on current year work.

The Board considered an update report on use of the Lancashire County Council innovation budget and associated activities, during which the following comments were made.

- A decision was still awaited on a bid for the Innovate UK Launchpad.
- Lancaster University was developing a bid for the Research England Development Fund which would include a letter of support from Lancashire County Council and the Lancashire LEP. The Senior Project Lead for Business Growth, Ms Conlon, and Ms Jenkins to pick up a discussion regarding similar work in Yorkshire where Sheffield University have been involved and may be able to share learnings via AMRC.
- Following a workshop with the Connected Places Catapult work was being done to focus on the last mile of transport between Lancaster and Morecambe with a view to building sustainability around the Eden North Project. Lancaster University were to hold a planning workshop on 23rd February 2023 to consider scenarios around future provision of sustainable transport by bus, foot, and cycle to enhance the customer journey/experience.
- The Innovation Marketing Manager continued to develop various media under the 'Innovate Lancashire' brand, including a weekly podcast with different innovators across Lancashire.
- Arrangements were being made for the Innovation Festival to be held on 13th October 2023 at AMRC and the Innovation Challenge (a 'Dragons Den' style event) to be held on 14th June 2023 in Preston.
- Fraser House in Lancaster continued to be an example of best practice in terms of providing high quality space for innovative co-working and collaborations between people.
- It was anticipated that the impact of the pandemic on the valuations of companies currently being seen in the US would begin to be seen in the UK towards the end of the year and will impact on the ability of companies to make effective bids for funding.
- The potential impact of Tech Nation ceasing operations with effect from 31st March 2023 after Barclays secured £12m in government funding, bringing an end to over a decade of support for UK technology start-up businesses.
- Work was ongoing regarding the definition and identification of clusters in Lancashire and an update would be presented to future meeting of the Board.
- Investment Zones were still under consideration and had been mentioned at the recent Convention of the North. 17 expressions of interest regarding investment zones in Lancashire (which contained a knowledge transfer or

partnership component) had been submitted previously. It was anticipated that there would be a further call for investment zones in the future and with some additional development work Lancashire would be well placed to provide a short list at that time.

Resolved: That the comments of the Board are noted.

8. Date of Next Meeting and potential future visit/venue

The Chair noted that the next scheduled Board meeting would be held at 10.30am on 5th June 2023 in Committee Room 'C' – the Duke of Lancaster Room at County Hall, Preston. The Board discussed potentially holding future meetings at different locations around Lancashire, provided that a suitable venue could be identified.

Resolved: That the Senior Project lead explore the possibility of the Innovation Board on 5th June 2023 being held at the alternative venue of Westinghouse Springfields Fuels Ltd, Station Rd, Lea Town, Preston PR4 0XJ