Feedback on the Innovate Local: North West event

Introduction

The Innovate Local: North West event was held online on 25th January. It attracted an England-wide audience of 78 delegates who wanted to hear from senior executives and learn about the big innovation themes being driven forward by pioneering leaders in the local area. [1] The full agenda, along with further details on the audience, is provided in the Appendix.

Big Innovation Themes for the local area were discussed, including Electronics, Nuclear and Defence & Security. Updates on those topics can be found later.

With this online event, we also wanted to achieve a deep level of involvement with the audience and recognised it would require a novel approach. So, mid-way, we flipped from 'broadcasting' into 'engaging', by enabling the audience to contribute their views against a series of questions on the local innovation ecosystem and their role in developing it further.

This engagement was facilitated by a Lancaster based employee of Innovate UK KTN, using the Menti software. Approximately 40 delegates responded to the questions which is reasonable for this pilot activity, especially as many were joining from outside the locality and may not have had informed views. We are grateful to everyone who engaged with the exercise and contributed their opinions.

It is worth highlighting that the session closed with an open question, "Share a few words that sum up how you feel about this session?" Most responses were very positive, e.g. involved, inspiring, collaborative, and enjoyable, which encourages us to build on this exercise in future. Even the partially critical responses were constructive and gave reassurance of the value of the exercise, e.g. too quick, rushed, and what happens next? In future, up to 40mins should be allowed.

A recording of the session can be [viewed online](#). The survey has now closed.

The results presented in this report are anonymous and aggregated which enables analysis and distribution among the event stakeholders and delegates.

Future engagement activities with innovators in the locality could return to this survey and go further into areas of importance. Delegates were told up front that the next steps would depend largely on the answers given. Indeed, one of the questions tested their interest in some options that should be discussed by the event partners, alongside their interpretation of the results against the individual questions that now follow.
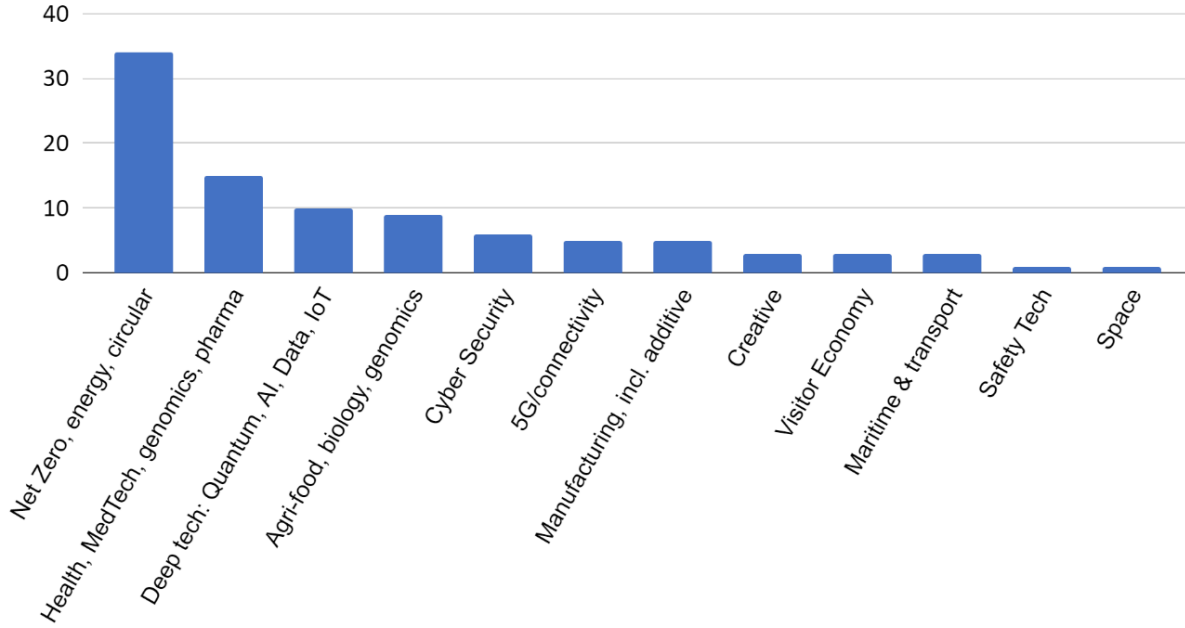
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[1] The aim of the Innovate Local programme is to work with local stakeholders to create an event that addresses local innovation priorities and helps businesses to learn more about the innovation process and the support available.

This event aligned with the strengths and priorities of Lancaster and South Cumbria and was organised by Innovate UK's Manager for North West England, working with Innovate UK KTN and Innovate UK EDGE. The event benefitted from strategic support from the North West Business Leadership Team, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, Cumbria LEP, Lancaster University, and the University of Cumbria. Collaboratively, these organisations shaped the objectives, agenda and arranged speakers.
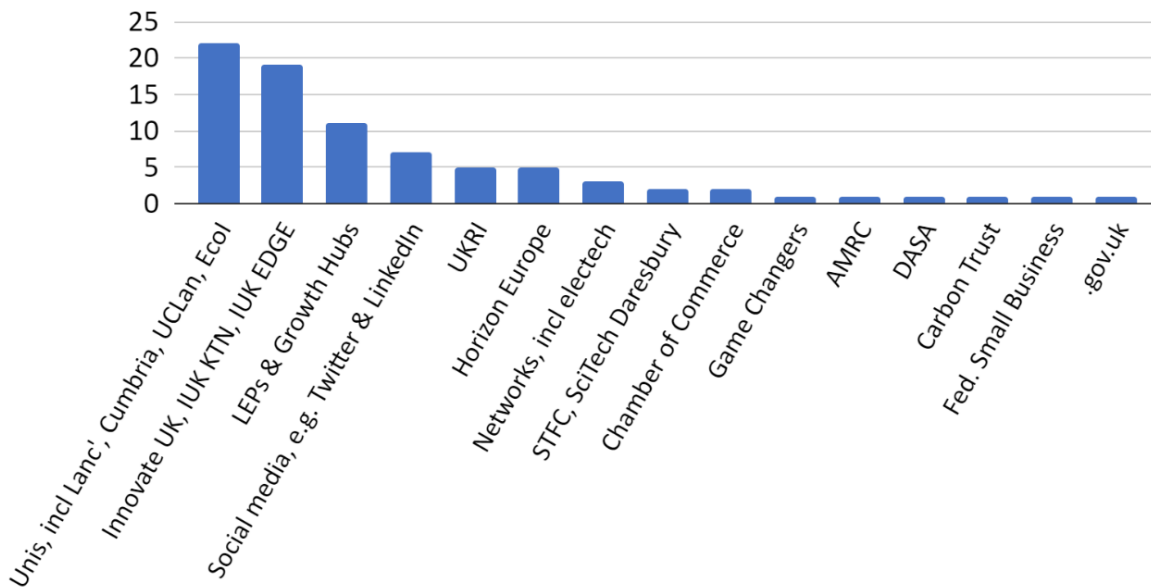
Big innovation themes for local area

Q: What other sectors or themes would you like to see promoted and supported? (In addition to electronics, nuclear, and defence & security.)
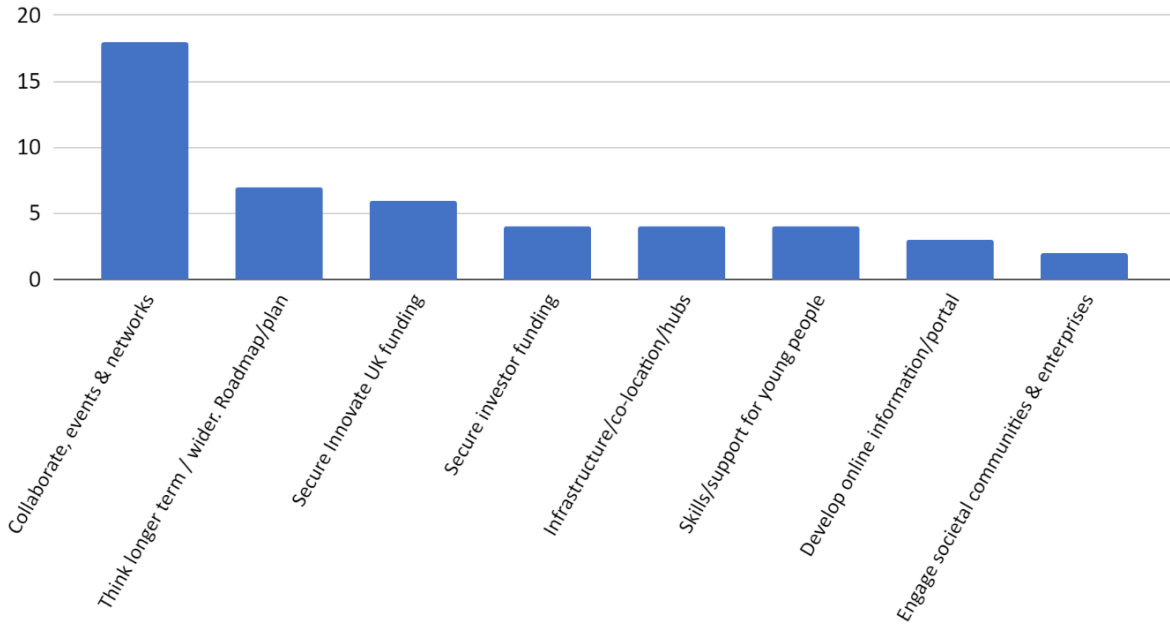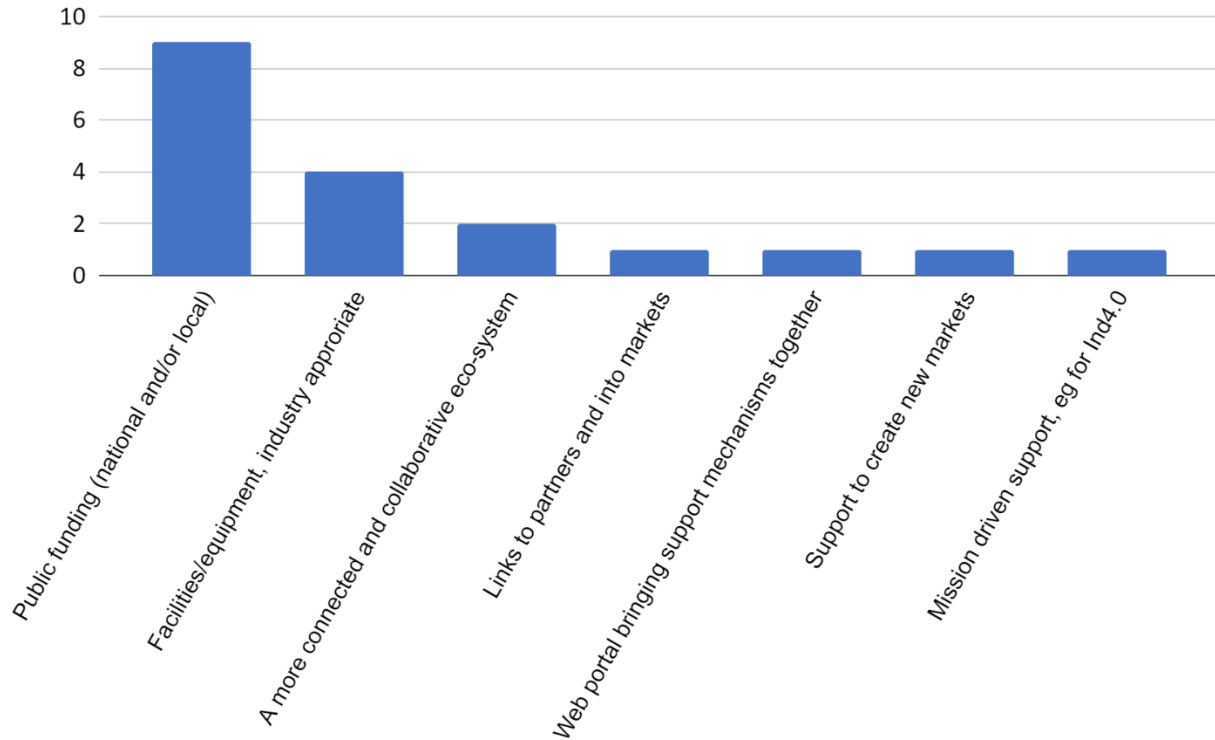

What needs to be in place

Q: Where can you learn of innovation opportunities?

Q: What more can the business community do to develop the innovation ecosystem locally?
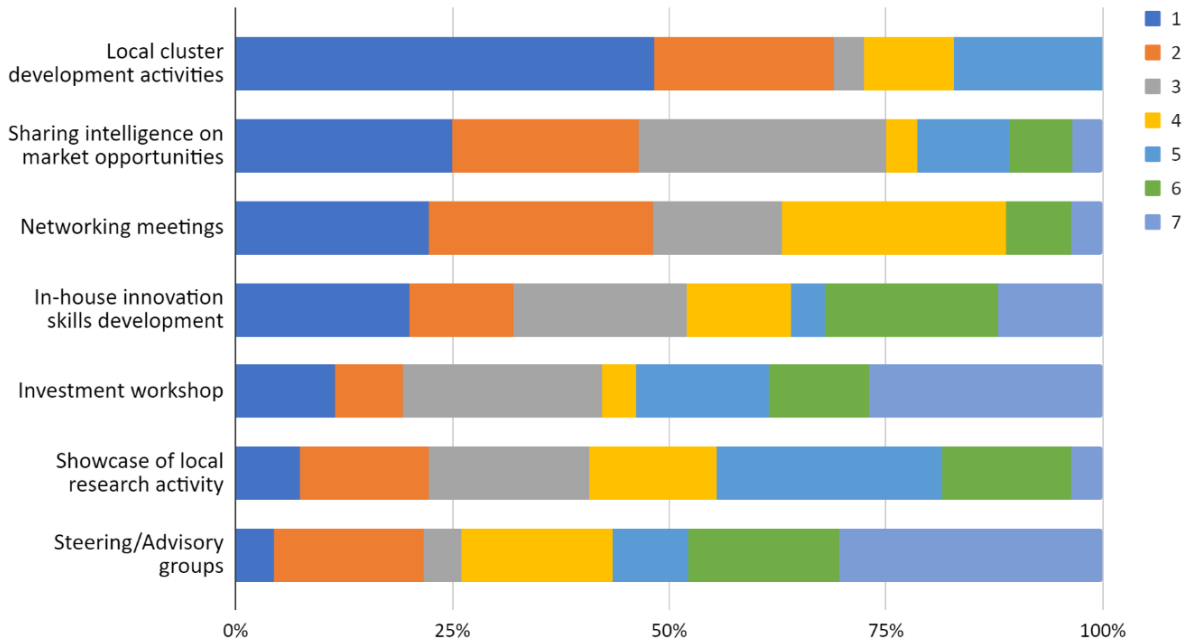

Q: What does the area need for you to innovate and scale up your innovative business?
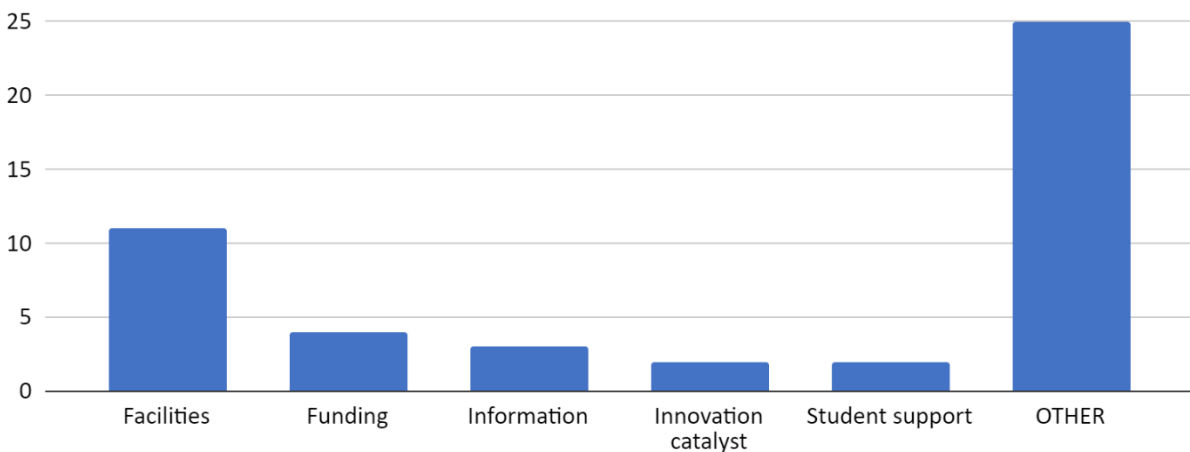
Actions and commitments

Q: Which of these follow-on activities would you participate in?

For this question, participants ranked seven possible options, with #1 being their most preferred and #7 being their least preferred. In the chart below, the seven options are ordered with the most popular at the top and the least popular at the bottom.

Q: What can you contribute?

'Other' consists of a wide-ranging set of individual answers such as specific products or services, or expertise on specific technologies or elements of business strategy and growth. The diversity of responses indicates a strength of willingness that could be harnessed by a coordinator.

Q: What will you do tomorrow to make this future state a reality?

Visit Game Changers website to review their challenges / opportunities.

Provide access to research engineers involved in advanced manufacturing technologies

Reach out to people today and going forward

Follow up with a few attending today to learn more about initiatives

Talk to Tech Lancaster

Follow-up

Follow-up

reach out

Network with participants

Keep building the momentum

Join Electech

Support future Innovation Catalysts with key stakeholders

Engage with new contacts met through this event

Communicate the offer more effectively

Internal communication of the content of this event. (We are a customer)

Going to explore a cluster

We will give NW SMEs a free R&D Tax Claim consultation

Healthcare solutions

Offer my help

Join the electech cluster group

Q: Share a few words that sum up how you feel about this session:

Appendices

Full agenda of the event

Innovate Local: North West - 25th January 2022

09:30-10:10: Welcome and Keynote – innovation leadership

Opening address by Indro Mukerjee, CEO of Innovate UK, followed by a keynote presentation by Professor Graham Wren OBE, Director of Major Projects at Strathclyde University.

10:10-10:30: Lancaster and South Cumbria economy, enterprise and innovation

An overview from Sarah Kemp and Jo Lappin MBE, the Chief Executives of Lancashire Enterprise Partnership and Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership.

10:30-10:45: Networking Break

10:45-11:55: The Big Innovation Themes

Ambitious provocations from local thought-leaders and clarity on how you can contribute and get behind these. The themes include electronics (Natasha McCrone of Rinicom Ltd), nuclear (Frank Allison of FIS360) and security (Neil Jackson of BAE Systems Submarines).

This is followed by an opportunity to tell us your views on the presented Big Innovation Themes, on the ecosystem, on how you could contribute, and on what is needed to fulfil the local potential.

11:55-12:05: Networking Break

12:05-12:25: Panel discussion: moving forward the innovation community

How will momentum be maintained? Responding to the contributions of delegates, maintaining local business engagement, and facilitating local leadership and drive.

12:25-12:45: Driving forward your own innovation initiatives

Introducing the specialist innovation support available to you through local and national support mechanisms. Presented by members of the Innovate UK family, Local Enterprise Partnerships, and the Universities of Lancaster and Cumbria, on areas including funding, business growth support, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) and the Innovation Canvas.

12:45-13:30: Networking Lunch

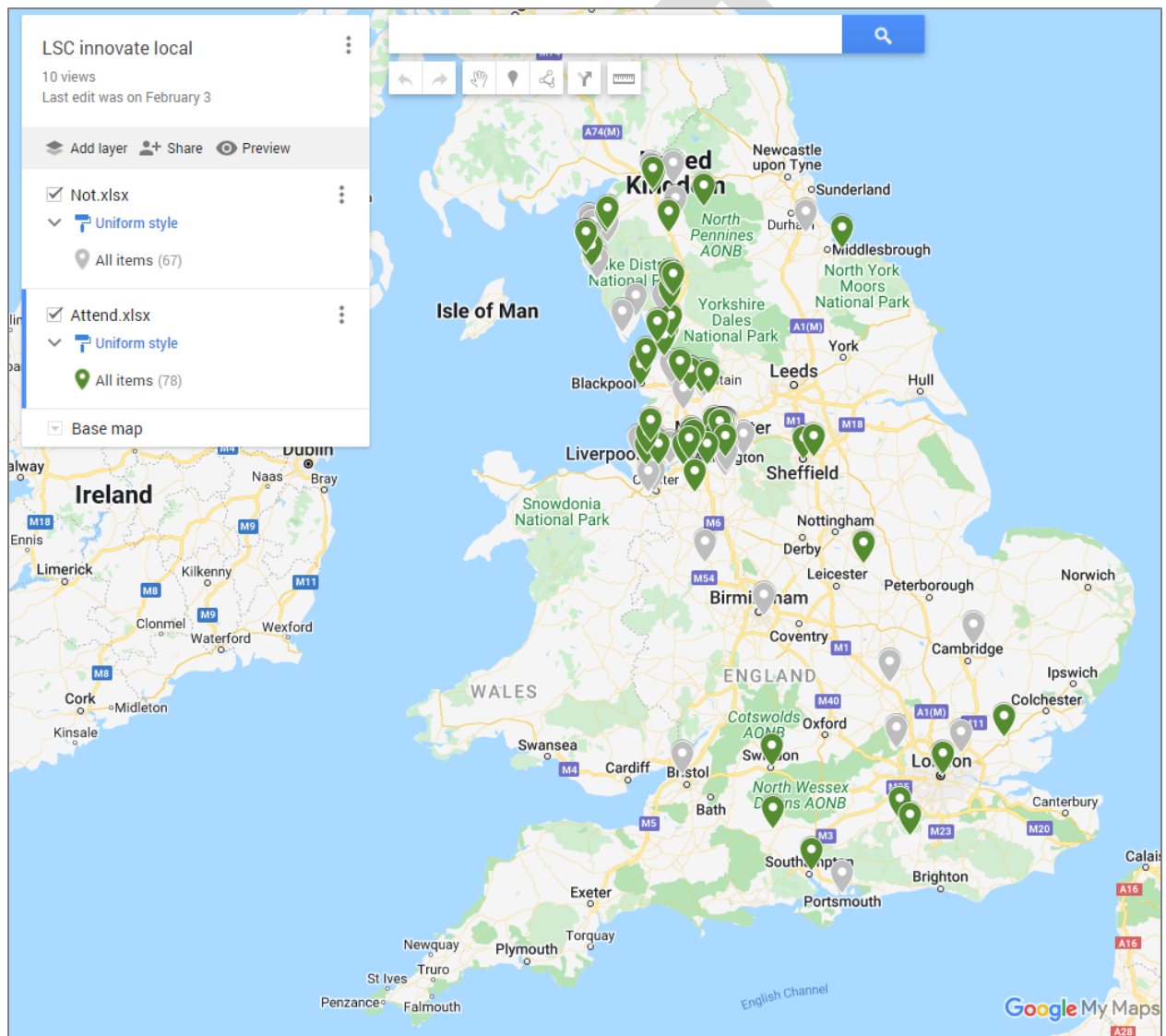**13:30-15:30: Drop-in networking sessions**

Drop-in sessions on virtual tables where delegates can discuss, ask questions and find out more about the support available. Tables hosted by Innovate UK, the two LEPs, Innovate UK KTN, the two universities, Innovate UK EDGE, and the local pioneers for Electech and Nuclear.

Registrants

- 145 audience registrants, plus the organisers and speakers
- 78 of the audience registrants attended on the day (54%)
- 67 did not join on the day but do receive follow-on communications

54% is a high attendance rate for an online, free-to-attend event, particularly at a time when similar events had been reporting much lower attendance rates.

The map shows the reach achieved across England, with the green markers showing the locations provided by the registrants who attended. Where markers overlap for the same postcode they only show as one marker. Grey markers are those who did not join on the day.

Organisations who joined on the day

Note, some organisations had more than one attendee.

AMRC North West	Ixion
Anglia Ruskin University	Lancaster city council
Arup	Lancaster University
BAE Systems	Like Technologies Ltd
Barclays	Manchester Metropolitan University
Barclays Eagle Labs	Metamorphic
Blue Orchid Enterprise Solutions Ltd	Milliamp Technologies
Blue Planet Energy Systems Limited	North West Business Leadership Team
British Business Bank	Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre
Cheshire and Warrington Growth Hub	OakTec
CNC Robotics Ltd	Phoenix DX Ltd
CPI	Praeferre
Cumbria Innovations Platform - University of Cumbria	Quantum Science Ltd
Cumbria Innovations Platform @ Lancaster University	RDvault Ltd
Cybermoor	Reason Digital
D & S Knowles Consulting Ltd	Rinicom Limited
DASA	Sellafield
Delkia	Stantec
Dept for International Trade	STFC
Digitecher Ltd	Stopford Ltd
E4-3D	Sunbeam Management Solutions
eBusiness UK Limited	The Centre For Global Eco-Innovation
EnBW	The Config Team
Engineered Capabilities Ltd	The Growth Company
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	The University of Manchester
FIS360 Ltd.	Thornton Tomasetti
GA Proto Ltd	Typhon Treatment Systems
GC Business Growth Hub	Unilever R&D
Gencoa Ltd	University of Cumbria
Glass Futures	University of Salford
Greenoak Innovation Ltd	University of Southampton
Health UnionTechnologies Ltd	Victrex Plc.
Health.ai Ventures	Vitaerium Ltd
Innovate pharmaceuticals	William Blythe Ltd
Inventya Ltd.	Yourgene Health

Post event updates

ElecTech (Electronics Technologies)

https://electechinnovationcluster.co.uk/

The cluster's website is an excellent place to remain up-to-date with the latest news and activities of the cluster. From there it is possible to subscribe to a newsletter.

The cluster continues to gain new members and ambitions. There has also been related success for academic partners in securing research funding for better understanding and supporting the cluster, and for innovation funding to provide direct support to businesses in the cluster.

Nuclear

Something similar could be contributed

Defence & Security

Something similar could be contributed