

LEP - Lancashire Innovation Board

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held on Friday, 6th November, 2020 at 10.30 am via Zoom.

Present:

Graham Baldwin - Chair

Tony Attard OBE DL	Rick Holland
Jane Binnion	Natalie Jones
Jane Dalton	Peter Lee
Gaynor Dykes	Lindsay Roche
Lorna Green	Claire Whelan
Dion Williams	

In Attendance:

Laura Sales, Company Secretary, Lancashire County Council.

Andy Walker, Head of Business Growth, Business and Innovation & Matt Wright, Lancashire Universities Innovation Manager, Economic Development, Lancashire County Council.

Vanessa Robinson-Hoy, Senior Project Officer, Business Growth, Lancashire County Council.

Emma Walton, Head of Marketing, Marketing Lancashire.

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

Presenters:

Dan Knowles, Lancashire Innovation Festival Co-ordinator.

Rachel McQueen, Chief Executive, Marketing Lancashire.

Howerd Booth, Regional Programme Manager, Innovation Agency.

1. Welcome and apologies.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Maya Ellis, the Innovation and Digital Lead for Economic Development at Lancashire County Council. It was also noted that due to other commitments Lindsay Roche would join the meeting at 11.00am and Dion Williams was due to leave at 12 noon.

2. Declarations of Interest

Since the last meeting the Register of Interests of Board members has been completed and made available to view via the County Council and Lancashire Enterprise Partnership websites.

No declarations of interest were made by Board members in relation to items appearing on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 24th July 2020 are confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair in due course.

4. Innovation Board Membership

The Chair presented a report regarding the 3 vacancies on the Board, which if filled would take the membership to the maximum of 15 as permitted by the Terms of Reference.

It was noted that during the initial recruitment process for Board members potential gaps had been identified with regard to representation on the Board from a small/medium sized enterprise in the technology/software/digital space, a representative from the Blackburn area and a person with a public facing international role.

Resolved:

1. That the 3 vacancies and the identified gaps in representation on the Board, as specified above, are noted.
2. That Board members forward any contact details for potential candidates to fill the 3 vacancies to the Chair and Maya Ellis, the Innovation and Digital Lead for Economic Development at Lancashire County Council, for consideration.

5. Feedback from Innovation Festival

Dan Knowles, Festival Co-ordinator, reported that following the first Board meeting arrangements had been made for an ambitious series of virtual events throughout October, 2020, to share ideas/information as part of the Lancashire Innovation Festival. He gave an overview of the Festival and highlighted a number of key areas identified at the various events, which the Board then discussed, including.

- a) The need to raise the profile of Academics and facilitate their engagement with the SME community in areas such as clean technology/sustainable transport together with the identification and promotion of innovative business models, such as Recycling Lives. The Board recognised that communication and collaboration was key to achieving this and that it would be necessary to review and identify key players/activity around innovation before taking any action.
- b) Improving the relationship between the public/private sectors and engagement between Universities and the SME community, particularly in relation to Health innovation. It was suggested that any future activity by

the Board should be private sector driven and demonstrate how the public sector can provide support.

- c) The need to identify and minimise any obstacles which may prevent SMEs from engaging in supply chains within Lancashire. The development of good lines of communication and engagement with SMEs was considered vital in this area.
- d) The creation of specific strong case studies involving SMEs within Lancashire and from elsewhere in order to both inspire others to innovate and provide examples of best practice.
- e) Ways to unlock the value in SMEs by educating them on how to innovate and view their business in terms of innovative assets such as staff, processes and data.
- f) The need for the Board to establish a clear vision of what innovation is, identify priorities and be able to communicate them to others. It was suggested that the Board should use digital means to promote a narrative and also seek to link any future activity with the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Thematic Groups.
- g) The formation of sector based clusters (similar to the existing cluster around Nuclear) in order to better manage innovation assets with improved links between the public/private sectors to encourage and facilitate engagement.

Resolved:

1. That the key areas identified during the Lancashire Innovation Festival and the initial thoughts of the Board as to how to address them, as specified above, are referred to Officers for further consideration.
2. That a full report on activity and outcomes from the Lancashire Innovation Festival be presented to the next meeting of the Board on the 19th February 2021.

The Chair informed the meeting that he would take item 9 as the next item of business so that Rachel McQueen, Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire, could update the Board on the marketing activity, before leaving the meeting to attend another commitment.

9. Updates/Intel from Board members

Rachel McQueen, Chief Executive of Marketing Lancashire, gave a presentation on how the Company was working with the Board to promote the Business Innovation Support offer to Lancashire businesses and attract new business into the County.

Referring to the earlier discussion around case studies Rachel reported that the intention was to identify a small selection of key stories which would be launched at Lancashire Day on the 27th November, 2020, and promoted as part of #RedefiningLancashire. The Board was also shown a rough version of one of a series of short films which Creative Lancashire would produce on success stories involving Lancashire based businesses. It was suggested that case studies should feature a diverse range of businesses and that one of the proposed films should focus on a business which had specifically moved into Lancashire in response to the availability of assets within the County.

In response to a query it was reported that the Invest in Lancashire website would be reviewed and updated so that in future it would be more focussed on enabling potential inward investors and less on simply signposting.

Resolved: That Board members be consulted by email and asked for their views on the following which can then be referred to Marketing Lancashire in order to help define and target future promotional activity.

- What are the significant innovation based events during the year?
- What are the main publications with a focus on innovation?
- Who are the major influencers in the field of innovation?

6. Project Mapping

Matt Wright, Lancashire Universities Innovation Manager, Economic Development, Lancashire County Council presented a report on activity to date regarding the mapping of existing and potential innovation projects across Lancashire.

It was reported that a review had identified that some existing data on innovation activity was dated and would benefit from an update. As a result a template had been developed which would be circulated to relevant partners to complete and provide a valuable resource of information on innovation organisations/projects. In considering the report members of the Board suggested that the information gathered should be organised as both thematic and geographical clusters and made available via an interactive webpage rather than a simple database. It was also proposed that in future the information be used to assist with applications for funding streams to support innovation.

Resolved:

1. That the proposed list of headings and organisations/projects to be used as part of the project mapping of potential innovation projects across Lancashire, as set out in the report presented, is approved.
2. That Board Members are requested to respond to the project mapping exercise and share relevant lists of existing/potential projects from their organisations.

7. SEED Health Alliance update

Howerd Booth, Regional Programme Manager from the Innovation Agency gave a presentation on the Social, Economic and Environmental Determinants (SEED) Health Alliance.

He reported that the Alliance had been in existence for around a year had initially comprised of the Universities and hospitals in Lancashire, though its membership had evolved to include local authorities, charities and emergency services. Health was increasingly seen as part of the economic agenda and the SEED Health Alliance Strategy was focussed on promoting innovation and economic growth and improving productivity skills through collaborative working. The Alliance also aimed to unite research, education, innovation, attract inward both investment and the best people in order to improve productivity, skills and economic growth.

The Board noted that the Alliance was in the process of making a bid to the Health Foundation for the establishment of an Innovation Hub, as set out in the report, which would assist with the alignment of partners to improve health and patient care.

The Board discussed the complexity of the NHS structure and how it could present challenges to entrepreneurs wishing to bring innovation or new products to the market. However, it was recognised that the Covid-19 outbreak had prompted the rapid adoption of some new technologies by the NHS out of necessity and that this may assist future innovation.

Resolved: That the report is noted and that the Board receive further updates on activity be the SEED Health Alliance.

8. Updates on Innovation Projects Portfolio

Matt Wright, Lancashire Universities Innovation Manager, Economic Development, Lancashire County Council updated the Board on work being done in association with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Reap programme.

The Local Enterprise Partnerships from Lancashire, Cumbria and Cheshire had worked with MIT and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on a programme to support specialisations and help growth companies with innovation and an international focus.

Data from the Local Industrial Strategy had been assessed and Manufacturing, Chemicals, Energy, Professional Services, Education, Health and Agricultural Technology all identified as strengths across the region. Increasing demand for clean technology had also been identified as presenting challenges and work was underway to develop a Network Accelerator Programme aimed at supporting innovation in that area.

Resolved: That the update presented at the meeting regarding the MIT Reap programme is noted and that the Board be kept informed of future developments.

10. Any Other Business - City of Culture 2025

Tony Attard reported that Marketing Lancashire was developing a bid for Lancashire to be the City of Culture in 2025 and suggested that the Board should receive a presentation on the bid at the next meeting.

Resolved: That a presentation on the bid for Lancashire to be the 2025 City of Culture be given at the next meeting of the Board on the 19th February 2021.

11. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Innovation Board would be held at 10.30am on the 19th February 2021, either remotely via Zoom or, subject to any Covid-19 restrictions in operation at that time, at County Hall, Preston.