

LEP - Lancashire Innovation Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 6th September, 2021 at 10.30 am at the Savoy Suite 1 - The Exchange - County Hall, Preston

Present

Graham Baldwin

Tony Attard OBE DL
Jane Binnion
Melissa Conlon
Jane Dalton
Gaynor Dykes

Michael Gibson
Rick Holland
Natalie Jones
Judson Smythe
Dion Williams

Observers

Mike Kenny

In Attendance

* denotes that attendee dialled into the hybrid meeting via Zoom.

In Attendance:

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

*Maya Ellis, Innovation and Digital Lead, 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.

Sarah Kemp, Chief Executive, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership.

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

1. Welcome and apologies.

The Chair welcomed those present to the first physical meeting of the Innovation Board and acknowledged those participants who were dialling into the hybrid meeting via Zoom. Apologies were presented on behalf of Lindsay Roche.

2. Update on Board Membership

It was reported that two Board members had moved into new career roles that required them to resign their positions on the Board. The Board was provided with information about a replacement nomination from the AHSN Innovation Agency and noted that to date no such nomination had been received from the chemical manufacturer, Victrex.

Resolved:

1. That the Board thank Lorna Green and Pete Lee for their contributions to the work of the Innovation Board since its creation.
2. That the Board agree Mike Kenny, from the AHSN Innovation Agency, replace Lorna Green as the Board member representing the health thematic seat and recommend his appointment to the LEP Board for formal approval.
3. That the Chairman work with officers to identify a suitable nomination from Victrex to replace Pete Lee as the manufacturing thematic seat and present details to the Board for consideration and, if suitable, recommendation to the LEP Board for approval.

3. Declarations of Interests

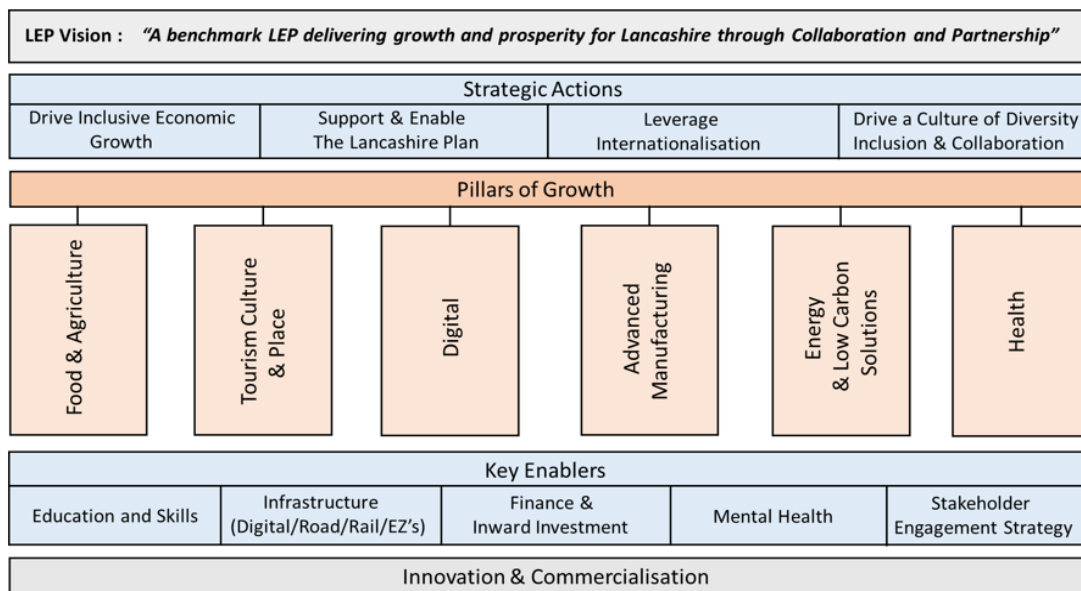
No declarations of interest were made at this point in the meeting.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th June 2021 are confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

5. Update on Innovation Strategy (UK and local)

Sarah Kemp, the Chief Executive of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, gave a presentation on the strategic framework and the relationship between the strategic actions, Pillars of Growth and Key enablers.



She reported that the response to the pandemic had varied across sectors and at different times with nuclear having had little impact whereas manufacturing and retail had been significantly affected in terms of the supply chain, markets, and employees. Food/agriculture had recovered relatively quickly and had been more impacted by the implications of Brexit. With regard to Sector Groups Sarah reported that plans had been published in relation to aerospace and energy/low carbon and that digital and food/agriculture would be the next plans to be published.

Matt Wright, Lancashire Universities Innovation Manager gave a presentation which updated the Board on the work to map innovation across Lancashire and identify clusters. He reported that following the initial identification phase the LEP would now seek to engage with individual companies and begin to gather more information which could then be divided into themes and sub themes e.g. Manufacturing – construction and textiles or Digital – Elec Tech. During the discussion it was suggested that a check be made to ensure that all Sector Groups used and understood the same terms when looking at innovation to ensure that the information gathered was comparable. It was also proposed that information regarding successful grants applications to the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council could be used to identify areas for future engagement.

Resolved:

1. That the presentations given at the meeting be circulated to Board members outside of the meeting for future reference.
2. That the Board recognise the progress to date on the development of the Lancashire Innovation Strategy and continue to receive regular updates in the future.
3. That the Board seek to shape its understanding/definition of innovation moving forward and identify key priorities.

6. Innovation Plan Refresh

Maya Ellis, Innovation and Digital Lead, gave a presentation and oral update on the next stages in refreshing the Lancashire Innovation Plan which would identify the economic role and contribution of innovation in the local economy and assess how the innovation infrastructure within Lancashire could be enhanced/deployed in order to drive productivity improvements in response to local/national policy priorities. She reported that the Final Plan would include an evaluation of key outcomes, determine new preferences/priorities, refresh key sectors, specialisations and strengths and provide a refreshed database of innovation assets across Lancashire.

In discussing the presentation Board members made the following comments:

- The innovation infrastructure/enablers and assets within Lancashire need to be defined in order to ensure that the Strategy was delivered.
- SMEs needed to be able to access infrastructure around developing ideas but also with regard to finance, R&D tax credits and access to support from Universities or Boost.
- Establishing a progression route, where support was provided at different stages, would help to support innovators.

Maya also informed the Board that the workshop proposed for the 9th September 2021 had been abandoned though the one on the 20th September would still go ahead and Board members would be given further opportunities in the future to contribute to the refresh of the Innovation plan.

Resolved: That an updated copy of the presentation given at the meeting be circulated to all Board members for information outside of the meeting.

7. Innovation Festival 2021 Update

Matt Wright, Lancashire Universities Innovation Manager, updated the Board on arrangements for the Innovation Festival which was due to be held from the 4th to the 8th October 2021.

He reported that the Festival would be a hybrid event with activity being live streamed from various locations across Lancashire with each day focussing on specific area – digital, health, social innovation, manufacturing and low carbon. Matt also highlighted gaps where hosts had not yet been identified for some of the planned activity across the Festival and Board members were encouraged to suggest possible hosts and publicise the festival through social media and their existing networks.

Resolved:

1. That the current arrangements for the Innovation Festival on the 4th to 8th October 2021, as set out in the report presented, are noted.
2. That the power supply issue at AMRC be explored further and if necessary an alternative venue identified for the manufacturing activities planned for the 7th October 2021.

8. Spotlight Reports**Social Innovation** - Jane Binnion informed the Board:

- That whilst the UK was ranked 5th in relation to Growth Domestic Product it had fallen from 12th to 20th in the social progress index and that UK social mobility had come to a halt in 2014.
- The biggest pay gap within the UK population was between the highest and lowest paid women.
- Petty theft was the main reason why women were imprisoned and the cost of keeping a woman in prison was £30,000 per annum and £56,000 per annum to keep her child in care.

Jane added that there was a lack of imagination and will to tackle the issue and that people needed to be given an opportunity to secure decent work (rather than employment) in order that they could rise out of poverty and cease to be reliant on benefits. Rick Holland thanked Jane for the presentation on what was an important issue and informed the Board that on the 4th October 2021 a competition would be launched where £50,000 grants would be offered for projects aimed at innovation which would tackle social innovation.

The Food Cluster – Jane Dalton gave a presentation on the work of the Food Cluster.

Jane reported that the Cluster involved a Core Team who would work with various partners, including Marketing Lancashire and the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, to build an ecosystem approach encompassing farming, food production and health outcomes. The Food Cluster would seek to identify existing projects within the sector and fill any gaps, embracing all of Lancashire and the full range of food production and moving away from the hierarchy of 'good food'.

Jane reported that a live cook-along and discussion panel around healthy eating was planned on the 6th October 2021 as part of the Innovation Festival with a quarterly programme of post Festival activity being developed. Judson Smythe confirmed that following initial discussion with Jane he had been in contact with a colleague in South Africa who was developing an process to produce a viable cellular agriculture system to produce an alternative to meat.

Resolved:

1. That Jane Binnion and Jane Dalton be thanked for their respective presentations on social innovation and the work of the Food Cluster.
2. That the Board be kept informed of further development in both areas, particularly with regard to the response to the competition to award grants to support social innovation.

10. Any Other Business

Mr Attard informed the Board that a 'Future Makers Hub', which would identify innovators and link them with young people who could be mentored and developed as future innovators was being developed as part of the Lancashire bid for City of Culture 2025.

Resolved: That Matt Wright discuss the 'Future Makers Hub' with Ms D Lander, the Bid Director from Lancashire 2025 and see if the proposed programme can be supported/promoted as part of the developing innovation strategy for Lancashire.

9. Date of next meeting

The Chair thanked all participants for their contributions to the meeting and noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Board would be held at 10.30am on the 15th November 2021 at County Hall, Preston.