

# Lancashire Innovation Board |

## Update on Observatory Discovery

May 2021



### Purpose

This note provides a summary of progress made on the discovery project to scope the requirement for Lancashire's Innovation Observatory.

### Background

The Lancashire Innovation Plan sets out the potential for a 'Lancashire Technology and Market Foresight Observatory' to:

- Drive and shape market and technology change
- Inform stakeholder of market trajectory and technology changes
- Make reports and insights easily accessible for Lancashire stakeholders.

In March 2021, Lancashire County Council partnered with the change agency [FutureGov](#) to better understand user needs in Lancashire's innovation ecosystem. The 12-week project timeline is attached on the next page for reference.

### Key outputs

FutureGov are working to deliver:

1. **Theory of Change** - Help establish, through desk research and a workshop with key stakeholders, a clear theory of change for how the Observatory could help you achieve your objectives in the short and medium term.
2. **Defining user needs** - Define the audiences of the Observatory creating a view of user needs.
3. **Proposition and outline concepts for the observatory** - Develop concepts and proposals for a minimal valuable version of the Observatory.
4. **Supplier Scope and final outputs** - Provide a summary of our research and a list of important user requirements and features for the initial iteration of the Observatory.

### Defining the problem

FutureGov have worked with the Lancashire team to more clearly articulate the problem that the Observatory is trying to solve. The following problem statement describes the challenge:

*We have observed that organisations in Lancashire are experiencing a lack of awareness of opportunities and resources to connect, collaborate and innovate.*

*We think this is because people don't have the time to seek opportunities and there is no central mechanism to help them do this.*

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## **User research**

To help unpick the problem further and get a deeper understanding of user needs, ten stakeholders took part in interviews with the FutureGov team over a two week period. The conversations provided insights into the barriers to innovation, ideas to tackle those challenges and the desirability of early concepts for the Observatory. Representatives from the Innovation Board, local businesses, funding institutions, Lancashire County Council and higher education institutions took part. Research insights will be shared with the Lancashire project team on the 19th May.

A user research survey has also been shared through Lancashire's business networks to seek a greater breadth of views on early Observatory concepts. The survey is currently being promoted across channels and the results will be fed into research findings.

## **Next steps**

- Using the insights from our user research, the project team are developing mock-ups of potential products and tools to test.
- Stakeholders who took part in interviews will be brought together in a workshop on the 25th May to develop the Observatory concepts further.
- A final wider stakeholder workshop will take place on the 1st June, which will be an open-call for all organisations across Lancashire with an interest in innovation. This will be an opportunity to test more detailed mock-ups further and engage people in the next phase of the Observatory.

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**Observatory Discovery**

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Sprints	<b>Sprint 1</b> 3 weeks	<b>Sprint 2</b> 3 weeks	<b>Sprint 3</b> 3 weeks
Dates	<b>w/c 5th April 2021</b>	<b>w/c 26th April 2021</b>	<b>w/c 17 May 2021</b>
<b>Sprint goals</b>	Project set up, Kick-off, Stakeholder engagement  Agreed project plan & ways of working  Agreed communication plan for engaging stakeholders (businesses, academia, innovators, LEP, council)  Agreed research and engagement approach  Engaging and recruiting stakeholders  Agree core aims and purpose  Session on LOTI and similar initiatives to frame the output	Deck introducing the work to the stakeholders (employers, practitioners, policymakers and youth) we will engage with  User research: Design and share a survey to learn from more of the stakeholders  User research: Interviews with 5 Innovation Board members  Synthesis of interview and survey research  Design Session/s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Theory of Change</li> <li>• Observatory / prototype mock up</li> </ul>	Stakeholder workshop to test mock ups  Next steps for how this can supports your overall strategy  Finalise research findings  Recommendations for next steps: design and build phase.  Agreed goals from stakeholders  Wrap up session with core team
<b>Outputs</b>	Stakeholder map  Established sprint rhythms and core days  Shared view of what good looks like  Problem statement	Draft Theory of Change  Draft Defined User needs  Outline Concepts for the Observatory	WIP of final deliverable for this project  A high level roadmap and supplier scope. Include a few options  .