

LEP - Lancashire Innovation Board

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held via Zoom on Monday, 7th June, 2021 starting at 10.30 am

Present:

Graham Baldwin - Chair

Jane Binnion	Natalie Jones
Melissa Conlon	Peter Lee
Jane Dalton	Lindsay Roche
Michael Gibson	Judson Smythe
Lorna Green	Claire Whelan
Rick Holland	Dion Williams

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.

Jen Rae NP11, Innovation Director.

Richard Lydon, Materials Consultant.

Sarah Kemp, Chief Executive, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership.

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

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and Mike Neville confirmed that that apologies had been received from Gaynor Dyke.

2. Membership and Terms of Reference

The Chair welcomed Mike Gibson, Judson Smythe and Melissa Conlon, who had been appointed to the Board by the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board on the 23rd March 2021, bringing the membership up to the maximum 15 permitted under the Terms of Reference.

Resolved:

- That the membership of the Innovation Board, as set out below, is noted.

G Baldwin	Chair	UCLan
C Whelan	Deputy Chair	(Corporate & Finance)
T Attard OBE	Co-opted LEP Member	(Corporate & Manufacturing)
M Conlon	Skills & International Rep	AMRC NW

R Holland	UK RI Rep	Innovate UK
D Williams	Universities Rep	Lancaster University
N Jones	Research & Science Rep	Engineering & Physical Sciences Council
J Binnion	Start-up, Micro & SME Rep	Growing Club Ltd
J Dalton	Strategy & Branding Rep	Groundswell Innovation Ltd
L Green	Thematic - Health & Life Sciences	Innovation Agency (AHSN)
L Roche	Thematic - Energy & Environment	Westinghouse Ltd
P Lee	Thematic - Manufacturing & Construction	Victrex Ltd
M Gibson	Thematic – Digital and Technology	Miralis Data Limited
G Dykes	Thematic - Professional & Services	Grant Thornton
J Smythe	Thematic – Manufacturing & Construction (additional)	MGS Plastics Limited

2. That the current Terms of Reference of the Innovation Board, as set out at Appendix 'A' to the report presented, are noted and a copy placed in the Minute Book

3. Declaration of Interests

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

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Chair reported that the Board would receive updates on the Lancashire bid for City of Culture 2025 at future meetings.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 19th February 2021 are confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair in due course.

5. Lancashire Innovation Festival

Maya Ellis, Innovation and Digital Lead, presented a report on the current action plan for the development of the next Lancashire Innovation Festival which would be held on the 4th – 8th October 2021.

It was reported that the Festival would be a mixture of panel discussions with online networking, Case Studies, 1:1 interview and some live in-person activity, subject to any Covid 19 restrictions in operation at the time. Discussions were also underway regarding a hybrid hosting platform with another Lancashire event that would allow in person events to be hosted while also streaming the content online for wider accessibility. It was anticipated that the majority of content and speakers for the Festival would be agreed by late August 2021.

Resolved: That the update on the arrangements for the 2021 Innovation Festival, as set out in the report presented, are noted.

6. Lancashire Innovation Observatory

Maya Ellis, Innovation and Digital Lead, updated the Board on the development of the Innovation Observatory including activity by FutureGov in relation to stakeholder engagement and design work to scope the functions for an interactive innovation platform for key stakeholders/clusters.

The Board noted that some interviews needed to be held and research findings finalised before FutureGov produced a final report which would help shape future innovation across Lancashire. A Beta version of the interactive platform would also be produced and made available for testing.

Resolved: That the updates set out in the report are noted and the Board continue to engage with the research being undertaken by FutureGov in relation to the development of the Innovation Observatory.

7. National and Regional Policy and Cluster presentation.

The Board received three presentations on the national, regional and more local perspective regarding innovation.

Presentation 1 – Jen Rae, NP11 Innovation Director.

Jen reported that NP11 is a network of the 11 Local Enterprise Partnerships in the North and was working with the NHS, Universities and other stakeholders to influence the delivery of innovation policy. From a national perspective innovation was emerging as a key priority. The Government had announced the 'Levelling Up' white paper with the national innovation policy was to be published at the end of June 2021, followed by the research and development place strategy in July 2021.

Over the next 6 weeks Jen would work with LEPs to finalise their position in order that they are able to present a unified case regarding the requirements to make the best of the opportunity to deliver the Government's strategy on innovation.

Presentation 2 - Rick Holland, NW Regional Head of InnovationUK

Rick focussed on the strategic role of Innovation UK which is to identify what assets exist in the north West and how can they be made ready so that they can align with the national policy.

In the past the definition of clusters/sectors had become confused and it was important to address this as Government in the future will engage with innovation clusters in geographies that may operate within a sector or cut across multiple sectors. Innovation often cuts across sectors so that groups of businesses in different sectors may have synergy in certain areas such as skills, knowledge or finance. The latter being particularly relevant it is an area where the UK performs well. However, the provision of funding for innovation is unbalanced across the country and the UK is ranked 4th in the world for technical finance, London alone is accountable for 50% of inward investment. More locally the North West only received 5% which is mainly targeted at Manchester. Lancashire needs to challenge that position.

Rick highlighted that the Morecambe Bay cluster had the advantage of being located close to a university which could provide valuable support and act as a coordinator. In the past administrative boundaries had presented an obstacle to working collaboratively. Innovation should not stop at the Lancashire boundary and with this in mind discussions are underway with the North West business leadership team and various organisations in North Manchester with regard to future collaboration.

Presentation 3 – Richard Lydon, Materials Consultant.

Richard focussed on the importance of clusters, especially in areas that would cut across different sectors/segments, such as chemicals, paints and pigments.

As with previous speakers he referred to the significant investment and development around innovation in Manchester, the lack of coordination between projects elsewhere and the need for Lancashire to increase its visibility if it was to be able to compete in the future. He suggested that the aim should be to raise the profile of Lancashire and create a materials powerhouse which would act as a focal point and platform for the future and make science clusters in the North West more influential in areas such as electronics and health.

Funding was vital in order to create impactful research and development and the current situation across Lancashire should be surveyed in order to establish who key stakeholders were. He also referred to a previous unsuccessful application regarding materials innovation and suggested that the subject be revisited with a view to aligning it with the Governments 'Levelling Up' agenda. Coordination was also considered vital, and the Local Innovation Strategy and SIA would be key components to achieving that and enabling Lancashire to make the most of future opportunities.

Sarah Kemp, Lancashire LEP Chief Executive, reported that discussions were currently underway regarding 6 sector groups with a view to developing plans for the short term whilst being mindful of the future. It was noted that the Food Innovation Cluster would work to support one such sector group looking at connecting farming/food.

Board members discussed the importance of maximising the opportunity presented by the Governments 'Levelling Up' policy and it was suggested that the Innovation KPIs within the Innovation Plan should include a KPI around people recognising that the range of opportunities available to them had increased as a result of the Innovation Plan. The Board also recognised the importance of materials in relation to Nuclear and the need for other clusters in Lancaster around clean energy and telecoms to also raise their profile

Resolved: That Jen Rae, Rick Holland and Richard Lydon be thanked for their presentations and that the comments from the innovation Board be taken into account regarding the opportunities presented by the Innovation Plan.

8. IER (Independent Economic Review) Innovation Chapter review

Maya Ellis, the Innovation and Digital Lead, updated the Board on a draft innovation chapter for inclusion in the Independent Economic Review for

Lancashire and invited any critical additions or comments to be shared from board members by email. Maya suggested that the chapter provided a good starting point to develop the next iteration of the Lancashire Innovation Plan and suggested that arrangements could be made for an informal workshop with Board members to kick-start this process.

Resolved:

1. That Board members submit any initial comments they may have on the draft innovation chapter for the Independent Economic Review to Maya Ellis for consideration.
2. That arrangements be made for Board members to have an informal workshop to look at developing the chapter into the basis of a refreshed Lancashire Innovation Plan.

9. General activity update

Maya Ellis, Innovation and Digital Lead presented a report which updated the Board on various activities associated with the Lancashire Innovation Plan actions list and reported that a dedicated full time position would be created within the Economic Development Team at the County Council to support innovation related marketing across Lancashire, particularly with regard to the Innovation Festival and the Ambassador Programme.

Resolved: That the updates on activity associated with the Lancashire Innovation Plan action plan, as set out in the Appendix to the report presented, are noted.

10. Any Other Business

No items of business were raised under this heading.

11. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Board would be held between 10.30am and 12.30pm on the 6th September, 2021, either remotely or at a venue to be arranged.