



LLEP INNOVATION BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting

23 June 2021

Attendance and Apologies:

Directors		Company/Organisation	Representing
Dr Nik Kotecha OBE Chair	NK	Morningside Pharmaceuticals LLEP Main Board Director	Private Sector
Dr Anthony Baxendale Head of Horizon Scanning	AB	Horiba Mira Research and Future Transport	Private Sector
Dennis Hayter Head of External Affairs	DH	Intelligent Energy	Private Sector
Stuart Hetherington CEO	SH	Holovis	Private Sector
Ben Ravilious CEO	BR	Ultimate Web /Leicester Start Ups	Private Sector
Sajjad Khan Managing Director	SK	Aristec/Leicester Textiles Federation	Private Sector
Rachel Tidmarsh Managing Director	RT	Blue Sky International	Private Sector
Sandra Wiggins Director	SW	DPI Limited	Private Sector
Paul Wright Quality & Sourcing Director	PW	Dunelm	Private Sector
Charlotte Horobin Regional Director – Midlands & East of England	CH	Make UK	Private Sector
Julian Bowrey Regional Lead (Advisory/Observer)	JB	Innovate UK	Government
Stephen Grubb Director Business Banking (Advisory/Observer)	SG	Nat West	Private Sector
Helen Donnellan Director Enterprise and Business Services	HD	De Montfort University	Higher Education
Dr Jen Fensome	JF	Loughborough University	Higher Education

Minute**Action**

Director of Research			
In attendance			
Josephine Dexter Area Lead Observer	JD	BEIS	Government
Gary Dimmock Project manager for the LLEP Innovation project Observer	GD	Loughborough University	Higher Education
Sharif Chowdhury Governance Officer Observer	SC	LLEP	Government
Sue Tilley Economic Strategy Manager – Business Observer	ST	LLEP	Government
Apologies			
Anil Majithia	AM	Regional Advisory Board East Midlands - Canal & River Trust	Private Sector
Andy Reed OBE (Vice Chair)	AR	Director SajelImpact Ltd LLEP Main Board Vice Chair	Private Sector
Avtar Singh Snr Director Strategy, Transformation and Productivity	AS	Pepsico – European SC	Private Sector
Dr Ian Forristal Director Research and Enterprise	IF	University of Leicester	Higher Education
Dr Rachel Granger Director of Creative and Cultural Industries Group	RG	De Montfort University	Higher Education

Minute**Action**

1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	
1.1	NK welcomed those present to the meeting.	
1.2	Apologies were received from AR, AM and IF.	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	There were no declarations of interest.	
3.	Minutes and Actions of previous meeting	
3.1	The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 March 2021 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.	
3.2	NK confirmed four Action Points from the previous meeting were completed and the updated Innovation Board Terms of Reference have been circulated with members.	
3.3	The two Action Points remain outstanding as AP 7.3 to be discussed in Item 5 and AP 9.1 the winner to the invited to the Innovation Board has been delayed until September.	
4.	Innovation week update	
4.1	ST provided an update the events that had already taken place as part of Innovation week and those planned for the remainder of the week which amounted to nineteen events across a range of themes and sectors.	
4.2	The week, promoting Innovation including key topic areas such as harnessing the power of space technology, developing the next generation of diagnostics in the health sector and green hydrogen. Events have focussed on building communities in food and drinks and the fashion and textiles industry. The events have delivered powerful insights and receiving a keen interest with events overrunning due to an engaged audience engagement in the interested in Q&A sessions.	
4.3	Events through the Business Gateway Webinars and De Montfort University's creative technologies for game changing business ideas have included developing skills, employability and financing specific to micro businesses. Events have also included accelerator start-ups and support for businesses recovering from furlough catered for the vast number of innovative businesses the LEP area to aid future growth initiatives in future. The LLEP Innovation Showcase event which preceded the Innovation Board meeting was Chaired by Dr Nik Kotecha, OBE with keynote speeches from government by Dr Luke Evans MP for Hinckley and Bosworth and Professor Fiona Murray CBE, from the MIT Sloan School of Business and testimonials from Leicestershire businesses about their innovation journey.	
4.4	Further events include how female leaders drive innovation, rebuilding the image of the fashion sector the Innovation Roundtable and an event including the three universities within the LEP region.	

Minute**Action**

4.5	NK echoed the updates presented, noting the wide range of sectors involved including the universities and building awareness of the LEP's Innovation support service. NK thanked all the teams involved with arranging, supporting, and attending the events.	
4.6	Board members highlighted observations that there is collaboration potential as the events showcased many overlaps between different organisations and increased interaction opportunities would be valuable. Members highlighted the benefits of hearing real case studies from businesses in similar Innovation journeys.	
4.7	ST emphasised that Innovation events are occurring throughout the year and going forward there will be more events with increased attendance intended.	
5.	A draft Innovation Dashboard	
5.1	JF updated on the Draft Proposal that has been collated with RG providing a presentation circulated with the board members.	
5.2	<p>JF explained the approach taken to devise the draft innovation dashboard, the assumptions made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The re-use and exploitation of existing sources of data saves time, money, and improves consistency and comparability • Most metrics available do not directly link to innovation but are a proxy for it • All the selected metrics can be mapped to at least one Innovation Enabler • Cross-Enabler mapping is fine and does not create conflict or confusion • Too many metrics makes the data monitoring exercise and overall picture of the health of an Innovation Enabler too difficult; less is more • A traffic light system for each Indicator will lead to an overall assessment of change / progress per Enabler 	
5.3	<p>JF outlined the process followed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reviewed as many sources as possible for information (BEIS, CBI, BBB, HEBCI and HESA, LLEP and referred sources, ME Observatory, Innovate UK) 2. Selected those seemingly most appropriate to monitor innovation regionally 3. Deselected those that appeared to duplicate data 4. Revised the definition of each Enabler 5. Mapped to the Innovation Enablers 6. Independently sense-checked 	
5.4	<p>The Board were asked to consider the following questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are the Innovation Enabler definitions appropriate? 2. Are strategic themes also needed to group the Indicators together (e.g. networks, skills and talent, innovation investment etc.)? 3. Do the selected Innovation Indicators represent Innovation? Are these Indicators sufficient to adequately represent Innovation? 4. Are there any known data sources and / or indicators missing? Can members offer any data themselves? 5. Proposed next steps are then to detail the baseline data for 2019 per Indicator, track them annually (if possible) and use a traffic light system to reflect positive or negative change. Does this assessment approach enable the satisfactory appraisal of progress? 	

Minute**Action**

<p>5.5</p> <p>5.6</p> <p>5.7</p> <p>5.8</p> <p>5.9</p>	<p>JF discussed and clarified that the potential indicators within the circulated spreadsheets and requires consultation with the Board. It was mentioned whether the indicators including the metrics of number of new businesses and consultants could be a sign of stresses and failings in the economy rather than a success.</p> <p>A board member asked the question whether it can be proved that the LLEP improved the indicators, and not due to external market forces. JF explained over a whole region the sheer number of variables makes it difficult to summarise the metrics increase percentages or RAG rating due to the LLEP initiatives. Once the feedback has been received the metrics will be reviewed to understand areas where the LLEP have enabled or facilitated through activities.</p> <p>A board member added the importance of having this suite of indicators use as metrics to identify areas of successes and stagnation, proving credibility when reporting to government.</p> <p>Other measurable indicators including R&D tax credits and IP Patent protections are areas where the LLEP could improve were highlighted. The current performance does not indicate that the region lacks innovation, rather a lack of understanding of these initiatives and how they can help businesses.</p> <p>Provide input where there are question marks within the circulated presentation where the Board might not have identified where there is available information.</p>	<p>JF/All</p>
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p>	<p>Business Innovation Support – Project Delivery</p> <p>ST provided background on the item which works at the grassroots levels within the Growth Hub where workshops and webinars are commissioned to run a pilot for SMEs.</p> <p>Seven companies had applied to the tender, with a rigorous assessment narrowing down to three companies. ST introduced CK and MR who will be presenting their company Qinesis, one of three companies to the Innovation Board.</p> <p>CK outlined that Qinesis help businesses to grow through offering services in management, consultancy, coaching, mentoring, and training. Dedicated area includes commercialising innovation.</p> <p>Recent Qinesis projects include the Upscaler, Peer Networks programme, training around innovation and culture working with partners in the University of Nottingham to deliver workshops on developing innovative mindset for SMEs through understanding the SME mindset.</p> <p>The methodology of the programme proposed fully innovation webinars built around being all around agile, flexible, practical, and catered for SMEs who often feel disenfranchised from Innovation. Regular breakout groups include discussion pieces, engagement, and reflection to improve the innovation mindset under a peer group trainer. CK emphasised that the training does not involve significant financial investment. The main investment is the time and energy, a very valuable resource to a micro business.</p>	

Minute**Action**

6.6	CK proposed a collaborative approach using the Innovation Board's knowledge of the demographics and the dynamics of the region to optimise the programme with feedback from delegates to redesign the programme.	
6.7	A board member asked two questions to the Qinesis team. First, the plan to help businesses who are reluctant to innovate in ways that they might need to change their approach, and how will businesses be incentivised to follow this direction? And secondly, how the Qinesis team measure performance on making a difference, what are the indicators from the program?	
6.8	CK responded that it is important that the marketing collateral speak the language of micro and SME businesses and provide them with confidence that the workshop will benefit their time. Qinesis expect to do this by understanding the target audience to effectively engage with the businesses using marketing messages. CK emphasised the importance of helping the business to realise quick wins to provide motivation before developing the mindset and culture through a three-step process.	
6.9	MR added that all the Qinesis training deliverers are or previous Managing Directors of small businesses who understand the bottom line for the bottom line whilst helping businesses to innovate.	
6.10	A board member echoed past experiences of such initiatives where delegates are more inspired with the motivation of the room rather than practical application of what has been learnt from the programme. CK explained that all delegates share learnings and key action points to take away to help businesses to find solutions at midpoints and the end of the course.	
6.11	ST clarified that all the sessions are free for businesses as the pilot will be a series of events, monitoring will take place to carefully understand the response from delegates in order to shape future activities.	
6.12	A board member shared the view that that peer networking and community building is a more productive and cost-effective approach for SMEs and the proposed programmes are not helpful for delegates to retain information.	
6.13	NK agreed with advancing the peer networking options by utilising face to face options for SMEs, sharing case study examples of micro businesses with practical examples.	
6.14	ST updated the peer networks programme which is currently recruiting businesses to form part of the new cohort delivery for 2021-22 three cohorts each comprising of 11 directors across a range of sectors have already commenced with a further 14 still to be recruited. The programme must be delivered between now and March 2022. The pilot programmes 2020-21 had been effective at helping businesses to develop the innovation mindset with glowing reports from participants benefiting from working with directors from other businesses across a range of sizes and sectors.	

Minute**Action**

6.15	A board member currently part of one of the first peer network group shared perspective where the programme has been effective at creating a safe environment to share business challenges and find resolutions without feeling intimidated. Across business areas the same challenges exist whether it is recruitment, IT or marketing, the peer networking offers a valuable outlet.	
6.16	NK highlighted the importance of the Peer Networking initiatives and for board members to share further ideas including best practices within own organisations, future direction ideas and to feed them into the Board.	All
7.	Any other Business	
7.1	NK emphasised that suggestions for agenda items are welcome from board members for future meetings and should be brought to ST.	

Future meeting dates

Wednesday 22 nd September	2pm to 4pm
Wednesday 8 th December	2pm to 4pm