



LLEP INNOVATION BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting

22 September 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
Ben Ravilious CEO	BR	Ultimate Web /Leicester Start Ups	Private Sector
Andy Reed OBE (Vice Chair)	AR	Director SajelImpact Ltd LLEP Main Board Vice Chair	Private Sector
Sajjad Khan Managing Director	SK	Aristec/Leicester Textiles Federation	Private Sector
Anil Majithia LLEP Main Board Member	AM	Regional Advisory Board East Midlands - Canal & River Trust	Private Sector
Sandra Wiggins Director	SW	DPI Limited	Private Sector
Stephen Grubb Director Business Banking (Advisory/Observer)	SG	Nat West	Private Sector
Julian Bowrey Regional Lead (Advisory/Observer)	JB	Innovate UK	Government
Helen Donnellan Director Enterprise and Business Services	HD	De Montfort University	Higher Education
Dr Jen Fensome Director of Research and Enterprise	JF	Loughborough University	Higher Education
Dr Ian Forristal Director Research and Enterprise	IF	University of Leicester	Higher Education
Anjuu Trevedi	AT	University of Leicester	Higher Education

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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

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1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	
1.1	NK welcomed those present to the meeting.	
1.2	Apologies were received from DH, PW, RT, SH	
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 23 June 2021 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.	
4.	Government Innovation Strategy Guidance	
4.1	JB updated on the Government Innovation Strategy guidance published in July where there is a commitment to Innovatively improve productivity and growth. The Innovation Funding will be a refresh of the Industrial Strategy Challenge fund.	
4.2	The strategy endorses Innovate's role and the growing role of business support, both in terms of working with other institutions such as the growth hubs and universities and supporting companies to scale up rapidly.	
4.3	Key focuses include scaling businesses, improving available talent and skills in areas including technical abilities, leadership and management required by innovative companies linking in with the reform of the FE sector and HE partnerships. Innovate UK's new CEO is focussed on making use of the existing talent within the country.	
4.4	JB outlined the support offers of Innovation include growth and financial support. A diverse range of financial products are being sought, with innovation loans being piloted and now a confirmed product collaborating with Business Bank.	
4.5	Uncertainties surround the implications of the levelling up agenda, spending review and changes to ministerial departments concerning the financial support offered from the autumn and later into the new year. Further important timelines include the conclusion of the LEP review and the continuing arrangements regarding the mayor or combined authorities and the impacts on County deals.	
5.	Hydrogen strategy	
5.1	AB presented information on the launched UK government hydrogen strategy where hydrogen is identified as a versatile or potentially a replacement for high carbon fuels.	
5.2	The significance of hydrogen has now increased with government regulations and the ever more aggressive decarbonization agenda. The vision is focused on 2030 although the road map in the strategy goes beyond to 2050. The strategy includes a medium-term vision setting quantifiable objectives on hydrogen generated power and drive clean growth.	
5.3	Hydrogen production is a key pillar of the strategy with the government intending to scale up. The expectation is for researchers, innovators investors and producers to respond.	

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	<p>Foundational areas including production, storage and transportation are key areas currently being explored. The strategy discusses the need to see significant development and scale up of the hydrogen network and storage infrastructure.</p>	
5.4	<p>The strategy looks at aviation trials of fuel cell aircraft, launching a £23 million transport program and investing up to £20 million this financial year, designing trials for electric systems and crucially hydrogen fuel cells.</p>	
5.5	<p>NK highlighted the positives leading into the COP26 and the expertise within the region in MIRA, Loughborough and that the LEP Board is in discussions to develop this key area.</p>	
5.6	<p>AB identified challenges in safety of hydrogen with significant progress already made with production hydrogen vehicles on the roads. AB highlighted that the Midlands is well presented and provided significant input through Cenex and the Midlands Engine in future consultation discussions. AB communicated the regional and national perspectives of the UK Centre of Excellence for Low Carbon.</p>	
5.7	<p>AB added the key is to simultaneously address all of the pillars including storage, distribution on a local scale and attract businesses working in hydrogen to have a green hydrogen refuelling station to create a small ecosystem and; scale up in line with the government's approach at pace.</p>	
6.	Net Zero Implications	
6.1	<p>ST updated that the low carbon agenda is taking shape including developments in hydrogen and the beacons of activity already working within guidelines received from government.</p>	
6.2	<p>ST informed the Board that the LLEP have a dedicated Officer for low carbon. Recent surveys conducted include low carbon activities, detailing key LEP deliverables.</p>	
6.3	<p>It was outlined that there are four key pillars within the Economic Strategy on productivity, innovation, inclusivity, growth, and sustainability. Each of those pillars has an element of low carbon, and an importance on job-creation to respond to the low carbon is on the agenda with the various Enterprise Zones.</p>	
6.4	<p>Further ongoing activities include the East Midlands Airport, Freeport, LUSEP and Space Park Leicester and the three universities which all have low carbon plans. The significant challenge is to encourage the 98% of SMEs in the region to become invested in low carbon by using the right language and adopting the best low carbon practices.</p>	
6.5	<p>The low carbon framework includes the energy hub with Nottingham City Council working closely with Gavin Fletcher who also works to the LLEP part time.</p>	
6.6	<p>ST noted that the LLEP have completed a deal with Delaware, based in Market Harborough, giving 100 businesses licenses for a year to guide them through their low carbon journey with 67 businesses signed up already and on track to recruit 100.</p>	
6.7	<p>It was mentioned that an upcoming event is due on the 11th of November for a regional Green Zone event.</p>	

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<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p>Innovation Dashboard</p> <p>JF updated that the received feedback has been incorporated into the Dashboard. JF intends to present a draft Innovation Dashboard at the next Innovation Board meeting. A student will be employed to design and draft options to simplify the five pillars with a dashboard visualization and provide some direction for this project.</p> <p>NK suggested JF provides a request for comment on anything further that should be considered as measures on the Dashboard from the Board, for SC to circulate</p>	<p>JF</p>
<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p> <p>8.4</p> <p>8.5</p> <p>8.6</p>	<p>Innovation Steering Group Update</p> <p>GD outlined the purpose of the Innovation Steering group, the transition from the MITREAP group into the steering group as an action group of the Innovation Board. A key focus of the group is to mitigate the blockers of Innovation which include senior management time, finance, risk and skills through the use of support and training.</p> <p>GD informed the group that the foundations for the BizGateway website is ready, and now in the process of collecting content for pages including case studies from all relevant parties including the Innovation Board and for content pieces to be sent to Gary Dimmock.</p> <p>GD has circulated a guidance document to create a thirty second video on recording short videos for the Innovation talking heads project.</p> <p>GD updated that Innovation support has now been added to support finder however a project is underway to improve the service as the current system is difficult to navigate.</p> <p>GD requested individuals who are willing to help out and become a role model mentor in Innovation to get in touch with Gary Dimmock.</p> <p>GD requested viewpoints from Board Members on the Innovation Branding suggestions to ensure a consistent brand identity.</p>	
<p>9.</p> <p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p>	<p>Innovation Week Feedback and Innovation Awards 2021</p> <p>GD updated on Innovation Week Feedback and the Innovation Awards 2021.</p> <p>Innovation Week 2021 ran 20 events registering 372 registered attendees including the three universities and approximately 110 companies that the Growth Hub had not had contact with before and 75 attendees outside of Leicestershire.</p> <p>Feedback overall was positive and included comments that some events were too self-congratulatory in terms of projections</p>	
<p>10.</p> <p>10.1</p>	<p>Innovation Week 2022 – Net Zero</p> <p>GD updated on Innovation Week 2022 where Net Zero will be a key theme. And multi-sectoral rather than focussing on a single sector and relevant to the environment.</p>	

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10.2	It was communicated that the events will be spread out across the year and we would be holding one relatively large all-day event at Space Park Leicester. Previous attendees and contributors from Innovation Week 2021 will be invited to take part and some publicity will take place in the coming weeks to promote the event.	
10.3	The Innovation Awards evening will be on the night of the Innovation Event to allow for individuals attending both to be able to do so.	
10.4	GD updated the Board on presenters for the Innovation Week events including discussions are ongoing to attract a profile personality to speak at the events as a keynote speaker. Two of the Innovation Award winners will discuss their innovation journey and a panel discussion will also be used.	
10.5	Board members voiced concerns that the media company used this year was unable to effectively promote and attract delegates to attend, leaving the majority of the promotion to internal parties.	
10.6	GD noted the Innovation Awards was a successful event with some great Innovation being displayed across the businesses and encourages more businesses to apply for next year.	
10.7	Action point – GD to firm plans for Innovation Week 2022 and the Innovation awards.	GD
11.	Innovation Checklist	
11.1	NK introduced the proposition of having an Innovation Checklist which has proved successful at the East Midland Chamber Brexit Board with a two-page list to be aware of important considerations and replicated in the case of Innovation.	
11.2	NK highlighted the importance of the definition of Innovation which included facilitating continuous improvement, allowing businesses to be more competitive productive, efficient and to create jobs.	
11.3	Board members suggested important aspects to include as part of the checklist including SG on changing work patterns and behaviours to improve work processes, costs and efficiencies, AB highlighted the importance of cultivating a culture where new ideas are encouraged and embraced and SW highlighted the importance of collaborations in problem solving.	
11.4	Action Point - GD to lead organising an SME Innovation checklist with the Innovation Steering group.	GD
12.	<u>Innovation Webinars Update</u>	
12.1	Item moved the future meeting.	GD

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13.	<u>Any other business</u>	
13.1	NK encouraged businesses to apply for the Queens Award for Enterprise and to follow the available thorough guidance for the application process. The award is one of the most prestigious making a positive difference to business in the UK or internationally.	
13.2	GD updated on Air Products which is a global company, with a parent billion-dollar company, is invested in hydrogen and oxygen projects products and the overall agenda. Discussions have been ongoing with Air Products on opportunities within Leicestershire. Collaborations have the potential to bring investment within Leicestershire.	
13.3	The Board agreed for representation of a young person on the Innovation Award, organised by Gerarde Manley at the Enterprise Adviser Network to involving young school student viewpoints in relation to Innovation.	
13.4	NK announced and welcomed Rachel York's appointment as the new Growth Hub manager, starting in October 2021.	

Future meeting dates

Wednesday 8 th December	2pm to 4pm
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