



## LLEP Innovation Board

### Board Minutes of meeting 9th March 2022

#### Attendance and Apologies:

**Chair:** Dr Nik Kotecha OBE (NK)

**In attendance:** Dr Anthony Baxendale (AB), Julian Bowrey (JB), Alison Cavey (AC), Martin Coates (MC), Dr Jen Fensome (JF), Jane Garnett (JG), Rachel Granger (RG), Stephen Grubb (SG), Dennis Hayter (DH), Stuart Hetherington (SH), Charlotte Horobin (CH), Sajjad Khan (SK), George Oliver (GO), Chris Owen (CO), Ben Ravilious (BR), Andy Reed (AR), Rachel Tidmarsh (RT), Sue Tilley (ST), Sandra Wiggins (SW)

**Apologies:** Ian Forristal (IF), Sonia Baigent (SB), Anil Majithia (AM), Helen Donnellan (HD), Anjuu Trevedi (AT), Paul Wright (PW), Avtar Singh (AS), Adam Holmes (AH), Sharif Chowdhury (SC)

Item		Action
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</b>	
1.1	NK welcomed those present to the meeting.	
1.2	NK expressed thanks to everybody on attending.	
1.3	Apologies were noted from SC.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
2.1	There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes and Actions of previous meeting</b>	
3.1	No changes suggested, the minutes of the meeting from the December	

Item		Action
3.2	<p>8<sup>th</sup> were recorded as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>All other actions were completed or will be covered in the agenda items.</p>	
<p><b>4.</b></p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p><b>Developing the Innovation Strategy – Past achievements and future ambitions</b></p> <p>ST gave an overview on the background to the establishment of the LLEP Innovation Board, achievements to date and future actions.</p> <p>NK stated that great work has already been done but went on to share points he had recommended to ST and MC in their preparation work for the Innovation Awayday that was to take place on 29<sup>th</sup> March.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b></p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p> <p>5.5</p>	<p><b>Innovation Away Day</b></p> <p>NK shared key questions on the planning of the away day. Stated the need for others to know Leicester and Leicestershire as an innovative county building on the good work carried out so far.</p> <p>The purpose of the day is to establish the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Innovation and what it means to Micro, Small, SME and Large Businesses, to focus on the smaller SME's as they make up 97% of our Leicestershire businesses.</li> <li>ii. Strategy for how the LLEP can better promote the long-term growth benefits of investing in innovation and look for new funding streams to boost innovation in Leicestershire. This should identify solutions to remove barriers preventing businesses from innovating.</li> <li>iii. A key action plan for establishing Leicestershire as a national hub for business innovation, skills and ideas.</li> <li>iv. Work up a plan to encourage more collaborations, including with businesses from the wider region and Universities.</li> <li>v. A benchmarking exercise to gain a better understanding of the county's innovation strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges.</li> </ul> <p>BR agreed to NK's points but added that there was a bullet that was missing, 'community' It is important to get this working as it plays an essential part in improvements locally.</p> <p>SW agreed to BR points to bring community into the decision making to break down barriers and form connections.</p> <p>MC/ST presented key discussion points for the Innovation Away Day.</p>	

Item		Action
	<p>Looking at innovation through the eyes of the SME. Four key areas looking at linking them to the innovation pillar priorities. What it means to the LLEP, to individuals, to large enterprises and, places of academia. Exercises planned that will focus on these areas.</p> <p>5.6 ST presented the Innovation Away Day agenda and suggested ending the day with a tour of HORIBA Mira. The Board members were requested to confirm interest in the tour and any special dietary requirements.</p> <p>5.7 NK encouraged people to really engage in the Away-Day and send comments in advance so we could have a practical session with 5 key outcomes that would then be developed into a strategy with the assistance of the Steering group.</p> <p>5.8 JF raised concern MC presentation referred to invention versus innovation. In that innovation includes invention in MIT REAP terms and suggested innovation versus entrepreneurship mat be a bit more inclusive term, rather than innovation versus invention.</p> <p>5.9 NK requested that if anyone had further thoughts to send them through so they could be added to the discussion points that had already been passed to MC in preparation for the away day.</p>	<b>NK/JF</b>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Innovation Dashboard Update</b></p> <p>6.1 AC clarified that she had been working with Ravi the Loughborough University Student to look at the back-end process for the Innovation Dashboard with the subgroup including RG and JB who were present at the meeting.</p> <p>6.2 AC key actions since the last meeting included trying to find credible metrics using solid datasets both reliable and trackable on a year-by-year basis. Align the metrics with the key pillars that the MIT REAP Programme also prioritized around: human capital, resources, infrastructure, culture and market opportunity, which were seen as key levers. For consideration when tracking the innovation ecosystem.</p> <p>6.3 AC presented the live dashboard. Offered to share afterwards to those who wanted a copy to look at and the supporting introductory guide on how the metrics were sourced and links to those metrics.</p> <p>6.4 AC stated this data is substituted effectively for innovation to look at on an individual basis as a statistical starting point. Gives a good baseline to commence the work and monitoring the work of the Board.</p>	

Item		Action
6.5	AC raised the point what's going to be more important to the board going forward statistics or tracking metrics trends.	
6.6	AC stated figures are East Midlands currently not Leicestershire. Where figures are available for other years, we can show additional negative or positive figures which will change annually such as the increase in net number of new businesses in the region for this year's statistic, post COVID.	
6.7	AR commented comparing areas is a challenge and suggested that instead we look for specific areas that have similar demographic.	
6.8	NK suggested soft measures to implement: Mentoring individuals who have technology but can't get it out to market. Use the Innovation Festival as a measure of growth and engagement, create a Leicestershire Innovation Festival LinkedIn page. Small actions throughout the year will lead to continued publicity.	
6.9	BR offered free of charge for NK a mentor machine engine helpengine.com will do a demo with NK.	NK/BR
6.10	RT approved the idea of the LinkedIn page. Requested a focus on disseminating information across the region, sharing case studies, innovation awards, as it inspires other companies. Stated a lack of resources could impact people developing innovation.	
6.11	Commented overall were positive towards the dashboard.	
6.12	BR recommended to get communities linked up together taking the lead, as a one size approach won't fit all.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Made Smarter East Midlands Cluster Collaboration</b>	
7.1	CO presented about the Made Smarter bid for the Midlands. Discussed both the strategic case and the economic case taken to BEIS. Opened the floor to questions.	
7.2	SW commented that Made Smarter coming to the Midlands is a good result. Deliver it at ground level to get people to understand that the benefit of using digital technology makes processes quicker.	
7.3	NK commented that notable slides were the productivity slide – showing through the whole manufacturing process all the levels of productivity to increase if manufacturers knew about them.	

Item		Action
7.4 7.5 7.6	<p>NK noted that most of the business in the East Midlands came into the small or the medium in the thousands of businesses. Only a few that were going into the large corporates, targeting the right audience, is key.</p> <p>NK stated the need for government help. The City &amp; County has ideas, and awareness needs increasing so businesses can implement it.</p> <p>CH commented West Midlands cohort came together in 2020 due to the combined authority. We need to promote the region more as it has the highest proportion of workers in manufacturing.</p>	
8.1 8.2 8.3 8.4 8.5 8.6 8.7	<p><b>8. Innovation Festival 2022</b></p> <p>JG gave a verbal update. Festival ran from the 14th, to 28th of February launching at the Space Park. Concluding with Innovation Friday, just closely following on the steps of the Innovation Awards.</p> <p>Twenty-four events in total and six in person. JB from Innovate UK managed to have a blended event. 726 attendees, doubling last year's attendance.</p> <p>Universities, Innovate UK and Business Bank were well presented. The requirement was for people to partially run their own events. Next time look at increasing SME engagement.</p> <p>Overall, well received with some good foundation to discuss at the away day. Recommend that the Board capitalise on other innovation events running throughout the year and plan a strategy for what to aim for.</p> <p>It was decided the Business Support Finder is a suitable way for people to search for innovative services and products.</p> <p>NK thanked JG and all involved who contributed to the success of the Innovation Festival.</p> <p>ST commented. It was great to have somebody with JG's professionalism helping. Thank you.</p>	
9.1 9.2	<p><b>9. Innovation Communication and Success Stories</b></p> <p>GO presented on the inception and accomplishments throughout the whole festival.</p> <p>A successful media partnership was set up with Business Live.</p>	

Item		Action
	<p>Guaranteeing content getting into the media. Ahead of the launch event the agreed strategy included running activity until March, and some of these news pieces are still appearing now.</p> <p>9.3 Used PR to fill all the slots in the event schedule alongside JG efforts.</p> <p>9.4 10 press releases sent out telling the stories of local businesses to reinforce the Innovation message. Using Business Live gave the Innovation Festival additional press and social media coverage.</p> <p>9.5 Anything Business Live didn't run was pushed out as secondary media through normal mailing lists.</p> <p>9.6 Easily exceeded the targets in terms of referrals, Peter Allen (Growth Hub Marketing and Communications Officer) did a BBC Leicester piece.</p> <p>9.7 Peter Allen (Growth Hub Marketing and Communications Officer) worked around the digital media monitoring the Business Gateway platform. He created the hashtag, with the resulting outcome a significant increase on the Business Gateway Festival page. Dwell time four times normal activity. The insight here was more content being read before people moved to register to attend events.</p> <p>9.8 The media value was £33k, a significant ROI on the overall spend.</p> <p>9.9 Now a brand has been created momentum needs to continue over the next year and work on how that innovation brand can build into the wider LLEP comms plan for 2022, including the economic growth strategy pillars.</p> <p>9.10 NK thanked GO and Peter Allen for their contribution agreed momentum needs to keep going around innovation publicity throughout the year</p>	
<p><b>10.</b></p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p>	<p><b>Innovation Award Winner - Introduction to new LLEP Innovation Board member</b></p> <p>NK advised the Board that the Innovation Awards winner was Nemauro Medical. Arash Ghadar their Business Development Manager will join the Innovation Board at the next meeting.</p> <p>NK stated it's important to celebrate achievements and to get innovative companies on our board to help drive the agenda for innovation in our City &amp; County.</p>	

Item		Action
<b>11.</b>	<b><u>Any other business</u></b>	
11.1	NK raised having a face-to-face board meeting.? Date options are the 8th of June, 7th of September or 7th of December.	
11.2	<b>Approval</b> received for an in-person Innovation Board Meeting to be held on 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2 - 4pm.	<b>ALL</b>
11.3	NK closed the meeting with great thanks to the Board, Steering group and Officers and commented that the Innovation agenda is front and centre in Leicestershire and we need to keep the momentum.	

**Appendices: (Powerpoint)**

- 1) Developing the Innovation Strategy – Past achievements and future ambitions
- 2) Innovation Away Day
- 3) Innovation Dashboard Update
- 4) Made Smarter – East Midlands cluster collaboration
- 5) Innovation Festival Comms and success stories