

Minutes from the Innovation Board 09:00 – 11:00, 24th June 2022

In Attendance

Adrian Dawson, Chris Evans, Stuart Brocklehurst, Icarus Allen, Stephen Mariadas, Layla Burrows, Ian McFadzen, Paul Powell and Andrew Dean.

Apologies

Victoria Hatfield, David Ralph, Jane Portman, Paul Coles and Sally Basker.

1. Minutes from the meeting held on 14 March 2022

These were accepted.

2. Update on our ongoing political engagement around Innovation

There had been positive feedback of late. There had also been very proactive engagement with Civil Servants and Government. Our regional politicians and policymakers were also supportive. Feedback from ministerial discussions indicated that there was a good chance that our ask for the three core elements will be successful for the Marine, Environmental Intelligence and Technopole offer. The Devon County Deal proposal mirrors our request for levelling up support and further support from the MOD for the maritime innovations had been received. Complementary private sector innovations were also progressing. We should be hearing more information soon.

There will be a follow-up session soon including presentations from the Met Office, Plymouth University, Exeter University and MOD. The momentum is encouraging and it feels like we are making progress, but we are not there yet.

3. Building Support – Group Discussion

The members discussed where they and colleagues can now maintain pressure for greater action.

CE – UoE had liaised with regional corporates and CBI looking to gain a positive statement of support for the marine and environmental proposals. Now seeking greater specificity and an agreement for co-development.

ACTION CE and ADaw - To gain a quote that can be used in support of our Innovation Proposals from the CBI

ADaw – Also speaking to partners around the marine and environmental offer and making progress. Conversations sounding more like ‘When’ than ‘If’.

IM – attended a Royal Society event last week and recognised that they were a potential route for further support for our proposals and they were impressed with the approach here and understood the technical challenge.

ACTION IM to follow up with Royal Society

ACTION SB Follow up with the Royal Academy of Engineering

IA – Hosting visitors from Australia soon to discuss marine autonomy and had been involved in discussions to date in partnership with the HEIs. Innovation service in the maritime sector was now

going to carry on with longer term funding support. Ian felt should speak to other sectoral and research bodies when the time was right.

ACTION IA - to engage with other Maritime Bodies when the time is right to gain further support

SM – IOTs had been asked to get involved in the Shipbuilding Taskforce. He also attended the Royal Society meeting last week. Suggested Darren Jones (MP for Bristol North) who may be able to support and has a strong Plymouth link.

LB – Innovate UK will launch a three-year strategy in July – including topics for investment. They also want to give time to creating regional innovation plans. Late Summer and Early Autumn LB will be drafting something for Marine and Maritime for HotSW and feels there as a strong business case for a region specific-sector specific fund. SME demand will be key to Innovate UK priorities.

SB – Emphasised that there is an agreed strategy which embraces both Environmental Intelligence and Marine and Maritime. It was expected that Innovate UK would not split this.

ACTION LB and SB to discuss this early-stage development

PP – sought to ensure that this would not be impacting on traditional innovation support and received assurances. Recognised corporates have a key role in the innovation ecosystem and they were working around developing a capability to develop new innovative additive layer management capacity.

IM – confirmed capital assets were the kind of positives that could be achieved through the work of the LEP and the regional innovation offer.

4. Update on membership of the Board and Panel

Thales have asked to join the Board and there was support from them. We have not had involvement from the Met Office. The latter very active in both maritime autonomy and environmental intelligence.

ACTION CE – To raise potential Met Office Involvement, possibly through the Informatics Lab

ACTION ALL – pursue additional membership of the IDE Panel – linking them to Andrew Dean

ACTION CE – liaise with UKHO and seek a replacement for Cathrine Armour for the Panel

5. Results of the LEP Panel Survey Proposal and Discussion

AD presented the findings of the survey which had previously been circulated.

IDEs can get support from Innovate UK Edge and LB recognised the challenges for smaller SMEs. LB also highlighted the new Fast Start approach which is being launched now. Grants of £25k - £50k, which are financially front-loaded. The submission process has a lighter touch than most IUK competitions.

ACTION ALL – circulate details of the Fast Start competition for first time applicants to their contacts

ACTION AD to forward results to Alex Gerbasi and Ciara Eastell in the Exeter University Business School.

6. AOB and new opportunities

CE - This is a critical time for the County Deal Developments in the region and we must ensure we connect positively and link the work of the LEP, Innovation Board and the individual members of the Board and ensure we progress areas where there is broad support.

SB - emphasised the need for consistent asks that were coherent which will give far greater chance of achieving success.

7. Date for the next meeting (14:00 – 16:00, Monday 19th September)

Contact

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