

Business Recovery and Growth Board

10 February 2022

Innovation Activity Update

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
<i>Reason why exempt:</i>	Not applicable
Purpose of this report:	Discussion
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Has it been included on the Forward Plan?	No

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Executive Summary

This paper provides an update on the progress of Innovation focussed business support and outlines upcoming activity that will be undertaken to deliver the innovation-led growth aspirations of the Strategic Economic Plan.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

Fundamental to the Strategic Economic Plan is the ambition to provide the enabling conditions for innovation to underpin the transformation of the South Yorkshire economy. Increasing the volume of innovative start-ups and scale-ups and supporting existing businesses to generate and commercialise new ideas, adopt new thinking and technology is fundamental to improving the productivity of South Yorkshire businesses which will be vital to delivering the ambitions of the levelling up agenda. A thriving innovation eco-system will support the development of a South Yorkshire economy where businesses, entrepreneurs and individuals are engaged and inspired to innovate.

Recommendations

That the Board notes the on-going activity to support South Yorkshire businesses to become more productive and the progress towards the formation of a South Yorkshire Innovation Board.

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

Non-Applicable

1. Background

- 1.1 Innovation, adoption and defusal is critical to the long-term health of the South Yorkshire economy. Evidence suggests that areas that invest in research and development and businesses that access innovation support activity create higher quality jobs and are more likely to export and grow their business.
- 1.2 The Strategic Economic Plan has placed innovation at the heart of addressing the South Yorkshire productivity challenge. Evidence gained from the Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Programme has identified several areas of increased focus that will ensure that the South Yorkshire innovation ecosystem is optimised. Engaging in innovation remains a choice for business, and therefore the South Yorkshire support functions must provide a compelling offer.
- 1.3 This paper provides an overview of some of the principal innovation focussed support activities underway across South Yorkshire delivered in partnership between, Growth Hub, Local Authorities and wider partners. In addition, it provides an overview of forthcoming activity for consideration by the Board. Note: it should not be considered a comprehensive review of all business support activity.

2. Key Updates

- 2.1 **Made Smarter programme:** Developed following an industry-led review that explored how UK manufacturing can maximise the benefits from increasing adoption of digital technology. South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority is leading on the programme for Yorkshire and the Humber. The Programme offers a range of support from digital road maps to intensive bespoke sessions to capital grants. In addition, the programme also aims to create 20 digital internships and 50 places on leadership development programmes.
- 2.1.1 The Growth Hub has worked in unison with its procured delivery partner (Rotherham North Notts) to ensure that the programme is able to deliver tangible and timely outcomes within the constraints of the pilot period. Demand for support has exceeded the initial forecast and as a result the Growth Hub has been able to agree funding for additional roadmap sessions and further discussions are taking place with the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy to finance additional intensive sessions.

2.1.2 The following outputs have been delivered to date:

Made Smarter	EOI	Digital Road Maps	Intensive sessions	Digital Interns		L&M cohort	Capex Grants
				SME EOI's to host interns	Student EOI's		
Total	178	56	60+	30	29	2 (40+ attendees)	1

2.1.3 It is expected that further government funding for the continuation of the Made Smarter programme will become available and this will allow the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to further scale the interventions to support more businesses across Yorkshire and the Humber. As this formalises a further update will be provided to the board on progress.

2.2 **Sheffield Innovation Programme:** This programme helps business to achieve ambitions for growth through practical research support. It provides access to innovation support to the Small Medium Enterprise business base via access to academic research, university facilities, innovation consultancy, workshops and bespoke research. The programme is funded via the European Regional Development Fund until July 2023. The programme is led by Sheffield Hallam University in partnership with the University of Sheffield and the Growth Hub.

2.2.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the progress of the programme with businesses unable to access provision from the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University due to closure of facilities and reduced access to innovative departments that traditionally support the Sheffield Innovation Programme.

2.2.2 In order to ensure engagement across South Yorkshire the Innovation Advisors have been working closely with individual local authority Business Advisors, and local Chambers of Commerce. This activity is supplemented with additional Innovation clinics delivered from within the local authority areas. The following outputs have been delivered up to the end of December 2021:

SIP	Enterprise Receiving Support	Employment Increase in Supported Enterprises	Cooperation with a research Entity	New Product to Market	New Product to Firm
Total	104	4	68	12	16

2.3 **The Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District:** This programme of activity builds on the success of the existing South Yorkshire science/business parks and is being led by Sheffield City Council and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. The Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District has an ambition to reach beyond these sites to create an innovation district that is integrated with its

surrounding communities and supports innovation across the South Yorkshire geography. It will create enhanced conditions for investment, connect translational research facilities and local businesses and create employment and education opportunities within its surrounding communities and across the whole of South Yorkshire.

2.3.1 During 2021 Sheffield City Council and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council were successful in securing £760k from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This funding will be used to give greater impetus to the proposal and will be used to fund the activity outlined below.

2.2.2 The following four areas will be developed between now and December 2022:

- The Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District Vision: This will set out the aims and objectives, ambitions and priorities.
- The Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District Spatial and Economic Strategy: The investments that the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District is required to deliver to achieve the objectives outlined in the Vision.
- Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District Delivery Models: Assessment of the options to deliver the Spatial and Economic Strategy and Vision at an enhanced pace beyond the business-as-usual approach.
- The Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District Offer: Market-facing value propositions setting out the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District 'offer' to attract investors, businesses, and talent; and a plan to address the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District name and brand.

2.4 **The Innovation Board:** The proposal for the formation of a South Yorkshire Innovation Board was approved by the Local Enterprise Partnership Board on January the 13th 2022. The board will provide strategic leadership of the 'innovation' agenda by bringing together the private sector, public bodies, research councils, funders, and innovation orientated organisations.

2.4.1 The board has a number of objectives that will be further refined once formed, these are outlined below:

- Provide leadership to drive and deliver a new approach to economic development in South Yorkshire centred around innovation. In particular, this includes operationalising the Strategic Economic Plan ambitions across start up, scale-up, commercialisation and the industrialisation of ideas, new supply chain opportunities, and clustering.
- Lead the development of an enabling ecosystem which fosters a culture of successful innovation and ensure the necessary components are in operation and functioning well in South Yorkshire.
- Harness and extend the impact of South Yorkshire's innovation assets regionally and nationally.
- Provide leadership which ensures the development of translational research and clusters in specific thematic areas where South Yorkshire has a competitive advantage. These include Sustainable Manufacturing and Engineering; Energy; Digital Technology; Health and Wellbeing and Advanced Logistics.
- Ensure South Yorkshire's innovation ecosystem supports productivity improvements across a range of lower-paid sectors through investment, training, use of technology or adoption of improved process.

- Provide leadership which ensures that inclusive outcomes are hardwired through all innovation and growth interventions. Transforming South Yorkshire's innovation ecosystem should create opportunities for all people, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or other circumstances.
- Collaborate and connect with other Innovation Boards and advice on how South Yorkshire can learn from peers.
- Develop strong relations with partners, especially central Government and complementary publicly funded bodies.
- Identify and promote growth opportunities for South Yorkshire Cluster Research.

2.4.2 Over the next month South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority will be working with partners to identify and approach potential members of the South Yorkshire Innovation board and identify potential private sector chairs. The Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership in consultation with the Mayor, will appoint the Chair and the Board will sit under the governance of the Local Enterprise Partnership and the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. It is currently envisaged that the South Yorkshire Innovation Board will be formally launched at the Economic Summit in March 2022.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 N/A – discussion paper

4. Consultation on Proposal

4.1 N/A – discussion paper

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 N/A – discussion paper

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

6.1 No costs have yet been identified for these activities. Budgets for 2022/23 are being set at the current time (January 2022) and innovation activities will be built into such, with more detailed plans being brought to future Boards for support/approval.

7. Legal Implications and Advice

7.1 None

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

None

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

9.1 None

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

10.1 None

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

11.1 None

12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

12.1 Working with the marketing and communications team, we continue to promote and look to prioritise developments of the South Yorkshire offer and narrative, pertinent to the enabling conditions to increase the volume of innovative start-ups and scale-ups alongside the evolution of the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District, and supporting innovation driven programmes identified that form the innovation focused business ecosystem. In alignment with vocalising development across the Strategic Economic Plan, marketing will work closely to evolve the narrative, support the innovation board and the economic summit.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

None