

INNOVATION COUNCIL MEETING • 28 JUNE 2017

- Jessica Boot Marshall Business Development Officer for IP updated on the progress of the Innovation Programme.
- Increased promotional activity, networking and attendance at events has proved successful. 109 SME's are now on the programme, 4 Proof of Concepts are live and 4 more are going to panel. 5 Internships are active and 5 are in the pipeline. Innovation vouchers are gaining good traction with 11 awarded so far and 6 going to panel; these include good quality projects across University departments. Results are all on or above target.
- Jim Bowens from Battles a £ 90 million turnover company, participating in the programme, shared his experiences which were extremely positive about the offer, the industrial liaison staff and the academics in the life sciences and engineering departments.
- Saket Srivastava Senior Lecturer (Electrical Engineering) is working with Jim on the project. Saket advised that the Innovation Vouchers enable real time research, effective management of client expectation and provide an opportunity to accurately scope and direct the project, which could lead to further research and additional funding applications.
- A discussion followed on how best to simplify and clarify ways to quickly connect business with the right academics for the project. An expert academic database is being created but it was felt this may not always provide the solution to an interdisciplinary team required for challenge based projects.
- Mary suggested adding a stage at the start of the programme which is workshop/forum based and brings together an interdisciplinary team of academics to meet with the business.
- Video case studies are being created to drive further applications.
- It was suggested that nodes of innovation be identified and mapped to focus promotional activities in key areas and sectors. This could lead to identifying more University led sector networking.
- The group requested that Jessica advise at the next meeting the number of enquiries that do not lead to projects.
- It was suggested that promotion of the schemes to academics would be useful so they can discuss with businesses.
- Kirsty Bolam, Innovation Programme Events Officer and Alex Wright Innovation Council champion for events updated on activity.
- Innovation Through Collaboration events have raised the profile of the programme throughout the County, mainly taking place in the North to date and moving South later in the year. Average attendance is 15 - 45 people and delegate feedback has been used to tailor upcoming events. Focus on specific topics and case studies has proved to be popular.
- There is a Manufacturing Conference in September and an Innovation Conference will take place next year.
- Road Trips - these are suggested to focus on LEP priorities starting with manufacturing and the Visitor economy with 12-15 participants and no more than 2 per sector. Potentially working through the 6% growth company list. A member of the IC to attend and the focus to be on solving the host business's problem/challenge.
- Discussion around how to invite businesses to apply and whether it should be for a sign up period of a year to an Ideas Club, following the Common Purpose model. Also if it should focus on talented Middle Managers.
- Decision taken to test the idea at events and create a working group, focusing on promoting the idea first and then selecting and targeting companies. The planning period to be for 6 months and to include identification of brand names to host visits nationally.



- Suggestion to invite members from other Innovation Councils Nationally to attend future meetings to share best practice.
- Tony Burnell, IC Champion on Training and Development updated on his discussions with businesses regarding their training needs.
- Initially business focused on financing and funding although less so in larger businesses.
- Larger companies wanted to engage more with the University to develop innovation and ideas skills outside their R & D departments.
- Smaller companies felt they did not need help with innovation
- Smaller companies lack strategic and business planning skills and an understanding of modelling how to make ideas become a reality.
- Companies want networking events with relevant case studies and discussions/workshops that they can relate to in preference to high level presentations such as those made at last year's conference.
- Training is fragmented across the region and there is a need for differentiation of the offers between start up and scale up (6%) companies
- The LEP requested feedback from the IC regarding how to give a WOW factor to the LEP Live event in October. The group suggested that it may be beneficial to not only have a WOW factor but to show how automation could work across sectors e.g Visitor Economy and its role in Industry 4.0.

