
JOINT INNOVATION COUNCIL AND GROWTH HUB MEETING • 25 SEPTEMBER 2019

- Mary opened the meeting by outlining the key purpose. The Growth Hub and the Innovation Council working together to drive growth in the Greater Lincolnshire area. To have a thematic approach to take to the LEP Board reference the LIS and innovation in the context of strategic pillars. To support companies identified through the Growth Hub.
- Samantha Harrison updated the group on the activities of the Growth Hub.
- The Growth Hub has a broad approach and supports businesses of all sizes.
- They provide strategic events, manufacturing and digital conferences and scale up activity.
- There are advisers that guide and navigate businesses through the public and private support programmes on offer.
- The Growth Hub heads up cluster support for the East Midlands region including funds for Brexit activity. There is a likelihood that more funds for Brexit activity will come through them in the future. They are working with the Chamber of Commerce on Brexit readiness support and are gathering data for Government.
- The scale up programme offers flexible funding.
- The Productivity Programme under the Growth Hub umbrella offers the greatest opportunity for collaboration.
- The University was successful in getting support from Government for the Agricultural Enterprise Zone.
- There are 70 programmes on offer at the Growth Hub and this is complex for business to understand and navigate. However, there are many opportunities for Greater Lincolnshire and the LIS is the major route forward. Focus and clarity is key to make the most of this moment in time.
- There is a need to link activities and their impact together across the area and demonstrate results.
- Postcode funding is a barrier to innovation and could future funding be sub regional and local in future? Could the Growth Hub use its seat at the table to enable this?
- Brexit and the business climate is driving SME focus to the more immediate challenges rather than longer term strategies.
- James Baty gave a presentation on LIS. He advised that the Government has stated there is no new money available.
- Key objectives (pillars of productivity) to raise productivity, ideas, dynamism, inclusive growth and earning power, resilience and future proofing the economy.
- Local distinctiveness is key. Discussion are continuing with other LEP areas where there is commonality with Greater Lincolnshire – New Anglia, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough around food and agriculture. What are the areas of collaboration with Humber?
- Conversations with Government are critical, there is a need to be specific about local needs and focus. Currently at draft stage and when it is 80% complete it goes into Government for authorship.
- Andrew has written policy positioning papers and has built in information from IC meetings and discussions.
- There is a considerable challenge in growing the GDP lag in innovation and ideas in Greater Lincolnshire from 2.2% to 2.4%
- Discussion around the low quantity and low quality in innovation in Greater Lincolnshire and how it is centred around the City of Lincoln. There is a clear link between innovation and growth. There is a challenge around the statistics as they are based on dated evidence.
- The University has had a major impact on the growth trajectory but it is from a low base. How can the pace of scale up and growth be increased and extended? Look outwards and promote more broadly across the area, have sector focus in areas of strength – agriculture, energy, digital. Have connected leadership across the Growth, Hub, IC and other agencies. Promote innovation champions and build on the success of the Innovation programme.
- Create innovation hubs and spokes – sweat the region's assets. Have greater focus on larger businesses rather than micro. Create a leadership programme for businesses around innovation.
- Use and combine different sources of funding to maximise the impact for business. Defence and security potential has not been unlocked.
- Drive innovation through procurement.
- Mary commented on the challenges around place and infrastructure and how the LIS could focus on how in a rural environment innovation can be supported. To date focus has been on cities. Greater Lincolnshire could be a demonstrator for rural innovation. Re-articulation of the notion of place in relation to industrial strategy.
- Consider the educational system: lifelong learning to drive opportunities for innovation.
- Look at community settings and the opportunity for innovation. Make places attractive to talent.



- Use the LIS to engage with business and aid collaboration. Ensure businesses understand it so that there is greater engagement, activity and more effective measurement of impact.
- Samantha commented on the low skilled, low growth, micro nature of businesses in the area. There are different programmes for themes and sectors covering defence, circular economy, investor development and globalisation, digital landscape – areas outside the LEP priorities. Mary commented on the opportunity for digital heritage as there is considerable experience in the area.
- There is a need to support people with ideas on how to commercialise them. IP sharing for local companies and the University. Prioritisation of the ideas with the best opportunity and linking these to boutique investment. There is a need for innovative and regionally focused finance. However, it was noted that access to finance is not currently evidenced as a barrier to businesses in Greater Lincolnshire.
- There is a need to ensure that people are ambitious and aspirational in the first instance and then to generate the infrastructure to support them. It is important to consider social impact in addition to profit generation in particular health and wellbeing.
- Scale up business support programmes include pre scale up and scale up activities and are aimed at 20+ employee businesses. There are behavioural and academic programmes, peer to peer networking and support. Private sector mentors are assigned to each company.
- Other topics include managing media, transformational technology (AI, VR and AR). A2F with Midlands Engine and management profiling.
- The second phase for the cohort of 78 companies is being considered and how it can be monetised as the initial phase is fully funded by Government. Since July 1 another 34 companies have joined the programme.
- Consideration should be given to the notion of rurally located businesses (located there through lifestyle choices) rather than describing them as rural businesses.
- 5G opportunities in rural areas are not currently on the agenda.
- Innovation should be an element on the scale up programme. Make links between the University and Scale up programme more fluid through workshops and events. Create a joint platform of introduction and potentially joint company visits.
- Brexit readiness fund has to be bid and spent within a month i.e. 31 October 2019.
- Future joint meetings to be scheduled as required.

