



Innovation Sub-Group Meeting

Wednesday 8th September 2021, 15:00 – 17:00

Virtual Microsoft Team Meeting

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Minutes

Members present:	<p>Lesley Thompson (LT): VP Academic and Government Strategic Alliance, Elsevier Sarah Haywood Price (SHP): Managing Director, Advanced Oxford Roger Neal (RN): Technical Services Manager, Sophos UK Jane Galsworthy (JG): Managing Director, Oxford Innovation Services Barbara Ghinelli (BG): Director, Business Development and Clusters, Harwell Campus (STFC) Agne Milukaite (AM): Founder, Cycle Land Stuart Martin (SM): CEO, Satellite Applications Catapult Ian Chapman (IC): CEO, United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority Andrew Harrison (AH): CEO, Diamond Light Source Linda King: Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research & Global Partnerships, Oxford Brookes University Chas Bountra (CB): Pro Vice-Chancellor for Innovation, University of Oxford David Legg (DL): Regional Manager, UKRI Adam Stoten (AS): SVP Academic Partnerships, Evotec</p>
Apologies:	<p>Paul Beasley (PB): Prof of Energy Systems and Head of R&D Siemens UK James Colgate (JC): Operations Director, Williams Grand Prix Engineering</p>
In attendance:	<p>Stuart Wilkinson (SW): Assistant Director, Innovation & Engagement Oxford University Simonetta Manfredi (SMf): Associate Dean for Research & KE Oxford For Linda King Thandiwe Hara-Msulira (THM): Strategy Development Executive, OxLEP Ahmed Goga (AG): Director of Strategy and Programmes, OxLEP Alexandra Capata (AC): Strategy Development Assistant, OxLEP Ross Burton (RB): Area Lead for Oxfordshire, BEIS Natalie Egan (NE): Inward Investment Executive, OxLEP Sebastian Johnson (SJ): Head of Innovation and Inward Investment, OxLEP Jeremy Long (JL): OxLEP Board Chair Shahid Omer (SO): Deputy Director-Innovation Strategy, BEIS Matthew Harpin (MH): Creative Director, Castus Design</p>

	Item	Lead
1.	<p>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies were said (Chair) Apologies were received.</p>	Lesley Thompson (Chair)
2.	<p>Matters Arising & Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th of May 2021 The minutes were confirmed as a true record of the meeting in May 2021.</p>	Lesley Thompson
3.	<p>Innovation Strategy Presentation from Shahid Omer (SO) ; Deputy Director – Innovation Strategy BEIS</p> <p>Group discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>the contents of the Strategy and what opportunities it can offer Oxfordshire</i> ▪ <i>What Oxfordshire has to offer to the strategy implementation process.</i> <p>AG: Thanked SO for taking time to talk to the ISG.</p> <p>SO: The strategy is about leading the future by creating it, boosting innovation skills, and our ability to drive productivity.</p> <p>This strategy is focused on how we support and boost private sector innovation. The overarching vision is to be a global hub for innovation by 2035.</p> <p>It is based on four pillars:</p> <p>i) Unleashing business</p> <p>This is about the business environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is it pro-innovation or is it prohibitive? - How competitive is it? - Does it support IP - How can we use our links and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)? - Can we use procurement as a lever to improve it? - Can we support Technologies to market commercialisation? - Can policy support adoption of technologies in the environments? <p>ii) People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do we make sure we have the right people and talent? - How can talent support talent recruitment? e.g. the creation and promotion of talent linked immigration routes (e.g. the Post Study Visa) - How can we use existing mechanisms to support talent development to make sure that skills are in place for later advancements? e.g. using Catapults and Gatsby foundation on emerging skills. <p>iii) Institutions and places</p> <p>This is about future proofing our objectives in line with wider Govt objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Levelling up (places) is a Govt priority 	Shahid Omer

- This will involve a full review of institutional landscape to test our understanding – is our system balanced? How much of our Research spending come from Universities versus industry? Is this an ideal balance?
- Do we have the full picture of institutions in research and how they are placed to deliver our missions and objectives?

iv) Missions and Technologies

This will be the successor to the IS grand challenges.

- Working closely with national science committees.
- This is one area where we will be setting direction.
- Key priorities are likely to be linked to the integrated review technology sovereignty.

Implementation

The innovation strategy is not the end point, rather it is the start. The implementation team is looking to the market for new ideas from across the landscape including Oxford.

LT: R & D investment is concentrated in a FTSE 100 companies and sectors, e.g. pharmaceutical or Defence. How can this be changed?

SO: We are looking at how we can attract inward investment from Multinational R/D companies which are also globally mobile, but it is worth noting that the London Stock Exchange (SE) may not have all the right indicators. E.g there are a lot of FTSE 100 companies who do not have concrete presence in the UK, but they use the SE to raise capital. We should work on retaining the ones who are already established here, as well as attracting new ones in.

SM: Universities already do a lot of things. How do you see them developing businesses under the strategy? What would you like to see in the relationships with universities?

Also, a report on the enquiry into the diversity in the STEM community found that there is a lot of diverse talent within the UK and there is a call for action to improve this. I note that under 'people,' there is a lot of emphasis on attracting international talent. How about national diverse talent?

SO: Universities do a good job in supporting R&D. We would like to see more universities doing more of what some of our best Universities are doing so well. e.g. commercialising technologies. There are some supportive mechanisms already in place e.g. the Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) and the Connecting Capabilities Fund (CCF). We can make a case for programmes we know work. We also need to have more conversation with Tech transfer offices in Universities.

On diversity, we need to make the most of existing talent and we want to go further in this. We need to work closely with colleges and FE and to think about what we can do including exposing young children to innovation.

SM: The catapult review highlighted that skills is an issue in STEM, so the catapult needs to play a big role in skills. However, The rate of change in Tech has become so fast that the workforce needs to be become more and more dynamic and continuous. We need an engaged process and this is an opportunity for such.

OS: The mission is for the UK to become a global Innovation Hub. Areas to development to include:

- How to leverage more R&D?
- Drive innovation including supporting the low intensity end of the sectors?
- Retain sovereign capability in more sectors e.g. similar to what we have in energy capability.

SM: There are excellent institutes across universities who are very good at what they do, so we may not need to create new ones. Have you thought of how we could gain leverage via existing institutions or how that could happen?

OS: Yes, this is not just about retaining sovereignty, it is also about establishing it. The review will look at whether we have enough institutes, working out how they compare globally, and how they can be part of the implementation etc.

AH: One invisible element is encouraging and facilitating connectivity within the powerful clusters we already have. The Govt seems to want to encourage innovation but we also need to connect them as there are positive feedback loops between them. Creating a pool of connectivity will be supportive of the entire ecosystem, including enabling companies have better access to otherwise remote talent. We can encourage this as part of the imminent levelling up.

SO: Yes, we rely heavily on collaboration and there is a huge sense that we can make the most of that.

SHP: DIT has a role in attracting innovation into the UK, but there is something of a gap in terms of how we retain companies that are growing here to also scale up here. The UK may have dropped a ball in incentivising the scale up activities of UK born companies to stay in the UK. An Advanced Oxford report indicates that many businesses are looking point were they need to go to take forward their innovation e.g. manufacturing or commercialisation.

SO: There is a conversation in DIT around how globally mobile SMEs can be retained but it is not clear what this looks like. There is no aggregate data which could make help the case. We might need to know and hear of examples of where this happening.

CB: On investment and funding, one of the biggest reason why there is a discrepancy between the UK and Stanford is that there is 10 times more capital in Stanford.

Locally, six years ago the University of Oxford was establishing 5-6 companies a year, but this now stands at 25+ companies every year, with more than 30 spinouts this year alone. This transformation is in a large part, due to the funding that the University has put in, so access to capital will transform the national and Oxfordshire land scape.

SO: Funding is part of the business environment pillar. So yes, if we want to lead the world, we need to do it at scale. We have deep capital pores, yet we also have more sophisticated financial markets. So something is probably not working.

It would also be good to know where the gaps are and to work out how and which types of funding would best support this. Some of our differences with the US may also be down to the culture around investment.

SM: But is the innovation environment so good because funding is available, or is funding available because the environment is good? We have some of the most sophisticated investors and if our innovation environment was better, we would get more investment. One of the biggest factors could be the way in which the government is prepared to act as a risk sharing customer, i.e. its role in taking away the risk at the beginning. It is much easier for the private sector to come in, if the government de-risks, and we need to look at this on a priority rather than on a case by case basis.

LK: Oxford Brookes has spun out 2 companies in the last year and we are looking at another 2 or 3. The issue remains access to funding – if we want universities like Brookes to take part in this, then funding must be available to support the process.

One of the things we need to think about in the innovation ecosystem is how universities can work with companies to address skill gaps - how might we support companies to enable staff to be trained within university, e.g. via part-time PhDs. This will help universities nurture their links to companies, develop R/D capabilities while also training and re-skilling people.

SO: There are more pathways to industry and academia that could be broadened and utilised. We need to produce an R/D culture strategy which may start to have a go at this.

DL: We need to recognise that the UK has done well, but there is more to be done on the supply side of innovation, including the future and adoption of technology. How far can we support businesses at IUK?

Also there is a whole range of other strategies – e.g. hydrogen, space, net-zero, etc... How do we get the SME community to engage with these without feeling bombarded, and also to adopt some of the emerging technology? There is a lot of low lying fruit but it needs to be communicated.

SO: We need to do more on adoption of technology to grow capabilities. We may need to create demand for some of the technology e.g. fusion.

BG: There isn't enough emphasis on leveraging existing activities and making the most of them. We have developed clusters which could be more connected and developed in a co-dependent way. e.g. the north West getting benefits from the SE. We already have proven mechanisms for the commercial and industrial base to leverage innovation and put it into fruition in a way that it can accelerate. Is there a way of scaling up these mechanisms and help the economy across the UK?

SO: You can form a proposal around connectivity and scaling up and take it to colleagues in cabinet office, and as an offer from Oxford, show the benefits wider.

JL: The stated target of 2035 is quite lengthy, that we could lose the sense of urgency on what we are doing in the short term. There is also levelling up needs within our own locality (e.g. on employment) which we recognise and need to work on just like we will across the regions.

	<p>AG (on behalf of PB): There is not enough that describes our market differentiation. i.e. Why would we be a destination of choice? This needs to be much more explicit as we move forward.</p> <p>Also – We have demonstrate the concept of what we can do for the country in and the globe in an incredibly transformative way and the vaccine is just one of many examples. Is there a mechanism for setting laser like visions ambitions for some innovation zone, or hub that can build off the vaccine success?</p> <p>SO: Yes, a clear and consistent USP is a good point to reflect on and take away including whether we need an innovation zone. May be this could be part of what we take forward separately.</p> <p>CB: On the vaccine, nothing else changed in the environment, apart from that we were getting money from everywhere. Those results were achieved by the same people and the same networks. So with adequate funding, we would just have to identify the problems we want to go after, and go after them.</p> <p>DL: What struck me was the foundation technologies – We may need to think a little more closely about what we can contribute to the seven areas of the strategy as well as what can be got elsewhere in the UK.</p> <p>AG: Thanked SO. We welcome continuation of conversation, after this that we could look at to discuss more of this conversation.</p> <p>LT: thanks to SO – We would like to promote all UK PLC not just Oxfordshire and we are not short of ideas and what we can do.</p> <p>Action: All members of the group to contribute to the creation of a paper around connectivity and scalling-up. The paper will be taken to colleagues in cabinet office by SO, as an offer from Oxford with the purpose to show the benefits wider.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Connecting Global - User testing session</p> <p>Created by Cactus and Led by OxLEP, this is a digital platform which will be promoting Oxford to innovators and investors and partners. It will be content driven and linked to social media, and we will be asking partners to feedback on the content etc.</p> <p>The platform has been in the technical development stage, and the team is working towards a January launch.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main navigation is category based. - The platform is API driven – it can construct pages and deliver them to user on their device. <p>SHP: Are any of the headings locked in?</p> <p>AG – This consultation process is part of the process of finding out if the headings we have are the right ones. The idea is to showcase the dynamism of the ecosystem, and these could include things like series raise, new partnership announcements, or how a business is attracting investment into technology. We will aim to showcase a full suite.</p> <p>SHP: Would this be as news as opposed to companies saying they are fundraising?</p> <p>AG: We are not settled on this point</p> <p>NE: The website is designed in a way that it will be able to cope with both.</p>	<p>Matthew Harpin</p>

	<p>SHB: Fundraising might be an FCA issue so it is probably better put on as news. It is also important to have other maps showing where innovation spaces are, and to give a sense of the offshore ecosystem. Another issue is that we need to create a wider narrative and a sense of ecosystem rather than one that appears to be just about the city of oxford.</p> <p>NE: Currently the app only shows Oxford as a dummy image, but the full page will show Oxfordshire. The target is for around a thousand companies, plus Jobs, and News. Other things like opinion pieces and interactive digital items will also drive the traffic.</p> <p>We will also have regular attractive features. e.g. the robotics home page can rotate images for visuals, or a collage of top stories, and articles can have any number of secondary categories. So one article can sit on one site but feed across the site in a linked manner.</p> <p>The ambition is to create a community where the centre of attention is the business or the entrepreneur.</p> <p>JL: We need to think about how we create differentiation. Some aspects of nature connectivity to London, schools all need to come out in a way that draw people in. It is not clear how knowledgeable we know the archetypal user will be. Even the map may mean nothing to see icons on the Oxfordshire and recognise the names. Is there going to be a way of the user finding a way depending on how knowledgeable they are? Or is it more general that they are seeking to browse on the site? Otherwise the site could be daunting for someone with limited knowledge</p> <p>AG: If it feels flat and sterile it won't reflect the dynamism, so we will have to drive trafick to it.</p> <p>MH: We have a few design mechanisms which we could play into the site, e.g. the author tagging system could help ensure that the most relevant content flows to the top, so people don't have to dig around and find a page they want.</p> <p>Design may be finalised towards end of September and we will have another iteration of the site that we can share with the group.</p> <p>Design of site will be finished soon and it should be ready for final reviews by mid Dec.</p> <p>If we can't meet as a group we can still give virtual feedback so we can push on with it. A link to this prototype and how to comment on it will be shared.</p> <p>LT: Thanked Mathew for the work done so far. The group will wait for the next iteration.</p>	
5.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Dates of the next meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>8th of December, 2:30pm - 4:30pm</i> 	All