

Minutes

Attended

David Carlin	Science Director	Cefas
Madeleine Coupe	Innovation & Sector Manager	New Anglia LEP
Prof. Fiona Lettice	Pro-Vice Chancellor	University of East Anglia
Julian Munson	Head Enterprise Zones & Innovation	New Anglia LEP
David Parfrey	Executive Chair	AIP LLP
Howard Partridge	Regional Manager	Innovate UK
Lisa Perkins	Adastral Park & Research Realisation Director	BT
Johnathan Reynolds (Chair)	Board Member	New Anglia LEP
Katie Snell	Innovation & Sectors Coordinator	New Anglia LEP
Jai Raithatha	Head of Economic Development	Suffolk County Council
Prof.Mohammad Dastbaz	Deputy Vice- Chancellor	University of Suffolk
Sarah Steed	Director of Innovation & Engagement	Norwich University of the Arts
David Tait	Chairman	Hethel Innovation
Tim Robinson	Chief Operating Officer	Tech East
Neil Miles	Chair	Digital Tech Council
Laura Hill	Project Manager	Norfolk County Council
Ian Pease	Business Development Manager	OrbisEnergy
Vince Muspratt	Assistant Director, Growth & Development	Norfolk County Council

Apologies

Helen Lewis	Director of Research & Innovation Division	University of East Anglia
Mark Ash	Executive Director of Growth, Highways & Infrastructure	Suffolk County Council

1	<p>Welcome from the Chair – Introductions, Apologies & Minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Johnathan Reynolds (Chair) welcomed all to the meeting. - Apologies were noted. - Minutes agreed. - Noted CJ – Green was not to attend this meeting.
2	<p>Innovation – Council for Digital Tech</p> <p>Neil Miles introduced himself as Chair of the Digital Tech Council and highlighted the importance of connecting the dots. He explained that every sector has a focus on clean growth and industries are looking at digitisation. He went onto to say that he lives and works in the region and has created businesses specifically with an artificial intelligence focus and he is keen to support the community.</p> <p>Digital Tech is an important sector to the region. It is not always familiar to everyone but underpins everything we do. It is transforming industries and is very important in terms of the impact it makes including the net zero contribution. The council’s role here is to support by helping to grow the economy.</p> <p>He explained that there is a regional opportunity to closely connect ICT digital capabilities with other high value sectors (e.g. Energy, Agri-food, Life Sciences and Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Ports & Logistics).</p>

The team and Tech East helps to operate the Digital Tech Council which plans for the digital sector in helping it to drive forward against the Local Industrial Strategy with its own delivery plan.

Tim Robinson Chief Operating Officer from Tech East went onto explain that the council meets quarterly and has regular communication between meetings. It links into sectors, groups, and Boards around innovation with a blend of start-ups, mature businesses and academia making up 27 members of the council. It has four task and finish groups, and each have a theme and they are known as Innovation Hubs, Communicating, Talent and Skills as well as Access to Programmes.

Telling the story of the digital ecosystem is hard to do as there is much competition in terms of the digital agenda and leadership and more so now than ever. A group looks at this as well as strategic affairs, there is also a programme that looks to support start-ups with finance.

Major wins for the Council are as follows:

- Connected Innovation project 2021 (Norfolk Strategic Fund) –led by LEP with Tech East as a delivery partner
- New Digital hub for Norwich –up to £25m Towns Deal funding awarded to boost creation and scaling of innovative start-up's.
- New tech and innovation support programmes: the Tech East 100, Innovation Network (LoRaWAN), partnership support for EIRA, Invest East
- Major new digital skills projects going live 2021: Digitech Centre, Factory, Campus, Productivity East; bid for Institute of Technology
- UPCOMING: East of England '12 Clusters of Tech' report with London Tech Week, May 2021; Suffolk County Council workshop –Public Sector Innovation Challenges/Digital Solutions, Jan 2021

Discussion

The Chair opened up the discussion with some questions:

- How do we connect more with the innovation board?
- How do we connect everything together and connect the sector groups? How do we make sure we are aligned?
- In terms of the tech sector challenges – what are they and how can this board help, supplement or enhance the work for the sector?

One suggestion was to connect opportunity to innovations for the region to ensure we are better aligned.

Tim Robinson – listed three challenge areas the board can help with - Growth, People, and Innovation.

Growth for existing tech businesses it is about growth and prioritisation and going after the right opportunities.

People this is about recruitment and now you are competing for talent which we may not have seen before.

Innovation centred around tech adoption that all businesses need to trade online, securely with innovation. It is hard to ensure that happens when budgets are constrained. It would be good to see SMEs and corporates working together.

Tech Nation runs a programme called net zero. One growth agency has decided to go after the clean energy opportunity. Overall, 30 businesses went for the Tech Nation opportunity and only one was a local business. We need to encourage more local involvement in going for the opportunities.

Sarah Steed - in relation to people and connecting things up what does it really mean? Businesses can take a risk in innovation but educational institutes with a focus on people are different. New courses may or may not fly so it is a different set of choices. The Innovation Board could do more to support those processes in getting more people to see the courses and bums on seats. Need to think how we connect those dots.

Johnathan Reynolds - there are similar conversations around innovation and skills for our key sectors and this includes research led key skills. How do we support research innovation for businesses?

Lisa Perkins - some of this work has already commenced in the digital tech sector, working with the UOS to help future proof the next generation. Productivity East is looking into this too.

Q: is there more in terms of connectivity that we can or should be doing – is there a gap that we can support on?

Lisa Perkins – in terms of connecting up the high-profile sectors in the region, we need to understand what challenges organisations face. What can our sector do to help to transform these sectors? Subject experts in energy combined with digital experts will help to support this.

Neil Miles commented that technology isn't there for technology sake, it is there to transform business and should be used to support port logistics, energy etc.

The BT AI festival runs next year. How we can support this with some of the energy sector? Julian Munson confirmed that plans are underway for the festival looking at a number of sectors to understand how AI can support them. Johnathan Reynolds confirmed he is happy to support with this event.

Action:

1	AI Festival/Key Sectors – send over plan to Johnathan Reynolds for input with contacts.	Katie Snell
---	---	-------------

3 Innovation Board Member Updates

Norfolk County Council

Need to give some thought to the small retailers and SME's. How can we support in their readiness to trade online – particularly in the post-Christmas period.

Suffolk Council Council

Much has been covered in the Tech East presentation, we are linking up with Tech East on some digital sessions to help SME's. These sessions are helping them with their challenges.

Hethel Innovation – David Tait

Continue to provide business support and so far, not seen any tenant failures as a result of the pandemic. New enquiries have come in, seen an increase in demand for workshop and manufacturing space and a decrease of office enquiries. Reached an agreement in principle with Lotus to purchase 5.8 acres of land where we hope to be able to build grow on space which will be part of our incubation offering. Additionally, looking to invest at Scottow Enterprise Park hoping to purchase Newton House from the Ministry of Justice and also to develop the Sergeants' Mess. Continue to work with the Food Innovation Hub and we are also speaking to Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Council regarding KLIC 2 or possibly a development on the Nar Ouse development zone. Engaging with West Suffolk to possibly do something at West Suffolk Park in Bury St Edmunds. There is also a possibility of working with Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Norfolk County Council with a focus on offshore renewable energy. Our business and tenant businesses have weathered the storm so far. Big challenges are furlough and Brexit.

BT – Lisa Perkins

A number of companies which form part of the eco-system have not renewed their leases for office space at Innovation Martlesham, but the virtual ecosystem is growing with a lot of take up. We are looking at how we pivot with the same impact and how we change the model and offering given the current climate. The Digi-tech centre at Adastral park is progressing well. Adastral has a high opportunity status and therefore we have had some sessions with embassies for example, the Canadian Embassy to look at the art of the possible and what the opportunities are at Adastral Park. We have ongoing conversations with BEIS in terms of a number of different initiatives at the park, one is our future network in our institute looking at the right environment for industry leaders to come together for a future network and what might be required. There are quantum opportunities also. In terms of skills we are pivoting and have created a number of learning modules hosted on the Adastral website made by researchers, they are homemade blogs and provide information about them and what they do.

Norwich Research Park – David Parfrey

NRP has been providing help where it can to the community, and the park has not seen any reductions which is positive. There has been a move away from office space, with an increase for lab space and this is ramping up significantly. In order to accommodate, some offices have converted back to lab space at the Centrum. The NRP office has been let to another tenant and Centrum is now full.

OrbisEnergy – Ian Pease

Tenancy remains strong with a couple of new arrivals and some companies have grown. Within Suffolk we have created a small group which encompasses some of the other innovation spaces such as Stowmarket Innovation Lab, Innovation Martlesham, OWIC and the hub at Haverhill. This brings an opportunity to talk to those organisations and bring the knowledge and understanding together. It will hopefully be a good development to help support the Connected Innovation project.

NUA -Sarah Steed

One business has failed within the incubation programme and we have seen some loss of overseas students who had visas but then went home before lock down and could not return because of COVID. Almost all businesses have opted not to use office space in future. We have seen some good growth in the animation area and three animation businesses are doing very well and nationally those sectors have done very well. NUA's model, the hybrid teaching model has been well received by students and our estate looks very different at present. The University has seen higher engagement with students, and this has forced us how to think about doing things differently. It seems to be a better way of operating.

Johnathan Reynolds said it will be interesting to see what the long- term impacts will look like. How do you get the collaborative approach if students are watching through their laptops?

Sarah steed commented that Games design courses like remote working but there needs to be more face to face interaction. Generally, students are being taught in smaller group sizes and feel they get much more value for money.

UEA – Fiona Lettice

It has been a challenging term with many students to manage and the guidelines have changed frequently. asymptomatic testing commenced from September which helped to get testing under control with the Earlham Institute. 15 -20 positives during any one time over term time and 4 positives currently which is a real improvement. Lateral flow testing has been interesting with little positives, so we think this is not very reliable. Launch Climate UEA has been brought together to reimagine what we want research to look like for the future. UEA is one of the nominators for the Earth Shop Prize launched by Sir David Attenborough and Prince William, if you have climate solutions and want to be a part, then submit them to the UEA. Submissions get sifted and then selected solutions go to a main panel. Welcome submissions before the 4th January (there is prize money at the end - link to be provided).

SuNRise BID was submitted in November, hoping for the outcome in April 2021. Productivity East is working closely with Tech East and NAAME looking to grow engineering cohort and competing science industry 4.0.

UEA will be putting on research seminars in January and April, they will be virtual, and anyone can attend. Will let group have more information.

Productivity East - Bit behind schedule, which has affected construction on site. Hope to open in May with a soft opening and an official opening in September 2021. Enterprise Centre tenancy has held and virtual has increased. Co-working at approximately 50 -70% occupancy.

UOS – Mohammad Dastbaz

Very busy in sorting out with students and moving them back and forth. All gone well and the data received shows the virtual learning platform has doubled. Digitech Centre had a bit of a delay in starting work at Adastral Park. UoS hope to deliver one key course from Jan/Feb, a Masters in AI sciences. Huge number of applicants wanting to join the course. Great partnership working with BT colleagues addressing challenges in developing the projects. Institute of Technology bid, Norfolk and Suffolk did not get funding last time round. Been a major

<p>journey but this partnership has been very useful and positive communication with those such as County councils, Chambers, Tech East, BT and so on. 2.5k learners in tech areas over the next five years due to this programme, a major project in this region. It will help to develop the skills requirement for this area. Started work on a project dealing with the provision of a health centre on waterfront, a state-of-the-art health provision working closely with Health Education England, NHS, ICS. Hope to be ready in 18month time. Looking very positive.</p> <p>Cefas – David Carlin New premises finished two weeks ago, and CEFAS have had a full hand back of the site. Still working virtually, labs are open for some operations. New CEO appointed and will start in February. Interesting year – things have turned around and we are cramming much work in. Some of Cefas team has supported the COVID position with secondments to government departments including Sage and this has now come to an end. Much focus on delivery with overseas space and supporting government in relation to the end of the EU transition specifically in relation to fisheries management.</p>			
<p>Actions:</p>			
<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="89 683 438 750">2</td> <td data-bbox="438 683 1173 750">N/A</td> <td data-bbox="1173 683 1516 750">N/A</td> </tr> </table>	2	N/A	N/A
2	N/A	N/A	
<p>4 UKRI and Innovate UK Update</p> <p>In the last 6 months our competitions team have done 3 years work and have now double the number of live projects. Live portfolio of projects is now worth £3.3bn. All COVID recovery programmes equate to £2.96m which has been awarded to 2600 businesses. Codikoat, Haverhill arrived with a large grant, Colorifix based at NRP had a smart grant with the Earlham Institute with £430K total. Equipmake won a £2.5m grant and they are really doing really well.</p> <p>Some people apply for grants, go through the whole process and get an offer letter then back off as they feel it is too risky for them and do not sign the offer. It is a big deal for some, and some people do not take it up..</p> <p>Spending review, UKRI combined with UKs national academy settlement is approximately £400bn a year on top of the current offer, there is much to pick apart within this. Innovate UK has a 12% increase in budget (£490m, £25m for more innovation loans) and does include the industrial strategy challenge. £150m ventures fund announced, watching for more detail with a fiscal event in the spring.</p> <p>Regional event to run next year. Opportunity for virtual event engaging with South East universities and five counties in March 2021. Currently looking at dates and more detail is to follow. Both LEPs have agreed to be sponsors and will involve the Growth Hubs. Welcome any name suggestions, we want to get sense of where it is, a sense of place but without being somewhere (if virtual).</p> <p>Q: Is there any correlation between those offered grants but who don't sign and other known factions e.g. a successful VC raise as alternative access to innovation finance?</p> <p>One of the Tech East pillars looks at how we can proactively take these opportunities to business. Howard confirmed that there is much information on grants on the innovate UK and UKRI website, partners can focus on their sector, filter, and point out what those sectors should be looking at.</p> <p>Lastly, watch this space for our EEN rebranding for the coming year to make them more business focused and clearly aligned to Innovate UK.</p>			
<p>Actions:</p>			
<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="89 1870 438 1937">3</td> <td data-bbox="438 1870 1173 1937">Event name suggestions to be put forward to Howard.</td> <td data-bbox="1173 1870 1516 1937">All</td> </tr> </table>	3	Event name suggestions to be put forward to Howard.	All
3	Event name suggestions to be put forward to Howard.	All	
<p>5 Papers received from Katie for your information.</p> <p>6a Connected Innovation</p> <p>Innovation Prospectus Thank you to all around the table in helping to shape content for the draft Innovation Prospectus. Need to connect the fragmented bits of excellence and hopefully this comes through in the prospectus. So much content</p>			

therefore cannot publish into one document and is split into two- a high level exec summary being produced and there will be a microsite which will have all the content on with case studies. Welcome feedback.
 Julian Munson confirmed that we need to turn this into a designed document, therefore if any members of the board have any images please send them over asap.

Connected Innovation Project

We have been successful in securing some Norfolk funding and we have also bid into the Suffolk Inclusive Growth Fund and we are confident that this will come through. If successful, this will kick off in January 2021. Tech East will be a delivery partner and it will see a number of events across the hubs and will join up a number of the innovation hubs too and will hopefully bring value to the Innovation Board. This is a joint project with the Council for Digitech too.

Tim Robinson gave his personal thanks to Maddie for pulling the Connected Innovation work together. This is exactly the knitting together piece that is required and will stand out from other parts of the UK.

Innovation Mentoring – Laura Hill

Laura introduced herself as working for Norfolk County Council as the new Innovation Mentoring Project Manager. The purpose of the programme is to increase the number of applications to innovate UK grants by businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk and from any sector SME. The project is flexible in a number of ways it supports bid writing workshops and coaching sessions. It helps to drive success within the innovation of the grant application. 120 companies signed up to a virtual launch event and we have had 14 applications to the project and are now starting to have virtual meetings with the companies to understand what support they need with workshops set in the new year. Hope within the innovation landscape to offer to support and drive successful innovation. One observation is that companies are unsure what is out there and how they can move their businesses along.

Actions:

4	Feedback to Julian on the Innovation Prospectus Forward any images to Julian Munson which could be used in the Innovation Prospectus, part of the Connected Innovation Project Promote the Innovation Mentoring Programme	All All All
---	---	-------------------

6	Future Board Items – Priorities for 2021 Lowestoft Marine Science Campus AI Festival Freeports
---	--

AOB	N/A
------------	-----