



# Draft Vision and Priorities

November 2020

# What is innovation?

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**An unhelpful word which many people struggle to identify with.**

- “Having impact by putting ideas into practice”
- “Achieving impact by implementing new ideas”
- “The commercialisation of ideas and knowledge by businesses”
- “Introducing new products process or services to effect positive change in a business”
- “Helping develop behaviour change across the SME community”
- “The art or science of translating existing inventions or new ideas into practical products processes and services”
- “Growing your business by doing things differently”.
- “A means to an end – not the end itself”

# Our initial innovation poll

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We asked you to tell us five words that best describe what innovation means to you.

These were the top 5 responses across both individuals and businesses

- Creativity
- New
- Change
- Improvement
- Collaboration

# Our vision

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## **Our vision for innovation for the Leeds City Region is:**

“A place that is globally recognised for developing an open, inclusive, thriving and coherent innovation ecosystem, where SMEs, budding entrepreneurs and individuals are inspired to innovate, and can easily navigate the support landscape and connect and collaborate with others to create new and better solutions for business growth and societal good.”

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# **Our innovation focus and priorities (draft)**

# Our innovation focus

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Based on the evidence, our focus is twofold.

- We must support our **leading frontier businesses** (and more cautious innovators) to 'do more' innovation, particularly more radical, Research & Development led innovation.
- At the same time as supporting this 'radical innovation', it is essential that we support the **broader diffusion of ideas and technology** into our micro dominant business base, within both our urban and rural settings, to further drive-up innovative activity, behaviours and productivity in the wider business base, and support our net zero ambitions.
- And across these, we need to support greater diversity in innovation – across individuals, businesses and society, supporting innovative behaviours and activities across the region.

# Our innovation focus

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For both of these:

- We must focus on supply and demand side issues to make a step change in progress that is needed. We may not have a large original equipment manufacturer to drive innovation through the supply chain, we do have significant public sector health assets, whose purchasing and procurement power we will work to leverage.
- We must also retain a focus on innovation for good, solving the most pressing societal challenges.

The ambitions that follow are based on the evidence, and an attempt to tackle long standing structural issues. These will only be realised by joined up strategic investment and interventions across a range of partners.

**This Framework is therefore the beginning of a journey to achieve a common set of ambitions.**

# Our priorities

	ACTION	High level description	
1. Inclusive innovation – by and for everyone	2	A focus on Healthtech	11. Connecting the landscape
	3	A strengthened relationship with Innovate UK	
	4	Innovation finance availability	
	5	A focus on innovative start ups	
	6	A new mission-based approach to innovation	
	7	A strengthened HEI - SME relationship	
	8	Investing in centres of excellence which match industry strengths	
	9	Creation of peer-to-peer innovation support networks	
	10	Increasing adoption of new innovative practices	



# 1. Inclusive innovation – by and for everyone

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**We will:** create a more diverse, inclusive and open innovation ecosystem, with the underpinning principle of innovation - by and for everyone

**By:**

- Embedding inclusivity in all the priorities as an underpinning theme in the IF, particularly in the design and execution of challenges competitions/ mission-based innovation activities.
- Ensuring diversity and inclusion support is a key factor in new innovation investment decisions through future funding streams.
- Working through the WYIN (West Yorkshire Innovation Network) to ensure existing programmes focus sufficiently on broadening participation.
- Developing a pipeline of future budding entrepreneurs and innovators and appropriate support through the Employment and Skills Plan
- Learning from examples of non-mainstream innovation already taking place in pockets in the region and supporting others to follow, particularly around frugal (or non tech) innovation.

**Which will result in:** An increased awareness, interest and participation in innovation by those underrepresented groups, including BAME, women and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

# More innovation activity

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We will develop plans and build on existing programmes and activities to further support our frontier companies and 'cautious innovators' to develop increased absorptive capacity, ensuring that those businesses with growth potential proactively invest in R&D (Research & Development) and innovation to contribute to the national 2.4% R&D target and R&D roadmap.

## 2. A focus on Healthtech

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**We will:** prioritise sectoral innovation investment in Healthtech as proof of concept around targeted innovation support in Leeds City Region (LCR), building on existing strengths and assets and emerging opportunities

**By:**

- Joining up and securing investment for the Healthtech ecosystem aligned to an agreed vision and strategy for action across the breadth of partners;
- Focusing interventions and efforts on growing our industry base, attracting new companies and translation into the health and care system.
- Prioritising Connecting Innovation grant funding on health innovation opportunities
- Working with the Science and Technology Facilities Council to explore opportunities to develop a Healthtech cluster in LCR

**Which will result in:**

- Leeds City Region positioned as a leader in the Healthtech space, the place for businesses to create and deliver innovations in Healthcare.
- Attract further investment into Healthtech from a range of agencies moving forwards
- A strong industry led cluster to service the health and care system more efficiently.
- A model for rollout to support other sectors to drive innovation.

**And strengthened inclusion:**

**By** – engaging with a broad range of stakeholders

**And for** – innovation to deliver healthcare benefits for all.

# 3. A strengthened relationship with Innovate UK

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**We will:** strengthen our relationship Innovate UK as the UK's national innovation agency, whilst establishing a stronger relationship with UKRI and key research councils.

**By:**

- Building on and strengthening our relationship with Innovate UK to deliver against the 4 priorities:
- Drive increased regional visibility across UKRI (UK Research & Intelligence) to promote areas of expertise and improve alignment of funding to regional priorities.
- Continuing to influence and shape the national R&D Place Strategy and make the case for levelling up and increased investment.
- Delivering aligned communications and joined up programmes, particularly showcasing successes.
- Ensuring UKRI / Innovate UK have a clear understanding/recognition of Leeds City Region strengths and opportunities and priority sectors.

**Which will result in:** a much more joined up (strategically and operationally) approach to supporting the regions businesses, reducing fragmentation and confusion – and more Innovate UK investment into local businesses, and greater understanding of LCR priorities at a national level.

**And strengthened inclusion:**

Working with Innovate UK to lead on key programmes including the national Young People's Innovation Programme to secure alignment and maximise participation.

# 4. Innovation finance availability

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**We will:** convene and work across partners to develop joined up specific innovation finance provision from pre-start to scale-up across Leeds City Region to support innovators from much more diverse backgrounds.

**By:**

- Focusing specifically on the innovation finance needs of business:
  - Working with partners to put in place more targeted financial provision to support and encourage more diversity in innovation.
  - Putting in place a renewed focus on investment in responsible innovation and an added emphasis on social innovation and net zero ambitions.
  - Securing additional investment to support (and de-risk) early stage innovation development and R&D opportunities.
- More generally, working across the emerging Business Growth and Productivity Plan to:
  - Better understand the overall investment landscape and connect the offer for businesses at all stages
  - Identifying means to fill the investment gap of between £100k-1m in particular
  - Putting in place mechanisms to attract additional Venture Capital investment into Leeds City Region by building the profile of place and showcasing the offer.

**Which will result in:**

The right finance being available and accessible for a range of businesses at the right stage of their business journey.

**And strengthened inclusion:**

- By supporting a broader range individuals to successfully secure investment to develop ideas and grow their business.

# 5. A focus on innovative start-ups

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**We will:** focus targeted support on innovative start-ups, with a strong focus on developing a diverse and inclusive pipeline and solving societal challenges including particularly around health and climate challenges.

**By:** learning from our participation in the MIT Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program programme and building on the initial pilot programmes to address the issues new innovative businesses face with appropriate interventions including:

- A graduate enterprise programme to support new Integrated Development Environments
- Corporate ventures
- Finance to support this distinct group.
- Inspiring and incentivising young people and individuals from more diverse backgrounds to engage in starting up innovation driven enterprises.
- Commercialising unused intellectual property across the region

**Which will result in:** Leeds City Region being recognised as the place to locate and grow an innovative start up with a full range of appropriate support available.

**And strengthened inclusion:**

**By** – engaging with a broad range of stakeholders to understand the barriers to innovation participation / what innovation means for them and appropriately supporting a diverse entrepreneurial start up led recovery.

**And for** – to ensure that new products and processes are created by a much more diverse range of individuals than currently, ensuring new products can adequately respond to the needs of a greater proportion of the population.

# 6. A new mission-based approach to innovation

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**We will:** adopt a mission-based approach to stimulating innovation

**By:**

- Stimulating the market and building a culture of innovation across our business base by focusing on the biggest challenges the citizens of the region identify and using challenge-based competitions for industry and diverse communities to come together and address (for example addressing health inequalities or climate/carbon challenges)
- Utilising the research power of our Higher Education Institutes and big business to drive this activity through both institutional expertise and through supply chains.
- Creating linkages to investment opportunities for local investors
- Concerted effort around comms and marketing to support all innovation activity
- Explore establishing a public engagement accelerator programme which combines small grants, bespoke support and partnering opportunities for innovators and those who need to engage the public on questions of science, research and innovation
- Shouting much more loudly about innovation and the opportunities for both businesses and individuals

**Which will result in:** an increased buzz and appetite/ interest in innovation and innovative activity across the region.

**And strengthened inclusion:**

**By** – engaging with a broad range of stakeholders to identify the challenges and gain buy in and support

**And for** – to ensure that new products and processes are created by a much more diverse range of individuals than currently, ensuring new products can adequately respond to the needs of a greater proportion of the population – and also are addressing societal challenges.

# 7. A strengthened HEI - SME relationship

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**We will:** strengthen the untapped potential that exists between the Higher Education Institute (HEI) and Small to Medium sized Enterprise (SME) base to drive business innovation in the region.

**By:**

- Working in partnership with Yorkshire Universities and the West Yorkshire Innovation Network (WYIN) to:
  - Deliver a comms and marketing campaign to raise the appetite – and interest- of businesses to work with Universities.
  - Focus on increasing investment in Knowledge Transfer Partnerships as a tried and tested means to increase knowledge transfer.
  - Establish an awards and recognition programme for academics who successfully engage with new SMEs in the region.
  - Explore scaling up and rolling out projects like First Steps (University of Huddersfield) which provide an accessible taste for businesses working with universities
  - Develop proposals to establish multi-disciplinary teams across universities to support the mission-based challenge approach.
  - Supporting universities to utilise supply chain relationships with large businesses to support local innovation needs.
  - Working collaboratively via continuous integration to develop a service standard to ensure a consistent approach across academia to business engagement on innovation.

**Which will result in:**

Increased demand driven by greater awareness and understanding of the support available and how to access it by businesses – and targeted attention on supply side issues which may act as barriers to collaboration.

**And strengthened inclusion:**

By creating accessible routes into higher education innovation support from a greater range of businesses.



# 8. Investing in centres of excellence which match industry strengths

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**We will:** strengthen our innovation infrastructure by investing in new flagship centres of innovation excellence.

**By:** making the case for capital investments which align to industry strengths across Leeds City Region, in particular safe spaces for innovation which allow businesses to locate and collaborate and build strong partnerships with local HEIs, for example:

- Advanced Machinery and Productivity Institute
- ActEarly Institute
- Leeds pop up innovation hub

**Which will result in:**

- Strengthened clusters to support industrial activity
- Greater brand and profile-raising opportunities.

**And strengthened inclusion:**

By ensuring new investments are positioned across the ecosystem and established with the needs of a diverse range of businesses in mind.

## 9. Creation of peer-to-peer innovation support networks

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**We will:** create an innovation peer to peer support network to utilise the power and credibility of small businesses themselves to support other businesses.

**By:** utilising the expertise of the WYIN and Connecting Innovation to establish a West Yorkshire Innovation Business Network to bring together the private sector to provide peer support across the ecosystem, including rolling out Innovation Champions for the region.

**Which will result in:**

Informed and supported businesses, tapping into the expertise of their peers and facilitated by the WYIN & Connecting Innovation.

**And strengthened inclusion:**

By using the power of role models from diverse backgrounds to inspire and support a new generation of business leaders.

# Innovation diffusion

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Innovation diffusion, supporting all businesses to benefit from the diffusion of ideas, presents a huge opportunity to improve productivity in the region.

# 10. Increasing adoption of new innovative practices

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**We will:** support the adoption of new innovative practices into SMEs and micros

**By:**

- Strengthening the evidence base to understand what works in innovation diffusion, what the business base needs are, and putting in place appropriate intervention to support all businesses.
- Create the right messages to promote business improvement to SMEs and micros, using case studies and appropriate language

**For manufacturers:**

- Working with key industry partners, HEI and Government we will take learning from existing programmes we are involved in (Smarty Interegg) and lobby for further activity/funding within the region, e.g. Made Smarter roll out.
- Creating a focused comms and marketing campaign to inspire and educate and demystify I4.0
- Explore opportunities to establish demonstrator facilities in key locations to support businesses to ‘try before they buy’ and explore the feasibility of a targeted Supplier Peer Learning programme.

**Which will result in:**

- Greater take up of innovative practices (digital technologies and leadership and management practices etc) which will result in more productive innovative businesses.
- Increased appetite from industry to explore increased use of digital tech and opportunities to de-risk investment through demonstrator hubs.

# Connecting the landscape

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Connecting the innovation landscape in Leeds City Region to better support SMEs and innovators to 'do more'.

# 11. Connecting the landscape

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**We will:** support and facilitate connectivity across the innovation ecosystem

**By:**

- Convening, between partners, the West Yorkshire Innovation Network (strategic group) to identify opportunities to better signpost and align the existing offer and improve collaboration for future delivery.
- Embedding Connecting Innovation as the region's innovation connecting and signposting facility – the gateway for all innovation support in Leeds City Region
- Identifying the most effective routes to businesses, particularly those less engaged to date
- Working towards better joined up intelligence from across the network – and shared with the network to better understand businesses and business needs and wants.
- Work through the Made Smarter Board and WYIN to align existing initiatives, tools and techniques to better support businesses

**Which will result in:**

- Greater awareness of innovation support and greater take up of support
- Increased profile of innovation across Leeds City Region
- Better, less fragmented provision.

# Contact us

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The logo for West Yorkshire Combined Authority features a large, stylized 'C' shape composed of three overlapping teal-colored arcs. The text 'West Yorkshire' is written in a large, bold, teal sans-serif font, with 'Combined Authority' in a smaller, teal sans-serif font below it, all contained within the white space of the 'C' shape.

**West  
Yorkshire**  
Combined  
Authority

**Thank you**