

Report to: Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership Board (LEP Board)

Date: 20 September 2018

Subject: **Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program – Links to the Industrial Strategy**

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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update the LEP Board on the outcome of the application by the University of Leeds into the MIT REAP programme and confirm the participation of the LEP in the Leeds City Region delegation to support the development of the City Region's Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy (LIIS).

2. Information

- 2.1 The MIT Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (MIT REAP) provides opportunities for communities around the world to engage with MIT in an evidence-based, practical approach to strengthening innovation ecosystems. Projects typically focus on increasing expertise and capacity across key players (using best practice from MIT) and develop interventions to strengthen the innovation support system available across an area.
- 2.2 Earlier this year, in discussion with the LEP, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and others, the University of Leeds submitted an exploratory application into the programme which in July, was confirmed as having been successful (the first outside of London).
- 2.3 Low levels of business investment in innovation and R&D have been identified as one of the four key challenges for Leeds City Region. LEP participation in this programme will provide an unrivalled opportunity to access international best practice and learning to support the development of the Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy, thereby setting us apart from other Local Industrial Strategies also in development.
- 2.4 The two year programme, run by the Sloan School of Management at MIT, will start in October 2018. Other teams in the 2018 cohort include Campania (Italy), Central Denmark, Guangzhou (China), Guayaquil (Ecuador), Kentucky (USA), Monterrey (Mexico), Oslo and Akershus (Norway) and Sydney (Australia).

2.5 The Leeds team includes leaders from the University of Leeds (Lisa Roberts), Nexus (Martin Stow), the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and West Yorkshire Combined Authority (Roger Marsh), Leeds City Council (Tom Riordan), KPMG (Justine Andrew), Arup (Tom Bridges), Leeds Academic Health Partnership (Jo-Anne Wass), and entrepreneurs Adam Beaumont and Ben Ziff.

2.6 Five challenges have been identified by the Leeds team which will be the focus of the programme over the next 2 years:

- Low productivity levels
- Employment below the national average
- Proportion of people with higher level skills below the national average
- Low industry investment in R&D
- Transport infrastructure issues

3. Financial Implications

3.1 The programme is part of the development work for the LIIS and therefore the associated costs (£15k max) to participate in the programme (travel and subsistence costs for a LEP delegate) will need to be met from this budget.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

5. External Consultees

5.1 Discussions have taken place with Knowledge Transfer Directors and with University Vice Chancellors at their last meeting. BIG Panel has also been briefed on the opportunity.

6. Recommendations

6.1 That the LEP Board supports participation in the above programme and receives regular reports on the potential application of thought leadership insights, gained from both MIT and other global delegations, to the Leeds City Region and in particular the development of the Local Inclusive Industrial Strategy.

7. Background Documents

None.

8. Appendices

None.