

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Northern Devon Economy, Innovation and Skills

Action Group Board

Purpose

Northern Devon faces significant economic challenges but also a range of growth opportunities. The Economy, Innovation and Skills Action Group Board will act as a sub-group to the Northern Devon Futures (NDF) Board and will seek to deliver, through collective vision and action, on the key question:

“What will it take to support an Innovative, Vibrant and Inclusive economy in Northern Devon?”

It’s about the Northern Devon economic community stepping up to address the big challenges faced. People, Skills and Innovation / Technology fundamentally underpin the area’s ability to sustain and grow new higher-skilled, higher-value, better-paid jobs. By coming together, the goal will be to act to:

- Grow Northern Devon’s GDP through an Innovative, Vibrant and Inclusive Economy – working across a broad cross-section of the community - including agriculture, tourism, pharmaceutical, engineering, digital and creatives, energy, sports and wellbeing, marine, aerospace, and manufacturing.
- Utilise available data sources, identify needs and plan practical projects that can successfully deliver real change and attract and secure inward investment into the area. This needs to be an action group with participants actively delivering to achieve gains for the region.
- Identify projects and have them ready to go when funding becomes available.
- Identify what is need to close the skills gap for Northern Devon’s businesses that underpin the current and future local economy - skills start at school (cradle to career).
- Build a network that promotes the area’s innovative businesses – that involves the wider local community across all ages to inspire current and future generations – critical for recruitment and retention, whilst changing wider perspectives about the true opportunities of working (including hybrid) in the region.
- Create an economy where young and people of all ages are able to see brighter futures for themselves by remaining in the region.
- Learn from the best initiatives from other regions that meet Northern Devon economic needs and exploit them and develop wider partnerships to be part of future best practice.
- Maximise the wider opportunities presented by a growing innovation ecosystem across the region, including Node Cowork and Cotie / SWIoT.
- Incentivise innovation by working with other organisations, e.g. South West academia, Heart of South West LEP, North Devon+, Chambers of Commerce, Seed Funding, Angel Network, and signposting to Innovate UK.
- Develop and deliver an action plan to achieve these objectives.

Scope

- Innovation in the context of this Action Group Board will include fresh approaches that deliver new value to an organisation and the local area/community to create the right kind of growth for the region.
- The Northern Devon Economy, Innovation and Skills Action Group will deliver across the two local authority areas of North Devon and Torridge
- It will directly deliver on the strategic ambitions of the NDF Board whilst also seeking to influence the NDF Board.
- The group will actively engage with schools and other educational partners to collectively address issues around youth exodus and aspiration.
- To deliver on the objective of the Northern Devon Futures Board to ensure an “inclusive concern for all citizens, especially the marginalised and disadvantaged”, with social value and environmental protection and enhancement critical to the action group’s ambitions.
- The Action Group Board will include a mix of public and private sector representation with all bodies prepared to deliver towards the agreed action plan.
- The Action Group Board will not be sector blind but will seek to create underpinning conditions for the right kind of growth for northern Devon, ensuring the distinctiveness and appeal of the region are suitably communicated.
- The Action Group Board will be data-driven, with clear metrics agreed, baselined and measured to evaluate impact. These metrics will include social value considerations.

Authority

The Action Group Board will take direction from the Northern Devon Futures Board but will equally advise the Board of key trends, challenges and requirements which need to be acted upon collectively.

On occasion the Action Group Board may seek to commission works through an agreed accountable body where it sees this will advance the Innovation growth for northern Devon. Where this is required, a request will need to be made to the Northern Devon Futures Board. Are NDF accountable body?

The Action Group Board shall form a single point of contact for strategic matters concerning Economy, Innovation and Skills growth in Northern Devon. The Action Group Board shall have a lobbying remit where needed to ensure Northern Devon’s needs are met.

Membership

The Action Group Board shall consist of no more than 20 members and shall appoint a chair and vice chair. The term of tenure for all members shall be two years (renewable for a maximum of one term, 4 years in total), when re-election shall take place.

Nominations for chair and vice chair shall be put forward for vote by the Action Group Board, with a majority outcome being carried.

The Chair of the Action Group Board will be a member of the NDF Partnership Strategic Board. The Vice Chair shall be their alternate. The Action Group Board will provide a report on its activities to the NDF Strategic Board every six months.

The NDF Secretariat will support the meetings of the Action Group Boards.

The Group may co-opt members as approved by the Chair. Named Action Group Board members can provide an approved deputy to attend on their behalf should they be unavailable for a meeting. The named representative must be provided in advance of the meeting where deputation is required if they wish to vote at the meeting.

If Action Group Board members consistently fail to attend 3 meetings in a row their position will be reviewed by the Chair. It is important that key innovation sectors are represented on the Action Group Board and consistent failure to attend meetings will lead to inequality of this representation.

The following representations (sectors) shall form the initial Action Group Board:

- Phill Adams (Devon County Council)
- Dominic Dunbrook (North Devon Council)
- Chris Fuller (Torrige District Council)
- Caroline Chipperfield (Petroc)
- Dr Claire Ankers (Chair of NORDAB)
- Louise Adam (North Devon+)
- Julian Dymond (Node)
- Paul Mullen (North Devon Manufacturers Association)
- Peter Morrish (Advanced Engineering)
- ? Federation of Small Business
- Mike Matthews (Digital)
- Katie Jennings (Marketing / Creatives)
- Dr Ben Staley (Pharmaceutical)
- Rob Passmore (Biosphere Foundation)
- Mark Burnett (Marine)
- Barnaby Newell (Agritech)
- Tony George (DWP)
- ? (Tourism)
- Ben Mitchell (Heart of the SW Careers Hub)

Organisations may provide observers/attendees for the meetings, but these representatives will have no voting powers.

Meeting arrangements

Action Group Board meetings shall meet a minimum of quarterly but as frequently as required to deliver the agreed action plan.

An agenda shall be issued for an Action Group Board meeting 5 working days before the meeting is due to take place. Reports shall be emailed prior to the meeting where possible or tabled at the meeting if necessary. Notes of the meetings shall be circulated no later than 5 working days after the meeting.

The Action Group Board shall require at least 8 voting members to be quorate, should decisions need to be taken.

Dates for Action Group Board meetings shall be agreed in advance for the upcoming calendar year – these may be subject to change and the Action Group Board shall be notified of such changes with 10 working days' notice.

Attendance at meetings in person is preferred, but provision for virtual presence will be accommodated where possible.

The Action Group Board may appoint a sub-group, or task and finish group to undertake a piece of specific work. The terms for these groups should be set out and agreed at the main Action Group Board meeting and may occasionally involve external bodies where appropriate.

Resources and budget

The Action Group Board representatives shall be in attendance on a voluntary capacity – or as part of their paid role within their own organisations. No expenses will be paid for duties carried out whilst representing the Economy, Innovation and Skills Action Group.

The Action Group Board may wish to seek external funding by way of grants or sponsorship to support key work activities. Any resources sought using the name of the Economy, Innovation and Skills Action Group Board must have full Action Group Board approval prior to submission/request.

Review

These Terms of Reference shall be formally approved at the first meeting of the Action Group Board. They shall be reviewed in two years when the re-election of the Action Group Board takes place and a new membership is confirmed. Any associated developed action plans, strategies or work programmes for the Action Group Board shall also be subject to review.

Agreed and Adopted

Chair, Northern Devon Economy, Innovation and Skills Action Group Board

Name:

Signed:

Date: