



Innovate
UK

Innovate UK Council Meeting – Minutes

13th June 2024

Digital Catapult, 101 Euston Road, London

Attendees

Council Members	Other Attendees	Apologies
Indro Mukerjee (Chair) Annette Doherty (online) Isabel Fox Jennifer Rubin John Fingleton John Gibson Julia Sutcliffe Mark Treherne (online) Simon Weeks Tunde Olanrewaju	Barry Shaw (deputising Guy Woolley) Dave Wilkes Neil Phimister Lisa Hazelden Mike Biddle (online) Robert Shaw Rick Holland (deputising Dean Cook) Stella Peace Dan Hodges Susan Bowen (Digital Catapult CEO for opening item) Alice Hillis Georgina Navalles Jonny Voon Laura Gataveckaite	Chris Ganje Guy Woolley Dean Cook

Actions

Action #	Owner	Action	Date Due
1 - 130624	Lisa Hazelden	IUK to draft a 2-pager explainer of Contracts for Innovation and other procurement activities to present to Government departments.	Nov 2024
2 - 130624	Stella Peace	Stella and Annette to connect on the raised points on the NHS.	Sept 2024
3 - 130624	Stella Peace, Mike Biddle, Rob Shaw	IUK to embrace points brought up by the Council in IUK strategy meetings and domain sessions in July, with Stella focusing on the NHS-related points and Mike addressing the Net Zero ones.	Sept 2024
4 - 130624	Rob Shaw	Engage with Council members to gather feedback on their thoughts on SR. [drop in sessions complete, SR work ongoing]	Sept 2024
5 - 130624	Clare Lindsay	Hold a future Council meeting in Polaris House (Swindon) and invite the operations team to showcase the different improvements.	Ongoing
6 - 130624	Rob Shaw	To hold e open-house sessions with Council colleagues before the September meeting to ask and discuss in detail any of the business areas outlined in this session. [drop in sessions complete, SR work ongoing]	Sept 2024

1. Welcome and overview of the Digital Catapult (Susan Bowen)

The new CEO of Digital Catapult provided an overview of the organisation's recent and future activities, noting the £1.6bn investment to the Catapult Network over 5 years and its 50 UK locations.

Digital Catapult works across sectors from immersive technology to manufacturing and construction, with strong partnerships with industry and academia.

2. Welcome and introductions

Indro (Chair) welcomed Council attendees and introduced the agenda.

3. Products and Services Update (Lisa Hazelden)

An outline of IUK's activity since the last Council meeting was presented, including holding more than 281 events such as Liverpool Investment Summit, the BridgeAI Annual Showcase, and London Tech Week; and product launches such as Talent & Skills Connect, Investor Connect, and Contracts for Innovation (formerly SBRI). IUK has reached 450k innovators so far this year, with the commitment to reach 1m.

Council discussed the strategic approach to planning and prioritising IUK events and activities.

Council commented that procurement will be a priority for any government and that the work that IUK has done in this space will be of interest.

ACTION: IUK to draft a 2-pager explainer of Contracts for Innovation and other procurement activities to present to Government departments.

Council discussed the launch of Startup Connect at London TechWeek. This platform brings together all IUK existing products and services for start-ups in one place, and complements the Innovation Hub launched last year. The team has received positive feedback from investors and businesses asking how to engage with the platform.

IUK colleagues confirmed user numbers for IUK's digital platforms is in the thousands, and acknowledged the learning process over the last 18 months as a public organisation developing digital products. Council appreciated IUK's work towards the customer-centric approach and emphasised the importance of testing to understand value addition and the skillsets required.

The meeting discussed how IUK can demonstrate how IUK products support the UK's productivity challenge. IUK has developed an impact management framework and data review processes for programmes which will help identify the type of interventions needed (e.g. adoption and diffusion, frontier, etc.). Council noted IUK is doing well in 'place' and scale up support to businesses, but that it needs to use clear data on impact assessment to showcase IUK effectiveness.

Council asked about evidence on frontier innovation coming from startups vs larger companies. Indro elaborated that IUK funding is focused on deep tech with the purpose of identifying and correcting market failures in these areas.

The meeting noted the progress made in Products & Services and across the organisation to embed the cube and its axes in support of strategic alignment.

4. Spending Review (Robert Shaw)

The meeting discussed Spending Review (SR) preparations. It was noted that IUK will collaborate closely with UKRI on a document touching on industrial policy and linking to scaling up adoption and diffusion.

IUK organised an SR focused workshop in May with all Catapult leaders. The focus was on thinking big and considering system-wide impacts, exploring how Catapults can be

interchangeably leveraged to drive productivity. As a result, key ideas were identified that have the potential to significantly advance our domain strategies moving forward.

IUK held a Leadership Community event aimed at fostering a cohesive understanding across the IUK ecosystem and sharing a unified vision to support innovation across the cube. The event will feed into Domain Workshops in early July, where discussions will focus on integrating big ideas into the SR process and building processes and frameworks.

Discussions identified potential priorities for innovation, emphasising support for adoption and diffusion through technology and innovation pathways, with a clear strategy for the next 3 years. The focus includes scaling businesses, regional growth, and responding to national missions, ensuring efforts align with broader objectives across axes of the cube.

IUK's broader work on SR involves creating a clear narrative with evidence through Products & Services, developing a framework for delivering industrial strategy, and leveraging R&D experience.

The meeting noted that IUK needs to meet government objectives effectively, and the importance of leveraging existing capabilities to allow easier pivoting. Consistent messaging is needed to support bigger changes especially if the 5 critical technologies are expanded which would widen the IUK tech portfolios whilst avoiding "boom and bust" cycles in research.

Council celebrated that IUK domains are well placed to deliver in the coming years and highlighted Net Zero and NHS as key strategic areas going forward. Council suggested thinking about the big challenges faced in these two areas (i.e., productivity, staffing, digitalisation, bureaucracy, etc.), as well as considering how IUK can establish strategic partnerships with public bodies (e.g. NHS institutions but also regulatory bodies) to strengthen the UK's position. The need for NHS engagement was noted, as well as a global strategy for NHS tech funding. The meeting also discussed the capacity challenges faced by NHS staff which impact on their ability to engage with new technologies.

Council suggested exploring how to engage and coordinate with other national innovation and research assets such as NPL. The meeting also discussed the potential of an 'NHS Catapult', with IUK colleagues noting this had previously been considered but not progressed due to government priorities at the time.

ACTION: Stella and Annette to connect on the raised points on the NHS.

ACTION: IUK to embrace points brought up by the Council in IUK strategy meetings across domain sessions in July, with Stella focusing on the NHS-related points and Mike addressing the Net Zero ones.

ACTION: Engage with Council members to gather feedback on their thoughts on SR.

IUK welcomed continued feedback from Council members regarding the effectiveness of our system, alignment with government priorities, and ways of engaging with the Council.

5. Innovating Innovate UK (Indro Mukerjee)

IUK colleagues presented the significant organisational change journey the organisation has undergone over the last 3 years, while continuing to deliver at record levels (more than 300 programmes last year). Recognising that structure precedes culture, a key area of focus in the next year should be culture to ensure continuity of changes.

IUK colleagues introduced the organisational changes at IUK: moving from the sector and ISCF model to domains; the creation of the P&S portfolio to bring cohesion to the IUK offer; and bringing place to the forefront of our offer alongside the other axes of the cube, co-creating with local leaders and partners.

On IUK Business Connect, IUK colleagues explained the reclassification (based on strategic coherence and public funds dependency) of the Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) to the rebranded IUK Business Connect, which has brought great successes but also areas of concern; with culture being a key part of this journey. IUK Business Connect remains a

separate legal entity, owned by IUK and embedded into the IUK system, working closely with IUK teams. Council asked why IUK Business Connect staff had not been transferred. IUK colleagues explained that it had been considered but multiple practical constraints and considerations make this a challenge.

IUK colleagues then turned to the Catapults, explaining the IUK journey to renegotiate all Grant Funded Agreements (GFA) to ensure stronger governance and value for money, as well as to create a business case, approved by HMT, of £1.6bn funding over 5 years (longer than the current SR). This process was challenging but has resulted in placing IUK and the Catapults in a stronger position and closer alignment.

IUK colleagues also explained some of the improvements in operations that have allowed IUK to cut 70 days last year plus 5 days this year on processing awards once competitions close (currently at 100, aiming at 90 days). IUK now takes 10.2 days to process a change request, 2 years ago it was 70 days.

ACTION: Hold a future Council meeting in Polaris House (Swindon) and invite the operations team to showcase the different improvements.

IUK colleagues summarised the work of the Place team over the last years, starting from 2016 when the team was set up. IUK has now published 7 Local Innovation Action Plans and that it has strong relationships with multiple local leaders, particularly Combined Authorities, and stakeholders across the country to work together in partnership in shared causes and objectives. IUK place agenda and work is ahead of other national agencies and institutions.

Council made the point that IUK SLT will be critical to ensure the continuity of this transformational change after Indro's mandate, as they will set the culture. Council also expressed their willingness to support during the transition.

ACTION: To hold open house sessions with Council colleagues before the September meeting to ask and discuss in detail any of the business areas outlined in this session.

6. Innovate UK Leadership Community (Stella Peace)

IUK colleagues presented the launch event of the new "Leadership Community" in June aimed at co-creating a vision for IUK with leaders from across IUK, IUK Business Connect and IUK Business Growth. The event focused on embedding the cube, with core values and an emphasis on activating strategic goals, highlighting leadership agility across domains.

The Leadership Community event aimed to connect individuals, building relationships and celebrating collective achievements.

Indro thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting.

A closed session was held with Council members only.