

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INTERFACE STRATEGIC BOARD
19th SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 3:00PM AT POLLOCK HALLS, 18 HOLYROOD ROAD, EH16 5AY.**

PRESENT:

Professor Andrea Nolan (Chair), Dr Siobhán Jordan, Brian Brown, Dr Colin Cooper, Professor Donald MacRae, Donna Chisholm, David Howie, Jo Bisset, Johnny Mone, Liz Connolly, Marc Crothall, Stuart Bain, Yekemi Otaru.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gary Bannon, SFC; Laura Goodfellow, Interface; Heather Rattray, Interface; Laura Hegarty, Interface (minutes).

1 APOLOGIES

Dr George Baxter, Dr Stuart Fancey, Jim Watson

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair opened the meeting and explained the agenda to the Board. She noted the apologies and welcomed the new members joining the Board including the new representatives for Highlands & Islands Enterprise and Universities Scotland Research and Commercialisation Directors Group. She also acknowledged the contribution of Lynn Mann from Supernature Ltd who had stepped down from the Board after a three-year term to pursue other commitments.

3. ORAL UPDATES

Professor Andrea Nolan provided the following updates:

- The new Board members will support the wide-ranging strategic discussions and the ongoing development of Interface
- The ever-changing landscape for knowledge exchange within Scotland, UK and internationally and it was opportune to discuss this over the networking dinner.

Dr Siobhán Jordan updated the Board on the following:

- The call for applications for the 2019 Scottish Knowledge Exchange awards had been recently launched. The format will be different to previous years with 4 regional events in October and November to promote the call for applications.
- We have been working closely with Universities Scotland on MSP engagement and through this we will host a company visit in Fife on 5th October for local MSPs.
- The multi-party support for clusters of businesses led by the sector engagement team has entered the final year of the three-year pilot. The intention is to progress a qualitative evaluation in the next 2 months with initial results available at the Board meeting in November.

The Board discussed the merits of companies who may perceive themselves as competitors working together and importance of industry buy-in to the collaborative themes that are supported. MC noted the importance of the multi-party collaborations to support the emerging themes for the new food tourism strategy.

4. MINUTES AND ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING (PAPER 1)

The Board agreed that the minutes (Paper 1) were a true and accurate reflection of the discussions held on 8th May 2018. They noted the progress of the actions on the tracker and that all were now completed.

Paper 1

In reviewing the forward plan, the Board suggested that “Horizon Scanning” be added as a regular agenda item. Future topics included (i) the inter-connectivity of stakeholder missions and how these support Interface (ii) blue sky thinking of the world in ten years. MC offered to update the Board on the future of the tourism industry if that was of interest.

The Board requested an update on progress by Interface with respect to the GDPR regulations that were introduced by May 2018.

ACTION

All Board members to suggest further topics for forward agendas	ALL
Progress report on the application of the GDPR regulations within Interface	HR

5. KEY HIGHLIGHTS - END OF YEAR AY2017-18 (PAPER 2)

HR and LK summarised the key highlights from AY2017-18 via a PowerPoint presentation.

The Board discussed the following: -

- The many approaches that were necessary to inspire businesses to collaborate with academia including social media, events, referrals from intermediaries and companies
- The importance of visibility of the team across Scotland through engagement with local networks
- The opportunity to liaise with Knowledge transfer network (KTN) staff to support engagement with key industry sectors
- The incremental support that is required to build trust with many businesses that are innovating for the first time

In conclusion they noted that the approved KPIs for the next 5 years are highly ambitious but achievable through working in partnership with other stakeholders including Colleges and HEIs.

6. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AY2018-2019 & MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK (PAPER 3)

Siobhan introduced Paper 3 which outlined progress since May 2018 on the business and operational plans. Over the last 2 months funders have streamlined the reporting requirements through the introduction of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF).

The Board noted the following:

- With the limited resources available there is a need to prioritise activities to achieve the ambitious KPIs
- There are many factors that are out with the control of the team in achieving the KPIs including the role of the HEIs in converting the many company discussions facilitated by Interface to contracted projects and managing ongoing collaborations to maximise scale and impact.
- The opportunity to work collectively with other partners to scale businesses in Scotland and enhance their ambition to grow through innovation.
- New/younger entrepreneurs may work best with Interface as they are open to new ideas. We need to encourage the more traditional business into a new and innovative mindset. Interface currently support businesses to gain trust which gets the best out of them.
- The decision-making process within businesses to collaborate with academia may be multi-faceted and need senior buy-in. This may take a considerable length of time.
- The potential to utilise data analytics internally to diagnose key factors that will support greater conversion to outcomes.

7. SPECIALIST FACILITIES PLATFORM (PAPER 4)

Heather introduced Paper 4 which provided an update on the current promotion of specialist facilities within the HE and FE sectors to companies. The online platform inspired businesses to consider what was available to them in Colleges and Universities.

The Board agreed that the development of the interactive map in conjunction with Energy Skills Partnership was a worthwhile approach and may help to streamline enquiries.

8. RESEARCH STUDIES & DATA ANALYTICS (PAPER 5)

Siobhán introduced Paper 5, which outlined the opportunities to partner with external collaborators to support continuous improvement through greater interrogation of the considerable data held by Interface.

The Board agreed that the proposed partnership with Edinburgh Napier University would yield interesting results that could support enhanced engagement with Universities and Colleges. They noted the opportunity to distinguish if there were different motivating factors within distinct clusters of Universities and Colleges.

9. AOB

In closing the meeting, the Chair thanked the outgoing member Donna Chisholm from HIE for her invaluable contributions and support over the past number of years.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 13th November 2018 – 2-4pm, Assembly Room, Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, Infirmary Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1LZ

APPENDIX ONE ACTION TRACKER [as of 31st October 2018]

No.	Date	Agenda Item	Action Agreed	Outcome	Result	Responsible
1	19th Sept 2018	MINUTES AND ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING	All Board members to suggest further topics for forward agendas	See proposed forward plan – Appendix 2	Ongoing discussion at each Board meeting	Board
2	19th Sept 2018	MINUTES AND ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING	Progress report on the application of the GDPR regulations within Interface	Information prepared	Information included in Paper 6	HR

APPENDIX TWO: FORWARD AGENDA PLAN FOR INTERFACE STRATEGIC BOARD MEETINGS 2018-19

February 2019

Interface Strategic Board meeting

- Horizon Scanning - Priority 2 – from single to multiple engagements
- Outcomes from review of sector engagement in three SME rich sectors
- MEF sign off – 2nd submission
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May 2019

Interface Strategic Board meeting

- Horizon Scanning – Priority 4 - Inter-connectivity of stakeholder missions and how these support Interface
- Impact of Brexit
- University Innovation fund and Interface
- MEF sign off – 3rd submission
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September 2019

Interface Strategic Board meeting

- Horizon scanning - Blue sky thinking of the world in ten years and what this means for Interface
Example - the future of the tourism industry
- Review of year 1 of MEF – targets and tolerances in practice, has streamlining worked in practice?
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Networking Dinner

- TBC