



Glasgow City Region Cabinet

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GCR Innovation Action Plan Update

Purpose of report:

This report provides an update to Glasgow City Region Cabinet on progress being made in the delivery of the GCR Innovation Action Plan.

Recommendations

The Glasgow City Region Cabinet is invited to note:

- a. The overall progress being made in the delivery of the GCR Innovation Action Plan;
- b. The decision to bring in specialist support to develop the Region's Innovation 'Identity'; and
- c. That a proposal will be developed for how the Innovation 'Identity' is managed by the Invest Glasgow team in collaboration with regional partners.

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Glasgow City Region Cabinet on progress being made in the delivery of the GCR Innovation Action Plan ('IAP').

2. Background

- 2.1 The IAP was developed in partnership with Scottish Enterprise and Innovate UK and launched in December 2023.
- 2.2 Since, the beginning of 2025, there has been significant progress in the delivery of the plan, all of which are noted below.

3. IAP Workstreams

- 3.1. The IAP was based on six broad workstreams. The progress for each is noted below:
 - a. **Ecosystem** – The GCR Intelligence Hub along with partners have been updating the clusters work to provide a baseline, which is feeding into the other workstreams. This will be used to inform the work to deliver the new GCR [Local Innovations Partnership Fund](#). Also, conversations are ongoing with Scottish Enterprise and Innovate UK on how best to come up with the most effective way of helping spin outs and start-ups navigate the very complex innovation ecosystem.
 - b. **Identity** – Two of the key actions are to 'align existing marketing and communication activity.....by developing a regional resource to 'sell' our distinctive innovation vision'. Further to that, the plan includes a proposal to consider learnings from comparator city regions across the UK and globally. The second of these actions has been completed, but the proposal is to engage external expert support to develop the Region's 'Innovation' identity. Further detail on that is noted in section 4 below.
 - c. **Skills** – A regional innovation skills group has been created. This includes representatives from across the regional partnership. Discussions have included whether the focus should be on innovation skills or skills for the most Region's innovation clusters. The plan is that it will be both. In the short term, the group has been engaging with Innovate UK for the development of regional Innovation Skills Framework pilot to be delivered this financial year. The intention is that this group can also help oversee the skills element of the Investment Zone programme.
 - d. **Inclusion** – The team have been working with experts at the Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde to develop an inclusive innovation framework. The work is ongoing and is due for completion by the end of the year. This will be validated with partners and is proposed that this is used to support the Investment Zone programme and similar activities.
 - e. **Investment** – A baseline has been created which identifies the levels of ongoing private sector investment in the Region and where that is coming from. Work is underway to link this back to updated ecosystem baseline and review other sources

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of funding. This work is also being used to support the British Business Bank who have increased their [enhanced Nations and Regions Fund](#) to include additional funding for Glasgow City Region. And they will use the data to identify businesses to target with this additional funding.

- f. **Infrastructure** – A review of the range of studies undertaken on lab and advanced manufacturing space within the Region has recently been completed. The next step is to look at the future pipeline of lab and advanced manufacturing space and the team will engage with member authorities on this. Working with partners at the universities and Scottish Enterprise this will be complemented by work to better understand future demands – with a view to considering where gaps lie. After which, the aim is to come up with proposals to address these.
- 3.2. The oversight of the work has come via the Glasgow Economic Leadership Innovation Group ('GELIG') chaired by John Howie, Babcock. Over the next couple of months, the intention is to expand the membership of the group, so it has a wider cluster focus and regional representation.

4. Identity Workstream

- 4.1 As noted in 3.1.b, the IAP includes the development of a regional resource to 'align existing marketing and communication activity'. Developing the Innovation 'Identity' will help the Region sell itself better to funders – private and public – and help galvanise innovation activity. It should also help young people better understand where employment opportunities in the future may come from. Whist also helping to establish a sense of local pride in the wide range of innovation activity which is happening but not well understood.
- 4.2 A scope to undertake the work is currently being drafted. Money is also available to pay for the work from the Innovation Accelerator programme capacity building funding. The Glasgow City Region Chief Executives Group agreed on 7th August that this work is commissioned as a priority.
- 4.3 One of the reasons holding up this work, was the lack of a regional team which would own and manage the 'Identity' and the curation and management of associated marketing material. This is usually how it works in Greater Manchester and West Midlands and other regions internationally.
- 4.4 Options for how the Region's innovation 'Identity' could be managed have been considered as outlined below.

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Option	Positive	Negatives	Progress (Yes / No)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Part of PMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to recruit a team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No – no obvious funding pot for the required resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GCoSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independence• Credibility with stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Glasgow focussed• Needs additional funding for resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No – would be reliant on additional funding from Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other Independent Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independence• Regional dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would need funding• Would take time to establish	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No – would require time and resources to establish
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invest Glasgow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has credibility• Has resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Glasgow focussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes – as the most cost effective but will need to ensure proper regional engagement mechanisms

- 4.5 The Glasgow City Region Chief Executives Group also agreed on 7th August that, whilst the expert support is procured, a plan for how the Invest Glasgow team can manage the identity is developed. And is done so in a way that it ensures partner buy-in from across the Region.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Glasgow City Region Cabinet is invited to note:
- a. The overall progress being made in the delivery of the GCR Innovation Action Plan;
 - b. The decision to bring in specialist support to develop the Region's Innovation 'Identity'; and
 - c. That a proposal will be developed for how the Innovation 'Identity' is managed by the Invest Glasgow team in collaboration with regional partners.

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