**MINUTES**

**THURSDAY 26 JULY 2018**

**Attendees**

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| Professor Phil Brown | James Carey |
| Peter Sueref | Deb Harding |
| Professor Andrew Westwood | Matthew Hicks |
| Richard Jones | Gail Evans |
| Kate Carr | Professor Ewart Keep |
| Carys Roberts |  |

**Apologies**

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| Dr Nicole Millard | Marsha Ward |
| Daniel Mines | Tegid Roberts |
| Professor Tom Crick | Sophie Howe |

**Minute**

1. **Chair’s update**
   1. Phil provided a short update to the panel on work to date and key meetings.
   2. The November interim report may have a wider influence on the restructuring of the economy teams within Welsh Government.
   3. The first meeting of the Review Action Group (RAG) took place on the 19 July. The group will provide a useful vehicle for testing ideas formed by the panel.
   4. The October expert panel meeting will focus on reviewing the range of evidence gathered by the review. It is therefore likely to extend beyond a full day. Diary markers to be circulated.
   5. Phil is keen to explore mechanisms for gathering bottom-up insight from communities, SMEs, individuals etc.. The Unite study of union members was cited as a potential evidence source to draw upon.
   6. Other points made in response to the update included:
   * The challenge of keeping pace to what is a moving target in terms of ongoing and future digital transformation.
   * Some of the challenges are associated with capability building rather than capacity building. For example, this may be true within the capability of Welsh Government to respond to the demand from industry.
   * There is a need to get a better picture of digital infrastructure in Wales, including social infrastructure, and how this will shape the use of technology.
   * City Deals were noted as a potential mechanism for attracting future opportunities to Wales. Panel requested that representatives from the City/ Growth Deals be invited to a future panel meeting.
   * A future marketing campaign focusing on the positive influence of digital technology and the benefits to businesses and individuals may also be a key recommendation to explore further.
2. **A view from industry: Tech UK**
   1. Vinous Ali from Tech UK provided a presentation to panel.
   2. There are approximately 50 Tech UK members associated with Wales. Tech UK would be happy to make contact with these members in supporting the outcomes of the review.
   3. Vinous noted the positive influence of technology from a business perspective. For example, the potential to support disabled workers to access work opportunities.
   4. Companies around 20 years of maturity are the most at risk in terms of failing to digitalise. Vinous noted the RSA Report on the Age of Automation as a further source of evidence.
   5. The right business support structures are required to effectively signpost and influence greater use of technology across the business community.
   6. The repurposing of civic/ public buildings was noted as a method for supporting digital innovation. For example libraries as digital hubs.
   7. A number of the larger employers are going down the Academy model in developing the skills and training infrastructure they need in order to adapt to technology change. This highlights the challenge for SMEs in moving their businesses up the value chain. Most micro and SME businesses will be starting their digital journey from a very low base.
   8. The education system is becoming increasingly knowledge based. Employers are looking to gain a wider base of skills and experience for new and existing workers. The Welsh Data Science Graduate Scheme was noted as an example of education and industry working collaboratively.
   9. Connecting networks of businesses was cited as important as was the need to balance facilitating inward investment with support for indigenous businesses. LEPs and ‘We Work’ office spaces were noted as key links to consider.
3. **A view from Government: Department for Business, Environment and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)**
   1. Louis Barson provided a presentation to panel on the UK Government Industrial Strategy.
   2. Panel felt it would be useful to map the Industrial Strategy through the lens of Wales. For example, mapping the 5 sector deals and what resourcing is going to these areas in Wales.
   3. The challenge of a competitive funding model was noted, particularly in terms of research and development funding. Panel highlighted the links to the Reid Review which has already made recommendations to Welsh Government in this area. Phil requested a meeting take place with Professor Graeme Reid to discuss some of these issues in more depth.
   4. The UK Government in Wales Group was noted as a potential vehicle for opening up dialogue about how best to influence UK-wide resources which could be of benefit to Wales. For example, the potential for Wales to develop its expertise in data assets and data ethics.
   5. The BEIS work seems to be light on its sense of place. Further dialogue is needed between Wales and the UK Government in order to shape this work going forward.
4. **A view from local government: Theo Blackwell, Chief Digital Officer**
   1. Theo Blackwell provided a presentation on the work of the Greater London Authority in supporting digital transformation across local government.
   2. Theo noted the challenge of addressing the risk appetite of elected officials when it comes to technology change and digitalisation. Effective air cover is needed to support those in a CDO position to make decisions and take on the challenge of digital transformation.
   3. The adoption of standards and the lack of consistency and uniformity across the London boroughs were noted as key to unlocking many of the projects which are now being taken forward.
   4. The focus of Theo’s work has been on ensuring innovation is amplified not just adopted or shared. He acts in a pseudo government advisor position with a direct report to the Mayor of London.
   5. Actions have focused on where London can mobilise its public assets for the benefits of its citizens. This ‘people first’ and can do approach to policy decisions was welcomed by panel. Theo highlighted that much of the work is on micro actions underpinned by the collaborative approach and patronage from the London boroughs involved.

**Feedback and any other business**

* 1. Panel held a short feedback session and discussed the focus of future meetings. Level 39 and We Work were suggested as two organisations/ initiatives which could be of use in shaping recommendations.
  2. Matt noted the pressure on future panel meetings leading up to the interim report in November. It may be necessary to conduct some study visits outside of panel meetings with panel members having the option to take part in these visits/ meetings subject to their availability.