



## **Stakeholder Consultation Survey 2019 Results and Discussion**

### **Summary**

- Innovation Alliance for the West Midlands (IAWM) has conducted its second consultation survey since its transformation from Birmingham Science City (BSC) in 2017.
- Results are analysed below and have been compared where necessary with results from the previous year to illustrate its continued growth.
- The results show continued and even greater satisfaction towards the achievement of IAWM's aims, particularly the aim to 'Stimulate and Catalyse a Pipeline of Innovation Activity', which was marked as a key priority in the 2018 Annual Report.
- Another priority for 2019 was to improve the standard and frequency of mail-outs across all three working groups. This proved to be a success, with stakeholders responding positively to the weekly updates. They were also pleased with our various events – our Working Group meetings in particular proving to be valuable networking hubs.
- IAWM's social media continues to grow, with LinkedIn proving to be a valuable source of information sharing (particularly personal accounts). The website – including layout and content – will take particular focus in 2020.
- Overall, stakeholders responded positively to the work of IAWM.

### **Introduction**

The first part and bulk of this report analyses and discusses the results of a survey Innovation Alliance for the West Midlands (IAWM) has undertaken in January 2020 to evaluate its continued progress as it moves into its third year as IAWM.

All stakeholders of IAWM (mailing list and working group members) were asked to complete the questionnaire which asked about the importance of the current objectives; the successes of the working groups and events run by IAWM; IAWM's efforts to catalyse innovation activity, as well as the influence of our communication channels.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed in order to evaluate the success of IAWM and how it should move forward. The results were compared with the findings from last year's survey in order to assess the continued success of the changes made in the transformation from BSC to IAWM.

The second part of the report quantifies, where possible, the scale of work undertaken by IAWM, predominantly with respect to the ‘Building the Innovation Ecosystem’ area of work, compiling statistics from our events and communication channels.

**Question 1: About you**

All respondents answered this question. Results revealed that **45%** were from Private sector, **28%** from Universities, **12%** from Public sector, and **9%** from Other – this included predominantly not-for-profit organisations.

**Question 2: The Innovation Alliance WM (IAWM) has two core objectives. Please rate IAWM's achievements against each of its core objectives.**

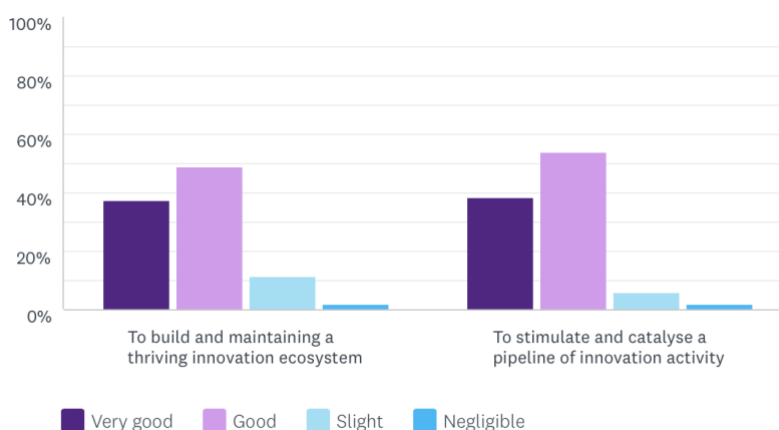


Figure 1: The Innovation Alliance WM has two core objectives. Please rate IAWM's achievements against each of its core objectives. 53 respondents.

**87%** of respondents rated IAWM’s success of ‘Building and maintaining a thriving innovation ecosystem’ as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’ (see Figure 1), a 2% increase from the previous year. In regard to ‘Stimulating and catalysing a pipeline of innovation activity’, **92%** of respondents rated it as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’, a remarkable 15% increase from 2018.

These results reflect the efforts of IAWM in 2019 to address the concerns revealed in last year’s survey that suggested more needed to be done to achieve our second aim.

**Question 3 & 4: Please select all working groups run or co-run by IAWM that you have been involved with. For the working group listed above that you are most involved with, how would you rate the value of each of the following: Content of the meetings, networking opportunities, work to develop collaborative opportunities, updates between meetings.**

**30%** of respondents were from Innovative Health Working Group, **45%** Innovative Low Carbon Working Group, and **49%** Smart City Alliance. Some were active in multiple working groups, whilst others stated that they were active in neither.

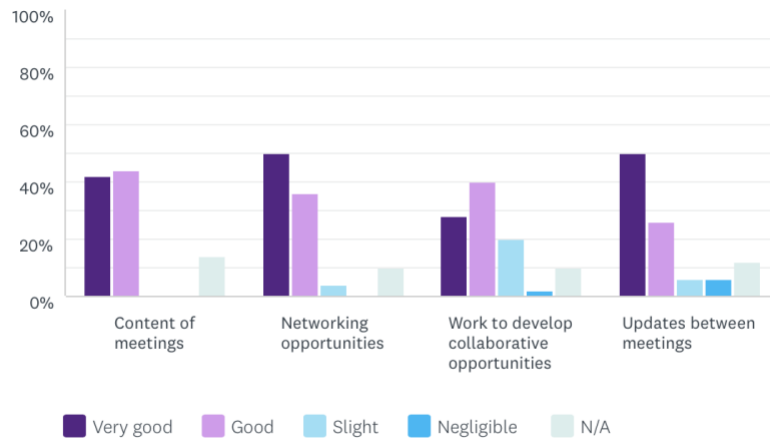


Figure 2: For the working group listed above that you are most involved with, how would you rate the value of each of the following? 50 respondents.

This year, with the inclusion of the ‘NA’ option, more accurate results were gathered. Therefore, whilst Figure 2 shows 86% of respondents rated ‘Content of Meetings’ as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’, with the ‘NA’ option accounting for 14%, it was in reality **100%** of respondents to whom this question was relevant that responded with ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. In the same vein, **96%** of respondents to whom this question was relevant rated the ‘Networking Opportunities’ as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. Both results a significant increase from last year, which were **90%** and **85%** respectively.

**75%** of respondents rated ‘Work to develop collaborative opportunities’ as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’ which, whilst still proving to be the weakest, is still an impressive 12% increase from 2018. Finally, **86%** rated the ‘Updates between meetings’ as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’, a 3% increase from last year.

Comments praise the updates between meetings – including the concise and clear content of the mailings, as well as the proactive nature of the team in making connections between stakeholders. The meetings themselves are described as the “perfect forum for networking” with high level of engagement and a good mix of attendees across various sectors.

A few respondents mentioned the need for more encouragement of the engagement of larger and smaller enterprises, with people failing to gain responses from new connections. More emphasis on follow-up is thus necessary.

**Question 5 & 6:** *As part of our aim to catalyse a pipeline of innovation activity, have you participated in any of the following, enabled by IAWM? (Introduction to a New Contact; participation in a group discussion of workshop on collaborative opportunities; Support/Guidance on the delivery of an innovation proposal of partnership) and For each of the activities above, how would you rate the value of the input from the IAWM Executive?*

**77%** of respondents selected that they had been introduced to a new contact; **77%** stated that they had participated in a group discussion or workshop; and **43%** said that they had

received support / guidance on the development and delivery of an innovation proposal or partnership.

The following percentages are again calculated based on the removal of those who responded 'NA'. Overall, respondents were positive about IAWM'S involvement in the three activities (see Figure 3). **93%** of respondents cited IAWM's involvement in regard to the 'Introduction to a new contact' as 'Good' or 'Very Good'; and **95%** selected 'Good' or 'Very Good' for 'Participation in a group discussion or workshop'. Finally, **87%** of respondents rated the 'Support / Guidance' as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

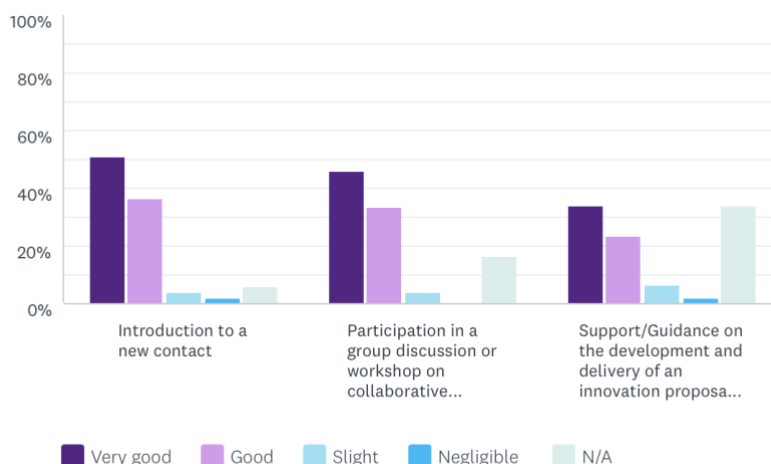


Figure 3: For the activities above, how would you rate the value of the input from the IAWM Executive? 49 respondents.

**Question 7:** How much do you value the following events that have been led by IAWM? (Venturefest West Midlands; Innovation Policy and Practice Breakfasts)

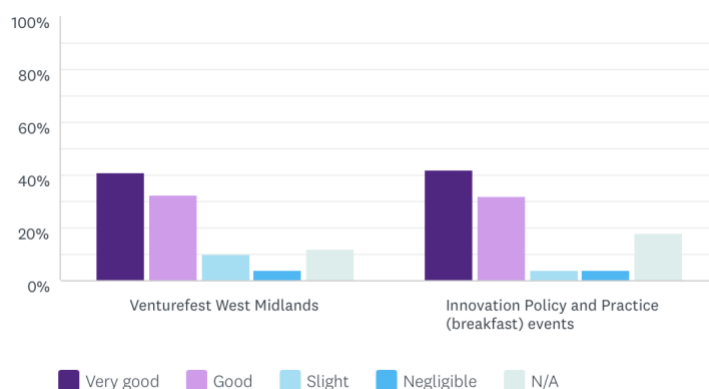


Figure 4: How much do you value the following events that have been led by IAWM? 52 respondents.

**84%** of respondents rated Venturefest West Midlands as 'Good' or 'Very Good' (see Figure 4), a 7% increase from 2018. **90%** rated Innovation Policy and Practice Breakfasts (IP&P) as 'Good' or 'Very Good', a 6% increase from last year.

Respondents were generally very positive about the events, though some mentioned the inconvenience of IP&P events being so early in the morning. Comments were also made

about the format and purpose of Venturefest specifically, which would require particular attention.

**Question 8:** *How much do you value each of IAWM's online and social media communications channels as a source of information? (Website/Blog; Twitter; LinkedIn)*

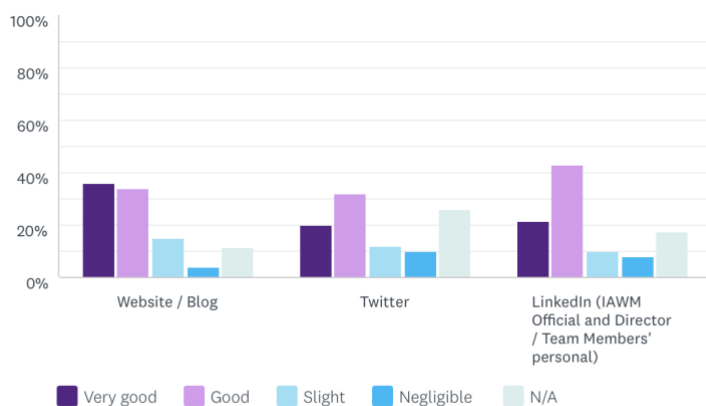


Figure 5: How much do you value each of IAWM's online and social media communications channels as a source of information?

**78%** of respondents rated the website/blog as 'Good' or 'Very Good' (see Figure 5), a significant increase from last year's 48%. Since the last survey, the website has had a few changes that have made it easier to navigate and organise (including separate tabs for 'News', 'Case Studies' and 'Blog'), but feedback has been given in regards to its simplicity and style; as such, moving forward, plans to renovate the website, making it more attractive and better organised, are being discussed.

**70%** of respondents who use Twitter rated it as 'Good' or 'Very Good', a 13% increase from last year (although the addition of the 'NA' option this year eliminated those from previous years who gave our Twitter a poor rating due to their own personal low usage, giving us a more accurate representation).

Finally, **78%** of respondents rated LinkedIn as 'Good' or 'Very Good'. IAWM's LinkedIn was set up towards the end of this year and still has a way to go to increase its following and reach. These ratings are thus likely more reflective of the personal Twitter accounts of each of the IAWM Core Executive.

Whilst our communication channels are important in maintaining an online presence and increasing brand awareness, it is quite clear – and is reflected in comments – that IAWM's most valuable source of communication are the weekly email updates, on which our members heavily rely for the latest information.

**Question 9:** *Please add any further comments you wish to make on the activities of IAWM in the last year, or further priorities, opportunities or changes you would like to see developed.*

Respondents were generally positive about the achievements and impact of IAWM in 2019. Its positive and influential role in driving innovation forward in the West Midlands is particularly noted.

## Quantification of IAWM Activity

### 1. Events and meetings

In 2019, IAWM ran or co-ran a total of 24 events – including 14 Working Group meetings, 4 Innovation Policy and Practice Breakfasts, 5 additional thematic workshops (3 of which were construction focused) and Venturefest. All the events were well attended, with a good spread of attendance across the private (include SMEs), public and University sectors. In line with our work in the WMIP programme, a goal for 2020 is to increase business participation.

Our Innovation Policy and Practice Breakfasts have been particularly well attended this year – including one that was attended by Birmingham Business Magazine, giving us a double page spread of pictures. Themes included the Circular Economy, Women in STEM, how large and small companies can collaborate to innovate, and Innovation and Place. Venturefest too had an impressive turnout, being held this year in the NEC which was met with positive feedback.

Our events are a vital part of IAWM’s aim to ‘Build and Maintain a Thriving Innovation Ecosystem’ – enabling valuable networking opportunities and a chance to see a snapshot of exciting projects in the West Midlands. Through partnerships and alliances made, this also importantly feeds into our aim of ‘Stimulating and catalysing a pipeline of innovation activity’, which has been seen more prominently in 2019.

<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Number of events</b>	<b>Total Attendance</b>
Innovative Low Carbon	4	<b>Total: 97</b> <i>Private: 18%</i> <i>of which SMES: 22%</i> <i>Public: 13%</i> <i>Third: 13%</i> <i>University: 26%</i>
Innovative Health	5	<b>Total: 76</b> <i>Private: 24%</i> <i>Of which SMES: 15%</i> <i>Public: 42%</i> <i>University: 33%</i> <i>Other: 1%</i>
Smart City Alliance	5	<b>Total: 150</b> <i>Private: 38%</i> <i>Of which SMES: 19%</i>

		<i>Public: 28%</i> <i>University: 29%</i>
--	--	--

<b>Event led/ co-led by IAWM</b>	<b>Number of events</b>	<b>Total Attendance</b>
Innovation Policy & Practice Breakfast	4	142
Venturefest	1	363

<b>Thematic workshop</b>	<b>Number of events</b>	<b>Total Attendance</b>
Construction focused	3	<b>Total: 55</b> <i>Private: 45%</i> <i>Of which SMEs: 11%</i> <i>Public: 22%</i> <i>Third: 13%</i> <i>University: 9%</i>
Digital Treasure Hunt	1	<b>Total: 32</b> <i>Private: 34%</i> <i>Of which SMEs: 16%</i> <i>Public: 50%</i>
Birmingham Tech Week	1	<b>Total: 32</b> <i>Private: 34%</i> <i>Of which SMEs: 16%</i> <i>Public: 50%</i>

## 2. Email updates

A priority for 2019 was to focus on improving the frequency and content of mail-outs across all three Working Groups. Furthermore, the introduction of CiviCRM in April 2019 enabled a consistent format, as well as allowing us to keep an eye on the reach and engagement of each mailout. The following stats are calculated from April 2019 – December 2019, when CiviCRM was set up.

<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Number of mail-outs</b>	<b>Number of opens</b>
Innovative Low Carbon	35	1,505
Innovative Health	27	993
Smart City Alliance	29	1,699

## 3. Twitter Statistics

In 2018, a Comms Assistant was hired on a part-time basis in order to improve social media engagement when the 2017 report revealed a significant lack. 2018 saw a remarkable increase in our Twitter Reach which was carried through to 2019. As shown in Figure 6,

there was a slight dip in the middle of the year when we were without a Comms Assistant, but it picked up for the rest of 2019. This year saw us reach 3,000 followers, a remarkable achievement.

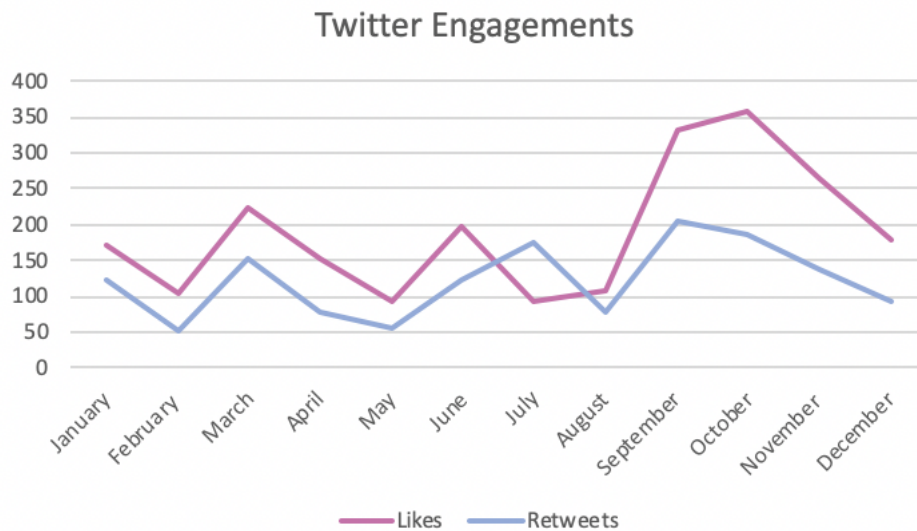


Figure 6: Total impressions from @InnovationWM from January 2019 to December 2019

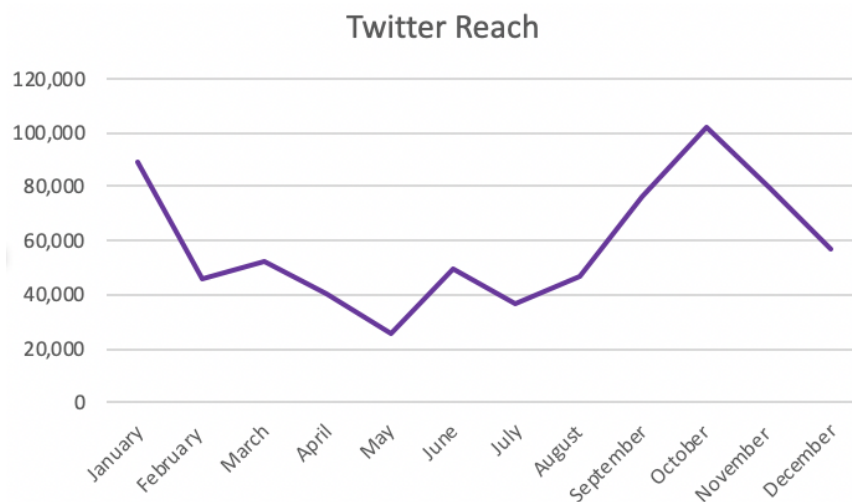


Figure 7: Likes and Retweets from @InnovationWM from January 2019 to December 2019

#### 4. Website Statistics

The website this year has had basic readjustment – namely a more organised format, dividing posts into ‘blog’, ‘event’, ‘news’ and ‘case studies’, making it easier to find specific articles. In contrast to 2018, Figure 8 shows a significant increase in our monthly views, never dipping below 600 (a remarkable difference to last year) and reaching over 1,600. Whilst this is certainly positive, the website will go under further reconstruction in 2020 to become more appropriate and easier to navigate.



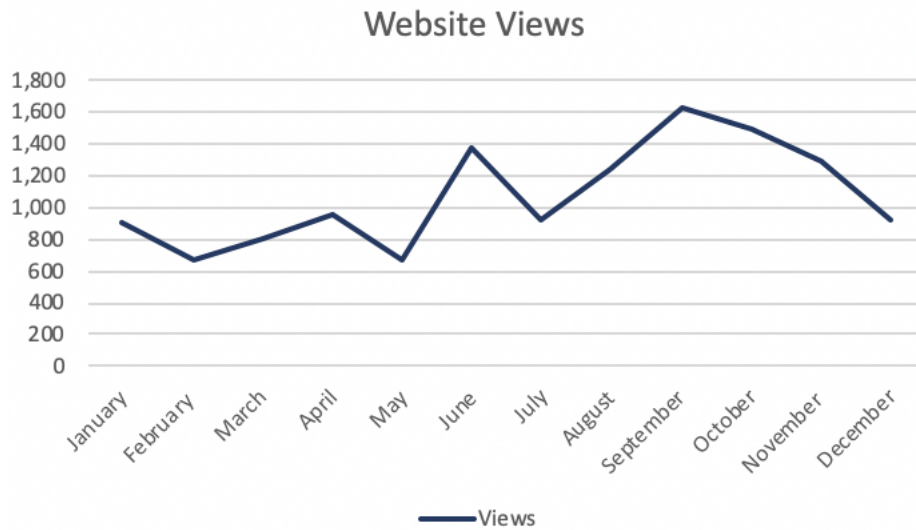


Figure 8: Website views from January 2019 to December 2019

## **Conclusions and priorities for 2020**

The results of the survey and the activity metrics indicate not only continuity from the positive results of IAWM’s first year since its transformation from BSC, but significant improvement. A key priority for 2019 based on the results of our 2018 survey was to ensure a stronger focus on our aim to ‘Stimulate and Catalyse a pipeline of innovation activity’ – and a 15% increase in stakeholder satisfaction illustrates the hard work that has gone in to achieving this. The aim to ‘Build and maintain a pipeline of innovation activity’ continues to be met with positive results. **A continued focus on ensuring both of these aims continue to be met in 2020 is crucial.**

Working Group members continue to be satisfied with the content of the Working Group meetings and networking opportunities they provide. The 2018 survey illustrated the need for better focus on the email updates between meetings, and work to develop collaborative opportunities. There is notable improvement in the standard, frequency of and satisfaction with the email updates, particularly since the introduction of CiviCRM in April 2019. Across all three working groups there are now weekly email updates following the same format which stakeholders have claimed to be highly valuable in sharing the latest events and opportunities. Whilst work still needs to be done to develop collaborative opportunities, there was a 12% increase in satisfaction from last year’s survey, proving positive progress. **There is still a need to ensure engagement and collaboration of organisations between meetings,** ensuring people follow through with connections made.

Venturefest and our Innovation Policy and Practice events prove to be a continued success, with a greater response than the previous year. Total attendance of IP&P events is slightly lower than last year, potentially due to the Women in STEM themed event that disappointingly attracted predominately women, but general satisfaction and responses to the event continues to be high. Stakeholders seem happy with themes, priorities and networking opportunities, so **these events should be continued following the same model.**

Our communication channels continue to show significant improvement since the transformation from BSC and the hiring of a communications assistant in 2018. This year has seen the introduction of a LinkedIn for IAWM which complements the personal accounts of the IAWM Executive which have been crucial in circulating events and opportunities. Website views have significantly increased this year as more content has been uploaded with better organisation. However, the style and format of the website has been noted as being out-of-date and difficult to navigate, and so **2020 will see a reconfiguration and necessary upgrade of the website, making it better fit for purpose.**