

Hull and East Yorkshire Business Support Board  
AI Conference  
Report by Jon Brunton, Growth Hub Manager  
Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
Paper C

## 1. Summary

1.1. The HEY Growth Hub has developed an “AI for SMEs” mini conference, which will take place on the morning of Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024. This paper provides an overview on this event, including the event objectives, agenda, and targeted outcomes.

## 2. Recommendations

2.1. That the Board notes this report.

## 3. Event Details

3.1. The advent of Artificial Intelligence presents the largest disruption to “doing business” for a generation. Regardless of industry, business size or maturity, AI will transform how businesses operate, from microbusinesses to the largest multinationals.

3.2. However, the integration of AI within business is multifaceted and presents various issues for consideration. This ranges from business strategy and governance, through to the implementation of AI, the impact on the workforce and skills requirements, as well as what lies “over the horizon”.

3.3. In order to support businesses in Hull & East Yorkshire with the advent of AI, HEY Growth Hub in partnership with the LEP’s Employment & Skills team has developed a half-day mini conference for an SME audience, which will explore the less considered aspects of AI within industry.

3.4. The objectives of the event are:

3.4.1. To **raise awareness amongst HEY SMEs of AI**, and what it means in the context of their business. Including strategic, governance and decision making considerations; practical applications of AI in business; employment & skills impacts; and a look to the future.

3.4.2. To **raise SME awareness of the information, advice and support available** to aid their adoption and implementation of AI within their businesses. Including support available from HEY Growth Hub, the two HEY LA’s, the University of Hull, training providers, and government amongst others.

3.4.3. To **ascertain the current barriers and challenges faced by HEY SMEs in relation to AI** adoption and implementation, in order that relevant

stakeholders can inform their business support and skills support provision as appropriate.

3.4.4. To **ascertain the current recruitment and skills challenges faced by HEY SMEs in relation to AI**, in order that training providers, education establishments and local government representatives can inform their understanding of the local skills and training needs.

3.5. Specifically, the conference will explore:

3.5.1. The impact of AI on business strategy and governance.

3.5.2. The impact of AI on the workforce, including employment and skills considerations

3.5.3. How SMEs can start to practically apply AI within their business operations

3.5.4. Horizon scanning – what’s next for AI within industry, and what can Hull & East Yorkshire firms do to prepare for this.

3.6. The Growth Hub has worked with partners from the University of Hull, Hull College, TEC Partnership and with local industry to program this event. Keynote speakers will include Dr Dionysios Demetis of the University of Hull Business School, Professor Dhaval Thakker from the University of Hull Computer Science Department, and Debra Gray, Principal of Hull College, amongst many others.

3.7. The mini conference will take place at the Village Hotel, Hull, 8am-12pm on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024. 75 delegates are expected to attend the event.

3.8. Subject to the success of the event, HEY Growth Hub may look to schedule future business events on the topic of AI, working with partners to ensure that the content of the events represent latest expertise and understanding of this emerging and transformational technology.

#### 4. **Financial and resource implications**

4.1. All associated event costs are covered from the Growth Hub’s core budget for the 2023/24 year.