

**GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE
JOINT STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

Collaboration on Skills Initiatives

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To agree to the principle of collaboration to address specific skills priorities common to the three local authority areas and to add value to the work of the GLLEP Skills Advisory Panel.
- 1.2 To consider joint strategic skills needs to be addressed on a joint Lincolnshire basis and to develop themes for collaboration for consideration at a future JSOC meeting.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

- 2.1 The skills landscape is changing faster than ever. We have traditional occupations facing the threat (and need for) automation. We have new industries offering highly skilled opportunities in high profile roles – in the green energy sector for example. And we are emerging from a pandemic where we cannot yet predict the long-term impact on jobs in, say, the hospitality sector or the health and care sector.
- 2.2 All of our authorities have benefited from significant injections of funds in recent months – through the Future High Streets Fund, Towns Fund, proposed Levelling Up Fund projects and the success of the Humber Freeport bid. Many of these projects are now moving into delivery phase.
- 2.3 Much of the recent focus has been on physical regeneration, particularly targeted towards our town centres and supporting the growth of the Energy Estuary.

- 2.4 There has been less recent focus, in terms of direct funding opportunities, on ensuring that we equip our residents with the skills required to take up new opportunities or to prepare for significant changes in our traditional sectors. In particular, there is a need to consider those people in our areas who have additional barriers to employment and are not job ready - to ensure that our approach to Levelling Up in Greater Lincolnshire is truly inclusive.
- 2.5 There is a significant opportunity for us to collaborate across our authorities in the years ahead to consider common challenges and to work collectively to consider new approaches to ensure all of our residents benefit from the enormous opportunity for economic growth in Greater Lincolnshire. This is a particularly timely discussion as the focus moves towards the opportunities afforded by the Shared Prosperity Fund from 2022 and the importance of ensuring that Greater Lincolnshire's skills requirements are reflected in that programme.
- 2.6 There are a number of reasons for developing a new skills eco-system for Greater Lincolnshire:
- To be ready for national policy that is still emerging – putting business in the driving seat;
 - To develop the Greater Lincolnshire skills proposition within a Levelling Up/ Devolution ask;
 - Ensuring match between supply and demand of skills locally, including reskilling;
 - Responding to immediate skills challenges that impact businesses and prosperity e.g. supply of trades;
 - Strengthening supply chains, e.g. through new approaches from large employers, including public sector procurement;
 - Providing higher level technical qualifications and diversification to enable medium- and long-term economic ambitions;
 - Enhancing provider collaboration –stimulating new product development to address needs and ambitions;
 - Maximising the impact of resources in the system –which may come forward in new ways;
 - Incentivising and encouraging individuals to invest in their skills and lifelong learning –lifting personal ambition at all ages.

Role of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

- 2.6 LEPs have an important role to play in developing skills thinking in the region. LEPs have a duty to produce local skills reports through Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs). The Greater Lincolnshire LEP (GLLEP) produced its skills report in April 2021 in line with government requirements with an updated report due in November and annually thereafter.

- 2.7 The LEP duty through DfE is predominantly focused on considering forecast economic growth against labour market analysis and to consider resulting skills gaps and potential programmes to address need. This helps to influence government thinking and funding and to target resources.
- 2.8 DfE's approach is macro and whilst data is collected at borough/district level by the LEP, it is not fine grain. The LEP approach does not, and is not designed to, reflect local nuances ie the factors behind a challenge at a very local level.
- 2.9 We do not want JSOC work to duplicate or confuse the work of the LEP. However, as Local Authorities (individually or jointly) we need to identify and articulate our local challenges both for our own skills plans and economic strategies and to better feed in local challenges and priorities to the LEP. We believe that there are a number of common themes across Greater Lincolnshire where we can work together to identify local priorities and to target resources on those priorities.
- 2.10 The University of Lincoln's Institute of Technology model provides a good example of how the different skills challenges across Lincolnshire can be brought together into a single delivery model via a polycentric approach – with individual institute nodes feeding in local requirements and ensuring that the Greater Lincolnshire approach reflects and addresses local nuances.

Joint opportunities

- 2.11 The skills ecosystem is complex and multi-layered. Through a Greater Lincolnshire Skills Eco-System, the following roles and responsibilities would be developed:
- **Businesses** forecasting and communicating skills needs that impact sectors; influencing, disrupting, and shaping the provider markets; galvanising sector voices;
 - **Providers** ensuring a responsive skills offer; marketing the offer; convening around specialisms; cooperating on specific skills challenges –by sector and by skills set;
 - **Conveners** facilitating and enabling challenging conversations; engendering system level accountability; providing high level economic assessment; influencing policy;
 - **Individuals** accessing information, advice and guidance; engaging in lifelong learning as a route to prosperity.
- 2.12 We will progress stakeholder engagement across Greater Lincolnshire, with individuals, providers, universities and businesses, and local authorities, in the next 6-12 months to identify potential areas of focus. We will bring this back to

the Joint Strategic Oversight Committee to consider our findings and recommendations for next steps. Once priorities are finalised, any future paper will need to identify specific outcomes and those initiatives which we can put in place to meet those outcomes.

2.13 Examples of areas where a joined-up approach may be appropriate include:

- Specific approaches where we have pockets of significant deprivation. In all three of our authorities, we have residents who will undoubtedly feel disconnected from the economic opportunities which exist in Greater Lincolnshire. Where the challenges are more fundamental than identifying new skills to meet the emerging job opportunities and where individuals face significant and multiple barriers to work. For Levelling Up to be successful, we will need to consider how the Shared Prosperity Fund can support those who are furthest from the labour market.
- Upskilling our communities. It has been highlighted elsewhere that Greater Lincolnshire has lower levels of productivity than many other regions – resulting in a push for increased automation within many of our traditional industries. Whilst such an approach is vital for Greater Lincolnshire’s competitiveness, such a priority puts at risk long standing job roles where, very often, employees are not aware of the alternative careers open to them and where they had assumed that their roles would be available across their lifetimes. Supporting our over 50s to benefit from the new job opportunities coming to the region could be an important area for collaboration.
- Careers advice across Greater Lincolnshire is inconsistent. We hear on a regular basis that young people are not aware of the new jobs coming forward in Greater Lincolnshire and that there can be a lack of time in the curriculum to introduce young people to such opportunities. In our more rural areas, this can be exacerbated by the need for schools to realise critical mass for their sixth forms which can impact on advice that is given.
- We need to do more to support our employers to engage with our schools and academies. We can support our employers engage with our schools through schemes like ‘Primary Futures’ and the work of the Careers & Enterprise Company, to ensure that there is early engagement with primary aged school children about the ‘jobs of tomorrow’.
- We have a strong Further Education offer but engagement with the offer is low compared to other regions and nationally – and the drop out rate is a concern leading to lost aspirations. We have an opportunity to work with these providers, businesses, and young people to ensure that they have a long-term plan to achieve their aspiration.
- Our labour market is buoyant across Greater Lincolnshire there are some job roles within Greater Lincolnshire where employers are finding it

increasingly difficult to fill vacancies because the perceptions of such roles doesn't reflect the reality – for example, in our strong food processing sector. We have industries where there is significant opportunity to develop skills sets but where there is a presumption that roles will be low level and unskilled. We need to work together to address such perceptions.

- 2.14 In particular, we want to consider these opportunities and actions with a view to identifying new ways of working which challenge traditional thinking, particularly in our schools and colleges. In taking that approach, we can then work with the LEP to ensure any skills strategy or future funding focus considers challenges at the most local level – which are often currently overlooked.

3. DETAIL OF OPTIONS/PROPOSAL

- 3.1 We will work across our three authorities in the months ahead to further develop the thinking in these key areas and to consider additional opportunities for joint working. To date, discussion has been amongst officers within the three local authorities. We will need to engage more broadly in developing our recommendations for JSOC linking up with, for example, the Federation of Lincolnshire Colleges.

4. RESOURCE AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no resource implications with this paper. Any subsequent need for additional resource will be subject to a further paper to this Committee as appropriate.

5. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES (INCLUDE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT IF RELEVANT)

- 5.1 Greater Lincolnshire has a significant opportunity to realise economic growth both through the emerging industries on the Energy Estuary and, in particular, in relation to the UK's drive for net zero (along with the breadth of wider opportunities set out in our respective economic strategies), and as a result of the government's levelling up agenda.

As potential pilot areas through the Communities Renewal Fund for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund – there is an opportunity to shape the future of the prosperity with Government with all of our stakeholders.

The recommendations set out in this report are designed to ensure that this growth is inclusive and affords opportunity to all of our residents.

6. CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT

6.1 This paper has been consulted on and agreed by all upper tier and GLLEP senior officers and Leaders/Chair. Should the recommendations be supported, there will be additional consultation with key skills providers in the region to develop further the proposed approach to collaboration.

7. **GOVERNANCE – DECISION(S) FOR MEMBER COUNCIL’S REQUIRED
(in accordance with the Joint Committee’s Terms of Reference).**

7.1 None

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That the Joint Committee agree to the principle of collaboration to address local skills issues which are common to the three local authorities;

8.2 That the Joint Committee ask officers to further develop the priorities set out in paragraph 2.13 and consider approaches to collaboration for those specific themes and others as they emerge.

8.3 That the Joint Committee work in conjunction with the GLLEP Skills Advisory Panel on a joined up approach to the emerging Shared Prosperity fund to ensure that these specific issues are prioritised, particularly with a view to developing new ways of working and challenging existing approaches.

STRATEGIC REGENERATION ADVISOR – NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE
COUNCIL

Address: Municipal Offices, Town Hall Square, Grimsby, DN31 1HU

Post Code:

Author: *Clive Tritton*

Date: *August 2021*

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report – None