



Minutes of the Greater Lincolnshire LEP Board

29th November 2019

Mercury House, Willoughton Drive, Foxby
Lane Business Park, Gainsborough, DN21
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Minutes

Present: Board Directors: Ursula Lidbetter (Chair) (Lincs Co-op), Pat Doody (Vice Chair & Nat West, Chair of ESC), Cllr Philip Jackson (Vice Chair & NELC), Cllr Craig Leyland (ELDC), Dean Fathers (Health & Diversity Champion), Gary Headland (Lincs Chamber & IoD), Mary Stuart (UoL and Chair of Business Lincolnshire Board & the Innovation Council), Nick Worboys (Longhurst), Sarah Louise Fairburn (L J Fairburn & Sons Ltd and Food Board Chair), Zoe King (Epix Media & Digital Lead & SME Champion), Alric Blake (AllTech),

Observers: Stephen Fidler (DfT & GLLEP Sponsor), Pete Holmes (BEIS), Christine Traill (Rutland CC), Simon Green (NLC), Andy Gutherson (LCC)

Apologies: Andrew Crookham (S151 Officer LCC), Cllr Ric Metcalfe (CoL), Cllr Rob Waltham (NLC), Cllr Colin Davie (LCC), Debbie Barnes (LCC), Chris Baron (Butlins, Skegness & Chair of VE Board), Clive Tritton (NELC)

LEP Executive: Ruth Carver (CX), Kate Storey (PM), Sue Groves (Note Taker)

For Agenda Items: Clare Hughes (GLLEP)

Apologies and Declarations of Interest - Apologies were noted from Andrew Crookham, Cllr Ric Metcalfe, Cllr Rob Waltham (Simon Green in attendance), Cllr Colin Davie, Debbie Barnes (Andy Gutherson in attendance), Chris Baron.

Full declarations of interest for each individual Board Director can be found at:

<https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/about/boards/>

The LEP Board were reminded that declarations of interest are required as part of LEP governance and must be updated at least annually, and if anything changes to the LEP office at the earliest convenience.

Minutes & Matters Arising (Paper 1)

The minutes from the Board meetings held on 27th September and 29th October were accepted as a true record.

Matters Arising:

- Still seeking a private sector director to join the Investment Committee
- Update on the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) - Comments from the last Board meeting taken on board and revised draft circulated to partners. The draft LIS has now been submitted to Civil Servants and has been published on the website for information. It is in the intention post purdah, that early conversations on the co-production of the LIS will take place.
- Decision Log was noted
- Review of Actions Log was noted
- Forward Plan - Board Directors were asked to send any agenda items to the CX.
- The meeting on 31st January will be held at Worldwide Fruit Ltd in Pinchbeck, Spalding.

➤ **LEP Chair & Chief Executive's Report (Paper 2)**

- The Chair recent had a telephone conversation with Minister Zahawi regarding flooding and the impact on the business community, and a longer term effect on agriculture and food production. A follow up letter on Lincolnshire's integrated water for growth strategy was sent to the Minister.
- The board were updated on the work of the Growth Hub with businesses affected by flooding.

Action

- ❖ It was suggested that a Lead Flood Officer be designated for communication with Govt. PH stated that a letter had been sent to each Local Authority Chief Executive regarding a

Framework and guidance.

Cllr Leyland left the meeting

- Free trade zones - A discussion on the potential of a free trade zone in Greater Lincolnshire was discussed with an update given from both North and North East Lincolnshire on their current discussions with the private sector. It was agreed that post purdah a supportive letter would be sent regarding the opportunities for Greater Lincolnshire. **ACTION: LEP Executive**
- LEP Review Compliance - The content of a response was discussed and the board agreed due to purdah and new chairs being recruited at both the Humber and Lincolnshire LEPs that an early meeting with incoming ministers would be sought. New board directors asked to see the analysis undertaken on the economic case for geography undertaken at the time of the review.

Actions

- ❖ Joint response from GLLEP and Humber LEP regarding Free Ports to be drafted
- ❖ Response to LEP Review response to be circulated
- ❖ LEP Geography - evidence to be shared with Board members.

Governance (Paper 3)

The CX outlined the proposed process and timetable for recruiting a Chair of Greater Lincolnshire LEP and updated Board Directors on other elements of Governance, including electronic approvals. It is proposed to invite all members of the Board, local stakeholders from businesses, education and the public sector to an informal lunchtime session to meet the chair candidates. The Stakeholder panel will give feedback to the Appointments Panel prior to a recommendation being made to the LEP Board.

Actions

- ❖ Pat Doody private sector deputy chair was appointed as the Interim LEP Chair.
- ❖ Cllr Philip Jackson was appointed as public sector deputy chair
- ❖ The Chairs Appointment Panel was agreed as follows: Prof Mary Stuart, Dean Fathers, Pat Doody, Cllr Colin Davie and Gary Headland, the panel will be supported by the LEP Executive.
- ❖ Gary Headland to join the Appointment Committee. Existing members are the Chair, the two deputy chairs, and Dean Fathers, Diversity Champion.
- ❖ Members of the LEP's Energy Council, an energy advisory council for the LEP were agreed as follows: Duncan Botting, MD of Global Smart Transformations, Emma Bridge, Chief Executive Community Energy England, Justin Brown, Assistant Director for Growth, Lincolnshire County Council, Jacqui Bunce, Programme Director Lincolnshire STP NHS, Arnie Craven, External Affairs Director, Cadent Gas, Marie Harley, CEO Blue Castle, John Henry-Looney, Sustainable Direction, Juergen Schaper, FCC Environment, Lea James, Siemens Smart Infrastructure team, Cllr Barry Dobson, Executive Councillor Economic Growth LCC and SKDC, Simon Green, Deputy CX, North Lincolnshire Council, Martin Haworth, Director, Singleton Birch and Mark Hutchison, Distribution Director, Western Power.

Employment & Skills Board Update (Paper 4) - Clare Hughes

PD outlined the work of the Employment & Skills Board (ESB) to date, delivery against the current action plan and the development of the delivery plan for 2020/21.

The ESB is made up of private sector members covering key sectors, post 16 providers, Department of Work and Pensions, Education and Skills Funding Agency and councillors and officers. The Board meets 6 times a year and each member is asked to be proactive in identifying where they can

contribute to and collaborate in any interventions between meetings, through Task and Finish Groups.

- There is a three year planned Delivery Programme for 2019/2022 (see Paper 4).
- A new Action Plan is currently being developed and will be discussed at the ESB meeting in February and then at the GLLEP Board meeting in March.
- £30k was approved by the GLLEP at the September Board meeting this will support a levy transfer for Greater Lincolnshire and is currently being developed - an Apprenticeship Plan will be published in the New Year.
- The Secretary of State for Education announced support earlier this year for LEPs to formalise the role of ESB (Skills Advisory Panels) as local leaders in the skills system, and providing strategic advice on LEP Board investment on employment and skills.
- Skills Analysis Evidence Base - this is being finalised following comments from the DfE and secondary analysis at LAD level is also being prepared.

It was suggested that greater focus is needed on inspiring people and businesses to work and stay in Greater Lincolnshire, and greater awareness of the work that the LEP and its Employment and Skills Board is already doing. That said, the University of Lincoln has one of the highest graduate retention rates in England. Ex-military personnel is an area of focus that should be considered again.

The national "Great Places to Work" website was highlighted as a useful initiative:

<https://www.greatplacetowork.co.uk/awards/uks-best-workplaces/-uks-best-workplaces-2019/>

The World of Work LEP initiative is good, [www.theworldofwork](http://www.theworldofwork.com), but businesses often struggle to communicate why someone would want to work with them, or describe the roles that have to people outside of the sector. Developing more leaders in our businesses would have a positive impact on recruitment and retention.

In relation to funding FE Colleges, the way that skills capital has been distributed has changed in recent years, and there has been a decline in Colleges being able to update existing estates.

Actions

- ❖ All Board Directors to add profile to local LEP website The World of Work about the roles that recruit to www.theworldofwork.co.uk.
- ❖ All to continue raising awareness of Promote Lincolnshire www.promotelincolnshire.com so that all recruiters can use the free collateral.
- ❖ Consider schemes that specifically address ex-military relocation and bring to next LEP Board meeting.
- ❖ ESB to request FE College estate condition assessments to feed into skills analysis.

Visitor Economy & Tourism Zone Update (Paper 5)

Board Directors were asked to note the work of the Visitor Economy Board during 2019, the development of the work programme for 2020 and to discuss and support the evolving plans for a Greater Lincolnshire refreshed Tourism Strategy, and focus for a proposed Tourism Zone.

Digital Approach (Item 6)

ZK gave a presentation on the Digital sector within Greater Lincolnshire and in particular the potential growth.

Every business needs digital skills in some form, whether that's upskilling existing employees, hiring new ones or working with one of our counties many digital businesses. It's important that this community is supported. Growing our digital businesses and supporting our digital community will have a positive effect on everyone. There are a number of activities that the GLLEP have

either put in place or contributed to the success of in a number of ways. Many specifically in the last year, others which have seen positive change this year thanks to the continued support of the LEP. Digital Skills Centre approved for Lincoln and completed in Stamford, Digital Conferences and Digital Health Checks for businesses as well as the Digital Landscape report. More could be done to support this work.

Digital landscape report

This year we updated our Digital Landscape report, which is available online. It has been three years since the first report in 2016 and it's been interesting to see the changes over that time.

It shows a digital sector that is continuing to grow in numbers, economic value and jobs. Now being worth almost £1bn to the Greater Lincolnshire economy. We also have over 2,000 digital businesses across Greater Lincolnshire, whilst this is below the national average; it is growing rapidly - the number of digital businesses increased by 19% between 2014 and 2017.

We have clusters of digital business. This report highlights the constant growth of a sector, but also helps to highlight some of the challenges our digital communities face, and areas the LEP can potentially facilitate appropriate resolutions.

<https://www.businesslincolnshire.com/media/1886/lep-digital-landscape-summary-report.pdf>

Digital Lincoln

Digital Lincoln has been a huge part of bringing the digital communities in a hub. This year saw Lincoln's first Women in Tech event. It also took on Lincoln Hack 2 years ago, a 24 hour coding challenge. This partnership has enabled this event to run more smoothly and grow. The hack has been known to facilitate relationships between businesses and funders and businesses and employees. Business Lincolnshire sponsors Digital Lincoln and the money helps to pay for speakers, venues and to run events like Lincoln Hack.

Mosaic - LEP has a seat on the Steering group for Mosaic, Lincoln's new digital hub which opened in October. The development of the hub has been led by the digital community in Lincoln, working collaboratively with Lincolnshire Coop and Lincolnshire County Council. As well as hot-desking, office space and events, the hub has high-speed internet, breakout areas, and booths for phone calls. Mosaic provides different membership options and flexible terms for digital businesses. The hub will play an important part in developing and retaining skills.

Digital Hub Director

The LEP is further supporting the hub by funding a new Digital Hub Director, which Business Lincolnshire will fund for the first 2 years. They will become a lynch pin for our digital community and sector. They will be responsible for quite a wide scope of activities, including:

- raising awareness,
- building relationships both with the hubs businesses and the wider community,
- helping to identify key challenges in the sector and working with the hub to identify resolutions,
- connecting digital and non-digital businesses, to solve business challenges with technical solutions,
- planning and sourcing external projects and forging the connections that help to maintain a strong connected community.

ERDF Bid

Business Lincolnshire's new ERDF Bid has secured funds to continue to provide a Digital Adviser, Digital Events Programme and Grant for another 3 years from June 2019 until May 2022.

Digital Health Check online tool

The Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub developed a unique digital health check tool, which helps

businesses to self-assess their own digital capabilities and identify key areas for improvement to optimise their growth.

Businesses can simply complete the short questionnaire to receive an instant personalised report tailored to their business, which provides recommendations on digital resources and areas for improvement to support the business's potential future development.

So far, there have been some interesting insights from those that have filled in the tool:

- 50% don't have a digital and IT Strategy
- 50% don't use a digital marketing strategy
- More than 80% don't understand or use SEO for their website

<http://businesslincolnshire-digitaltool.com/>

Digital Conference November 2019

Business Lincoln held the 5th annual Go Digital conference last week. Approximately 100 businesses attended the event which was centred around ensuring delegates left with practical actionable advice.

Next steps

The Growth Hub will continue to provide support through the existing mechanisms and bring back a sector plan for approval.

Energy Strategy, Energy Council & Prospectus (Item 7)

Members of the Energy Council have been appointed, but have yet to meet. Will update the GLLEP Board at a future meeting.

The terms of reference for the group and proposals for priorities were agreed.

Fresh Produce Businesses (Item 8)

A Board Director informed the Board that they had recently visited a number of businesses in the Spalding area and was surprised about how little understanding they have about the Greater Lincolnshire LEP and what it does.

One of the barriers for Greater Lincolnshire is the A16, not necessarily being dualled, but the junctions. Following a discussion, feedback would be welcomed, but requires more information.

Greater Lincolnshire LEP already have links with these companies, but it was asked if links with the CEO/decision makers via social media would help with communications

The Greater Lincolnshire LEP still needs to focus on the top 100 companies, but the challenge is being able to access to them.

It was suggested opening up social chat rooms, ie, farmers use this format for networking.

Towns Fund (Item 9)

An update on the Towns Fund was given and board director sought to sit on the towns boards for Scunthorpe, Lincoln, Boston, Mablethorpe, Skegness and a continuation of Grimsby Project board. Officer support will be available to support the Board Director. It was stated that all boards have to have met by the end of January 2020. It is anticipated that further guidance will be issued in the new year.