

## Greater Lincolnshire Food Board: 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021 Notes

Sarah Louise Fairburn chaired the meeting.

### Attendees:

- Daniel Fairburn, Fairburn Eggs
- Darren Bevan, JDM Food Group
- Duncan Worth, AH Worth
- James Dallas, Openfield
- James Truscott, Branston
- Jonathan Oldfield, Moy Park
- Mos Kalbassi, 2 Sisters
- Neal Collishaw, Worldwide Fruit
- Oliver Shooter, AE Lenton
- Prof. Simon Pearson, LIAT University of Lincoln
- Rhonda Thompson, NFU
- Robert Smith, Danish Crown
- Sarah Louise Fairburn, GLLEP Deputy Chair
- Will Naylor, Bakkavor
- William Burgess, Burgess Farms

### Guests and Officers:

- Robin Price, MD, Water Resources East (WRE)
- Ruth Carver, GLLEP Chief Executive
- Kate Storey, GLLEP Communications and Operations Manager
- Martin Collison, GLLEP Food Advisor

### Observers:

- Paul Ward, Growth Hub
- James Baty, GLLEP

### Apologies:

- Alric Blake, Alltech
- Simon Dwyer, Seafood Grimsby and Humber
- Justin Brown, Lincolnshire County Council
- Mark Aitchison, Frontier
- Yvonne Adam, Youngs (850 Group)
- Mark Suthern, Barclays

## Notes of the Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021

### Agreed Actions:

**Action 1** carried forward - A formal request to be made to all Food Board members to report on the investments they have made in the food chain since 2016. This report will include ongoing refurbishment and equipment upgrades as well as new investments to expand production.

**Action 2** carried forward - An updated report on food chain investments to be brought back to the Board for review, by the May 2021 meeting, including as far as possible a consideration of how investment in Greater Lincolnshire has performed relative to peers across the UK.

**Action 3:** Robin Price's email to be circulated so members can follow up on WRE's work on water management: [robinprice@wre.org.uk](mailto:robinprice@wre.org.uk)

**Action 4:** WRE Membership Application Letter to be circulated (see annex 1).

**Action 5:** Workforce supply:

- 5a Kate Storey (LEP) to work with partners to promote the need for additional staff, settled status scheme, seasonal workforce opportunities etc.
- 5b Martin Collison to communicate challenges with labour directly to DEFRA and Food and Drink Sector Council
- 5c Martin Collison to work with LEP skills team to explore potential for retraining and to attract staff in from other sectors
- 5d Simon Pearson and Martin Collison to feed into DEFRA automation review and task force

**Action 6:** Brexit transition challenges to be communicated to Martin Collison so they can be raised directly with government and included in LEP input to government (for all sectors) when there is a commonality of problems.

**Action 7:** UK Food Valley

7a The LEP to develop the 'UK Food Valley' proposals further into a programme and consult with the Food Board on this plan in May 2021.

7b Send invitation to the South Lincolnshire (Holbeach) Food Enterprise Zone event to Food Board members.

7c Set up virtual demonstration event at the University to showcase robotics and/or host physical event when this is possible again.

### Actions from 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020 Board Meeting & matters arising not covered on the agenda:

#### 2021/02/1 Food Chain Investment and HPO

It was noted that a consultation would take place with the industry on food chain investments by May 2021, with results reported to the Food Board at the 13<sup>th</sup> May meeting (Actions 1 and 2).

A report on LEP food sector activity since November 2020 was noted.

## **Main Meeting Items**

### **2021/02/2 Water Management in Eastern England and the Food Sector, Robin Price, Water Resources East (WRE)**

Robin gave a presentation (see slides in annex 1) on WRE and the challenges of water management in Eastern England. Key points presented included:

- The region is facing a growing challenge on water supply due to housing growth, climate change, the need to delivery environmental improvements and growing demand from industry;
- The region is different to other regions with a significant demand for water in agriculture, mainly for spray irrigation, and the food processing sector;
- By 2050 the region faces a daily deficit which could reach 70% of the amount of water which is currently supplied per day. To address this action needs to be taken by everybody as the water companies cannot address this on their own.
- WRE is also looking at how we can unite flood management with water supply challenges so that we capture and store more drainage water rather than pumping it out to sea.

Food Board members reported that:

- The challenge of water supply is recognised by the food sector;
- Companies have been using global benchmarking and the UK typically scores well on these issues, but further work is needed;
- The collaborative approach WRE are leading is critical, but needs proper long term funding;
- Lincolnshire is keen to see new water management schemes;
- A water sustainability plan for the food chain would be helpful.

It was agreed that the food board should help identify future water requirements for the food and agriculture sector. Robin extended an offer to work with LEP and its boards, or individual companies, to feed into the regional water plan.

Robin also encouraged food board members to join WRE which is a company limited by guarantee, membership of which will ensure that companies receive updates on all of WRE's work. Membership is free, with the only liability being a £1 stake if WRE was to fail. A membership application form proforma is in annex 1.

**Action 3:** Robin Price's email to be circulated so members can follow up on WRE's work on water management: [robinprice@wre.org.uk](mailto:robinprice@wre.org.uk)

**Action 4:** WRE Membership Application Letter to be circulated (see annex 1).

### **2021/02/3 Feedback from Board Members on Covid-19, post Brexit Trade and Labour Supply**

Members were asked for feedback on three issues:

- Impact of lockdown 3 on the food chain
- End of Brexit transition impacts: what has worked well, what challenges have arisen, what help does the food industry need to sustain/grow food trade
- Labour supply situation for 2021 and beyond

Key feedback was:

### **Labour Supply:**

- Labour supply is a major issue. There has been a tightening of agency labour supply and the pressure continues to grow. Even in sectors, such as food to go, where demand is down due to Covid, there are staff shortages.
- A further storm is to come as workers return overseas following lockdown and some won't then return to their jobs in the UK.
- The end of the settled status scheme in June 2021 is a concern as many migrant staff have still not applied, despite encouragement to do so.
- Language skills remain a concern with many staff lacking the language skills to fulfil their potential in the workplace.
- Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) recommendations were rejected by government who deflect the issue by re-asking for more information. It does not help that food manufacturing is lumped together with food and leisure in statistics, which hides the impact.
- Seasonality is not just an issue for farmers, the food processing sector faces the same challenges. The SAWS increase for 2021, to 30,000 places, is only a 1 year deal and there is no certainty it will be repeated in subsequent years.
- There will be a need to run campaigns for seasonal labour supply again in 2021 and subsequent years.
- Government is planning to do a review of automation needs in the industry during spring 2021 through an automation task force.

Labour Supply solutions:

- Creative solutions are needed in using a local workforce / redundant staff from other sectors. A key question is how do we make people outside of the industry aware of the sector's career opportunities and how do we reach them?
- It is useful to continue to engage with senior levels in supermarkets as they have influence with government.
- LEP can assist by lobbying government. Members recognise this is complex politically but government need to be aware of how big the problem is.
- LEP to help promote end of Settled Status Scheme.
- Promotion and positive spin is key. For example the Fresh Produce Network are collaborating with the University to bring cameras into the workplace so that workers/ apprentices can wear a headpiece to record and narrate a day-in-the-life-of.. for use in schools. The industry needs to be proactive to 'show off' the careers on offer and to connect the economy into the workplace better.
- Workforce supply is a key issue which the Food Valley programme will need to try to address, because a larger cluster is helpful in developing a food sector workforce.

- Automation can help to meet future workforce needs, but it will not eliminate the need for staff and so a blended approach is needed which combines automation with upskilling staff.

#### **Actions 5: Skills and workforce**

5a Kate Storey (LEP) to work with partners to promote the need for additional staff, settled status scheme, seasonal workforce opportunities etc.

5b Martin Collison to communicate challenges with labour directly to DEFRA and the Food and Drink Sector Council

5c Martin Collison to work with LEP skills team to explore potential for retraining and to attract staff in from other sectors

5d Simon Pearson and Martin Collison to feed into DEFRA automation review and task force

#### **End of Brexit Transition**

- Food chain business prepared very well but still saw a huge increase in the admin burden as a result of Brexit, which is impacting heavily on profit margins.
- These burdens will increase from April and July as additional requirements are phased in.
- The end of transition has led to structural issues which will take much longer to resolve, but which are likely to lead to a reconfiguration of supply chains.
- The communications from DEFRA have been poor as they have told you what you need to do, but not how to do it. In contrast DAERA in Northern Ireland have developed youtube videos which explain how to meet the new requirements which are very useful and easy to use:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuiUeDNsSRk>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rf7kdfwQps>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OM08fBefv2o>
- The availability of vets to conduct health certifications can be problematic and rules are not always being applied consistently.
- Companies which both import and export, have seen more disruption to exports. For example exports to the Republic of Ireland, France etc will get through one day but be stopped the next day even with identical paperwork.

**Action 6:** Brexit transition challenges to be communicated to Martin Collison so they can be raised directly with government and included in LEP input to government (for all sectors) when there is a commonality of problems.

#### **2021/02/4 UK Food Valley Proposal**

Martin Collison presented an overview of progress with the Food Valley programme and reported on meetings with delivery partners (see slides in annex 2). The programme has two major components:

- Business support and growth programme;
- Promoting the cluster.

Food Board members were asked:

- What would benefit industry in the LEP area;
- What role can business play in supporting the Food Valley development.

Feedback included key focus areas for an industry support programme including:

#### **Infrastructure:**

- Infrastructure is very important to the industry as it gives compelling reasons for businesses to grow or relocate.
- The infrastructure which is most important varies from business to business, but basics such as water and clean electricity tend to be universal.
- Infrastructure needs to be joined up with councils.
- Fast broadband is also a key factor for industry.
- The Fresh Produce Network is promoting road infrastructure needs and is working with a range of industry bodies and Councils on this.
- There is a clear role for the public sector to take a lead on infrastructure.

#### **Environment and low carbon:**

- Need a focus on low carbon footprints and to address sustainability, to position the region at the forefront of a sustainability transition.
- Clean energy is going to be really important to help the sector demonstrate a low carbon footprint.
- There are more interesting and varied jobs in a circular economy and this could be a real strength.

#### **Innovation:**

- The food valley needs to be world renowned and has to stand out for a reason - innovation R&D and/ or efficiency are key industry themes which all businesses could sign up to.
- Collaboration between sectors and businesses is essential e.g. grass paper in Germany is used for packaging apples and this came from a collaborative approach with complimentary local businesses developing it together.
- Innovation needs to include commercialisation as well the R&D.

#### **Labour supply and automation:**

- The big problem for manual labour is to work collaboratively with robotics, this will require new skills to be developed.
- University of Lincoln has 65PhDs in agri-robotics but needs integrators and a whole supply chain approach.
- The industry 4.0 agenda needs demonstrators so that industry can see solutions working. Meeting suggested at UoL robotics, virtually or physically, to showcase what is possible.
- It is important to link work on labour supply to careers promotion e.g. take part in virtual Careers type webinars with schools and colleges to get the messages across about possible career paths in the sectors. The LEP will join existing activity with

NFU, Lincolnshire Agricultural Society, Fresh Produce Network on careers in the food chain.

### **Naming the cluster and promotion:**

- LEP request to feed in and suggest branding ideas for the cluster. Other areas are focusing branding on local geography, but Lincolnshire wants to be a global leader, so the branding needs to convey the fact that this is a national cluster.
- Additional names/concepts suggested included: Bright Green Food GB and/or stressing 'Future'.
- The branding should be linked to opportunities to bring key customers to showcase the area and its food cluster.

### **Overview:**

- To stand out needs to be World class.
- Multi-agency approach is essential, linking industry and the public sector.
- Need to focus on a few areas and do them well.
- Potentially focus on: low carbon; automation and labour; NPD, all supported by innovation and skills.
- Ruth Carver is taking a request for seed funding to the LEP Board to progress the concept into a programme.

### **FEZ Launch:**

- Kate Storey to send South Lincolnshire FEZ launch invite.

### **Action 7: UK Food Valley**

7a The LEP to develop the 'UK Food Valley' proposals further into a programme and consult with the Food Board on this plan in May 2021.

7b Send invitation to the South Lincolnshire (Holbeach) Food Enterprise Zone event to Food Board members.

7c Set up virtual demonstration event at the University to showcase robotics and/or host physical event when this is possible again.

### **AOB**

Members supported the current Board format, but would also support an annual physical meeting with MPs when circumstances allow. Members were encouraged to come forward with ideas for speakers and topics for future meetings.

Fresh Produce Network have been lobbying for food improvements around Spalding/Boston and are keen for the Food Board to add weight to this process.

### **2021/02/5 Future Meeting Dates**

Future meeting dates were noted as:

- 13th May 2021

Annex 1 - WRE Letter to Apply for Membership & Slides

[TO BE WRITTEN ON CORPORATE LETTERHEAD and returned electronically to  
robinprice@wre.org.uk]

The Directors, c/o Dr Robin Price (Managing Director)  
Water Resources East (WRE) Limited  
The Enterprise Centre  
University of East Anglia  
Norwich  
NR4 7TJ

[DATE]

Dear Sirs

**Application for Membership of WATER RESOURCES EAST (WRE) LIMITED (the Company)**

We, the undersigned of the above address, wish to apply to become a Standard member of the Company and agree to be bound by the provisions of the Company's articles of association (the "Articles").

In particular, we agree to guarantee the debts of the Company up to a maximum amount of £1 if the Company is wound up whilst we are a member and for a period of up to 12 months after our membership ends.

Subject to our application being successful, we authorise you to enter our name in the company's register of members.

Yours faithfully

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[PRINT NAME]

For and on behalf of

[ORGANISATION]



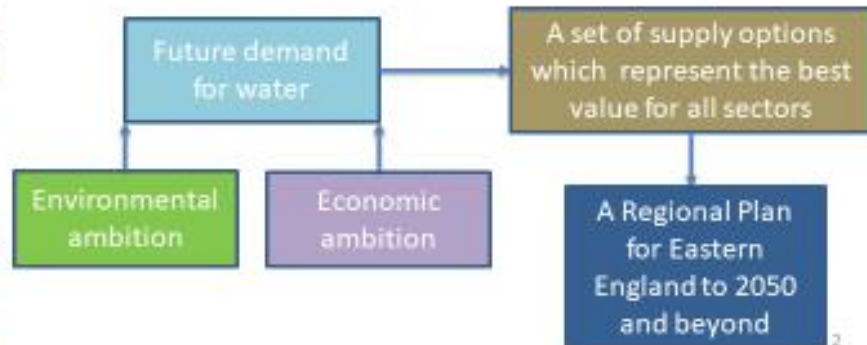
# Water Resources East

## Safeguarding a sustainable supply of water for Eastern England

Dr Robin Price  
Managing Director

February 2021

### Regional Water Resource Planning

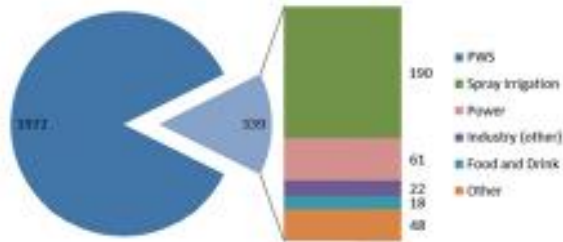


# What is the problem we're trying to solve?



## BASELINE (2020/21):

On an average day, in a dry year, the total consumptive demand for water in the WRE region is equivalent to 2,311 million litres (megalitres) per day. Most of this water (85%) is used for public water supply (PWS). Most of the rest is used for spray irrigation (8%), power generation (3%) and in the manufacturing, food and drink sectors (2%). A breakdown in megalitres per day (ML/d) is given below:



# Eastern England in the 2050s....



Sector	Pressure	Dry Year Annual Average Estimated Impact (ML/d)		Comment
		Lower	Upper	
Public Water Supply	Climate Change	54	180	Includes range of possible high/low climate change impacts - mostly on reservoir yields
	Sustainability Reductions	139	500	Upper limit accounts for indicative levels of enhanced environmental ambition
	Growth (population)	159	408	Upper limit accounts for maximum possible build-out rates in OxCam Arc and failure to make significant progress with planned demand management measures
	Drought resilience	88	88	Note: methodology uncertainties which are subject to work in progress
	Regional exports	(-)	(-)	Unknown at this stage, although 100 ML/d export is currently assumed for work on the South Lincolnshire Reservoir scheme
Power	Decarbonisation	17	192	Assumes rapid transition to Hydrogen economy with 20% of the national production in WRE region
Agriculture	Growth (irrigation)	74	288	Based on range of plausible growth factors for spray irrigation in the WRE region
<b>Total</b>		<b>531</b>	<b>1,656</b>	

# How does WRE work?



CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION  
OF A  
PRIVATE LIMITED COMPANY

Company Number 12819193

The Registrar of Companies for England and Wales hereby certifies that  
WATER RESOURCES EAST (WRE LIMITED)

is for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006 a private company limited  
by guarantee, and the members of its registered office in  
England and Wales

Class of Company (Class): Private Ltd 100.000.000

All other provisions of the Companies Act 2006 and any regulations made thereunder apply to  
this company as if they were provisions of the Companies Act 2006



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## Current Board Members



**Board of Directors:**  
Water Companies, agriculture, energy, the environment and regional development/Local Authorities



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## WRE's 3 Year Business Plan - published June 2020

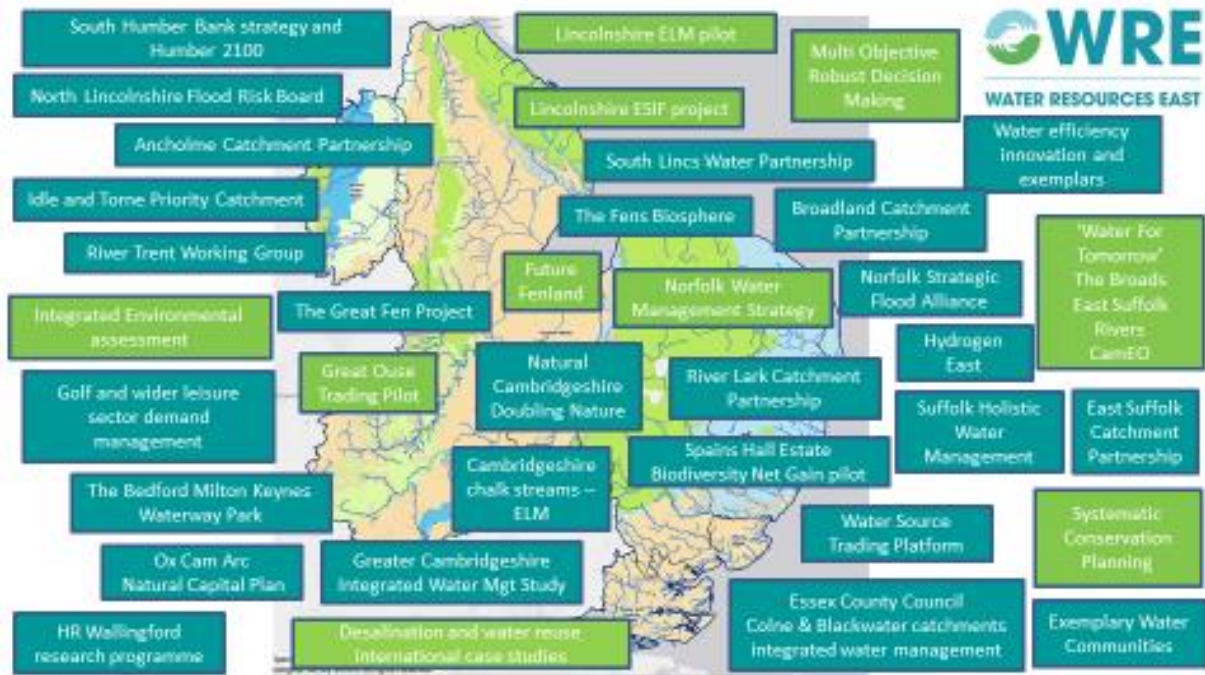


### WRE VISION

WRE's vision is for Eastern England to have sufficient water resources to support a flourishing economy, a thriving environment and the needs of its population, and for the region to be seen as an international exemplar for collaborative integrated water resource management.

### WRE'S OVERARCHING REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR EASTERN ENGLAND

1. Work with all water users in Eastern England to identify ways in which they can become as water efficient as they can be.
2. Promote the need for additional storage of water within the landscape, increasing resilience for all water users and seeking to identify multi-sector opportunities to link water scarcity with flood risk management solutions.
3. Transfer water from areas of surplus to areas of deficit, increasing connectivity using both open water channels as well as pipelines.
4. Link land and water management more effectively, increasing resilience and restoring and enhancing the natural systems and resources on which all abstractors depend.
5. Understand where abstraction is having a detrimental impact on the environment, and develop options which restore and enhance it whilst ensuring sustainable economic development, for example around agriculture and food production.
6. Actively explore other potential sources of water for our region, for example desalination and water re-use.
7. Contribute to low carbon strategies and plans, helping the region to meet a net zero ambition.

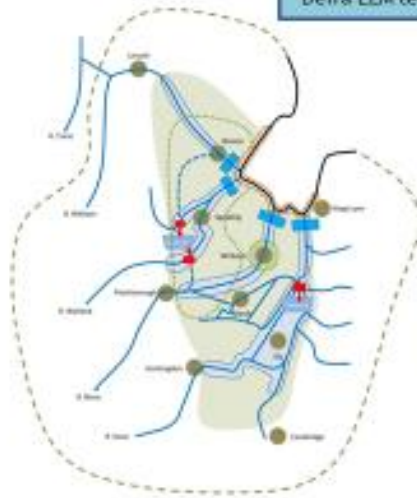


## The Fenland Adaptation Strategy



Lincolnshire ESIF project

Defra ELM test & trial (Lincolnshire)



- Water efficiency innovation and exemplars
- Multi Objective Robust Decision Making
- Lincolnshire ELM pilot
- Lincolnshire ESIF project
- South Humber Bank strategy and Humber 2100
- North Lincolnshire Flood Risk Board
- Anchorlome Catchment Partnership
- South Lincs Water Partnership
- Idle and Tame Priority Catchment
- The Fens Biosphere
- Broadland Catchment Partnership
- River Trent Working Group
- Future Fenland
- Norfolk Water Management Strategy
- Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance
- Integrated Environmental assessment
- The Great Fen Project
- Natural Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature
- River Lark Catchment Partnership
- Hydrogen East
- Golf and wider leisure sector demand management
- Great Ouse Trading Pilot
- Spains Hall Estate Biodiversity Net Gain pilot
- Suffolk Holistic Water Management
- East Suffolk Catchment Partnership
- The Bedford Milton Keynes Waterway Park
- Ox Cam Arc Natural Capital Plan
- Greater Cambridgeshire Integrated Water Mgt Study
- Water Source Trading Platform
- Systematic Conservation Planning
- HR Wallingford research programme
- Desalination and water reuse International case studies
- Essex County Council Colne & Blackwater catchments Integrated water management
- Exemplary Water Communities
- "Water For Tomorrow" The Broads East Suffolk Rivers CamED

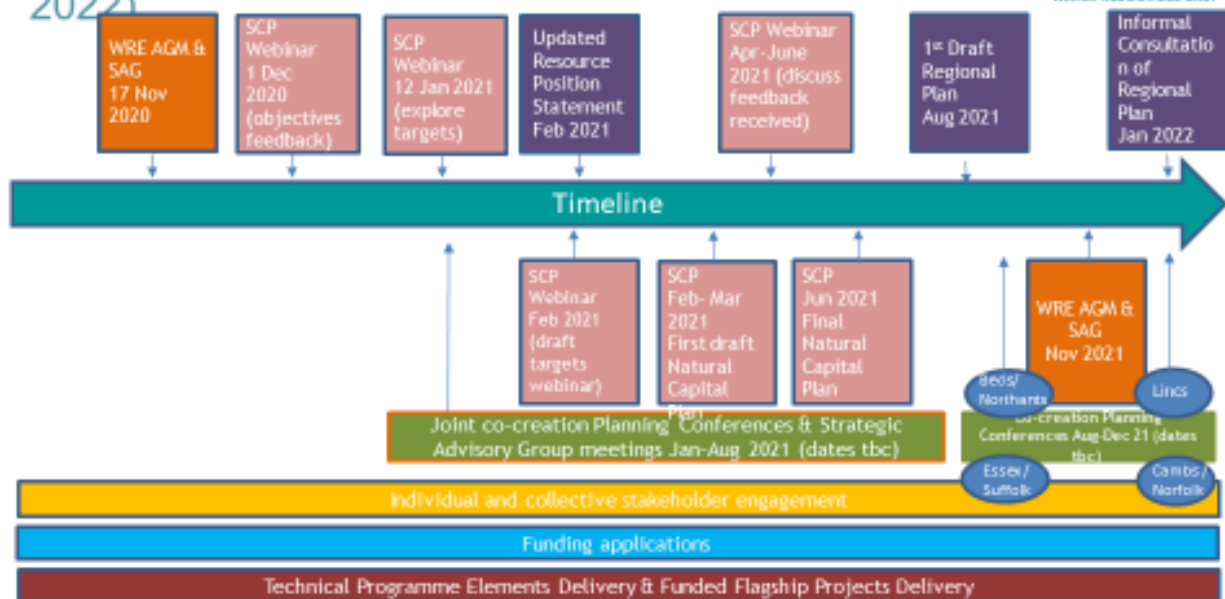
- New multi-sector reservoirs providing additional water supply resilience for water companies, farmers and the food industry
- Downstream flood barriers or barrages to protect growth areas in the fens, enabling key local infrastructure projects such as a rail connection from Walsbich to Cambridge and the doubling of the A47 to move forward.
- Open water channels to provide water storage, biodiversity, navigation and tourism, and further flood risk management benefits.
- The opportunity to collaborate to manage land and water across the fens in a new and integrated way, seeking to secure the future of the peat landscape given its crucial role in carbon sequestration.



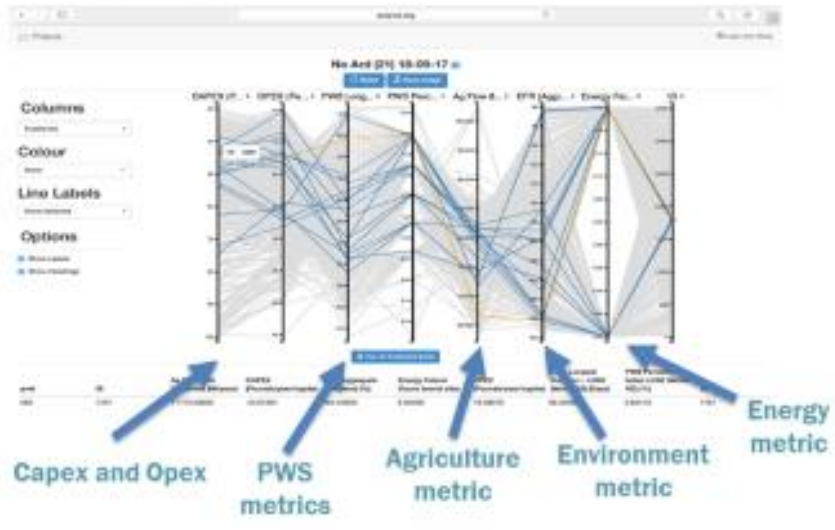
## Our environmental destination



## WRE Forward Engagement Plan (to January 2022)



# Shortlisting options





## Food Valley focus

### UK Food Valley Proposal (annex 3) Discussion Paper

- Key changes to the proposals: increased focus on a co-ordinated programme of business, investment and innovation support
- Programme outline and plans for 2021-'22

**Open discussion** - the proposals are presented as a draft paper for debate as we work to refine the proposals and secure support from partners for delivery.

Key questions:

- What would **benefit industry in the LEP area?**
- What **role can business play in supporting the Food Valley development?**



# Business Support Programme

**Development and delivery of an enhanced and co-ordinated cluster development programme ('on steroids')** to make Greater Lincolnshire the place to invest and grow in the food chain through World class support:

- an enabling planning system e.g. LDOs for the food sector
- infrastructure e.g. improved roads, rail, ports, energy, water
- workforce supply and skills development
- innovation and R&D support
- investment support for growth
- inward investment programme to attract new businesses to the cluster

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# Promoting the cluster

- Promotion of the Greater Lincolnshire food cluster regionally, nationally and internationally as a **top 10 global food cluster**
- Regional branding and promotional programme to showcase the depth, breadth and scale of the offer
- Aim to attract:
  - Customers
  - Investors
  - Workforce
  - Innovation support
  - Government investment

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# Timeline

The indicative timeline for the proposals is:

- Multiple consultations with delivery partners completed
- February 11th 2021 - discussion with GLLEP Food Board
- Late February 2021 - discussion with GLLEP Board
- March 2021 - refine proposals and, subject to green light to proceed, develop proposition
- April-May 2021 - secure resources for launch, phase 1 and continuing liaison with industry and delivery partners to refine the proposals
- June 2021-December 2022 - Phase 1 delivery
- January 2023 onwards - growth and development of the programme

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