

Greater Lincolnshire Food Board - 19th November 2020 Agenda

The meeting will be held from 4.00-6.00pm via Microsoft Teams: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

4.00pm	Welcome and introduction	Sarah Louise Fairburn
4.05	Welcome to New Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neal Collishaw, Operations Director Worldwide Fruit • Mark Suthern, National Head of Agriculture Barclays • Richard Priestley, Redleaf Global Solutions Limited • Rhonda Thompson, NFU Lincolnshire 	Sarah Louise Fairburn
4.10	Notes of previous meeting & matters arising not covered on the agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector insight using SIC codes (see table 1 below) • AgriFood Sector investment 	Martin Collison
4.15	Changes in the consumer food market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory remarks followed by Q&A 	Jake Pickering, Agriculture Manager, Waitrose
4.40	Feedback from Board Members on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of new national lockdown on the food chain • End of Brexit transition preparations 	Sarah Louise Fairburn Martin Collison
5.00	National Food Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1 Report findings • The focus of Part 2 and publication timeline 	Eleanor Dowding and Joseph James, National Food Strategy Team, DEFRA
5.25	UK Food Valley Proposal (annex 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on Board priorities (annex 2) • Vision for Greater Lincolnshire Agri-food Sector • UK Food Valley proposal DIT High Potential Opportunity for Greater Lincolnshire Food Processing and Technology Cluster (annex 3)	Sarah Louise Fairburn, GLLEP Board Martin Collison Karen Seal, Investment Team Lincolnshire CC

5.50	AOB Future Meeting Dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11th February 2021• 13th May 2021	Sarah Louise Fairburn
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Greater Lincolnshire LEP AgriFood Sector Workforce 2018

Table 1 - Business Register and Employment Survey: open access, ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 3 November 2020], Date: 2018, Employment status: Employees Count

Estimated total food chain workforce:	Boston	East Lindsey	Lincoln	North Kesteven	Rutland	South Holland	South Kesteven	West Lindsey	North East Lincs	North Lincs	GLLEP
Agriculture and forestry ¹	2,267	3,277	-	1,769	551	2,955	1,525	2,001	176	1,511	16,032
Fishing and aquaculture	20	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	10	65
Food and drink manufacturing	2,345	420	340	3,090	260	6,930	2,335	505	4,950	3,610	24,785
Agriculture & food wholesaling	910	490	310	885	60	2,545	1,270	425	965	310	8,170
Food transport	465	263	90	323	62	2,060	325	238	1,283	1,350	6,457
Food service	1,095	3,425	4,225	2,100	1,460	1,495	3,250	1,650	3,725	3,800	26,225
Food retail	1,410	2,340	2,680	1,350	455	1,235	2,495	995	3,295	2,755	19,010
Temporary labour suppliers	4,000	170	930	275	60	2,520	425	123	2,880	1,750	13,133
AgriFood machinery and inputs	120	285	-	410	40	30	75	130	400	55	1,545
Food chain packaging	75	270	10	270	150	635	50	130	168	315	2,073
Total food chain	12,707	10,945	8,585	10,472	3,098	20,405	11,750	6,196	17,871	15,466	117,494

The data is derived from BRES for a set of SIC codes, wholly or partly linked to the food chain. The data does not include those employed in professional, business, academic and research services for the agrifood sector. These are in total believed to support another 3,000 jobs across Greater Lincolnshire through the work that they undertake in the food chain.

¹ Agricultural workforce data is from DEFRA, not BRES, and from 2016 when they last produced detailed data at local authority level

Annex 1 - GLLEP Agri-Food Vision and UK Food Valley

Greater Lincolnshire Food Chain

Greater Lincolnshire Vision for the Food Chain

Greater Lincolnshire first set out a vision for its agrifood sector in spring 2014², when it stated that:

The Greater Lincolnshire agri-food sector will double its contribution to the economy by 2030 through an ambitious programme of investment in productive capacity, skills and knowledge to drive an increase in high value added sales to UK and export markets

Recent internal work by the LEP suggests that from 2012 (the baseline used for the 2014 sector plan), the sector's GVA grew from £3.5bn to £4.7bn in 2018, or by over 35% in 6 years. If this growth rate is sustained the sector would deliver the original target to double its GVA by 2030. However, since 2014, the political and commercial context for the industry has changed and this necessitates a re-evaluation of how this growth rate can be sustained.

A Changing Context

Since 2014: Brexit; the introduction of the National Living Wage (NLW); an acceleration of digital technology; Covid-19 and a growing focus on the link between diet and health; and, climate change³, have combined to cause a major shift in the context in which the food industry operates.

However, throughout this period Greater Lincolnshire's food chain has continued to invest strongly with 43% of new jobs in the area in the sector. Inward investors have been attracted to the sector and the LEP have re-affirmed and, in the light of Covid-19, increased their focus on the agrifood sector as a key driver of regional growth.

The UK's exit from the EU and Covid-19 have reset the context in which every regional economy in the UK is working and reinforced trends for a greater focus on:

- **Sustainability** - global (UN SDGs), EU Green Deal and the UK's 'Build Back Better', combines with growth in the priority given to sustainability by industry and consumers, meaning that it is not an optional extra for any business or industry which wants to retain consumer and political support. Sustainability leadership is therefore now a key differentiator for high growth;
- **Internationalism** - the focus on Global Britain and a recognition that major challenges, e.g. climate change, food and poverty alleviation, disease control, are international issues, means the UK with its strong institutions and global reputation for science and technology, should seek to lead these global agendas;

² Greater Lincolnshire LEP (2014), Greater Lincolnshire Agri-food Sector Plan 2014-2020

³ In a post Covid world the focus is on 'Building Back Better', which is normally taken to mean more sustainably, with a greater focus on health and addressing the 'left behind' areas and communities

- **Interconnectivity** - given the very rapid reconfiguration of physical supply chains and an explosion in demand for digital connectivity and solutions, there is a need to lead the development of slick, digitally enabled and connected supply chains.

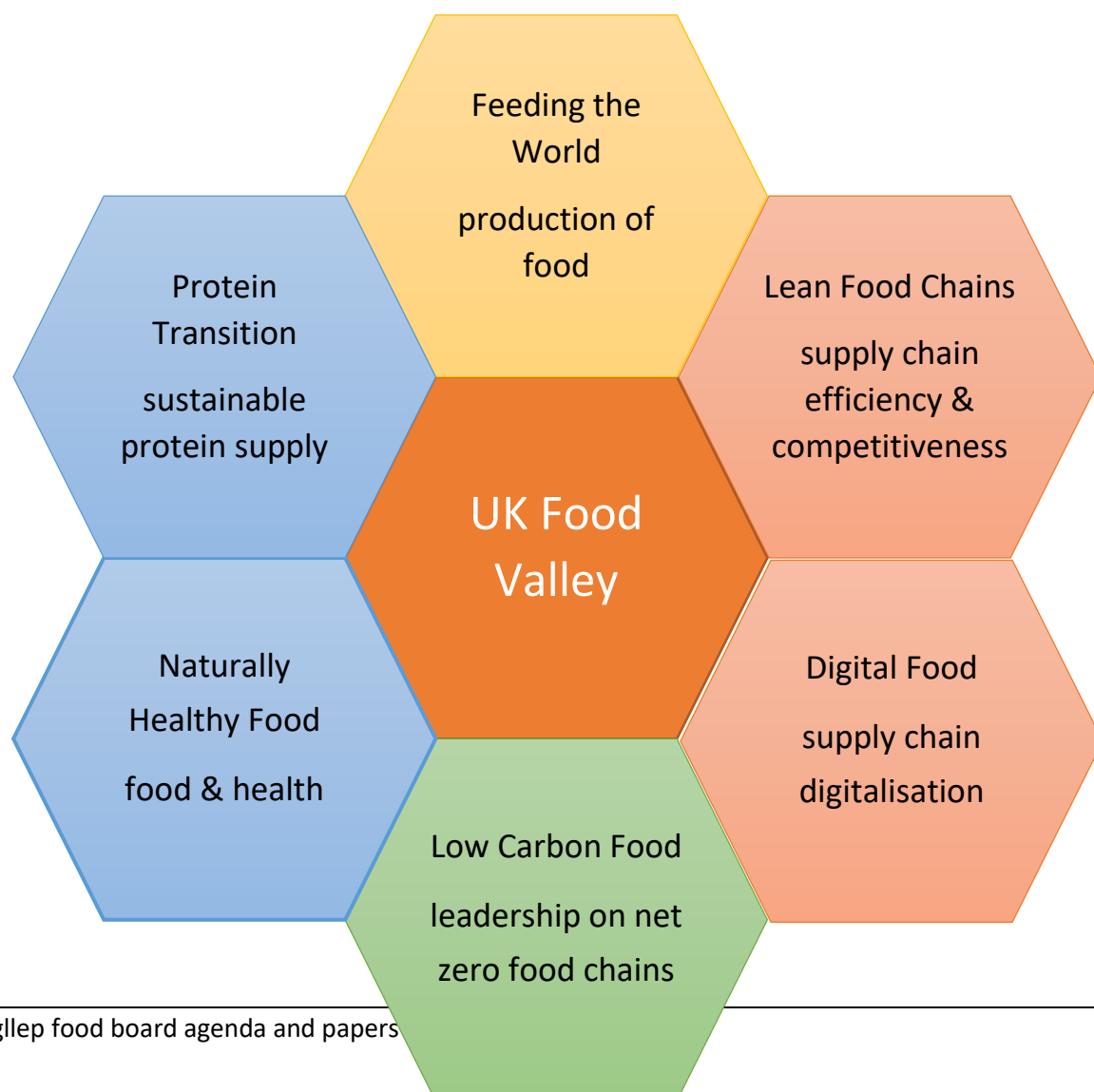
Vision 2030 - Greater Lincolnshire's Food Chain in 2030

The proposed approach is to develop a 'UK Food Valley' ecosystem (see detail later) focused on a few themes in which we can provide thought and delivery leadership, to address two key questions:

- What do we want to be known for?
- How do we communicate a clarity of vision nationally and internationally to attract further investment and partnership opportunities to our food chain?

Given the international nature of our food chain (more than 75 large national and international food companies in the area), it is important to focus on the global drivers of the food chain to enable the region to attract investment from international companies and supply chains, by aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the role the food chain plays in their delivery.

The UK Food Valley - Sustainable Food from Land & Sea



The UK Food Valley - Sustainable Food from Land & Sea

Theme	Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals ⁴	Alignment with Greater Lincolnshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS - June 2020 draft)	Opportunity
Feeding the World	<p>Goal 2 Zero Hunger - In 2019, 750 million people were exposed to severe levels of food insecurity and an estimated 2 billion people did not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food in 2019</p> <p>Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth - which includes the need to deliver good jobs and growth without transgressing planetary boundaries or ecological limits</p>	<p>Agrifood is 18% of the local economy (3% nationally), the source of 43% of new jobs locally and the heart of food innovation through the Lincoln Institute for Agrifood Technology (LIAT), National Centre for Food Manufacturing (NCFM), Riseholme College and three Food Enterprise Zones. As new technologies develop there will be opportunities to deliver food more efficiently to a growing global population</p>	<p>Greater Lincolnshire's food businesses have the scale, capacity and ambition to grow accelerating sector growth, substituting imports and increasing exports. The opportunity for Greater Lincolnshire is to capitalise on these trends and use innovation to improve productivity not only locally but in food production across the globe, taking a leadership role for this sector nationally</p>
Lean Food Chains	<p>Goal 12 Responsible Consumption & Production - an estimated 1.3 billion tons of food, worth around \$1 trillion - ends up rotting in the bins of consumers and retailers, or spoiling due to poor transportation and</p>	<p>The LIS commits to increasing the international competitiveness of its agrifood sector by championing automation and resource efficiency to benefit its food chain. The LIS also sets out plans to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with</p>	<p>Greater Lincolnshire based R&D and innovation teams have spearheaded the development of Europe's largest digital food chain team in the last 5 years. This positions the area to lead this agenda as the speed of technology adoption accelerates. The</p>

⁴ UN (2017), Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030

Theme	Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals ⁴	Alignment with Greater Lincolnshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS - June 2020 draft)	Opportunity
Digital Food	<p>harvesting practices</p> <p>Goal 9 Industries, Infrastructure & Innovation - 96% of the world's population lived within reach of a mobile-cellular signal (2018), and 90% of people could access the Internet through a 3G or higher-quality network</p>	<p>BEIS, DEFRA and UKRI to collaborate on development of a local innovation plan for priority sectors building on the area's traditional strengths in manufacturing. This will link to emerging relevant sector deals and Made Smarter, which features the food sector</p>	<p>development of automation, energy and waste efficiency technologies and a focus on manufacturing, positions the region well to lead the development and deployment of lean manufacturing principles to the food chain, building on local industry champions</p>
Protein Transition	<p>Goal 2 Zero Hunger - In 2019, close to 750 million people, nearly 10%, were exposed to severe levels of food insecurity and an estimated 2 billion people did not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food in 2019</p>	<p>The LIS includes a focus on Health and Care with a particular focus on ageing. As people age their nutritional needs change, they need more protein and fresh produce and less carbohydrates, which fits well with the profile of Greater Lincolnshire's food sector</p>	<p>Greater Lincolnshire is the centre of the UK fresh produce (vegetables, salads and fruit) and fish sectors, both of which are naturally healthy foods with clear recommendations to increase consumption. It is also a major producer of potatoes, cereals and lean meats, including poultry, eggs and pork products, which are part of a balanced diet. This strong local focus on healthy foods positions the sector well for growth as the focus on dietary health and sustainable protein grows post Covid and due to an ageing population</p>
Naturally Healthy Food	<p>Goal 14 Life Below Water - marine fisheries directly or indirectly employ over 200 million people</p>		

Theme	Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals ⁴	Alignment with Greater Lincolnshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS - June 2020 draft)	Opportunity
Low Carbon Food	<p>Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts - 2019 was the second warmest year on record and the end of the warmest decade (2010- 2019) ever recorded. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere rose to new records in 2019</p>	<p>The LIS seeks to support clean energy generation, storage and distribution, and maximise benefits from the energy cluster by adopting new ‘whole of system’ thinking to manage energy and support industrial decarbonisation. This will be enabled by innovation and the adoption of digital technologies.</p> <p>The LIS also aims to increase the capacity of the area’s ports and logistics sector to deliver clean growth by helping deliver the Clean Maritime Plan and by facilitating modal shift to rail freight</p>	<p>Greater Lincolnshire has a large and rapidly growing low carbon sector and is championing smart grids and similar technologies. Its research base has focused on more efficient food cool chain solutions and reductions in waste. The growth in the use of AD, solar and wind power in the sector is strong. Foods such as fish, white meat and fresh produce also have lower carbon footprints. The industry is also developing new ports and logistics solutions with an emphasis on using lower carbon transport options</p>

UK Food Valley - Sustainable Food from Land & Sea

Purpose

The food sector is truly global and we need to position our sector as being the centre of a wider regional cluster which is a top 10 food centre in the World. The DIT supported High Potential Opportunity (HPO) programme starting in 2020/21 to promote the Lincolnshire food cluster internationally provides an ideal platform to be ambitious on this.

Scope

The scope needs to include the whole cluster and agri-food eco-system, including:

- Farms;
- Food processors;
- Food logistics, storage and distribution;
- Agri-food technology, equipment and input suppliers;
- Agri-food specialist advisory, consultancy and financiers (including the Banks);
- R&D and innovation;
- The public sector bodies which support our agri-food cluster: Councils; LEP.

Triple Helix

The Dutch use the term triple helix to describe a multi-faceted mutually supportive cluster, which combines:

- Production industry (farm to fork in the food chain);
- Knowledge and tech sector;
- And government, working together to develop and promote a cluster.

Around the World the most progressive areas promote an industry led approach which has active backing from their government who act to facilitate sector growth. Government does this by being really ambitious and ensuring that all the conditions for transformational growth, e.g. infrastructure, skills, easy planning etc., are in place.

It is also important, in a market in which international investors are mobile, for 'government' to demonstrate that it believes in the sector and is prepared to invest.

The concept of branding the cluster was set out in the Holbeach FEZ report (February 2020)⁵:

- Inspiration could come from the terminology used by other leading clusters in the food sector e.g. the Netherlands agri-food cluster located close to the World's largest agri-food University, Wageningen University Research (UR) centre, is termed the '*Food*

⁵ SHDC, Lincolnshire County Council, GLLEP, University of Lincoln (2020), Developing & Refreshing a Joint Vision for the Ambition & Delivery of Holbeach Food Enterprise Zone (now the South Lincolnshire FEZ)

Valley NL⁶ - shaping the Future of Food. Their marketing pitch and website sells the whole food valley 'ecosystem', identifying that the valley is home to 8,000 scientists, 1,500 food and agricultural companies and has been working collaboratively for 15 years to promote the area.

The team leading the Holbeach FEZ delivery (SHDC and LCC) have picked up on this branding and recently started to promote the UK Food Valley, with the FEZ at its' centre.

Food Valley NL describes itself as follows:

Foodvalley is the **primary knowledge-intensive agrifood ecosystem in the Netherlands**. This ecosystem is characterized by many world class innovative agrifood and food-related solutions and by the **cooperation between companies, knowledge institutions, education and governments**.

It offers a platform of resources and opportunities to an (inter)national business network to accelerate innovation and market introduction. And to attract potential partners and investors, thereby stimulating the economy and realizing ambitions in the region and far beyond.

Since its establishment in 2004, Foodvalley NL has built up a deep insight into the challenges of the (ag)food industry and a vast network of companies and knowledge institutions that can help in tackle these challenges effectively.

From its home base in Wageningen, the Netherlands, every day Foodvalley NL works on speeding up the innovation performance of companies, both from the Netherlands and abroad. Our experienced team does so in a way that fits your demands: fast, to-the-point and practical.

The core Food Valley NL team is 28 strong⁷, and is supported by commercial (fees for facilities and building usage), project income and membership fees from companies (these range from €175-5,000 per year depending on company size and the services required).

Lessons from Others

There are a number of clear lessons from across the World on what works:

- **Business needs to buy into and 'own the brand'** - it cannot be a public sector led project if it is to truly succeed. This is because the best advocates for the brand are the businesses which use it. The public sector needs to support and help facilitate the cluster 'brand' but it is important to ensure that business is at the heart of decision making for the cluster and the focus it adopts.
- **Have a clear, comprehensive offer** - need clear information on the cluster and the benefits it offers in commercial terms and through supporting infrastructure such as skills and innovation.

⁶ <https://www.foodvalley.nl/>

⁷ <https://www.foodvalley.nl/our-team/>

- **Be in it for the long term** - Scotland and Eire both have long standing, publicly supported and industry match funded, programmes to promote food exports, whilst in contrast England has had only short term projects. The result has been much faster growth in Scottish exports as long term programmes mean expertise and market knowledge is optimised. A report⁸ on the EU's €200million/year Agricultural Promotion scheme (promotes international food exports), found that maintaining a presence in target markets is essential, with short term projects having less impact than multi-faceted long term programmes. Combining industry and government voices is very effective and gives both parties more confidence.
- **It needs a physical presence or 'home' to act as the Hub** - international best practice includes: Agroparc Technôpole d'Avignon⁹ in France, Wageningen in the Netherlands and Cornell Agriculture & Food Technology Park¹⁰ in the US (also known as the 'Technology Farm'). These hubs group together the research base but also act as physical hubs for industry interaction, in the manner proposed for the new hub building at the South Lincolnshire FEZ. Other clusters of this type often use a University or research centre (public or private) as the hub to provide strong links to innovation, skills and technology support.
- **International Partnership is Critical** - the food chain is international and if the cluster is to attract international companies it has to be promoted internationally. This can include PR, conferences and events, but the best clusters have long standing collaborations in place with leading international companies (whose networks they use) and other leading food clusters with whom they have reciprocal agreements to support mutually beneficial cluster growth.

A UK Food Valley

To chart a way forward there are a number of key questions to be addressed:

1. Who should lead the set up and development of the UK Food Valley?
 - There is a need to align LEP wide action with districts which are pushing this sector, e.g. South Holland District Council and Boston Borough Council, North East Lincolnshire and the fish processing cluster, Lincolnshire County Council, several of whom have already picked the name up and started to use it to promote the sector. University of Lincoln and South Lincolnshire FEZ are also beginning to use the branding. It could also be a brand for the DIT HPO across Greater Lincolnshire.
2. How do we bring industry in¹¹, in particular Lincolnshire's strong compliment of international companies and sector business groups? and, what is the role of the public sector in partnership with the commercial sector?

⁸ Unpublished at present, Martin Collison was part of the Deloitte led team which undertook this work - publication expected autumn/winter 2020

⁹ <http://www.agroparc.com/fr/>

¹⁰ <http://cityofgenevany.com/cornell-agriculture-and-food-technology-park/>

¹¹ Food Valley NL has 185 companies who are formal members, paying to support cluster activities on skills, innovation and development

3. There is also potential interest in extending the brand to cover adjacent areas (NB Food Valley NL covers about 1/3rd of the Netherlands). How should any extension be managed?
 - Interest is likely from the Midlands (especially East Midlands LEPs - South East Midlands LEP, Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, Leicester and Leicestershire) and East Anglia (Cambridgeshire Combined Authority and New Anglia LEP - these LEPs have already suggested a collaborative approach to the sector).
4. What do we want to promote? Suggested scope:
 - A clear strategic vision for the cluster, as outlined above, to position the cluster globally;
 - The business cluster in all its scale and diversity;
 - Investment successes to show a track record of growth in the local sector;
 - Infrastructure and market access - roads, rail, ports, energy and water in a location which is strategically located so that the whole of the UK is within 1 day's travel distance;
 - Land available for development/food specific business parks, backed by supportive local policy and planning systems which understand and support growth in the agri-food sector;
 - Proximity to major UK and international markets and trade routes;
 - International connectivity based on a strong compliment of international businesses either based locally or with production facilities in the area;
 - Skills and knowledge cluster based on long term investment in the sector, the National Centre for Food Manufacturing (NCFM), Lincoln Institute for AgriFood Technology (LIAT), the Lincolnshire Institute of Technology, Bishop Burton College Riseholme, Seafood Institute.

Next Steps

- Agree branding and address the contextual questions above so we can clearly set out the scale and ambition we are aiming for
- Align with other interested parties, so that use of the branding is aligned
- Begin to secure business support so that it is more than a public sector led branding exercise, with a clear understanding for business of how they can influence, use and promote the brand and benefit from the cluster activities, e.g. on skills and innovation, which underpin it
- Develop the marketing pitch for the cluster (based on point 4 above) so that at launch we have clear collateral to use which shows the scale and local ambition for this sector

- Promote and Launch - ideally we will agree how to do this before we start to deliver the HPO with DIT (first detailed scoping meeting for the HPO is in mid November)

Annex

The LEP has secured the following domain names for UK Food Valley:

- ukfoodvalley.co.uk
- ukfoodvalley.com
- ukfoodvalley.net
- ukfoodvalley.org

Headline data on the wider East and East Midlands cluster:

The food cluster centred on South Lincolnshire and including GLLEP plus Cambs Combined Authority, New Anglia, D2N2, LLEP and Northants have circa:

- 62,000 staff in agriculture;
- 94,000 staff in food processing;
- 33,000 in food storage and wholesaling;
- 9,000 in agricultural machinery¹²;
- 40,000 in food chain transport.

Giving a sector of 238,000 staff¹³ or circa 17.5% of the UK total for the commercial, pre-consumer food chain (i.e. not including food retail and food service).

This area has circa 7.3 million residents, 11% of the UK population, showing that even across this extended area the sector is 1.6 more times concentrated (the Location Quotient or LQ) than at UK level and, in the heart of the cluster in South Lincolnshire, this rises to an LQ of over 10 times the national average.

¹² Underestimate of total inputs as data on other inputs not readily available at this level

¹³ NB, this does not include those employed by labour providers, which it is believed adds a further 50,000 employees to the sector across this area

Annex 2 - Feedback on Sector Priorities

Following the meeting in August we consulted Board members on the priorities for industry support and received the following feedback (N=10):

Ranking of top 10 issues in terms of their importance for food sector development:

1 st	Productivity & profitability
= 2 nd	Supply chain resilience
	Innovation support (skills, applied R&D & innovation)
4 th	Skills and workforce
5 th	Sustainability: Net Zero, energy, water, waste
= 6 th	Health & diet (including food access for all)
	Trade deals which support UK food companies (including food standards)

Further comments received included:

- Labour Supply - without access to a ready supply of labour the region will potentially suffer extraordinary wage inflation.
- Frictionless Trade - Anything that slows, frustrates or increases the cost of trade, both import and export, will be a drain on the capability of the region to lead in agrifood.
- Supply Chain Agility - Given that the whole country will be adapting to new ways of operating post-brexit and there will inevitably be unforeseen challenges. It is vital that bureaucracy is minimised to allow supply chains to adapt quickly to any unforeseen challenges that emerge.
- Productivity and Profitability - Covid 19 has been a huge challenge for us all to manage to maintain supply and try to forecast requirements. The ability to flex the workforce/switch & adapt plans at short notice and ensure profitability is protected has been a major focus area
- Supply Chain Resilience - Storage has been a problem, ensuring we have access to the materials we need etc without having to carry high stocks etc. Are there shared opportunities the group can access? Group deals/synergy savings/buying groups etc
- Health and Diet/Food for all - A huge opportunity as we move towards recessionary times/families struggling etc - what should we be doing as an industry to support communities whilst growing our own businesses with the right propositions including providing innovation/value for money etc. Young's have been doing work with Fareshare and providing school meals etc which has become part of our CSR programme
- There might be some merit in promoting "Proudly Made in Lincolnshire" (perhaps this has already been done??) - positive messages about the richness of food manufacturing in the county rather than being most famous for the biggest Brexit supporters etc!

- Productivity and profitability - This assumedly should always be the given top priority for all food businesses?
- Sustainability including Net Zero, energy, water and waste - I see major issues in the next 5 to 10 years for the farming and food production industry if we aren't ahead of the game on these measures. With businesses being penalised not just via government but also via retailers delisting underperforming companies and in terms of brand reputation environmental responsibility will be paramount.
- Innovation support (skills, applied R & D and innovation) - in order to compete in our ever changing industry with growing demands from retailers for distinctive products and with consumer needs changing this will be key to ensure we can compete in our market place. This also covers skills which are fundamentally going to have to change as innovation in digitalisation/ robotics increases.

These results have been used to inform LEP proposals for post Covid recovery and to inform the thinking set out in the 2030 Vision and proposals for a UK Food Valley.

Annex 3 - High Potential Opportunity (HPO) Press Release



News release

9th October 2020

Global Spotlight on Greater Lincolnshire Food Automation and Robotics Research

Automation and robotics in the food sector in Greater Lincolnshire has been chosen as one of the Government's 19 new investment opportunities across the UK.

The announcement means our area will now work with the Department for International Trade (DIT) to attract overseas investment into agrifood automation and robotics projects and businesses in Greater Lincolnshire.

The High Potential Opportunities (HPO) scheme aims to increase inward investment into the UK and help the country build back better.

Last night (Thursday) the Investment Minister Gerry Grimstone MP announced that the bid submitted by the [Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership](#) in the second round has been successful.

DIT's global network based in 177 cities around the world will now provide support to our agrifood automation and robotics cluster by showcasing opportunities internationally and contacting investors to promote the opportunities.

Next month partners from DIT, the Greater Lincolnshire LEP, Lincolnshire County Council, district councils, universities and industry will meet to start work on Greater Lincolnshire's HPO in food processing, automation and robotics.

DIT will then use the resulting commercial proposition to put Greater Lincolnshire on an international stage through its sector teams and network of posts across the globe.

The expectation is that the HPO will attract more inward investment to the area and create more high-quality jobs in the agrifood sector.

Pat Doody, Chair of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership, said: "Food production is a cornerstone of the Greater Lincolnshire economy and indeed the UK. It has created more growth and high-value jobs in the last five years than any other sector so we

are delighted this is recognised nationally, and we will work with the Department for International Trade to develop our pitch for additional investment opportunities to bring automation and robotics companies to Lincolnshire.

“Partners locally are working together to develop Greater Lincolnshire into the ‘UK Food Valley’ which will compete globally. In the last five years we have seen a real upturn in this sector, with at least £500 million being invested locally, including £90 million on research and development and innovation. Key schemes such as the development of the South Lincolnshire Food Enterprise Zone and the growth of the agri-robotics research hub have been influential in growing the cluster.

“However, I am really clear that there are significant opportunities for growth, particularly around food production and logistics in Boston, automation and robotics, AI, and nutrition. These are exciting times for Greater Lincolnshire food production.”

Karen Seal, Principal Officer for Place and Investment at Lincolnshire County Council, said: “The HPO will give us a fantastic opportunity to showcase our region on an international platform, promoting our assets, attracting new inward investments and creating highly skilled jobs.

“We need investors to know that Greater Lincolnshire is the UK and European leader for agri-robotics and automation, and to be based here opens up a wealth of opportunities for their business.”

Professor Simon Pearson, Professor of Agri-Food Technology at the Lincoln Institute for Agri-Food Technology, said: “We’re delighted to be engaged in this opportunity. Clearly agrifood technology is a significant strength of the University of Lincoln and we’re looking forward to collaborating with the Greater Lincolnshire LEP and the Department for International Trade to support inward investment into the area.

“It’s a wonderful way to exploit the research capacity at the university which now includes the largest group of agri-roboticists in the EU.”

Councillor Nick Worth, Lincolnshire County Councillor for Holbeach and Deputy Leader of South Holland District Council, welcomed the announcement, saying: “This is really positive news for the area, and the additional support, promotion and resource will be invaluable as the district and wider county continues to promote itself to investors as the home of the largest cluster of agri-food businesses anywhere in the country.

“With the Department for International Trade’s assistance we can begin to build new global connections and highlight some of the fantastic projects taking place in the area, such as the Food Enterprise Zone in Holbeach. Working with our partners I am excited to help put Lincolnshire on the map worldwide and encourage new investment, businesses and jobs into the county.”

The Minister for Investment Gerry Grimstone MP said: “The UK has so much to offer international investors across a variety of key sectors and regions. Our HPO programme looks at some of the sectors and sites across the UK where we see some of the world’s greatest challenges being solved.

“Inward investment will help the UK build back better while levelling up all parts of the UK. This is just the start of the steps we are taking to increase inward investment and drive economic recovery.”

Notes to Editors

About the Greater Lincolnshire LEP:

- [The Greater Lincolnshire LEP](#) was set up in 2010 and works with businesses and local authorities to develop and grow Greater Lincolnshire’s diverse economy.
- It is a public / private partnership led by the private sector.
- It works with central Government and the private sector to invest in infrastructure, skills, innovation and productivity.
- More than 100 businesses are involved in its strategies, and 80 business people sit on its boards.
- The LEP has an ambitious and balanced strategic economic growth plan for Greater Lincolnshire.
- The LEP’s six priority sectors are agri-food, the visitor economy, manufacturing, logistics, health and care and low-carbon energy.
- The LEP has invested £307 million in local economic growth schemes in Greater Lincolnshire since 2014.
- The Greater Lincolnshire LEP covers an area including North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire, Rutland and the administrative county of Lincolnshire and is led by a LEP board made up of leading figures in the public and private sector.
- To find out more visit <http://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk> or follow the LEP on Twitter @greaterlincslep, Facebook or LinkedIn.

About DIT and inward investment:

- The UK continues to be the top destination in Europe for attracting foreign direct investment. Results published by UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) show that by the end of 2019 the UK’s inward FDI stock levels reached USD2.1 trillion, second only to the United States.
- The Financial Times FDI Report 2020 highlights that the UK remains top in Europe on attracting FDI projects and on green field capital expenditure. This demonstrates that the UK continued to attract FDI throughout 2019 at an unbeaten rate in Europe.
- The most recent FDI figures show 1,852 projects were recorded, 56,117 new jobs were created and 9,021 were safeguarded in 2019/20 thanks to FDI. [Source: DIT Figures July 2020].
- Regionally, FDI contributes to around 12% to 17% of employment in every region of the UK and contributes to more than a quarter of the business turnover in every

region of the UK, with the exception of London, where the share of employment and business turnover is 24% and 52% respectively.

- It is observed that businesses that receive inward FDI were 74% more productive than non-FDI firms.
- There is high productivity disparity within the UK regions, with relatively higher productivity in London and the south-east (where the presence of foreign-owned firms is more than proportional to other regions). Thus, attracting additional FDI can be a part of the solution to the UK's long-standing productivity challenge and particularly for the levelling up agenda.