

# GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE BUSINESS AND ECONOMY RECOVERY PLAN

## SUMMARY

June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020

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This is the greater Lincolnshire business and economy recovery plan.

Its evidence base is the Local Industrial Strategy, augmented by an analysis of the weekly business sentiment reporting that has been conducted during the Covid-19 lockdown.

The plan is split into short (i.e. 0-3 month) actions and medium (i.e. 3-6 month) actions. The long term action will be to deliver the ambitions of the Local Industrial Strategy so that the greater Lincolnshire and Rutland economies provide prosperity to their residents, businesses, and communities as well as making a substantial economic commitment to the national economy.

The plan includes two enabling measures and three delivery measures. Its strategic objectives are:

**Business Support** (Delivery measures)

Strategic objective: To repurpose existing business support schemes, and design new business support schemes, that meet the challenges of Covid-19.

**Workforce** (Delivery measures)

Strategic objective: To take measures to meet the changing employment and training needs of the greater Lincolnshire workforce in the context of Covid-19.

**Sectors** (Delivery measures)

Strategic objective: To provide tailored support to greater Lincolnshire's most important economic sectors so that they can respond to Covid-19.

**Economic Intelligence** (Enabling measures)

Strategic objective: To ensure that accurate and current business intelligence is available and informs decision making in the Business and Economy recovery plan.

**Funding** (Enabling measures)

Strategic objective: To use regeneration funding in a strategic way to tackle the current challenges of Covid 19 and to support the Business and Economy recovery plan.

The plan will drive the delivery of the tasks that are set out in the following pages; substantially more detail has been produced by working groups for the tasks that are set out in the plan.

In addition to the pragmatic actions which will be delivered in the action through a re-alignment of existing activity and funds, the effective delivery of the plan relies on the following investments by government:

**Local leadership of skills and employment budgets** –(i) to provide the ability to manage the transition of post 16 education and training providers into an effective post Covid 19 operating model; and (ii) to work with government on delivering a bespoke programme which helps employers to provide quality jobs for young people.

**Investment in those sectors where greater Lincolnshire makes a substantial contribution to the UK's economic recovery** –(i) investment to provide a Food Technology Hub which will drive transformation in the country's food manufacturing sector; and (ii) the piloting within greater Lincolnshire of approaches to making the nation's horticultural sector resilient.

**Designation of greater Lincolnshire as a Tourism Action Zone** –which will help us to drive investment, skills, and growth in this important sector which will provide the context for the creation of a single Destination Management Organisation which will align place marketing messages. Leadership of a change to high streets so that they are future focused, offering Hospitality, Events, Retail, and Tourism

**A Local Housing Investment Fund co-designed with Homes England** –this will provide the stimulus for the small and medium sized construction businesses in greater Lincolnshire to invest in sites which have been stalled due to concerns over viability. It would also provide support that would enable small and medium sized construction businesses to access products/supplies from within a very tight supply chain.

**Local discretion to adapt regeneration funding to deliver this recovery plan** –we are able to identify uncommitted regeneration funding, but it currently has a variety of conditions attached which make it difficult to align the funding quickly to meet the priorities in this plan. Local discretion over uncommitted regeneration funding will enable us to deliver this plan as quickly as the economy requires.

## BUSINESS SUPPORT (DELIVERY MEASURE)

Strategic objective: To repurpose existing business support schemes, and design new business support schemes, that meet the challenges of Covid-19.

Issue(s)	Short-term priorities	Medium-term priorities
<p>Business advice is delivered through a number of sources, from government sponsored growth hubs to commercially delivered services and business representative organisations like FSB and Chamber of Commerce's delivery. It is essential that advice is delivered in a complimentary manner across all of these sources.</p> <p>Traditionally business support has focused on growth, and on providing advice to businesses on aspects of their growth plans. C-19 has changed that emphasis to assisting with business survival, with the closure of businesses, and with very practical advice to businesses. Some groups of businesses have been unable to attract the Covid-19 business grants and are likely to be unable to receive other support; they need to be supported though.</p> <p>Immediate cash flow challenges –businesses are concerned about their financial viability/ access to working capital – how to drive cash in to the business</p> <p>Implementing COVID-19 secure workplaces - Clear guidance on business opening and the easing measures is required.</p> <p>Large numbers of furloughed workers and workers operating from home present different management challenges.</p> <p>Keeping in contact with established customers and developing new customers is difficult during lockdown and social distancing.</p> <p>Many businesses are reporting difficulty in sourcing components and products from their normal supply chain.</p>	<p>1). <i>Provide Information and Guidance to help businesses to adapt to COVID- 19 impacts and easing measures</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Help businesses understand what they can do to adapt and to continue to trade through practical information and tools as well as through inspiring stories.</b></li> <li>- <b>Provide mental health and wellbeing support for business leaders to help them to cope with change</b></li> <li>- <b>Substantially increase use of the Business Lincolnshire supplier directory to suppliers and buyers in order to tackle the supply chain problems that they face</b></li> <li>- Highlight what furloughed staff could and should be doing at this time. In particular, highlight the up skilling opportunities that furloughed staff can take advantage of.</li> <li>- Run Restart Communication Campaigns via web/ social media / newsletter / adverts with key messages</li> <li>- Reduce the number of Growth Hub adviser face to face visits and provide a telephone helpline to businesses in crisis.</li> </ul> <p>2). <i>Adapt existing programmes to ensure that businesses are resilient and have the right COVID-19 Recovery Support</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Provide advice to businesses on bringing cash into the business, and identify funding that can be used for the purchase of homeworking kit, and support businesses to access government backed loan schemes to support cash flow funding as part of financial readiness provision, etc.</b></li> </ul>	<p>1). <i>provide Specialist Advice to meet business demand</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Establish new Supply Chains and grants to restock – especially where supplies come from abroad.</b></li> <li>- <b>Put support in place to focus on digitalisation across sectors with a focus on Industry 4.0. Utilise the opportunity to ‘leap’ forwards and accelerate digital adoption.</b></li> <li>- <b>Provide support for businesses making redundancies and signposting for displaced employees, for example new start – self-employment campaign</b></li> <li>- Install specialist advisers into the Growth Hub for both growing sectors and for business facing difficulties – including for example, supply chain, digitisation and automation, visitor economy, leisure &amp; retail. (Additional advisory support funding requirement)</li> <li>- Work with universities to support the immediate challenges and medium term opportunities COVID19 presents, by contributing intelligence through to activity such as the incubation/ innovation centres, industrial engagement in development/delivery of academic courses etc.</li> </ul> <p>2). <i>Increase Funding to support business adaptation and growth</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Identify opportunities for capital schemes to assist businesses with larger investments, such as automation/innovation/technology, and digitisation of operations.</b></li> <li>- Identify businesses that have missed out on other sources of grant support and identify what funding options to assist, particularly support for operating costs.</li> </ul>

## WORKFORCE (DELIVERY MEASURE)

*Strategic objective:* To take measures to meet the changing employment and training needs of the greater Lincolnshire workforce in the context of Covid-19.

Issue(s)	Short-term priorities	Medium-term priorities
<p>We are anticipating significant increases in unemployment as a result of the C-19 outbreak.</p> <p>Businesses who will be under significant cash constraints may not invest in training, and education providers are concerned about a substantial drop-off in apprenticeship provision.</p> <p>Education providers will need to react to post-lockdown regulations.</p> <p>Public transport is essential to help trainees gain access to placements, but social distancing guidelines add a further complication to public transport provision within a rural area.</p>	<p><b>Provide advice to business leaders on: reshaping the workforce (e.g. to work from home instead of workplace) and how to carry out virtual / safe recruitment and induction.</b></p> <p><b>Brief local authorities and other organisations so that they understand the offer to redundant employees; shared intelligence and vacancy data. Be prepared for trigger points linked to gradual reduction in support for Job Retention scheme.</b></p> <p><b>Ensure that current programmes which provide training delivery to workforce, to unemployed, and to people who have been made redundant remains available beyond the current funding deadlines, and seek flexibility so that the programmes can meet any emerging problems.</b></p> <p><b>Support the area's training infrastructure – seek finance to support the cashflow of Further Education and Higher Education institutions, (particularly those with a greater proportion of income from apprenticeships or overseas students); ensure that decisions are taken at the local level</b></p> <p>-Inspire employers to adapt by producing stories of employers who have adapted to inspire others. Positive messages and visible campaign – how are you adapting, how are you training etc.</p> <p>-Ensure that businesses who need it can continue to access the training and talent they need, maintaining the existing training infrastructure and courses required.</p>	<p><b>Establish capital programmes to support the transfer of learning onto digital platforms where possible, and shore up IT systems</b></p> <p><b>Deliver a programme to help residents to participate in the workforce, driving people up the skills ladder. To include the provision of information to schools about the changing workplace.</b></p> <p><b>Encourage employers to employ young people with relevant knowledge, using programmes like internships, Apprenticeships, and T Level placements. Undertake a feasibility study into establishing an Apprenticeship Training Agency to minimise risk to employers of taking on young people –to include transport access solutions as well as employment.</b></p> <p><b>Equip the workforce with high-quality, relevant training - continued digitalisation and automation of processes needs an equivalent push on the digital skills of staff and owners as well as qualities such as agility, flexibility, enterprise and resilience.</b></p> <p>Provide training and advisory support to those who are digitally excluded and with challenges around literacy or speaking English, who will not be able to learning remotely</p> <p>Promote T Levels, IoT and other new Government training schemes to continue as planned.</p> <p>Commission the Apprenticeship Levy Transfer scheme that was planned pre Covid-19.</p> <p>Support to people furthest away from the labour market, even more excluded with greater numbers on the job market.</p>

**SECTORS (DELIVERY MEASURE)**

*Strategic objective:* To provide tailored support to greater Lincolnshire's most important economic sectors so that they can respond to COVID-19.

Sector	Issue(s)	Short-term priorities	Medium-term priorities
<p><b>Place marketing –to assist all sectors to grow</b></p>	<p>Investment opportunities will be tighter in light of the economic impact of Covid-19.</p> <p>Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland has a particular strength in terms of quality of life, and its rural context will be attractive to people looking to move businesses and homes out of urban areas following Covid-19.</p> <p>There are currently several place marketing programmes which lead to slightly different messages and to potential duplication</p>	<p><b>Seek to align our Place Marketing messages so that there is less duplication</b></p>	<p><b>Deliver an aligned Place Marketing strategy which encourages investment in greater Lincolnshire and Rutland</b></p> <p><b>Establish a single Destination Management Organisation for the area to drive up awareness of the area to visitors, investors, and potential residents</b></p>
<p><b>Agriculture, Food Sector</b></p>	<p>People still need to eat, but market shift to people eating at home rather than in restaurants, take-away's etc. and substantial staff shortages.</p>	<p><b>Provide support and advice to ensure that business support programmes and skills programmes accelerate the move to online business.</b></p> <p>Short term business is advice needed on best practices on how to re-open whilst delivering social distancing.</p>	<p><b>Deliver Holbeach Food Enterprise Zone - complete the land assembly, develop a fully costed delivery plan, source a commercial Joint Venture partner and promote the site commercially. Establish Holbeach FEZ as an investment "High Performance Opportunity" which will lead to international promotion of the site and the sector cluster.</b></p> <p><b>Create more value for the regional economy by promoting the local and regional food offer (quality local food provenance) in food service.</b> This will benefit the food chain and visitor economy through a higher value more distinctive offer.</p> <p>A review needs to be established of the need to proactively repurpose vacated food service commercial space into new uses, so that a proactive policy is in place for this commercial space if it becomes vacant.</p>





<p><b>Energy Sector*</b></p> <p>*NB Should connect across to the infrastructure group</p>	<p>Although the price of oil is very low, our energy sector remains strong and is a national leader.</p>	<p><b>Work with the Midlands and Humber Energy Hubs to help to re-start stalled energy/low carbon projects.</b></p> <p>Deliver targeted Business Energy Events across the whole county, including Technology road show event/s, highlighting energy technologies that are available to business, and SME Energy Efficiency Event looking at the future business benefits to be gained.</p>	<p><b>Use Planning for Growth as a way of championing investment in energy schemes, namely:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Humber Zero aspirations and roadmap for decarbonisation</b></li> <li>- <b>Place based energy interests around Lincoln, Grantham, Holbeach, Skegness, Boston</b></li> </ul> <p>Work with local delivery partners and industry to link generation from local hubs to the national grid and address existing local capacity constraints.</p> <p>Create a grant scheme for SMEs to access energy solutions (similar to the Worcester/Marches for SME's).</p>
<p><b>Health and Care Sector*</b></p> <p>*NB. Should connect across to the Health and Care group</p>	<p>Substantial increases in public investment likely, huge labour shortages remain and sector likely to be less attractive due to perceived risk of virus transmission.</p>	<p><b>Run a promotion campaign to encourage people to join the health and care sector –build on the goodwill of the "Clap for the NHS/Carers" initiative.</b></p>	<p>Develop a med tech, pharmaceuticals and nutraceutical network based around the science &amp; innovation park (and hubs) to look at digital health – focus on virtual care networks to address spatial inequalities in deployment.</p> <p>Pilot 'Communities of the Future' to meet the needs of an ageing population.</p>
<p><b>High Street Sector</b></p>	<p>Social distancing, economic downturn, and supply chain at a time of travel restrictions will affect them.</p>	<p><b>Provide advice to retail and other high street businesses on safe opening protocols.</b></p> <p><b>Promote to residents and visitors that the high street is open for business, asking them to recognise social distancing.</b></p> <p><b>Create a safe environment for visitors to the high street.</b></p>	<p><b>Use local leadership and planning powers to promote the diversification of the high street away from its focus on retail and onto Hospitality, Events, Retail, Tourism</b></p> <p>Implement the town strategies that were developed in the Future High Street and Towns Fund application phase.</p>



<p><b>Manufacturing Sector</b></p>	<p>Economic downturn will affect customers, supply of raw materials has slowed due to travel restrictions, workplaces are likely to be less productive because of social distancing regulations.</p>	<p><b>Provide clear information and guidance on how to operate and work safely in a manufacturing environment with industry led support ( including risk assessment, mapping supply chains, health and safety and workforce planning);</b></p> <p>Signpost businesses to; HR &amp; Employment law guidance.</p> <p>Expand the existing 'Manufacturing Growth Programme' so that it is available to more businesses and provides support for business resilience as well as business growth. Include an element on adapting products to meet local needs.</p>	<p><b><i>Increase the Supply Chain mapping, risk assessment and resilience support offer:</i></b> businesses are looking for supply chain localisation based on availability resilience and speed – businesses need advice, support and grants. Businesses now want to re-shore their supply chains and build them on accessibility, deliverability, speed rather than just cost.</p> <p><b><i>Digitisation/ industry 4.0- support and guidance:</i></b> accelerate adoption and aid social distancing measures. There is the opportunity to review working practices and acquire new skills/knowledge needed to succeed in a post COVID market. This needs to be supported with a strategic review of how business communicates with its clients, supply chains and networks.</p>
<p><b>Tourism/Visitor Sector</b></p>	<p>Restrictions on travel, viability as a result of social distancing, and extended lockdown will create huge risks for the sector.</p>	<p><b>Add content to the Visit Lincolnshire website starting with pages on pushing walks, cycle routes. Use this, and associated media campaigns, to show which local businesses are open and steer the public away from the busier areas to undiscovered areas where we know it can cope.</b></p> <p>Act as a conduit from Visit England to our tourism businesses – giving consistent messages and support from a single platform.</p>	<p><b>Drive investment in this important sector by delivering a strong tourism action zone in the area</b></p> <p>Further develop the Visit Lincolnshire website as a flexible and intuitive platform to deliver engaging content with rich presentation of information, media and downloads allowing for the development custom tools or integrations in the future.</p> <p><b>Establish the 'new normal' – maintain communications with businesses providing advice and help on recovery planning. Lobby for support to the sector and provide business intelligence.</b></p> <p>We change focus as more businesses open &amp; can encourage visitors from further afield and a year round offer.</p>

**ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE (ENABLING MEASURE)**

*Strategic objective:* To ensure that accurate and current business intelligence is available and informs decision making in the Business and Economy recovery plan.

Issue(s)	Short-term priorities	Medium-term priorities
<p>Now more than ever we need to understand business sentiment and to use that sentiment to inform decisions and our direction of delivery.</p> <p>But business leaders are so busy managing their own transition out of lockdown that surveys and questionnaires will be wholly inappropriate.</p> <p>Local authorities, as a result of managing the grant schemes, have a closer relationship with more businesses than they have had before.</p>	<p><b>Compile a fortnightly economic situation report that all organisations can use to understand the rate of economic recovery.</b></p> <p>Increase the number of businesses using the Quarterly Economic Survey, currently run by the Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce, with Greater Lincolnshire LEP and University of Lincoln as partners. We will look to expand this partner network to include all Business Cell members.</p> <p>Analyse the make-up of those businesses who were unable to attract government recovery grants, and work with government so that they these businesses do not "fall through the net" should they seek government support in the future</p>	<p>A recovery dashboard will be developed utilising real time data where possible, together with other indicators to build a monitoring picture for Greater Lincolnshire. In order to assess the requirements of the dashboard, a small working group comprised of members of each work stream will be convened to develop the potential content.</p> <p>A scenario plan for the economy will be commissioned to form the basis for informed decision making on potential resources and policy decisions.</p>

**FUNDING (ENABLING MEASURE)**

Strategic objective: To use regeneration funding in a strategic way to tackle the current challenges of Covid 19 and to support the Business and Economy recovery plan.

Issue(s)	Short-term priorities	Medium-term priorities
<p>The cost of supplies/labour, lockdown, and changed economic conditions mean that many projects will be different to their contract. This leads to the risk of claw-back and pressure on match funding, some applicants may chose not to go ahead with.</p> <p>Research shows that parts of G Lincolnshire and Rutland are at biggest risk of economic shock following Covid-19.</p>	<p><b>Request an extension to the Single Local Growth Fund deadline so that projects can recover from the Covid-19 delays and challenges.</b></p> <p><b>Ask government to agree that local partnerships have local discretion/accountability to repurpose any unallocated funds to support the recovery plan.</b></p> <p>Ask government to accelerate the implementation of the additional £387m of growth fund so that it can be used to deliver recovery actions</p>	<p>Re-constitute existing funding programmes to meet this recovery strategy, especially sector and workforce activity.</p> <p>Seek information from HM Treasury about which businesses furloughed staff, and use this to design a support programme for those businesses.</p> <p>Press for the proposed National Skills Fund to be implemented, using it to lever the £5m of unallocated ESF to address the workforce elements of this strategy.</p> <p>Establish a partnership with Innovate UK to support those businesses who are investing in new technology.</p>