



ISSUE 10 GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE LEP FOOD SECURITY

21 July 2020

Sector Progress & Highlights

In this issue we cover the recent key highlights and announcements both locally and nationally. As these briefings grow in content, please click on a link below to take you directly to the stories for quicker review.

- The LEP welcomes the [re-opening of food service](#) and the need for consumers to visit to keep them vibrant and alive
- Greater Lincolnshire's [£25.8m New Deal](#)
- [Winning bids](#) for investment to create world's first robotic farm and new potato technology
- Industry Updates to include [Trade and Agriculture Commission membership announcement](#)
- [Calls for Industry innovation](#) (Tesco and DiT opportunities)
- [Chancellor's Statement](#) headlines
- LEP [Food Committee](#) resumes
- Message from the [Lincolnshire Resilience Forum](#) (LRF)

Food Service Sector Restart

Greater Lincolnshire has approximately 26,000 staff employed directly in food service and many more in food, drink and supply chain companies who supply them. It is important that we continue to work collaboratively to support the re-opening of this large and important area within our economy.

The food service sector forms a major part of our food economy and was largely closed from late March to the 4th July. Before the Covid-19 lockdown the UK food service sector represented 28% of the volume of food and drink consumed in the UK and 45% of the money spent by consumers on food and drink. It was the largest single part of the food chain in terms of both employment, representing 1.89 million staff, and the contribution it made to the economy at £36.9 billion (DEFRA, Agriculture in the UK 2019).

Early indications are that even following re-opening, many venues are still running at less than 50% of the sales they would expect at this time of year. To help to support re-opening the government has announced both:-

- The **Eat Out to Help Out** scheme which will offer £10 per person off food and soft drinks for meals on Monday-Wednesdays in August from Monday 3rd - Monday 31st August. Full details and how to register can be found [here](#).
- A reduction in VAT on food service and hospitality to 5% from July 15th 2020 to 12th January 2021 has also been announced. Read more [here](#).

- Visit Lincoln is supporting this alongside the wider hospitality and leisure sector re-openings, and are offering a [Good to Go](#) accreditation. Visit www.visitlincoln.com/coronavirus for more information on schemes and support. You can also read our [Making Room at the Inn](#) guide intended for any pub operator who might want to consider developing overnight accommodation for business and leisure visitors.

Greater Lincolnshire to Get £25.8m in 'New Deal'

The Greater Lincolnshire LEP has received a £25.8 million cash boost from the Government to fund 'shovel-ready' projects to help the local economy and create jobs. The 'New Deal' announcement is part of a comprehensive plan by the Government to "build, build, build", delivering upgrades to local infrastructure and boosting skills in a move to fuel economic recovery across the UK.

Thirty-six 36 LEPs and combined authorities are receiving a share of a £900 million Getting Building Fund that will support local infrastructure projects to support economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. This fund will be used to improve digital infrastructure, support skills and career opportunities, and transition to a low-carbon economy. We are unable to announce the full list of funded projects just yet but are confident that some of them will be of interest to the food sector so watch this space! Read the full story [here](#).

Supporting Jobs

The Chancellor announced that there will not be a further extension to the furlough scheme beyond October. However, as part of the plan to support jobs, a Job Retention Bonus will be introduced to help firms keep furloughed workers. UK Employers will receive a one-off bonus of £1,000 for each furloughed employee who is still employed as of 31 January 2021. In Greater Lincolnshire there are an estimated 117,800 people who have been furloughed, one quarter of the total workforce.

A new £2 billion Kickstart Scheme will also be launched to create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people across the country. Those aged 16-24, claiming Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment, will be eligible. Funding is available for each six-month job placement to cover 100% of the National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week - and employers will be able to top this wage up. Around 8,100 16-24 year olds are currently claiming job seekers elements of Universal Credit in Greater Lincolnshire and make up 20% of all claimants. Read the LEP Chair's response to the full announcements [here](#).

Winning bids for investment to food chain robotics and technology led by Lincolnshire businesses

On 17th July 2020, Innovate UK announced that nine projects would share a £24m investment to apply big data, AI and robotics to UK farming to help establish a more efficient system of food production. The projects ensure industry sustainability by addressing labour shortages, the need for global food production and reductions in the environmental impact of the farming sector. Two of the winning consortia are led by Lincoln based companies:

- **Robot Highways** led by Saga Robotics based at the University of Lincoln Riseholme Campus, will receive nearly £2.5 million to perform the largest known global demonstration of robotics and autonomous technologies on the farm. The robots will assist farmers by carrying out essential, energy intensive physical farm processes such as picking and packing fruit and treating crops to reduce critical pests and diseases.
- **TUBERSCAN-DEMO** led by B-hive based at the Boole Technology Centre in Lincoln, will receive nearly £2 million to develop and test an innovative demonstrator system to measure average potato sizes and yield throughout potato fields, providing insights that will enable selective harvesting to

take place, optimising crop yield and resource use. It is anticipated that this technology could generate an estimated 5- 10% increase in UK marketable potato production.

These grants form part of UK Research & Innovation's (UKRI) Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund; Transforming Food Production (TFP) challenge, which aims to set food production systems on the trajectory to net zero emissions by 2040 producing food in ways that are more efficient, resilient and sustainable. Further detail of all funded projects is available [here](#).

Read the University of Lincoln's news release [here](#).

Key Future Focus

The LEP Food Committee will meet virtually in August to discuss EU Exit and the post Covid-19 Food Chain. The LEP Food Committee Chair, Sarah Louise Fairburn, is hosting a meeting on 13th August to include renowned speakers on food industry trends: Rick Bourne who has worked for major food chain companies and supermarkets; and Nick Downing, Commercial Director of the Institute of Grocery and Distribution (IGD).

The discussion will focus on how the food industry will develop post Covid-19 and in the light of Brexit. The aim is to debate the work the LEP does to support post Covid-19 recovery and to prepare the food industry for growth in the longer term. The Committee will be asked to prioritise the support needed by the industry to deliver future growth and development, with their recommendations used to inform both local action by the LEP and its partners and to lobby government.

National Food Industry Updates

Trade and Agriculture Commission membership announced

Retailers, farming unions, consumer, hospitality and environmental bodies from across the UK have been named as members of the Government's new Trade and Agriculture Commission. Full details can be found [here](#).

It will be chaired by food safety expert Tim Smith, a former Chief Executive of the Food Standards Agency and Tesco Group Technical Director and report directly in to International Trade Secretary Liz Truss, advising on:-

- Trade policies the Government should adopt to secure opportunities for UK farmers, while ensuring the sector remains competitive and that animal welfare and environmental standards in food production are not undermined.
- Advancing and protecting British consumer interests and those of developing countries.
- How the UK engages the WTO to build a coalition that helps advance higher animal welfare standards across the world.
- Developing trade policy that identifies and opens up new export opportunities for the UK agricultural industry - in particular for SMEs - and that benefits the UK economy as a whole.

Calls for Industry Innovation

Tesco wants to support some new agri-tech start-ups and has a competitive bid in place with applications due by 28th July. Visit [here](#) to find out more and for application details.

The DIT are in discussions with Dutch automation specialist Lely, who are looking to offer a similar programme to identify new agri-tech companies in the dairy and related sectors they can work with. Visit [here](#) to find out more.

Thanks from the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF)

"The Businesses and People of Lincolnshire should be applauded for the manner in which they are managing the opening of the public space. At the weekend, with pubs, bars, cafes and restaurants opening, we experienced considerable effort by most to ensure the safety of each other whilst allowing the economy to slowly open. We will continue to focus on helping our colleagues in business to open safely with a view to Lincolnshire NOT returning to another lock down as experienced in other parts of the country.

Businesses must continually monitor and review Government guidance. Whilst we will seek to support and keep our businesses informed, as best we can, we are reliant on our businesses in Lincolnshire ensuring they keep themselves informed, recognising that national guidelines can change overnight.

We are working across the public sector, business and the community to enable business, retailers, services, public amenities, schools, transport and public spaces to open safely, we need everyone to take personal responsibility for their part in protecting each other and the economy."

To be added to the LRF economic & business updates distribution list click [here](#).

The Greater Lincolnshire LEP continues to work closely with businesses, facilitators, and government to address the impact of Covid19 on the food chain and support the food sector to continue feeding the nation and to plan the recovery phase and interventions. Please follow the latest updates on our website www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk and follow us on [@GreaterLincsLEP](#) and through [LinkedIn](#)

Covid-19

- Visit [Business Lincolnshire](#) or call 01522 782189 for continued support to your business
- View the Government Covid-secure guidance by sector [here](#)
- Click [here](#) if you can provide Covid-19 testing capacity
- Feed business impacts into [Business Intelligence](#)