

UK Food Valley Business Plan - September 2023 to September 2024

Vision for UKFV by 2030:



Purpose

The UK Food Valley (UKFV) is a collaborative partnership of pioneering industry, academic and public sector organisations working together to facilitate food and ag chain growth and investment across Greater Lincolnshire. It focuses on delivering proactive change by convening expertise, commercial intelligence and using public and private investment to focus on industry priorities.

The UKFV Partnership will be led by the Greater Lincolnshire LEP Team and convene partners to align messaging and activity to one ambition for Greater Lincolnshire as the UK's Food Valley. The partnership will promote and support the food sector (both land and sea in greater Lincolnshire), support growth (skills, innovation and enterprise) and encourage significant further investment.

How:

We have identified seven overarching areas to focus our work on:

1. Accelerating food chain automation and digital technology adoption;
2. Delivering low carbon and sustainable food chains on the road to net zero;
3. Growing the provision of Naturally Good for You foods and supporting protein transition.

All of these big challenges are underpinned by investment in the following themes:

4. Innovation
5. Skills
6. Infrastructure
7. Investment

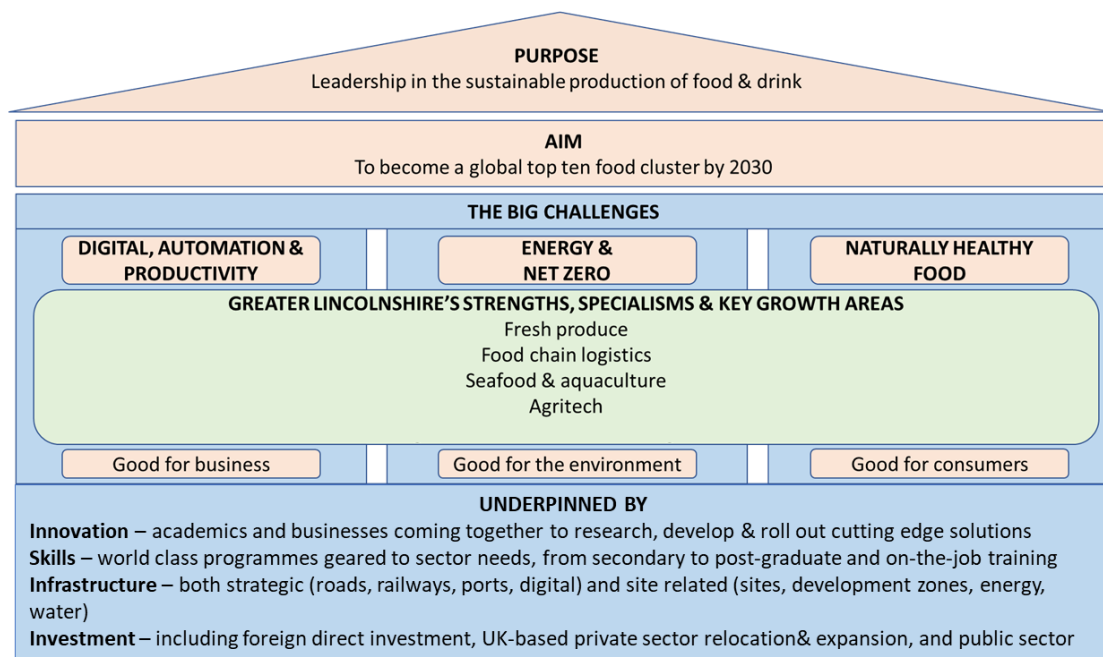


Figure 1. diagram showing breakdown of the building blocks of the UKFV

At the core of the UKFV approach is the development of ‘One Team approach’ to deliver co-ordinated support for the agri-food industry. At the heart of this is a LEP led core team, with a partners team drawn and aligned where appropriate from:

- Councils - district, unitary and county, including their teams working on economic development and inward investment
- LEP team and Growth Hub and Team Lincolnshire
- University of Lincoln
- Colleges
- Barclays Eagle Lab
- Chamber of Commerce and sector specialist business groups such as the NFU, CLA, Seafood Grimsby and Humber Alliance.

The UKFV will also work closely with private sector professionals e.g. Banks, Accountants, Lawyers, Consultants who work with the agri-food sector to align support wherever possible.

Key areas of work within year 1 priorities

- Re-establish the offering of the UKFV
- Skills, education and workforce
- Governance
- Stakeholder engagement
- How to ensure sustainability of the UKFV - funding streams
- Increase awareness and branding of UKFV - both internal and external

See expansion on areas below.

Skills, education and workforce

One of the big challenges facing all agri-food businesses is recruitment and finding the right skills for their needs. Where robotics and automation are introduced in the food chain, more people with higher level, specialist technical and digital skills are needed. Evidence also shows that digital transition also increases demand for team working and higher cognitive and problem-solving skills. It is forecast that 50% of future jobs in the food sector will require employees with level 4+ qualifications.

Technology deployment requires a significant strategic acceleration of initial training and retraining provision. We already have the Lincoln Institute for Agri-food Technology (LIAT), Lincolnshire Institute of Technology (IoT), Agri-Food Centre of Excellence and National Centre for Food Manufacturing (NCFM), but more support is needed to grow business collaborations with food industry training facilities. Successful targeted activity and programmes are in place or being developed but require stronger connectivity to reach more businesses, and funding options to help them continue to deliver.

Governance

A governance model needs to be developed. We don't want this to be too onerous, and we need to keep in mind the volatility of the industry we are working in. However, we do need some basic levels of governance that are clearly communicated internally and externally to ensure smooth running of the programme. This will be developed as a priority task.

A suggested governance model is outlined below, however this will be refined to be most appropriate for the UKFV model.

The LEP Board will remain the decision-making board and maintain ownership of the UKFV Strategy and Business Plan.

A UK Food Valley Strategic Board will lead on strategic activity and make recommendations to the LEP Board. The UKFV Strategic Board will have a strong commercial steer and include key partners to include local authorities in UKFV cluster areas. It will meet biannually.

A UKFV Operational Board will be developed to meet quarterly to respond to business need, drive forward delivery, and identify further opportunities. This will include the Councils, LEP, LA's, Growth Hub, University of Lincoln and Colleges. Task and Finish Groups will be established as needed when new projects are formed, to deliver the projects. These groups will report into the operational group. The group will be formed of members of each of the project partners

The LEP Food Board will continue to operate as an industry commercial advisory board and represent the UKFV as lead advocates and ambassadors for the UKFV. This Board understand the landscape required for businesses to thrive and will provide critical friend and what's-in-it-for-me sense check.

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Re-establish offering of UKFV

There is some confusion over the what UKFV actually does, what its role is and how people should engage with it. There is also a lack of clarity on what the LEP's specific role is and what the whole partnership's role is. Therefore, we would like to re-evaluate what our offering is and clearly define the LEP's active vs passive involvement. Additionally, we need to define how the wider partnership should engage and use the brand, and what benefits they get from it.

Stakeholder engagement

Due to the lack of resource, only fragments of work on the UKFV have been happening, and some stakeholders may feel like they are out of the loop. We want to re-engage all stakeholders and communicate the governance and programme offering (once these have been defined). This will ensure all stakeholders are on the same page and all working together in the "one team" approach. The LEP team has limited resource and so we need to utilise the partnership as a whole to push the brand forward. This will be covered further in the brand awareness theme.

An informal UKFV Ambassadors Group will bring together UKFV VIPs and senior sponsors and supporters to form a core coalition of (e.g. Simon Smith inspiring and galvanising the Seafood sector or Gemma Clark driving sustainable, organic and regenerative farming practices thorough innovation of seed varieties) and convening business access to R&D and academia to accelerate innovation.

Task and Finish Professional Sector Groups could be established as needed to sense check the wider industry response to core challenges/opportunities and positioning in terms of the UKFV, to include industry agents, insurers, solicitors, investors (banks) etc.

UKFV sustainability

We need to develop a model to ensure the financial sustainability of the UKFV moving to a partial self-sustaining or commercial model by year 3. This will increase the resource allocation to allow the UKFV team to grow and increase its delivery. This will be through multiple funding streams, with potential for it to be from government or commercial streams.

Increase awareness and branding of UKFV

One of the key aims of the UKFV is to become a top ten global food cluster. For this to happen we need to increase the awareness of the UKFV both regionally, nationally and internationally.

This work needs to start internally by ensuring all LEP and LCC staff, and all partnership members understand the UKFV and its messaging we want to get across.

Target Government Departments, and stakeholders.

Research

- UKFV Local Energy Plan - Led by Caroline Illingworth - due Spring 24
- UKFV Cool Chain Study - LCC and LEP - Due Spring 24
- Sector Skills Plan - Due Autumn 24

Year 1 priorities

Specific priorities within these themes have been outlined in the below tables. UKFV objectives have been split into two categories to define the active vs passive roles of the programme. The categories are (1) activities the LEP will deliver directly, and (2) activities the whole UKFV partnership will need to collaborate on to deliver.

LEP Specific deliverables

Area	Task	Lead
Governance	Implement a governance model - including working group structures, reporting lines, risk management and escalation procedure	UKFV PM
	Create a “working group” structure and clearly define roles and responsibilities	UKFV PM
	Develop KPIs for the programme	UKFV PM
Offering	Re-evaluate the offering of the UKFV and clearly communicate	UKFV PM
	Create project funnel with partnership	UKFV PM
	Consolidate current UKFV activity	UKFV PM
	Establish intelligence sharing offering	Technical team
	Develop briefings on commercial opportunities such as green port, aquaculture and logistics	Technical team
	Develop bids and UKFV partnership proposals for the three priorities of <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accelerating food chain automation and digital technology adoption;• Delivering low carbon and net zero food chains;• Growing the provision of Naturally Good for You foods and supporting protein transition.	Technical team
	Win an Innovation Programme for UKFV	UK FV PM
	Flagship UKFV event	UK FV PM
Stakeholders	Re-engage with stakeholders	UKFV PM
	Re-engage with food board	UKFV PM
Sustainability	Establish 1+ income stream(s) to secure additional core team resources & exploring in kind funding options	UKFV PM
	Explore ideas for a medium-term sustainable model	UKPV PM
Awareness & Branding	Establish UKFV brand as a leading game changing sector for Greater Lincolnshire	Comms team
	Create comms and PR material (videos, flyers, update website etc)	Comms team
	Establishing a strong group of industry ambassadors based on an Advocacy approach	UKFV PM
Skills	Produce a sector skills plan	UKFV PM
	Create a pilot programme for UKFV education in schools	Skills team
	Create an interactive jobs board and talent finder platform	UKFV PM

	Update UKFV careers website	UKFV PM & Skills team
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Whole partnership deliverables

Area	Task	Lead
Offering	Facilitate 5 commercial investments in GL	UKFV Core Team, Team Lincolnshire and Local Authorities
	Continue to gather intelligence on challenges and opportunities in Greater Lincolnshire for UKFV.	Core Team
	Create project funnel with partnership	UKFV Partnership
	Deliver UK Food Valley Skills Capital Programme	LEP
	Progress set up of AG Zone in collaboration with WLDC and UoL	UKFV PM, UoL, WLDC
Branding & Awareness	Establish UKFV brand as a leading game changing sector for Greater Lincolnshire	UKFV Operational Board, Ambassadors
	Increase awareness of UKFV amongst the target audience	Comms leads

Objectives will be reviewed every six months or if significant policy/environment changes occur. The industry can be fairly volatile and therefore we need to maintain a flexible approach to remain relevant.

Longer term priorities (year two and three)

- Secure sustainability model and income streams
- Recruit a UKFV Director post
- Build targeted support programmes
- Convene & strengthen new & increased commercial/ academic innovation & funding collaborations (UoL)
- Deliver Phase 2 and support development of Phase 3 FEZ in Holbeach
- Develop one or more additional Agri-food Enterprise Zones

UKFV core budget FY 23/24 and 24/25

	FY 23/24		FY 24/25		Total
	Sept 23 - Mar 24	Apr 24 - Aug 24	Sept 24 - Mar 25	Apr 25 - Aug 25	
General Staff & Travel	£ 83,251.71	£ 44,668.67	£ 63,405.88	£ 45,289.92	£ 427,942.44
PR, Comms, Marketing	£ 12,166.67	£ 43,833.33	£ 37,166.67	£ 23,833.33	£ 210,166.67
Careers	£ 12,383.82	£ 40,500.00	£ 8,500.00	£ 0	£ 122,767.64
Total	£ 107,802.20	£ 129,002.00	£ 109,072.55	£ 69,123.25	£ 415,000.00

The business plan will start in September 2023, meaning we have split the budget from September to March, then April to August to fit the financial year and the academic year.

Key Contacts for UKFV**UKFV Programme Manager**

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