



LEP Business Live – 20th October 2017
Speech by the Chair of the Greater Lincolnshire LEP
Ursula Lidbetter

PART 1

Good morning everyone and a very warm welcome to LEP Business Live, our 5th annual conference and exhibition. Today is the last day of Lincolnshire Business Week for 2017, and those of you who've been involved in the many workshops, seminars and events will know that we have a lot to talk about.

Today is all about the economy. We'll be concentrating on economic and business successes and will be sharing with you what the LEP is doing to help drive growth and productivity now and in the future and how we can all work together to achieve this aim.

This years' conference theme is **Embrace the Future**, and the speakers and exhibitors we've brought together for you give us all the chance to understand how advances in technology continue to revolutionise the world, through artificial intelligence, technology and automation. It gives us all a chance to *Embrace the Future*.

The LEP doesn't grow the Lincolnshire economy, the people in this room do. However, there are lots of way we can support you; through connections, influence, investments, and business support programmes. As a business person myself, I'm proud that over 200 businesses are now actively involved with us in shaping

Lincolnshire's economic strategies, and over 120 Lincolnshire business people sit on our boards, regularly committing their time and efforts to growing the economy.

I'm also delighted that the LEP increasingly works with a wide range of partners across Greater Lincolnshire, from the public and education sectors, whose expertise and resources support the delivery of our ambitious strategies and programmes. Today is my opportunity to thank you all for your continued focus and ambitions for Greater Lincolnshire. It is certainly paying off.

PART 2

This year we've been working closely with all of you to shape a response to the Government's **Industrial Strategy**, and to influence policy on important areas such as utilities, technical skills, water management and rural isolation. We anticipate an Industrial Strategy white paper in the autumn. Locally however, we are starting work on producing a Lincolnshire industrial strategy and we'd like you to get involved – watch out later in the year for more announcements.

This year also saw our closer involvement in the **Midlands Engine**. From securing and publishing a Midlands Science and Innovation Audit; a Midlands Connect Prospectus; launching the Midlands Engine Investment Fund; and attending MIPIM - the international property show, this is just the start of the activity for the Midlands Engine, and shortly you'll hear more of the opportunities this offers, from Anthony May, the lead on the Midlands Engine Vision for Growth.

Last year, we were all challenged to bang the drum louder for Greater Lincolnshire so with Lincolnshire County Council and other local authority and business partners, I am pleased to announce that today we are launching **Team Lincolnshire** and **Marketing Lincolnshire**.

Team Lincolnshire has already proved a success. Over the last four years it's been representing Lincolnshire on the global property and investment stage. Today, we step up a gear. And I'm pleased to launch the **Team Lincolnshire Ambassador Programme** to support you to champion Lincolnshire. We are justly proud of

Lincolnshire, and want to generate a community that is well informed, well networked, and able to champion Lincolnshire as place to live, work and invest.

If you're interested in joining Team Lincolnshire, please speak to a member of the team at the LEP Stand.

We're also launching **Marketing Lincolnshire.com** today, an innovative new website which helps you create tailored content to showcase the best things about living, working, visiting and investing in Lincolnshire. Visit the LEP Stand to see the demonstrations of the website and toolkit.

And you also told us last year that we needed to combine forces to attract the skills needed to support our growing economy and I'm pleased to launch today a bespoke careers website for Lincolnshire – **The World Of Work**. It's built around content supplied by over 100 local employers and next year we will be promoting this within schools to showcase what fantastic and varied careers are available across Lincolnshire. Visit the World of Work team on our stand for a demonstration and a chat about how to get involved.

The LEP's role as a leader and conveyor within the Lincolnshire economy means we want to support all of our partners with common tools and information to help grow, and increase the productivity of, Lincolnshire.

The business support arm of the LEP – the **Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub** - provides vital face-to-face advice and has been instrumental in making business-to-business introductions and supporting businesses to accelerate their growth. Over 3,500 businesses have now engaged with the Growth Hub and a varied programme is being delivered including free business advice, skills training, and funding. Programmes of support include; tender writing; environmental management; digital marketing; and getting "investment ready", alongside the core offer of free business growth reviews and advice. You've told us that the funding programmes and support offers were numerous but complex, so we've produced new brochures and on-line content which explain the different types of support available. Please visit the LEP

stand or the website at businesslincolnshire.com to learn more or sign up for your free business growth plan.

Since the LEP began in 2011, we've secured £307 million of external investment funding. It's now over two years since I first reported on the **Growth Deal** funds we secured through a competitive process with government. Year on year we're now seeing the results of these 35 projects delivering on the ground, and last year alone we invested over £47m in the Lincolnshire economy. Whilst all parts of Greater Lincolnshire have benefited from these ambitious growth programmes and investment plans, half of these initiatives are within our five most deprived areas, reflecting the LEP's ambition to drive inclusive economic growth. These schemes are creating jobs, allowing people new learning opportunities, and attracting partner and overseas investment. In this brief overview, it's not possible to do justice to all of the schemes we are now involved with, but I'd like to take a few moments to reflect on some of the highlights that are really starting to make a difference.

Skills are a very important priority for you and for many of our partners. We were therefore pleased that the Riseholme College, Showground Campus, was one of the first Growth Deal projects to complete. Phase 2 of the campus has now been open for over a year and is having a real impact on the number of learners in land based subjects. And amongst a number of skills projects launched the "Skills Support to the Workforce" project - for businesses that are seeking to train their staff; and a scheme to help people from local businesses to become part time or occasional lecturers or speakers within our local Colleges.

This year we also launched our £6.5m Skills Capital Investment Fund – so that we can invest in training equipment and facilities, to upskill the workforce within our six priority sectors. Project proposals are currently being evaluated.

The LEP's investment programmes are also supporting many well needed **infrastructure** schemes across Lincolnshire. Working in conjunction with Chestnut Homes Land Ltd, the LEP is supporting the creation of an exciting new Southern Gateway neighbourhood in Boston. Phase 1 of the Boston Quadrant project will significantly contribute to the sustainable growth of the area, providing new homes,

shops, restaurants and a community sports hub, as well as improving traffic flow through a major new distributor road.

LEP funding is centred on enabling the distributor road and affordable housing provision totalling £5.75m of Growth Deal investment. Ultimately the scheme will unlock a further £60m of private sector investment in residential, retail and other commercial developments. Works are progressing well on site, with the first leg of the distributor road including the site roundabout already complete, with the remainder of stage 1 road works due to be completed by the end of November. In addition, the first phase of **housing** commenced on site in April, and first completions of the affordable dwellings are scheduled for January.

Another great scheme we are supporting will provide access into the South Lincolnshire Food Enterprise Zone at the Peppermint Junction in Holbeach, on track to complete this year. The LEP has recently confirmed provisional allocations totalling £6.8m to support the development of all three **Food Enterprise Zones** at Holbeach, Hemswell and Europarc, Grimsby.

Boole Technology Centre located on the Lincoln Science and Innovation Park cuts across a number of priority themes and sectors for the LEP but delivers much needed innovation infrastructure for supply chains within the engineering and **manufacturing** sectors. Providing nearly 3000sq m of new commercial floor space it's open for business and has already attracted 8 innovative companies including Metis Aerospace, Kryptokloud, Tenantia and Nutrapharma – some of which are exhibiting here with us today.

The government's **Housing White Paper** published earlier this year, highlighted the broken housing market. It focused on; location; diversification; speed; and helping buyers now. In support of this, our collective strategic housing plans aim to build significant numbers of new homes by 2030. And our Unlocking Rural Housing scheme is specifically designed to help viability issues across Boston and East Lindsey. We've now supported the delivery of 419 homes which would not otherwise have been built. The first 3 projects are complete and 118 homes are now occupied

at Broadfield Lane and Tytton Lane in Boston, and Chapman Court in Skegness, with 2 further projects very near completion.

Many other projects are now contracted or have planning underway. These include the £5 million new Centre for Health Science, £2 million towards an advanced engineering R&D centre, £4 million for infrastructure in Gainsborough, £2 million for infrastructure in Sleaford, £2 million for infrastructure to unlock the Lincolnshire Lakes Scheme in North Lincolnshire and £2 million towards the South Humber Infrastructure Plan in North East Lincolnshire.

And as well as these large scale growth related projects, our **Invest & Grow** fund this year has provided loan funding to Stokes Coffee to assist with their refurbishment of the Lawn. Their new coffee shop was opened last month, helping to bring this historic building at the heart of Uphill Lincoln back into use.

We learnt this year that our **European funding** stream is guaranteed to 2020. And we're very involved in the BREXIT agenda, working with our partners to influence the best policy outcomes for Lincolnshire.

The 2014-20 European funding stream is now well underway with a pipeline of spade-ready projects coming forward as funding rounds are announced. A Lincolnshire agri-food business was the first in the country to be awarded a grant through the latest round of Growth Programme funding from the Rural Development Programme for England on behalf of DEFRA, winning funding for a new technology to sort and pack brassicas which will grow their business, increase their sales, and create new jobs.

The **LEADER** programme continues to be open for business and we are in the process of topping up the EAFRD Growth Programme; funding for food processing; business development; and **tourism** infrastructure grants. Grants have been made to support projects including; a glamping campsite; a microbrewery; precision drilling equipment; and a rainwater harvesting system. Another series of funding events across Greater Lincolnshire will be held from January to promote LEADER, EAFRD, and other national funds under Countryside Productivity so look out for these in your

area. Under ERDF for Greater Lincolnshire we will also be launching further calls for bids next month which will be targeted at Research & Innovation, SME Competitiveness, Low Carbon and Promoting Climate Change Adaptation.

You've been telling us for some time that funding is available for small scale business projects and for large infrastructure projects but that a locally developed fund is needed to fill the gap for larger growing businesses seeking funding.

I am therefore delighted to announce that our brand new £3m Greater Lincolnshire Growth Fund – targeted at accelerating job growth - has been developed to support businesses with significant growth plans in our priority sectors of **agri-food, manufacturing, ports and logistics, visitor economy, health and care, low carbon and digital**. The customised programme of growth funding will stimulate further business investment that would not otherwise occur; so helping to remove the barriers to private sector led growth. Visit our LEP stand.

PART 3

Looking forward, the Greater Lincolnshire LEP will remain focused on our three core objectives; to promote the economic interests of the area; to influence the investment plans of partners; and to deliver local programmes.

This will benefit all in our economy, and continue to reach towards our ambitions of increasing the Greater Lincolnshire economy by £3.2 billion, creating new jobs, delivering new homes and supporting businesses.

Most of our policy work will focus on working with you to develop a local industrial strategy that will underpin our Long term and aspirational Strategic Economic Plan. Look at out for more news on this later in the year.

Through the products we've launched today, we remain totally committed to supporting our businesses to become ambassadors for Greater Lincolnshire through Team Lincolnshire. We will continue to drive the successful delivery and evolution of the LEP's Growth Deal Programme and will sustain funding for the Business

Lincolnshire Growth Hub – to build an offer for rapidly growing scale-up businesses. We will champion key sectors and supply chains; raise the profile of Greater Lincolnshire as an inward investment location of choice; actively market the Food Enterprise Zones as the place to locate your food business; and continue to make the best use of European Structural Investment Funds as they remain available, whilst case-making and planning for succession funds.

I'd like to thank all of you who give up time voluntarily to make this all possible. Particular thanks go to the members of the Employment and Skills Board chaired by Herman Kok of Lindum, the ESIF Committee chaired by Pat Doody of NatWest, the Innovation Council and the Growth Hub Board chaired by Professor Mary Stuart of the University of Lincoln, the Visitor Economy Board chaired by Chris Baron of Butlins, the Manufacturing Board chaired by Steve Middlebrough of Siemens, the Food and Water Management Boards chaired by Mark Tinsley of Tinsley Foods, and the Finance and Audit Committee chaired by Andy Orrey of Ongo Homes.

Not forgetting our public sector board members, Councillors Colin Davie, Ray Oxby, Peter Wheatley, Craig Leyland, and Rob Waltham who together create a powerful private and public partnership for the Benefit of Lincolnshire.

Embracing the future is our theme today, and Lincolnshire has been *embracing the future* but there is much more to do if we are to remain competitive in this rapidly changing global world. Over the last five years the number of high tech businesses across Lincolnshire has increased by 20% and job numbers in the sector have increased by 1,600 to 10,000 - but we need to do more.

So I thank you again for being here today, which demonstrates your commitment to a dynamic and thriving future for Lincolnshire, and I look forward to working with you to achieve our aim by **Embracing the Future**. Thank you.