
INNOVATION COUNCIL MEETING • 10th March 2022

Key points

It's a moment of great importance, with heightened awareness of issues in food security, energy security, defence. These are Greater Lincolnshire's comparative advantages - what we need to do in the county is of national and international importance.

Our assumptions about how trade works are no longer relevant - commercial risk profiles have changed. Businesses will be much more risk averse than they have been in the past 30 years. This is important because GL is strong in food, energy and defence. We need to be bold.

National policy has been fragmented and without clear policy direction for quite some time, driven by responding to issues - Brexit, covid, etc.

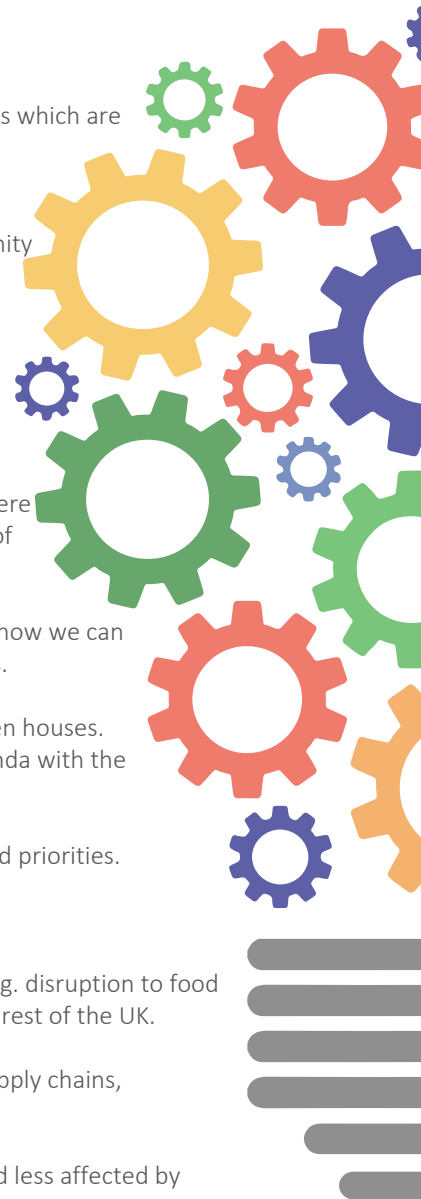
The University of Lincoln 5 year strategy is being written and being engaged in critical global issues which are grounded in the region remains a key part of this.

Levelling Up is the other major policy development - real issues to address in the region. What we choose to do here must resonate with government policy. This is an important opportunity for us to shape what we do as a region

When it comes to the local delivery of levelling up policy, it seems Government is expecting local authorities to focus on the 'pride in place' aspects of the policy.

Greater Lincolnshire's Innovation Assets

- UoL has done a great job of incubating businesses, but once they're out of incubators there aren't places to go. This is true for health and care; it's even true for agri-food (e.g. lack of cold storage facilities). To grow businesses need space, skills, infrastructure.
- We need to secure our supply chains. A big opportunity for innovation is thinking about how we can make supply chains more circular, local, and less affected by international developments.
- Businesses which rely on gas are closing - e.g. food producers which use gas to heat green houses. Gas has become too expensive. We need to link up what we're doing on the energy agenda with the food agenda.
- Manufacturing is a cross cutting theme for all innovation assets and innovation zones and priorities.
- The Defence Board was set up a year ago.
- Security is an important sector in its own right but we often overlook what it enables - e.g. disruption to food supply. There are real opportunities to showcase the value of GL's defence sector to the rest of the UK.
- We need to somehow secure our supply chains - need to shift away from just-in-time supply chains, and consider how we reduce reliance on distant supply chains.
- An opportunity for innovation is how we can make supply chains more circular, local, and less affected by international developments.
- Defence and food are very closely linked - e.g. North Africa won't be exporting any food this year (concerned about Arab Spring 2.0),



Inclusive innovation

- Innovation in under-served areas must come from within.
- Need to avoid any approaches which feel like 'doing to' or 'doing for' and focus on 'doing with' - this is the only approach which works. People need to be empowered to make changes in their own lives.
- Rural Health has highlighted addressing poor health in Mablethorpe as one of their key projects, and this is ripe for innovation. What has been tried there hasn't worked, we need something new. A more holistic approach is required. Mablethorpe offers an opportunity to approach levelling up in a different way, focusing on health as the main lever. Improve health and you can improve the town's economic prospects.
- On funding, we need to push government to agree to long-term funding for key strategic clusters in GL. We need funding certainty in order to create real change.
- Innovate UK and UKRI are being encouraged to take a place-based approach to how funding is allocated.
- Will be very interesting to see what happens to the innovation accelerators; expecting some other smaller-scale pilots like Launch Pads (not expected in the east midlands)
- What we might be able to do with the free ports - they feel intangible at the moment? Need to engage with them more closely to understand how they can drive innovation.
- Business support programmes - they need to be geographically close to people. You don't need events in every market town, but they need to be close to people
- We have a range of market towns which fall within certain zones - can we look at developing education centres of excellence in market towns which are linked up with the innovation zones?
- If we want to build on skills in health and care sector - something which has been talked about but never created - is a pathway from care into healthcare

Incremental innovation

- We need to make 'innovation' relevant for local people in their local areas. What does a clean growth innovation zone actually mean to people?
- We need to get better at communicating what's out there.
- We need to encourage businesses to seek out information, not just make it available to them.
- Need to make business support feel simple and accessible to SME's. Write and communicate it in plain English.
- Language is the issue - 'innovation' puts a lot of businesses off. We mean something much broader than they understand it to mean. How do you get beyond scratching the surface of the businesses which are out there? Need to bring organisations together to maximise contact with businesses.
- Skills – do more for school age children to inspire them and be realistic about matching skills levels to job opportunities.
- Breakdown Greater Lincolnshire into smaller, more manageable zones, connect the activity together and identify where the gaps/investment are required.





THE GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP
INNOVATION COUNCIL

Next meeting June 7th. Focus on the University and LEP 5 year innovation strategies and plans and actions for the year ahead.

