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Forward:

An Interconnected Geography of Opportunity

Our Economic Growth Strategy 2025-2030, developed by members, officers and the community (businesses, residents and other stakeholders), builds on the progress delivered as part of the Economic Recovery Plan 2021-2024. It sets out a bold vision to drive sustainable prosperity, ensuring that businesses, residents and investors can thrive in an environment built on innovation, collaboration, and long-term sustainability.

At the heart of our strategy is a commitment to inclusive growth and regeneration. We recognise that economic success must be shared across all sectors and communities, ensuring that our market towns, rural enterprises and emerging growth sectors have the support they need to flourish. We will build on our targeted regeneration programmes, creating diverse and sustainable town centres – the foundation of vibrant, equitable local economies that attract investment and talent.

We recognise that a strong business environment is essential for economic resilience. West Lindsey is home to a diverse range of enterprises, from micro-businesses to established SMEs. Our strategy promotes entrepreneurship, innovation and business support, providing access to funding, resources and expert guidance. By fostering a culture of enterprise, we will empower businesses to scale-up, adapt and compete in an evolving global market.

Investment is a cornerstone of our approach. By facilitating public and private sector investment, we will enhance infrastructure, digital connectivity and job creation. Championing strategic investments in transport, energy and technology infrastructure will ensure that West Lindsey remains a competitive and attractive location for businesses and residents alike.

Our focus on economic diversification will strengthen resilience, creating new opportunities in agri-tech, clean energy, defence and advanced manufacturing.

Employment and skills development are critical to our district's long-term success. Through partnerships with educational institutions and industry leaders, we will align workforce capabilities with market demands. By supporting investment in skills training, apprenticeships and career pathways, we will equip our residents with the tools they need to succeed in high-growth sectors.

Sustainability cuts across our vision. As we embrace the opportunities linked to the green economy, we will continue to advocate for environmentally responsible growth, ensuring that economic progress is balanced with climate-conscious policies. By promoting renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and low-carbon initiatives, we will contribute to the UK's net-zero ambitions, making West Lindsey a leading advocate in eco-friendly economic development.

Our strategy is guided by place leadership principles. We will continue to deliver growth using an evidence-led, collaborative, enabling and customer-centric approach. We believe that strong governance, strategic partnerships and community engagement are essential to achieving our goals. By working together, we can unlock West Lindsey's full economic potential, creating a prosperous, forward-thinking district that is ready for the future.

This is our vision. This is our commitment. Together, we will build a thriving, sustainable and inclusive economy for West Lindsey.

Cllr Trevor Young
(Leader, West Lindsey District Council)

Cllr Lesley Rollings
(Chair, WLDC Prosperous Communities Committee)



Executive Summary: An Interconnected Geography of Opportunity

West Lindsey District Council's Economic Growth Strategy 2025-2030 sets out our vision and ambition for the future growth and development of West Lindsey's economy.

West Lindsey stands at a pivotal moment in its economic development. The broader economy, at both macro and micro levels, is constantly evolving and often complex and ambiguous. Businesses are exposed to multiple, volatile market forces which, while presenting opportunities also impact upon the bottom line.

The district has a rich heritage of innovation and entrepreneurship and economic metrics confirm the local economy's potential - this strategy supports the positioning of the district to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities.

West Lindsey's strategic location promotes regional economic inter-connectivity - ensuring the district is an integral part of the East Midlands economic geography of opportunity. This, combined with strategic alignment with central government and devolved authority policy, will help to foster a dynamic, resilient and inclusive local economy that benefits all West Lindsey communities.

The Economic Growth Strategy 2025-2030 aims to drive sustainable prosperity in West Lindsey, ensuring businesses, residents and investors thrive through innovation, collaboration and long-term sustainability. The strategy emphasises inclusive growth and regeneration, supporting market towns, rural enterprises and emerging growth sectors. The strategy includes the following priorities and opportunities:

Strategic Priorities:

- Inclusive Growth and Regeneration
- Business Environment
- Investment
- Employment and Skills
- Sustainability and the Green Economy

Key Opportunities:

- Clean Energy (STEP Fusion)
- Agri-Tech
- Defence and Security
- Visitor Economy
- Town Centre Regeneration
- Digital Economy
- Housing
- Transport Infrastructure Development

The strategy, a whole organisation commitment, will be delivered through collaboration, place leadership and evidence-led approaches. Monitoring and evaluation of the fluid action plan will ensure progress and impact are tracked, with annual reviews to support adaptation to changing economic circumstances.

Place:

An Interconnected Geography of Opportunity

Despite being a largely rural and sparsely populated district, West Lindsey's strategically advantageous location presents significant growth opportunities.

Gainsborough – West Lindsey's main service and commercial centre (which is home to sector leading businesses such as Ping, Einox, AMP Rose etc.) is experiencing significant urban regeneration as a result of both public and commercial investment. The town's gateway location into Central Lincolnshire from the Sheffield City Region/Nottinghamshire and close proximity to the planned STEP Fusion development at West Burton represent the western edge 'STEP/A15 Corridor of Opportunity' (Energy, Agri-Tech, Defence, Space, Communications, Aeronautics and Robotics).

Ideally located to take advantage of infrastructure investment that improves transport, digital and utility connectivity, the 'corridor of opportunity' incorporates the Central Lincolnshire FEZ (Hemswell Cliff), the emerging Agricultural Growth Zone and the Scampton regeneration site north of Lincoln.

Concurrently, and in line with our strategic ambition to disperse sustainable growth across our wider rural geography, growth will be further driven by evolving both traditionally strong local sectors including primary agriculture, the visitor economy and manufacturing as well as emerging creative and lifestyle clusters – all of which will play a leading role in evolving the circular economy and decarbonisation activity.

West Lindsey's landscape, rural lifestyle and abundance of natural (including the Lincolnshire Wolds – the East Midlands only 'National Landscape') and historic assets make it a popular location to live and visit. Opportunities for cultural engagement, active leisure and community involvement – combined with highly competitive house prices form a compelling quality of life offer – based around our historic market towns (Gainsborough, Market Rasen and Caistor, as well as the Lincoln fringe villages).



Road – close connections to: the M18, M180 and M62 as well as the A1, A15, A46



Rail – passenger stations in Gainsborough and Market Rasen. Less than 1 hour to: Nottingham, York, Sheffield and Lincoln. Daily trains from Lincoln to London, Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester

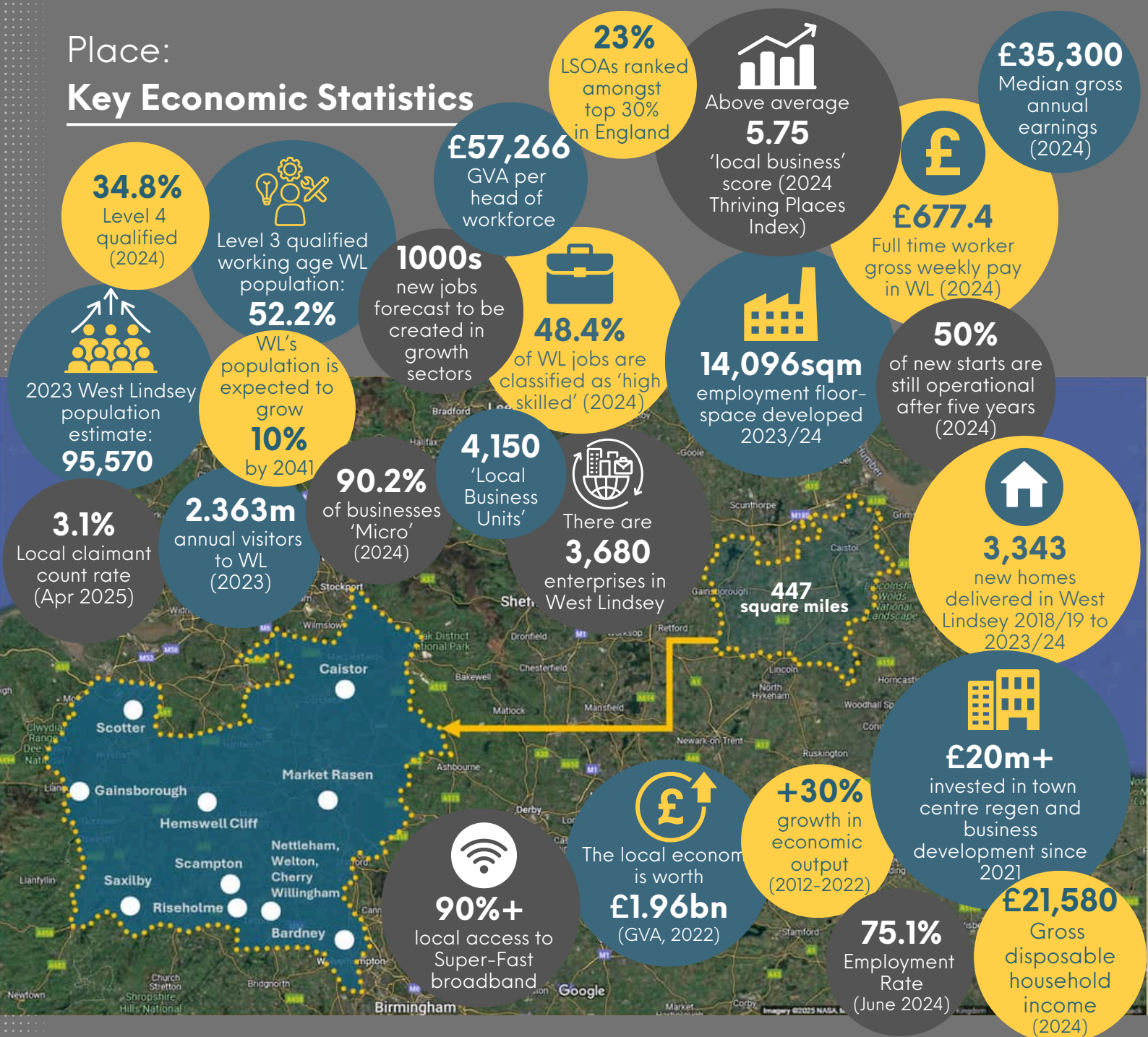


Air – close connections to: Humberside Airport (direct access to Amsterdam Schiphol international hub) East Midlands Airport and Freeport Leeds Bradford Airport. Doncaster Sheffield Airport – likely to reopen during the life of this strategy



Sea – commercial freight transport on the River Trent. Close connections to: Humber Freeport (UK's busiest port complex and global trade gateway)

Place: Key Economic Statistics



West Lindsey is a predominantly rural geography and shares many of the socio-spatial and economic traits experienced by partner geographies in Lincolnshire. The District has historically been characterised by:

- A sparse population coupled with infrastructure and connectivity challenges linked to rurality
- Low qualifications/skills base
- Lower output and productivity
- Economic inactivity
- An ageing population and workforce
- Inequality - pockets of both significant deprivation and wealth

This position, however, was starting to improve pre-pandemic, particularly around productivity. Metrics such as GVA and Gross Median Weekly Pay had improved beyond 'Rural as a Region' averages. Conversely, the percentage of people in low paid jobs continued to rise and the gap between the growth of gross disposable household income in West Lindsey increased versus the rest of England.

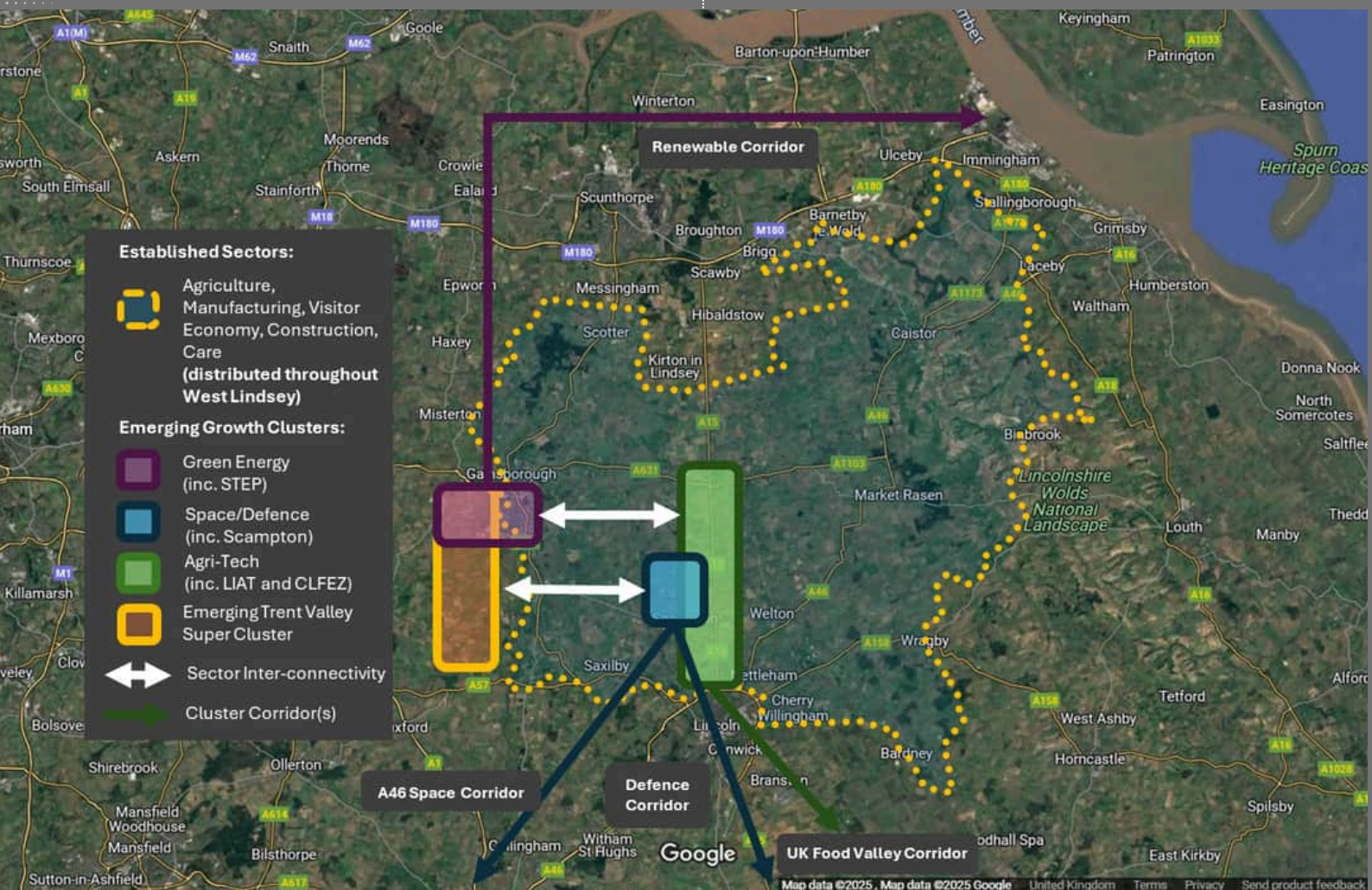
Despite these challenges, West Lindsey is now entering a period of economic opportunity with the potential to significantly improve socio-economic metrics via public funding and indigenous/inward business investment to support and realise growth which will create jobs and increase the resilience of the local economy.

Place:

Economic Sectors

West Lindsey's economy is currently worth £2 billion (Gross Value Added) annually and has grown by 30% over the past decade (higher growth than both the UK and Greater Lincolnshire economy over the same period). The local economy benefits from a diverse and well established business base, reflecting historic industrial strengths – centred around agriculture, manufacturing and construction, sectors which are still experiencing modest growth.

Alongside established industrial sectors, the local visitor economy (worth £172m annually) continues to grow year-on-year, both in terms of income and employee numbers. The care sector is also growing, linked to West Lindsey's increasingly ageing population. These sectors are part of a broader, inter-connected economy which continues to contribute to the sustainable growth of the wider Lincolnshire economy.



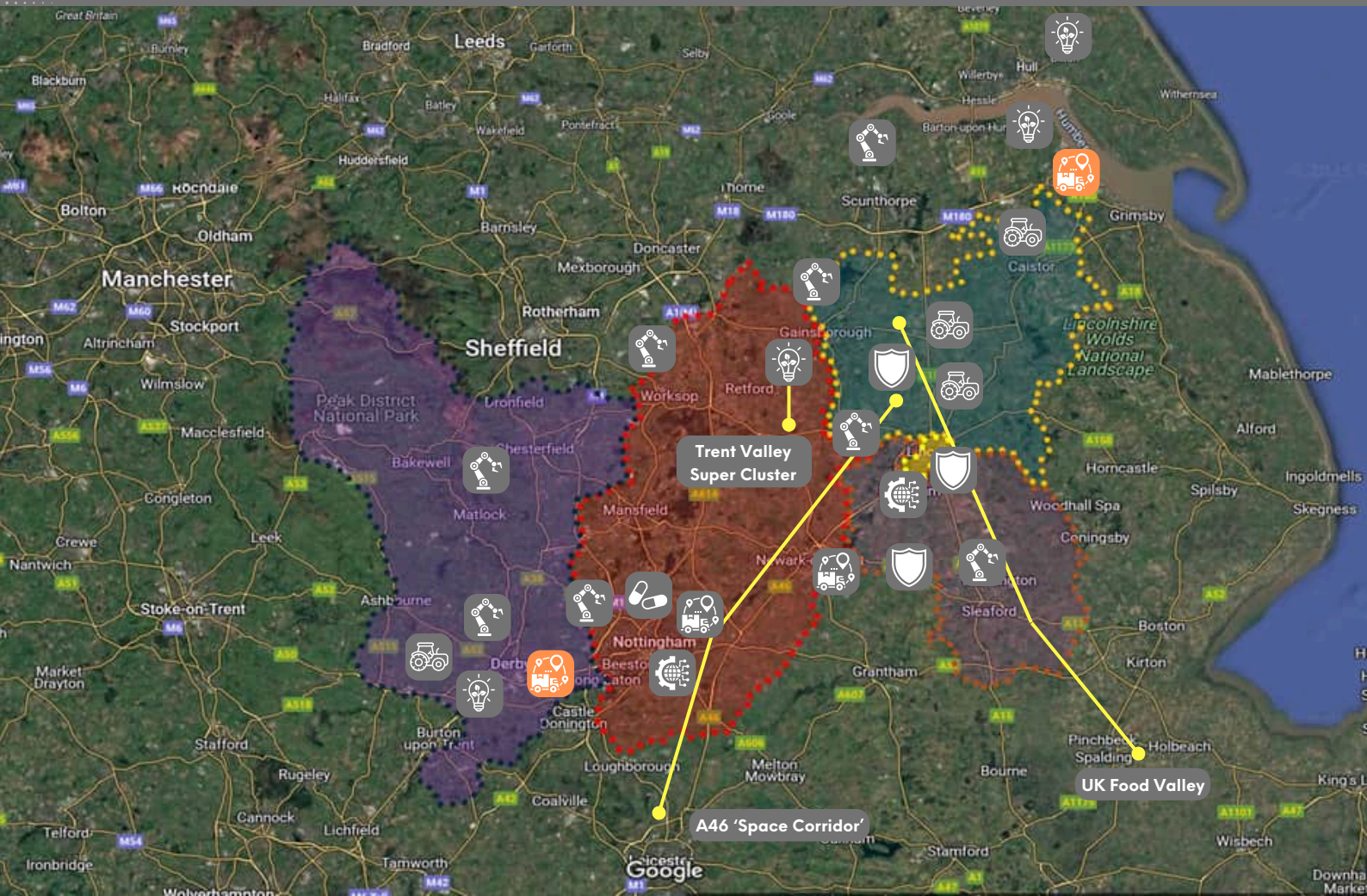
This sectoral mix is changing and the economy is growing in traditionally under-represented, higher-value, higher skilled sectors such as digital (information and communications has experienced almost 20% growth over the past five years) and the broader service sector.

West Lindsey's close proximity to the emerging 'Trent Valley Super Cluster' also presents significant opportunities around hydrogen production, advanced manufacturing, data-centres, artificial intelligence and linked supply-chains.

Critically, the Gainsborough/A15 'Corridor of Opportunity' presents significant scope for future growth, with the potential to create considerable volumes of investment, income and skilled job creation – strengthening West Lindsey's position within the East Midlands economy. West Lindsey's emerging growth sectors include:

- Clean Energy
- Defence, Security, Space and Robotics
- Agri-Tech

Place: Connected Growth



Connected Growth:

Economic activity is not constrained by the boundaries of public administration. Growth, and the policy that supports it, focuses on functional geographies within which there are economic similarities in terms of business sectors, travel to work patterns, labour markets and critically - opportunity.

Geographic Key:

-  West Lindsey (Central Lincolnshire, GLCCA)
-  Lincoln (Central Lincolnshire, GLCCA)
-  North Kesteven (Central Lincolnshire, GLCCA)
-  Nottinghamshire (EMCCA)
-  Derbyshire (EMCCA)
-  Freeport

West Lindsey is an integral part of the East Midlands economic geography of opportunity (also extending towards the Humber Bank), anchored around the growth sectors identified within the Government's emerging Industrial Strategy. Partners are already collaborating to ensure this inter-connected economic region realises its' growth potential. Key sectors include:

-  Advanced Manufacturing
-  Life Sciences and Healthcare
-  Digital and Creative
-  Ports and Logistics
-  Agri-Food
-  Clean Energy
-  Defence and Space

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Collaborative analysis of local economic data, sectoral composition and consideration of West Lindsey's functional economic geographies has resulted in the following analysis:

Strengths

- Established agricultural (agri-food) base.
- Thriving and expanding visitor economy (inc. Aviation Heritage).
- Strategic location (gateway to neighbouring economic geographies).
- Entrepreneurial culture.
- Enterprising manufacturing/engineering sector.
- Quality of life (Rurality).
- Culture of collaboration around R&D and innovation (particularly within agri-tech cluster).
- Significant regeneration of market towns.
- Housing led growth supporting future supply of employment land (and potential for job creation).
- 'Best in class' local plan (CLLP).
- Strong network of large villages, supporting economic growth.

Opportunities

- Evolution of the 'A15 Corridor of Opportunity' and linked growth sector development (agri-food, defence, clean energy etc.).
- On-going visitor economy development.
- Digital economy (and improved digital infrastructure/connectivity)
- Provision of demand led business support for SMEs.
- Developing a highly skilled workforce which responds to local economic opportunities (with a focus on apprenticeships).
- Increased levels of investment as a result of lower land values and cost of business via strategic place marketing.
- Growing the health and care sector in response to the ageing population.
- New government policy and devolution objectives aligned with West Lindsey's economic opportunities.
- Development of the circular economy and wider green business opportunities.
- Realising business efficiencies linked to artificial intelligence.

Weaknesses

- Ageing working population and economic inactivity in some parts of West Lindsey.
- Sub-optimal infrastructure including utilities, road networks and public transport.
- Sub-optimal general B2B collaboration around business development.
- Lower levels of business diversification.
- Low skills base and access to Training/HE/FE.
- Pockets of acute deprivation and unemployment.
- Sparsity
- Pockets of lower productivity
- Historically lower levels of inward Investment.
- Under-performance as a functional economic geography.
- 'Last Mile' infrastructure quality.
- Key service centre (Gainsborough) located on the western periphery of the district.

Threats

- Macro economic volatility.
- Environmental challenges.
- Cuts to public funding.
- Out migration of skilled workers.
- Limited stock of employment land.
- On-going under investment in utility and infrastructure provision.
- Ongoing volatility of development costs.

Strategy:

Alignment and Context

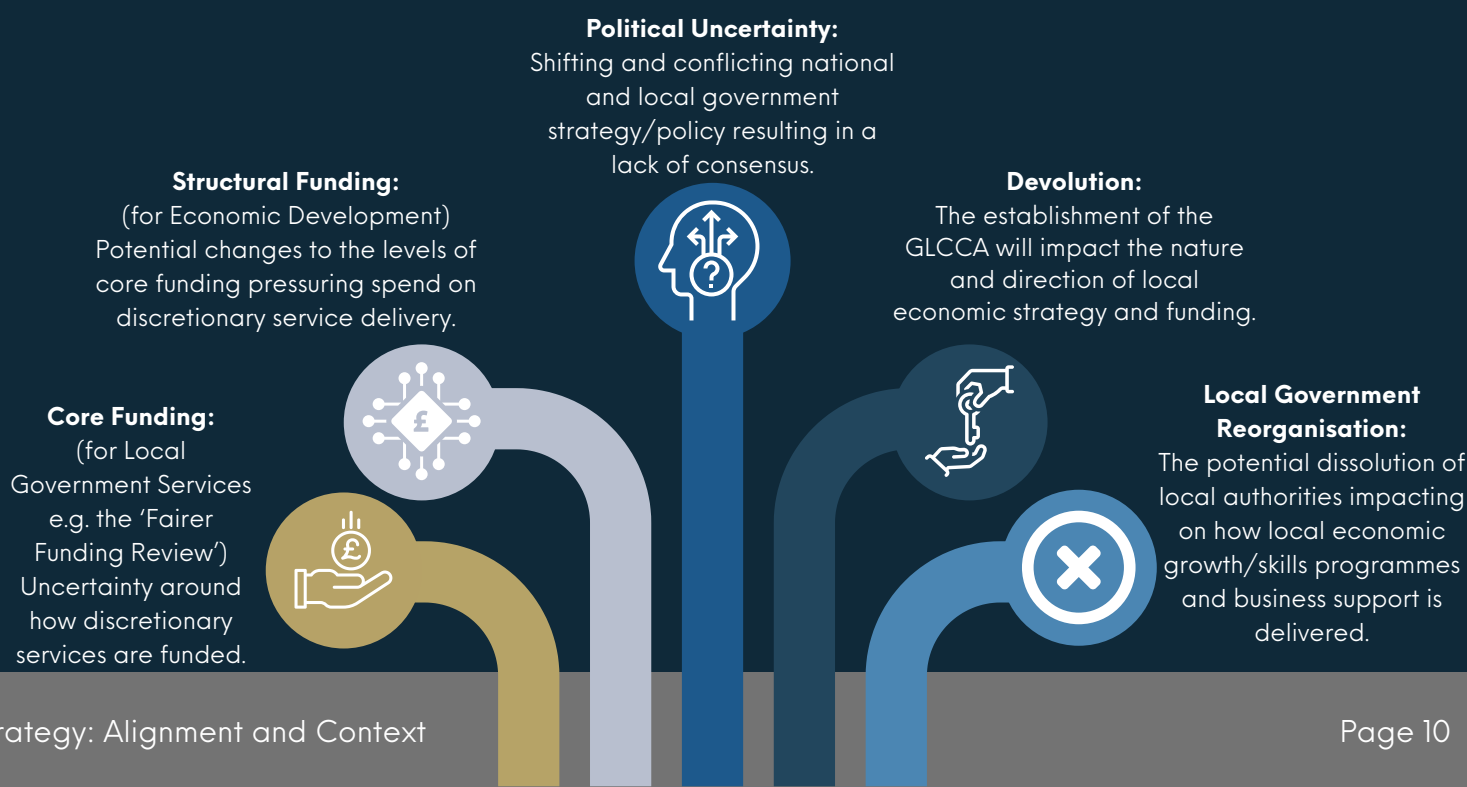
Nationally, the economic policy context continues to evolve rapidly, with Government identifying economic growth as their number one mission. Through this mission, Government plan to deliver new homes and invest in the critical infrastructure which underpins economic growth, drives improved productivity and results in improved living standards. The UK's **Future Industrial Strategy, 'Invest 2035'**, aims to drive long-term economic growth by attracting more investment and fostering domestic business growth and improving productivity in strategic sectors.

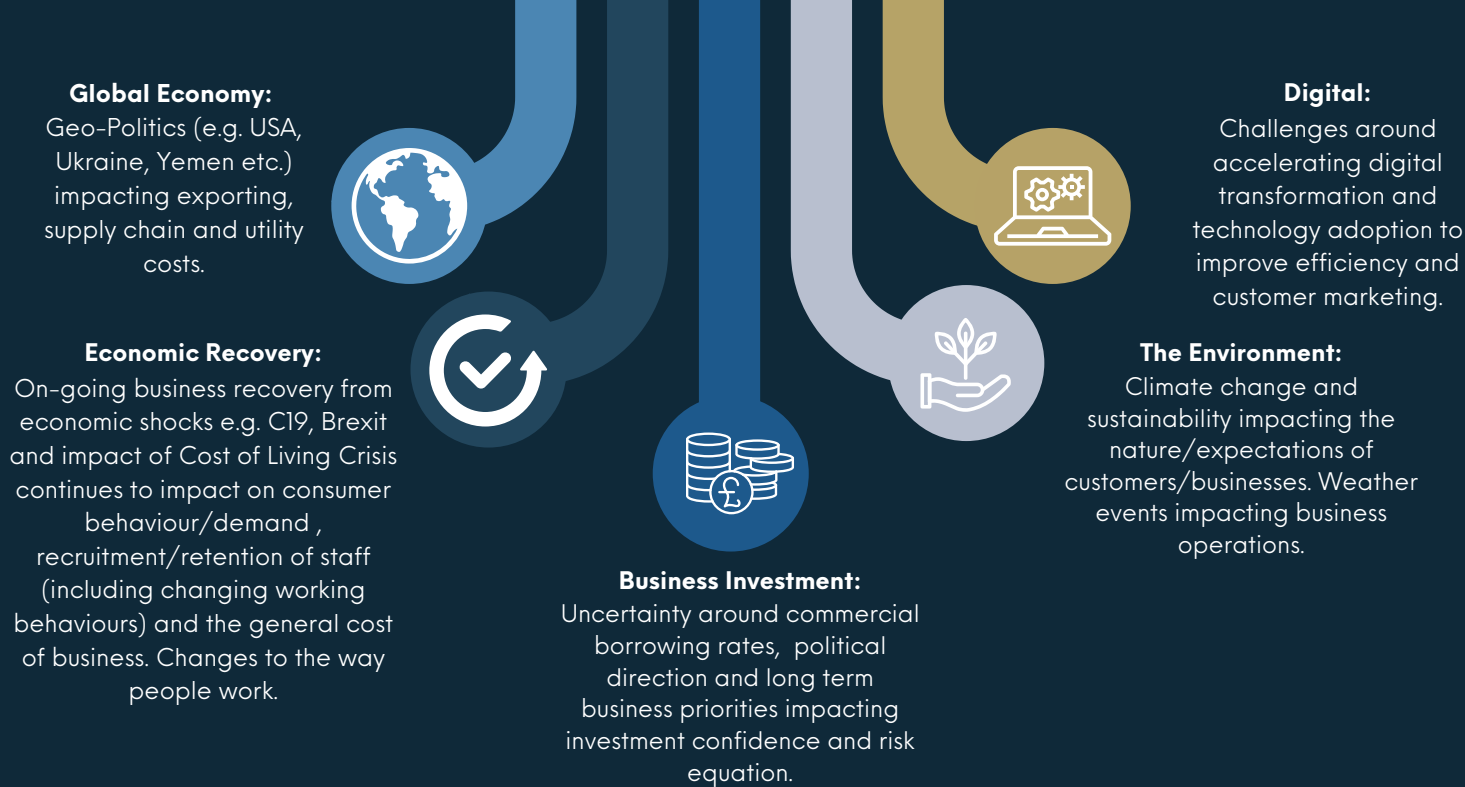
This 10-year plan focuses on creating a stable environment for businesses to invest and grow, particularly in high-potential sectors. The strategy also aims to address barriers to growth (infrastructure and planning), improve skills, develop international trade, evolve place partnerships, support innovation/net-zero and ensure that the benefits of economic growth are felt across the UK. This, along with linked policy (e.g. The National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF and the proposed Planning and Infrastructure Bill), will shape the opportunities to stimulate local growth and deliver growth supporting infrastructure.

Regionally, devolution has created the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Council Authority (GLCCA) which will lead on the growth of local sectoral clusters, improving the local business environment and the composition of local growth plans. Change will be delivered by the GLCCA via the following boards, linked strategy (Greater Lincolnshire Local Growth Plan 2025-2035, Spatial Development Strategy and Investment Plan) and operational programmes: (1) **Transport Board** dedicated to enhancing connectivity and infrastructure across Greater Lincolnshire; (2) **Skills and Employment Board** focused on workforce development, education, and training initiatives to meet local employment needs; and; (3) **Business and Infrastructure Board** aimed at driving economic growth, supporting businesses and overseeing infrastructure projects and investments.

Additionally, although subject to change, the GLCCA has published '**A Flourishing Lincolnshire**' outlining its' initial priorities including: (1) the UK Food Valley; (2) Energy Security; (3) Defence; (4) Employment and Skills; and; (5) Transport and Infrastructure. The GLCCA has also committed to lobbying Government for a Greater Lincolnshire Growth Zone.

Economic Growth operates within an ever evolving, volatile, complex and often ambiguous macro-environment: **External Service Drivers**








West Lindsey businesses also operate within constantly evolving macro and micro-environments influenced by: **External Market Forces.**

The following regional strategies also dictate the nature and extent of growth in West Lindsey:

(1) **‘A 2050 Vision for Greater Lincolnshire’** is a strategic framework developed by local authorities in Greater Lincolnshire – an element of which identifies an innovation led future for the local economy.

(2) **Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Framework (SIDP)** determines priorities for investment into critical infrastructure, particularly in support of new housing and proposes funding strategies using devolved funds, national programs and local funding.

(3) **Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP)** – (and linked Neighbourhood Plans) adopted in 2023, guides economic growth in West Lindsey, Lincoln and North Kesteven by setting-out a long term strategy for development, aligned with sustainability, which includes:

-  Infrastructure, Residential and Commercial Development
-  Town Centre Regeneration
-  Strategic Site and Employment Land Allocations

Locally, there are a number of WLDC strategies (and linked action plans) that contribute towards the growth of the local economy. **‘Moving Forward Together: Our Vision for West Lindsey – Corporate Plan 2023-27’** confirms an over-arching commitment towards supporting business development, job creation and improving the local skills base. This corporate position is supported by operational strategies such as:

- (1) **‘Employment & Skills Strategic Aims and Delivery Plan 2025-2028’** is focused on the continued development of a skilled local workforce, that meets the present and future needs of the local and wider economy and aligned with the Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland Local Skills Improvement Plan;
- (2) **‘Housing Strategy 2022’** which focuses on providing access to good quality housing that meets the needs and aspirations of residents, while also promoting economic development;
- (3) **‘Environment and Sustainability Strategy’** identifies how WLDC will advocate/support sustainable business development and land use;
- (4) **‘Visitor Economy Strategy 2022’** outlines how WLDC will stimulate the growth and development of the local visitor economy.

Strategy:

Alignment and Context



West Lindsey's economy is well positioned to deliver growth which contributes towards both emerging national and regional (Greater Lincolnshire Combined Council Authority) strategic priorities.

Growth policy focuses on fostering regional economic growth, innovation and investment – aligning with the goals of creating a high-tech, low-carbon economy while ensuring that local industries remain competitive in the global market. West Lindsey's growth potential levers include:

Growth Driving Sectors (GDS): WL is home to a number of strategy identified growth sectors, such as Advanced Manufacturing, Clean Energy and Defence, as well as multiple GDS adjacent clusters such as Agri-Tech. There are opportunities to foster innovation in these GDSs through local universities (such as the University of Lincoln) and research institutions. These can drive the development of cutting-edge technologies, particularly in sectors/sub-sectors such as advanced manufacturing, agri-tech, defence and green energy creating 1,000s of jobs and £bns of GVA contributions locally.

Pro-Business Environment: Overcoming barriers to investment and supporting local businesses, through simplifying investment (and financial support), innovation, cheaper energy and access to improved infrastructure are key elements of both local and national growth strategy. Policy interventions will stimulate growth in WL's GDSs. Investment in skills training and educational opportunities with a focus on upskilling the workforce, especially in digital, green and technical sectors, will support West Lindsey's economic transformation. Enhancements to transport and digital connectivity will improve access to national and international markets and investment in infrastructure in West Lindsey is crucial to support local business growth and attract inward investment.

Place Leadership: West Lindsey is well positioned to work with government and stakeholders to ensure growth ambitions are embedded in local strategy and enabling policy and backed by GLCCA's growth deal funding.

Strategy:

Theory of Change (T.O.C.)

The following overarching T.O.C. summary brings together all of the analysis undertaken in preparing this growth strategy – highlighting how positive change will be realised.

This analysis will be explored in more detail through West Lindsey's strategic priorities for local economic development and the key opportunities for sustainable growth over the next five years.

<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Lindsey faces the challenge of transitioning to a high-tech, low-carbon economy while ensuring local industries remain competitive globally. Improving physical and digital infrastructure and ensuring the local workforce has the requisite skills to match the evolving needs of high-growth sectors. Transforming rurality into growth opportunity. 	<p>Current Situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like many rural economies, WL has a sparse population, lower qualification/skills base, lower output and productivity, an aging workforce and infrastructure/connectivity challenges linked to rurality. WL has a strong manufacturing, primary agriculture and visitor economy base, with emerging sectors supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy. Growth in the local economy is focussed around clean energy, agricultural innovation and defence. Infrastructure improvements are required to support economic growth. The University of Lincoln (LIAT etc.) plays a crucial role in research and development, particularly in agri-tech and sustainable technologies. 	<p>Data Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2022, WL's GVA was £1.96b, up from £1.6b the previous year. WL's growth in economic output over the past decade (2012-2022) was +30% (UK = +18%). In 2021, the amount of employment floorspace in the district increased by 56% Lower Universal Credit Claimant rate (3.3%) than regional and national comparators. Strong growth in residents with level 3 and 4 qualifications. Business survival rates better than national averages. <p>Data Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volatile economic activity rates. 25% of working age population 'economically inactive'. Qualification profile remains lower than national averages.
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WL's economy aligns well with the Government's Future Industrial Strategy (FIS) and GLCCA - which emphasizes innovation, sustainability, and inclusive growth. Growth-driving sectors such as advanced manufacturing, clean energy, creative, defence and digital technologies present significant opportunities for economic development. 	<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean Energy: Work collaboratively around STEP Fusion (and the wider Trent Valley Super-Cluster). Agricultural Innovation: Evolve the 'Ag-Zone and CLFEZ agricultural corridor. Defence: Work with partners and the private sector to realise the defence/space opportunity. Skills Development: Focus on digital skills, modern apprenticeships and growth sector training around clean energy, agri-tech and defence. Infrastructure Investment: Improve transport networks and digital connectivity. Support for SMEs: Enhance the business support ecosystem for SMEs, particularly growth sectors. Industry-Academia Partnerships: Strengthen collaboration between local businesses and the University of Lincoln. 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A thriving, low carbon economy with a strong focus on innovation and sustainability. Increased high skill, high wage job opportunities in growth sectors. Improved infrastructure supporting economic growth and attracting investment. A resilient and adaptable workforce equipped with the skills of the future. Stronger collaboration between industry, academia and public sector. A more equitable, inclusive and sustainable local economy and society. <p>Efficiencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamlined planning process via CLLP. Strategic approach to ensure efficient investment of public finance to accelerate growth investment. Simplified business support.
<p>Current Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents travel to work outside WL which stifles local growth. Business are less productive and tend to stay as SMEs (Micro), limiting the economic potential of the local economy. WL sub-performs as a functional area of economic geography. Slow growth entrenches deprivation in pockets of WL. WL has a limited number of higher value/skilled job opportunities for residents. In response, local partners are working collaboratively to ensure a strategic focus on supporting growth sector opportunities which will help long-term sustainable economic and environmental transition. Digital, utilities, transport and employment-land infrastructure improvements are planned to support local growth. 		

Strategy:

Strategic Priorities for Growth

Building on the economic analysis presented in this strategy and the priorities/themes identified in both existing and emerging national and local strategies/plans, the following strategic priorities for growth in West Lindsey have been identified.

These priorities have been qualified through consultation with stakeholders, including local businesses, residents and wider representative/stakeholder groups and partner organisations.

The identified priorities have been positioned to take advantage of the opportunities arising through new and developing plans for Greater

Lincolnshire and the strong culture of collaborative working with partners to achieve the collective goals of Greater Lincolnshire and the wider East Midlands region.

This strategic approach, which will remain agile in order to respond where required to both uncertainty and opportunity, complemented by a flexible Action-Plan (see Appendix one) will position West Lindsey's economy to realise on-going growth moving into local government reorganisation.

Following further strategic priority definition, the strategy identifies and provides further context around West Lindsey's key economic opportunities.

West Lindsey District Council is committed to fostering a dynamic, vibrant, resilient and inclusive economy that supports sustainable growth, meets the challenges of climate change and fulfils the economic potential of the district, benefiting all of our communities and confirming West Lindsey's role in the wider regional economy. The strategy focuses on:



By focusing on these key themes, West Lindsey District Council aims to build a dynamic and prosperous future, where economic growth and regeneration are achieved through collaboration, innovation and a customer-centric approach.

Theme 1: Inclusive Growth and Regeneration

Vision for West Lindsey:

'Through the delivery of growth and regeneration programmes, we will support the development of a thriving West Lindsey economy where everyone has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from economic success, leading to more diverse, equitable and sustainable town centres and communities.'

Approach:

Consultation with stakeholders has confirmed a desire to ensure growth benefits all. West Lindsey is a district of contrasts. Despite many communities performing well (in an economic sense), analysis highlights acute pockets of deprivation, inter-generational economic inactivity, youth unemployment and challenges linked to rurality/sparsity.

Our approach to delivering inclusive growth and regeneration will seek to ensure that through our interventions, local economic growth, and more importantly - economic well-being, is accessible to as many of our residents as possible. In order to realise growth, while concurrently lowering barriers to opportunity, we will:

- Continue to lobby for growth enabling infrastructure investment which supports emerging opportunities and bridges gaps between rural and urban provision.
- Champion place-making and build on the significant investments we have recently made via the Levelling-Up Fund and National Lottery Heritage Fund to revitalise our town centres (e.g. 'Thriving Gainsborough 2024') with further programmes targeted at addressing market failure through the generation of commercial investment.
- Use our place-leadership role to work with developers to improve social-infrastructure, deliver balanced housing stock and commercial buildings which create a sense of pride in place for residents.



- Lever our key growth projects, such as STEP, in order to maximise their economic reach/social value (via local investment, supply-chain, skills development etc.) and create opportunities for our residents most likely to be excluded from the labour market.
- Support the re-imagining of our town centres as places to live, work and shop by targeting interventions that tackle vacancies and retail churn to improve the vibrancy of the local retail/leisure/service and market mix (including the night-time economy).
- Continue to utilise structural growth funding, such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to deliver programmes to support growth across the district which is focused on meeting the specific needs of our rural communities.

We will also evolve our relationships with representative organisations, such as the Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Business, to promote equitable employment practices, advocate sustainable and inclusive business models and support social enterprises and cooperatives.

Additionally, we will seek to increase the local socio-economic value of our growth investments through procurement activity and seek to ensure the planning process distributes opportunity through-out the district equitably.

Theme 2:

Business Environment

Vision for West Lindsey:

‘Through the provision of advice, resources and funding which encourage growth, entrepreneurship and innovation, West Lindsey’s Micro, SMEs and larger businesses will have the opportunity to realise their potential.’

Approach:

Consultation with stakeholders emphasises that local businesses have: (1) an on-going need for practical support which addresses real-world business challenges; and; (2) financial assistance to realise commercial opportunities. Additionally, stakeholders identify that all support should be demand-led and respond to the unique needs of the business accessing support, supporting innovation and adaptation – especially given the volatile operating environment many businesses find themselves competing in.

West Lindsey has an entrepreneurial business culture with a strong base of SMEs, scale-up businesses and business survival rates significantly higher than national averages – all of which are positive indicators of economic resilience and growth potential. Conversely, high streets continue to struggle in response to changing consumer behaviour and external market factors e.g. utility prices, continue to increase operational costs for many businesses. On-going structural uncertainty is also having a negative impact on business operations, confidence, investment and ultimately, commercial sustainability. To support West Lindsey’s businesses we will:

- Work with partners to improve access to growth finance that helps de-risk SME investment, improves businesses growth and sustainable, high value job creation throughout the district.
- Explore, with funding partners, opportunities to deliver business infrastructure including incubators/start-up units and grow-on space.
- Support sustainable additional employment land allocations through the local and neighbourhood plans.



- Support local entrepreneurs, start-ups and micro-enterprises, scale-ups and high-growth businesses with support programmes which are focused on meeting the specific needs of the end-user.
- Establish a key account management programme to ensure West Lindsey’s most significant businesses – in both mature and emerging sectors, can engage with local government and partners.
- Build a business case for a pan-district business forum, providing a platform for B2B collaboration around growth opportunities, workforce development and knowledge transfer.
- Continue to work with partners to support foreign-owned businesses/investors.
- Advocate and support local business exporting into the global market.
- Continue to develop and promote West Lindsey’s visitor economy, town centres, markets and footfall events.
- Continue to utilise structural growth funding, such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to co-fund the delivery of the Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub and WLDC’s bespoke local business support provision.
- Animate supply chain opportunities.

Theme 3:

Investment

Vision for West Lindsey:

'Through the facilitation of investment from both the public and private sector, we will drive West Lindsey's economic resilience and diversification, job creation and improvements to infrastructure and digital connectivity to create a conducive environment for businesses and communities to thrive.'

Approach:

Consultation with stakeholders confirms an expectation that WLDC should continue to play a leading role in facilitating investment into the whole district. There is strong support for improving physical and digital infrastructure, with a focus on 'future-proofing' and incorporating sustainable technologies. Although WLDC works pro-actively to encourage and facilitate both public and private investment in the district, it is undeniable that investment decision making continues to be impacted by market uncertainty, the commercial viability of investments in the district and investors appetite for risk.

Our approach to investing in growth projects will continue to be based around sound business case development. In parallel, our approach to supporting investment will be based around maintaining an investment ready culture, enabling investment through a supportive approach which helps businesses to mitigate risk. In order to provide investors (both public and commercial) with confidence we will:

- Utilise our adopted local plan to take a flexible approach to growth in order to support/facilitate the realisation of emerging commercial opportunities.
- Ensure that, as part of the Local Plan review, future employment land and residential allocations meet future growth requirements, using planning policy to help create the conditions in which interested parties can invest with certainty.
- Work with partners, such as Invest/Team Lincolnshire, to provide dedicated investment, relocation or expansion support.



- Work with partners, such as Lincolnshire County Council and the Greater Lincolnshire CCA (as well as utility providers) to develop policy/business cases which: (1) make the case for investment to unlock local sites (e.g. Sustainable Urban Extensions); (2) improves community connectivity; (3) delivers additional housing and serviced employment land; (4) delivers transport, utility and digital infrastructure improvements to support West Lindsey's priority growth sectors (e.g. regenerating Scampton).
- Continue to work in partnership with developers/investors to address market failure, revitalise our high-streets/communities and deliver locally iconic developments (e.g. Savoy Cinema, Gainsborough).
- Continue to maintain our intelligence led approach to handling investment enquiries, working pro-actively with stakeholders/agents to bring vacant units/sites into commercial use.
- Evolve our place-marketing collateral, launch the 'Invest West Lindsey' website to promote the district, local opportunities and supporting local business networks.
- Continue to lobby, develop policy and the mechanisms to aid West Lindsey's communities hosting Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) realise significant community benefit in both the direct locality and across the wider district.

Theme 4:

Employment and Skills

Vision for West Lindsey:

'Through partnership working with educational institutions and industry, we will strive to improve skills development and employment opportunities in West Lindsey - aligning workforce capabilities with current and future market needs, particularly in our emerging growth sectors - developing a pipeline of local talent to support all local businesses to realise growth'

Approach:

Consultation with stakeholders identifies the on-going need for WLDC to work in partnership with employers and education/skills providers to improve functional skills, raise productivity and create career pathways - particularly for younger residents. Additionally, stakeholders identify there is a need to improve both up-skilling opportunities and access to employment across all sectors through-out the district. There is also strong support for maintaining and developing relationships with businesses and skills providers to ensure skills shortages are identified/addressed, apprenticeships prioritised, employment is inclusive and West Lindsey has a workforce which is ready to respond to opportunity.

West Lindsey already benefits from a collaborative approach to skills and employment planning via established bodies like the West Lindsey Employment and Skills Partnership. Conversely, despite research confirming that although the district benefits from a number of encouraging metrics, including improving higher skills levels and low unemployment - there is a significant workforce deficit, out-migration for training or employment and pockets of acute skills and employment deprivation. Critically, there is only minimal local provision around further and higher education, despite nationally renowned facilities such as the Lincoln Institute for Agri-Food Technology (LINCAM) based/operating in West Lindsey.

Local employers often struggle to access the training and development their employees require locally and the ageing population is creating issues around succession planning. Building on the legacy of the WLDC's UKSPF funded 'People and Skills' programme, workforce development strategy will be focused on future-proofing employee skills, addressing employment gaps and aligning education and training with industry needs (particularly those in emerging sectors such as defence, agri-tech and clean energy). Working with the GLCCA to ensure Local Skills Improvement Plans, local Get Britain Working Plans and skills funding works for the West Lindsey economy more broadly, we will:



- Work with stakeholders via the West Lindsey Employment and Skills Partnership to both address local challenges and facilitate local opportunities identified via the Employment and Skills Delivery Plan, ensuring ongoing skills intelligence and forecasting proactively address future business and workforce needs.
- Continue to strengthen links with the University of Lincoln and explore the potential for a campus based in Gainsborough focused on developing advanced manufacturing and fusion adjacent skills, building on the successful LINCAM model.
- Support businesses/educational institutions to develop a talent pipeline for WL's emerging growth sectors via industry led programmes which aligns local skills development with ongoing/future sector needs.
- Explore the potential for a West Lindsey trade school.
- Establish the business case for a Fusion Skills Cafe in Gainsborough.
- Engage with schools to develop skills curriculum, animate local career pathways, support placements and inspire the future workforce (emerging/established sectors).
- Engage with employers and skills providers to address local access issues in order to address travel/connectivity issues and reduce barriers to employment and training.
- Work with providers to promote life-long learning, re-skilling and apprenticeships - particularly around digital and green skills.

Theme 5: Sustainability and the Green Economy

Vision for West Lindsey:

'Through advocacy and promoting sustainable economic practices that balance growth with environmental stewardship, we will ensure West Lindsey contributes to net-zero ambitions.'

Approach:

Consultation with stakeholders confirms that transitioning to a low carbon economy and adopting greener technology is a necessity for environmental sustainability and a key economic opportunity for local businesses. However, stakeholders also identify that the 'net-zero transition' is costly, complicated and time consuming for many businesses and there is a definite requirement for practical business support and funding to realise benefit which balances sustainability with financial viability.

Corporately, WLDC is committed to championing sustainable business practices, as well as stimulating commercial investment linked to the green transition and supporting the growth of sectors that contribute to country's net-zero ambitions. As part of this approach we will support, with partners, businesses to identify how:

- Investing in energy-efficient technology and transitioning to renewable energy sources like solar or wind can significantly cut carbon emissions and reduce long-term business costs.
- Sourcing materials responsibly, partnering with eco-friendly suppliers and reducing transportation emissions through local procurement strategies can improve sustainability.
- Moving from a linear 'take-make-dispose' model to a circular system that emphasises reuse, recycling and refurbishment to minimise waste.
- Reducing packaging, implementing recycling programs and finding ways to re-purpose byproducts can make operations more sustainable.
- Switching to low carbon fleets, optimising delivery routes and leveraging rail or sea freight over air transport can lower carbon footprint.
- Upskilling employees core environmental literacy can reduce costs, drive innovation and realise commercial opportunities.



- Implementing water-saving technologies and practices in production, office spaces and supply chains can preserve this vital resource.
- Creating goods that are durable, repairable and made from sustainable materials can attract eco-conscious customers and reduce environmental impact.
- Participating in carbon offset programmes, investing in reforestation or biodiversity projects and supporting regenerative agriculture can help balance emissions.
- Encouraging sustainable practices in the workplace, such as remote work options, carpooling and eco-friendly office policies, fosters a sustainability-focused culture.

To do this, we will continue to work with partners at organisations such as the Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub to ensure local businesses have access to the support resources required to realise net-zero transition and business opportunities linked to sustainability.

We will also ensure we act as local sustainability advocates and encourage businesses to embrace opportunities for sustainable innovation, efficiency and market differentiation.

More broadly we will build upon work with partners to conduct district-wide climate vulnerability assessments and develop adaptation strategies for critical infrastructure and economic assets. We will also explore how sustainable energy generation can mitigate grid constraints which may prevent business growth in West Lindsey.

Key Opportunity 1: Growth Sector, Clean Energy (STEP Fusion)

Vision for West Lindsey:

'West Lindsey has leveraged its proximity to West Burton (STEP fusion) and other renewable energy projects to evolve a local advanced manufacturing and service supply chain which has improved local skills levels, infrastructure and created a volume of jobs and local business opportunities'



£102.9m Annual Average GVA
(until 2065 from STEP)



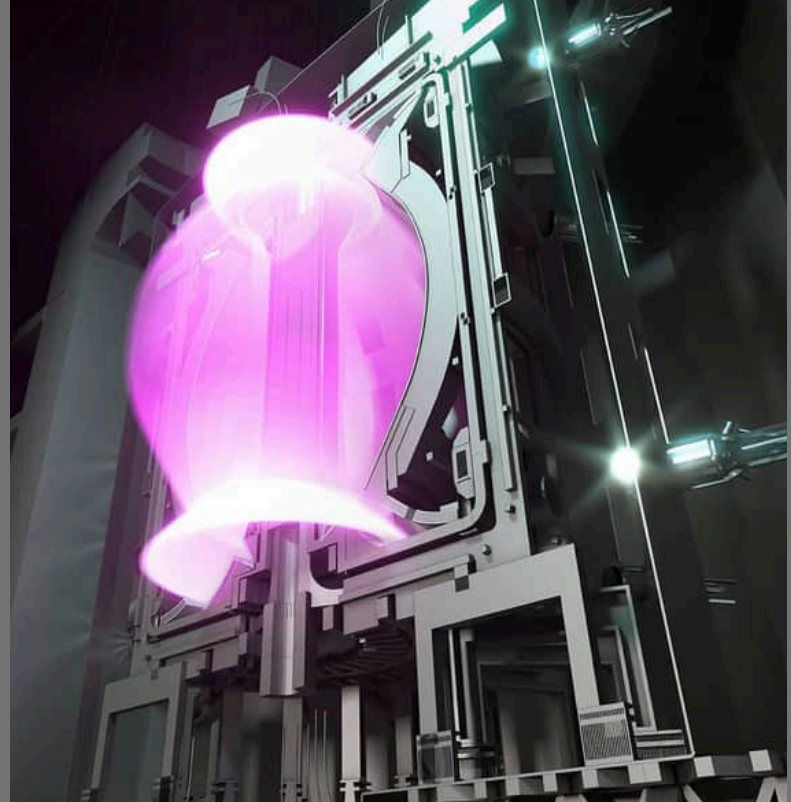
1,329 Annual Average Jobs
(until 2065 from STEP)

Background:

Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) was announced as part of the Government's 'Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution' in 2020 which sought to design and construct a prototype fusion power plant by the 2040s. This internationally significant, first of its kind programme will result in the UK being one of the first countries in the World to commercialise fusion energy generation, placing it at the forefront of the clean energy revolution.

In order to progress the realisation of STEP, both strategic and operational engagement/collaboration groups have been formed in partnership with UKAEA, representing the interests of 30+ organisations/businesses in the Midlands. These groups operate with the shared purpose of enabling the progression of STEP development to maximise the direct/indirect socio-economic benefits from the programme, with STEP acting as a catalyst for wider regional benefits.

In addition to the redevelopment of the West Burton site, the Trent Super Cluster Vision identifies the future use of the former Cottam and High Marnham sites for Data, AI, Hydrogen and Food/Agri Tech, with the potential to create over 15,000 highly skilled jobs and generate £930m GVA per annum.



Opportunity:

STEP, located at West Burton – next to Gainsborough, is identified as a key element of the 'Corridors of Opportunity', which positions West Lindsey as the 'engine room' for the development of clean energy, defence and agri-technology sectors in the Greater Lincolnshire economy. WLDC will continue to work with partners to:

- Deliver construction and operations phase training – equipping local people with the necessary skills to compete for the job opportunities.
- Promote fusion in local schools and promote career pathways leading to local recruitment.
- Develop local supply chains – promoting and providing support for local businesses to access commercial opportunities.
- Undertake local sector/cluster development – supporting the UK fusion sector and facilitating the creation of a local cluster of clean energy adjacent businesses.
- Support inward investment.
- Support the requisite investment in improving local infrastructure (transport, local homes, sites/premises and services) to service the requirements of the opportunity.
- Identify programmes to maximise the benefits from increasing local footfall and spend.



Key Opportunity 2: Growth Sector Agri-Tech

Vision for West Lindsey:

'The Ag-Zone becomes the UK's most dynamic, productive and sustainable agricultural cluster, investing in its capital and knowledge base to be a global exemplar of agricultural growth'



£165m GVA uplift by 2035



731 jobs created by 2035

Background:

The Ag-Zone was originally proposed in Autumn 2022, to secure the future of the Greater Lincolnshire agriculture and horticulture sector during a period of significant change.

Focused around the emerging agri-tech cluster at Riseholme in West Lindsey, which is rapidly emerging as a key national centre for advanced agri-tech, organisations such as the Lincoln Institute for Agri-Food Technology (LIAT), Barclays Eagle Lab and two national Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) in agri-robotics and the use of AI in agri-tech have already emerged.

This growth has also led to a series of programmes to support start-ups and spinouts in agri-tech, with the first of these now being commercialised. This has created a growing cluster of agri-tech businesses, supported by over £100m of applied R&D and innovation funding since 2016.

This cluster of activity, which includes: education from foundation level to PhD; an active CPD and knowledge exchange programme for industry; a large and fast growing innovation programme; and, a growing community of agri-tech companies, means West Lindsey is poised to be a leading UK centre for agri-tech.

Opportunity:

Over the next 10 years, the Ag-Zone has the potential to experience significant growth (see above). Furthermore, the Ag-Zone supports the broader Agri-Food sector in Greater Lincolnshire including:

- Agricultural and Horticultural Producers;
- Food Processing and Supply Chain Businesses;
- Agri-Tech and Input Suppliers; and;
- Professionals, Innovation and Skills Providers.

Critically, WLDC and partners can play a key role in supporting the Ag-Zone and broader sector development by creating the conditions for investment growth:

- Enabling Policy (Planning etc.)
- Employment Land Provision
- Infrastructure Investment
- Investment Marketing and Facilitation
- Financial Incentives
- Skills Development and Training Programmes
- Public/Private Sector Partnerships

Key Opportunity 3:

Growth Sector, Defence and Security

Vision for West Lindsey:

'Scampton is part of a thriving and internationally important defence (and adjacent sectors) cluster built around cutting edge innovation, technology and sustainability'



£108m GVA per annum



Up to **1,725** High skilled new jobs

Background:

The UK (and International) defence and security sector is undergoing rapid digital transformation and growth as a result of increased government investment. The Royal Air Force presence in central Lincolnshire is accompanied by a cluster of major defence and security technology businesses (and skilled staff), providing operational support for ISTAR and digital systems. They are part of a wider regional industrial base with advanced digital, manufacturing and energy capabilities, including Industry 4.0 technologies, robotics and automation, automotive and power systems. This knowledge intensive sector is one of the fastest growing in Greater Lincolnshire and employment has risen by 21% since 2019 with turnover increasing by 31% over the same time period

The former RAF Scampton base, historically home to the World famous RAF Red Arrows display team, 617 'Dambusters' Squadron and the Vulcan Bomber, ceased military operations in 2023. The dormant site was quickly identified as a viable location for the development of a nationally significant defence cluster.

The 900 acre secure site includes a fully operational and CAA-licensed CAPI68 3,000 meter runway. With low ambient population density and local communities supportive of commercial site redevelopment, Scampton provides the ideal environment for businesses engaged in aerospace, space, robotics, defence manufacturing, technology R&D, innovation, testing and evaluation. Scampton is also identified as a key element of the 'Corridors of Opportunity'

Opportunity:

The redevelopment of the former RAF Scampton base will deliver significant economic benefits and presents multiple opportunities for economic regeneration, nationally significant sector development and the creation of a sustainable, high-tech industrial ecosystem.

The Scampton Master Plan sets out the redevelopment vision for a sustainable mixed-use site encompassing commercial, aerospace, defence, education and heritage activities – a key element of the 'A46 Midlands Space Corridor' vision, enabling growth across the wider region. WLDC will continue to work towards site acquisition and disposal to its development partner Scampton Holdings Ltd in order to realise:

- High value local job creation and skills development.
- Domestic and International site investment
- Local infrastructure (transport/digital) improvements
- Development of local supply/service chains
- Regeneration of the local area
- Innovation sector(s) development (e.g. defence, advanced manufacturing etc.)
- Carbon neutral site operations
- The development of aviation heritage and tourism
- Sector adjacent linkages to the Trent Super Cluster



Key Opportunity 4:

Visitor Economy

Vision for West Lindsey:

'West Lindsey has continued to develop as a quality visitor destination attracting more visitors and encouraging people who are already visiting to stay longer, explore further and spend more in the local economy during their trip'



£171.82m Sector value (2023)



2.363m Visitors (2023)

Background:

The visitor economy is a significant and growing sector within West Lindsey, which has grown from an annual value of £93m in 2012 to £172m in 2023. The sector provides a variety of local employment opportunities either directly, or across the local supply chain (employing nearly two thousand employees in 2023) and generates volume footfall for our high-street shops and service providers.

The district is an attractive, rural area which combines an outstanding natural environment (including the Lincolnshire Wolds) with historic service centres/market towns (e.g. Gainsborough, Market Rasen) and villages as well as close proximity to the city of Lincoln. The district is also rich in aviation heritage and has a developing cultural and leisure offer (via WLDC's Cultural Strategy). WLDC's current Visitor Economy Strategy is underpinned by key principles, which remain vital to the ongoing growth and success of the sector and the wider local economy:

- Visitors must have a positive rewarding experience; they will want to share with others.
- Residents must benefit from the Visitor Economy.
- The District's Environment must be protected.
- The Visitor Economy must be continuously developed.

Opportunity:

West Lindsey has a number of ingredients to develop an increasingly successful and prosperous visitor economy: a broad heritage offer and a range of attractions and activities (such as the race-course at Market Rasen and the Lincolnshire Showground); a strong food, hospitality and retail sector; including Marshalls Yard in Gainsborough and family-friendly attractions such as Rand Farm Park, Lincoln Zoo and Forestry England's Willingham Woods.

Critically, WLDC and partners can play a key role in supporting sector development by working collaboratively to deliver increased:

- Volumes of flexible accommodation e.g. self-catering and 'glamping'.
- Provision and promotion of outdoor activities e.g. cycling and walking.
- Product development around food, shopping and attractions to improve quality and experience.
- Usage of locations such as Market Rasen Race Course and the Lincolnshire Showground for music and business events.
- Variety of events to support market development and generate media attention.
- Quality of the local tourism product offer.
- Promotion of the 'whole' West Lindsey offer including local producers, street markets etc.

Key Opportunity 5:

Town Centre Regeneration

Vision for West Lindsey:

'West Lindsey's town centres will continue to undertake vibrant transformation to counter structural changes to the composition of the high street, focused on sustainable growth, heritage preservation, inclusivity and economic prosperity'



£23m+ invested in the regeneration of our towns (since 2020)

Background:

WLDC has a proud history of facilitating investment into the regeneration of the district's town centres. This investment is crucial because it encourages business growth, creates jobs and attracts visitors – making our towns more vibrant. The investment also leads to improved public spaces, fostering a sense of community pride and identity. Investing in our town centres is part of our long term approach to addressing high street vacancies, the health of our stall markets and place making more broadly.

During the 2010s Market Rasen was a location for the Portas Pilot scheme, a programme aimed at rejuvenating high streets across the UK. More recently, the 'Historic Building Grant' has helped regenerate a number of town centre buildings and supported the establishment of the town's banking hub. In Caistor, WLDC have worked alongside the Government's High Street Task Force (HSTF) through the 'Unlock Your Place's Potential' programme. This approach has resulted in the vacant former Co-Op building being redeveloped as part of a £3m programme to provide additional commercial, community and holiday accommodation space. The UKSPF funded 'Large Village Retail Grant' has helped regenerate local commercial, transport and leisure infrastructure.

Gainsborough, through Levelling-Up and National Lottery Heritage funding, has benefited from over £18m of targeted investment into the 'Thriving Gainsborough' programme which includes the regeneration of the town's Market Place, town centre parks, heritage buildings, Bus Station, way-finding signage and the building of the Savoy Cinema.



Opportunity:

Moving forwards, WLDC is keen to work with commercial partners and wider stakeholders to build on this catalytic investment in order to address market failure and further improve the physical, economic, social (including healthcare provision) and environmental characteristics of West Lindsey's town centres – encouraging footfall, dwell time and spend. Opportunities include:

- Evolving our proactive 'place-partnership' approach ('Audit, Engage, Encourage and Promote') to tackling vacancies and developing the town-centre retail/service mix – using commercial specialists to support the identification and recruitment of new businesses that improve the mix.
- Maintaining and improving the 'Invest Gainsborough' initiative and supporting local business networks.
- Developing and deliver the Vacant Property Action Plan.
- Identifying funding opportunities to support the delivery of elements of the next phase of the Gainsborough Heritage Master Plan.
- Refreshing the Markets Action Plan and exploring the potential for a speciality market programme.
- Exploring the potential for further investment into public realm improvements.
- Incentivising investment via business grants and business support.
- Utilising levers such as festivals, entertainment and free parking to drive footfall generation.
- Identifying funding to deliver improved wayfinding in Market Rasen and Caistor.

Key Opportunity 6: The Digital Economy

Vision for West Lindsey:

"West Lindsey has embraced digital opportunities, improved infrastructure and connectivity and started to realise the efficiency benefits of Artificial Intelligence"



100% Superfast connectivity by 2028



731 jobs created by 2035

Background:

In 2022, provisional estimates show that the digital sector contributed £158.3 billion to the UK economy. Digital opportunities linked to both high tech sector growth and emerging opportunities around quantum technologies, programming, data engineering, design and artificial intelligence are pillars of a modern economy.

High-quality digital infrastructure is essential for positioning West Lindsey to take advantage of technological advances, local commercial opportunities, support inward investment and more broadly – improve living standards and well-being.

Historically, there has been a spatial disparity in digital infrastructure provision and linked improvements to connectivity. The roll-out to more sparsely populated areas such as West Lindsey has been slower as a result of both technical and commercial factors. Project Gigawatt (led by BDUK and LCC locally) is focused on delivering full fibre infrastructure to the district, but currently access to superfast in the district is around 90.24% and ultrafast 57.27%.

Improving local access would contribute to increased economic growth, innovation and productivity through improved digital connectivity, as well as supporting those that are vulnerable or disadvantaged to access skills, training and flexible employment opportunities.

Opportunity:

West Lindsey is home to a growing and diverse cluster of digital and tech businesses, including a cluster of cutting edge agri-tech businesses at Riseholme. Improving local digital connectivity, particularly in growth sectors, will boost the local economy.

There is an opportunity for WLDC to work with partners (and the wider business community) to:

- Enhance digital connectivity across the whole district through the roll out of improved fixed and mobile connectivity (5G, Super/Ultra Fast broadband).
- Support the introduction of smart technologies
- Lever higher investment into emerging digital infrastructure
- Develop supply chain connectivity to Data Centres and AI Growth Zones
- Develop financial incentives, networking and mentorship for digital businesses to support realisation of commercial opportunities
- Develop digital skills development and training programmes
- Support tech enablement for non-digital businesses

Key Opportunity 7:

Housing

Vision for West Lindsey:

'West Lindsey has a balanced housing mix which supports the infrastructure requirements of a growing local economy enabling residents to access to high-quality, affordable housing and sustainable communities'



1,306 new homes delivered
(2006 to 2024)



8,000 new homes required to be
delivered in Central Lincolnshire by
2030

Background:

The Government are committed to delivering 1.5 million new homes over the next five years. An overhaul of the planning system is underway and new mandatory housing targets are once again required to be agreed within local plans.

As part of the Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal increasing the choice, quality and diversity of the housing offer, as well as the numbers, was agreed as a priority for the new joint working arrangements between the GLMCCA, Lincolnshire County Council, the unitary authorities, districts and other stakeholders (including Homes England) operating in Greater Lincolnshire. As part of the deal, the following commitments to housing delivery were made:

- Unlocking barriers to affordable housing delivery, regeneration and wider housing growth through the development of a housing pipeline.
- Infrastructure development to support housing growth.

Collaboration has already commenced with the completion of the Greater Lincolnshire housing pipeline study in early 2025 and early discussions are underway to develop the approach to delivery of the required Spatial Development Strategy for Greater Lincolnshire.



Opportunity:

The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (adopted April 2023) promotes a spatial strategy which focuses on delivering sustainable growth for the area which meets the needs for homes and jobs, regenerates places and communities and supports necessary improvements to facilities, services and infrastructure.

Moving forwards, the plan-led approach to growth in Central Lincolnshire aims to maintain and enhance the role of Gainsborough as the main town in West Lindsey, supporting the towns growth and regeneration objectives. The Market Towns of Caistor and Market Rasen are also recognised for their ability to deliver proportionate growth in housing, employment retail and wider service provision, whilst villages varying in scale also have carefully planned growth allocations. Key opportunities include:

- Utilising Gainsborough's Sustainable Urban Extensions to support the growth requirements of the STEP development (2,800 new homes required).
- Supporting Neighbourhood Plans to deliver sustainable local socio-economic growth.
- Working with partners to ensure new housing supports the 'Corridors of Growth' - meeting the requirements of the future workforce.

Key Opportunity 8: Transport Infrastructure Development

Vision for West Lindsey:

'Transport infrastructure development creates a more productive, connected, efficient and sustainable transport network in West Lindsey, supporting economic growth and improving commercial opportunities for local businesses'



CEPR research identifies that for every £1 spent on transport infrastructure, £3 to £7 benefit is generated

Background:

Economic Growth is a fundamental theme of the Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan and West Lindsey's current transport network plays a crucial role in connecting the district to Greater Lincolnshire and the regions:

- **A15:** This major road runs north-south through West Lindsey, providing access to Lincoln and the A46 to the south – connecting to the M180 (M18 and M62) motorways, Humberside Airport and the Humber ports to the north.
- **A631:** This road runs east-west, linking Gainsborough to Market Rasen. It is an important route for local traffic and goods movements onto the A15 and A46 and a gateway route into Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire.
- **A46:** This major trunk road connects West Lindsey to the A1, M1 and provides access to major cities like Leicester and Nottingham as well as the south Humber Bank (Freeport).
- **Rail:** Local services link with both the East Coast Mainline (London) and major Midlands/Northern cities.

There have been recent investments in local network improvements, such as the new Foxby Lane roundabout in Gainsborough, which will improve traffic flows and safety as well as supporting local housing development and the commercial development of employment land.

Opportunity:

The improvement (including maintenance), efficiency (in terms of the flow of people, goods and services) and safety of key transport links in and out of West Lindsey (and Central Lincolnshire more broadly) to ports, rail/air-hubs (e.g. Humberside, East Midlands airports) and the strategic road network, as well as digital connectivity to support emerging smart transport solutions, is a critical enabler of local economic and business growth. Key opportunities include:

- Improving the A15 economic growth corridor infrastructure to support Defence and Agri-Food sector opportunities.
- Developing 'gateway' road (A631), rail and waterway infrastructure to support the evolution of the STEP programme and Clean Energy sector.

More broadly, WLDC and partners (e.g. GLCCA) can play a key role in shaping and delivering transport programmes that are focused on:

- Road/Rail Upgrades and Air-Hub linkages
- Improved Local Public Transport
- Active Travel Schemes
- Digital Connectivity/Smart Travel
- Sustainable and Green Transport
- Strategic Growth Corridor Development

Delivering Change: Collaboration and Place Leadership

‘Place leadership’ is a strategic approach where local authorities and other stakeholders collaborate to improve the quality of life and economic prosperity of a specific area.

In order to support the continued restructuring of the local economy – which contributes towards improving outcomes for residents, communities and local businesses as well as a more equitable, environmentally friendly and sustainable West Lindsey, it is critical that we work in a holistic way.

Realising West Lindsey’s economic opportunities (via the appended action plan) and delivering positive change will be challenging. Navigating a complex operational environment with multiple public, private and community organisations – each with their own objectives, requires decisive leadership and collaborative place-focused partnership working.

West Lindsey District Council have worked to define how Place Leadership can be used to refocus how local services are delivered. The development of this approach (and supporting toolkit) is particularly timely given the way that the economic development in West Lindsey, and Greater Lincolnshire more broadly, is changing as a result of devolution and the establishment of the GLCCA.



In the context of economic growth and through the lens of place leadership, West Lindsey District Council will act as a leading enabler of local economic change, advocating West Lindsey’s growth and setting the context for local growth into Local Government Reorganisation.

As part of our commitment to place we will continue to develop our strategic and operational relationships, working with both current and emerging partners at a place-based level to address challenges and opportunities, removing ‘silos’ and promoting outcome focused partnership working.

West Lindsey’s Place Leadership Principles:

-  Evidence Led
-  Collaborative
-  Partnership Focussed
-  Enabling
-  Coordinated
-  Customer Centric

West Lindsey’s Place Leadership Toolkit:

-  Creating narratives and priorities for Place Leadership at place-based levels.
-  Equipping officers and members with the right language and knowledge to ensure West Lindsey is at the centre of long-term, consistent strategic decision-making.
-  Using intelligent data analysis and insight from communities to back-up decisions.
-  Auditing stakeholders, their objectives and existing relationships to promote positive partnership working.
-  Supporting internal staff and external partners to become ‘place champions’ – championing West Lindsey and the vision across their work.
-  Creating case studies to showcase behaviours and positive outcomes through a Place Leadership approach.

Delivering Change: Commercial Place Shaping

'Commercial Place Shaping' is a strategic approach which involves enhancing commercial areas to foster economic growth, attract investment and support local businesses. It creates vibrant, accessible spaces that encourage community interaction, increase footfall and reflect local character – aligning with broader goals of urban revitalisation, livability and sustainable development.

In delivering this strategy, we will continue to act as a leading enabler of investment into West Lindsey. Our operational regeneration programmes, such as 'Thriving Gainsborough 2024', address entrenched economic decline by improving both the physical and economic conditions of our places – resulting in a more compelling and sustainable long-term investment proposition(s).

In order to facilitate commercial place shaping, West Lindsey District Council and partners (e.g. Team Lincolnshire), will support investment into West Lindsey's high streets and on employment land in the district.

Our holistic approach will help investors to mitigate risk, develop, grow and create sustainable jobs:



Strategic and Place Advocacy

We will work at a senior level to foster productive commercial relationships, develop policy/programmes/collateral which supports the case for local investment, consider strategic acquisitions (where financially viable) and identify and convert funding/investment opportunities which support commercial place making.



Development Control

We will use planning policy to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest with confidence. The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan takes a flexible approach to town centre and employment land growth, management and adaptation in order to support the realisation of emerging commercial opportunities.



Town Centre Regeneration

Utilising structural funding (e.g. the UK Shared Prosperity Fund) we will deliver both capital and revenue interventions which support the long term vitality of the district's town centres and employment land (and social infrastructure) to build confidence in place and encourage commercial investment.



Business Support and Market Intelligence

We will provide a package of 'soft-landing' support to encourage investment into West Lindsey – either directly (through our Growth and Planning teams and regeneration programmes) or via our partners. To support this approach, we will continue to undertake significant analysis around town centre properties/employment land use and proactively liaise with agents in order to promote active commercial usage.

Delivery of this strategy will be focused around a rolling medium-term **action plan** - linked to the strategic themes identified within this strategy.

In alignment with the strategy, the action plan is intended to be dynamic in order to react to changing economic circumstances and flexible to capitalise on emerging opportunities.

The action plan will be reviewed annually and amended as appropriate - both in terms of composition and delivery timescales.

To track delivery progress, impact monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken using both overarching economic metrics which we have developed with strategic partners (identified below) and project specific analysis which will animate the broader outcome(s) of our interventions.

Metrics will measure data, direction of travel and performance versus comparators. These metrics will also be reviewed annually and updated where required.

Progress updates will be reported back to stakeholders annually via summary info-graphics and case studies where pertinent.

Theme 1: Inclusive Growth and Regeneration

- GVA per head of Workforce (real terms)
- Wages - Weekly Pay
- Employment Rate
- Out of Work Benefits
- Vacancy Rates
- Gross Disposable Household Income

Theme 2: Business Environment

- Business Survival Rate (3 Year)
- Total Businesses
- Total Businesses per 1,000 of Population
- Business Birth and Death Ratio

Theme 3: Investment

- Estimated Investment Funding
- Employment Floor Space Developed

Theme 4: Employment and Skills

- Total Jobs
- Job Postings
- Qualifications - Level 3+
- % of Occupations classed as High Skilled

Theme 5: Sustainability & the Green Economy

- Median Housing Energy Efficiency Score
- Per Capita CO2 Emissions within the scope of Local Authority
- Total Commercial and Industrial Emissions



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