

24<sup>th</sup> November 2016

**European Structural Investment Fund  
Growth Programme Up-date**



This paper is to provide the LEP Board with an update on our European Structural and Investment Fund programmes and highlight latest progress to date.

The Chancellor confirmed that the government will guarantee EU funding for Structural and Investment Funds projects signed after the Autumn Statement and which continue after we have left the EU. European Structural and Investment Funds projects will now have funding secured if the agreement is signed before the UK departs the EU, is in line with domestic strategic priorities and is good value for money.

**European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** aimed at strengthening economic and social cohesion

**Calls/projects up-date**

There have been three calls for activity since the ERDF programme launched:

- 7 projects have been contracted requesting £8m of ERDF
- 2 projects have funding agreements in place requesting £2.5m ERDF
- 12 projects are in appraisal requesting £26.7m ERDF

Projects supported to date include: encouraging innovation and research based interventions to SMEs with a key focus on the GLLEPs priority and emerging sectors; a range of business support activity aligned to the Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub to provide a wide ranging but comprehensive suite of business support activity; raising flood defences in Boston and Wrangle to provide longer term economic sustainability for the areas; constructing a pumping station & drainage solutions at Killingholme Marshes & creating centres of excellence for our Agri-food sector.

DCLG have confirmed that we will be able to launch a fourth call in December 2016, but there are some restrictions on how much of our total allocation to 2020 we can have calls for. We are holding an interim ESIF Committee meeting to discuss options for December calls and it is likely that the focus will be around supporting capital broadband infrastructure, business support activity aligned to the Growth Hub, supporting the shift towards a low carbon economy, promoting climate change adaptation and preserving/protecting the environment & promoting resource efficiency.

DCLG anticipate that there will be further call windows in 2017 and 2018.

**European Social Fund (ESF)** focused on training and improving employment

## Supporting People Back into Employment

Current activity around this area includes:

- A Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) Opt in Proposal, supporting the individual to be better placed to move back into employment
- A Skills Funding Agency (SFA) Opt In Proposal, which will support the skills and training requirements of individuals who are unemployed.

The DWP proposal is one contract with the Humber LEP which will cover the geographical area from North Yorkshire to Greater Lincolnshire. A contract has now been awarded to:

- Support packages for the Unemployed £2.25m delivered by Maximum/Remploy

Big Lottery Fund is supporting the social inclusion agenda and there are four areas that were subject to a call. 3 contracts are now operating that include:

- Considering Employment Options £1,260,000 ESF delivered by Lincolnshire VCS
- Engagement into Learning £480,000 delivered by Grantham College
- Money & Debt Management £480,000 delivered by the Community Foundation of Lincolnshire, with the Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership

Another scheme which is through to stage 2 is:

- Supporting the economically Inactive £240,000 delivered by Children's Links

The Skills Funding Agency opt-in proposal includes several programmes to provide training, or to make training more relevant and appropriate.

The procurement process for six of the seven projects will be complete on the 12<sup>th</sup> November and delivery is expected to begin before Christmas.

These are:

- Apprenticeship Growth Programme - supporting businesses through the process to recruit an Apprentice and supporting unemployed residents to apply for Apprenticeship vacancies;
- NEET Information, Advice and Guidance – preparing unemployed young people for local jobs by providing inspiration about local jobs and industry;
- Specialist Skills Advisor Network – helping business owners to articulate their skills needs and matching that with appropriate training;
- Industry Specialists Teaching & Knowledge Exchange Programme – supporting businesses to collaborate with local Colleges and Training Providers so that curriculums and knowledge within local training organisations is current;
- Skills Support to the Unemployed – training for residents who are unemployed
- Greater Lincolnshire Careers and Industry project - developing a local online resource of information about local industry/sectors, helping to change perceptions about skills needs.

The largest project (£6m) will provide eligible training to the Greater Lincolnshire workforce. This contract has been won by Calderdale College and we are working closely with them to ensure that the right kind of training is delivered (subject to eligibility).

All contracts will run until at least March 2018.

### **Calls/projects up-date**

**European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)** aimed at improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry, the environment and countryside and the quality of life and management of economic activity in rural areas

### **Calls/projects up-date**

Limited calls for activity were announced in March and August 2015 which were targeted at supporting businesses in the Agri-food sector and investment in the tourism sector.

3 agri-food projects have been contracted requesting £668k to invest in the automation of a pack house to improve the efficiency, product flow and quality of spinach and kale; an automated flower bunching line and a new facility to house four existing brassica processing lines.

2 tourism projects are currently being appraised by DEFRA which includes a cycle path to link to the Sustrans 64 cycle route and to provide a new all-weather multi-themed activity centre

We have not been able to launch with further calls for activity to date, but DEFRA are now asking up to prepare for calls, likely to be launched Nov/Dec 2016 and will be focused around food processing, business development and supporting tourism activity. We are continuing to work with our specialist advisors from the Forum for Agriculture and Horticulture and we are pushing DEFRA to allow us to open a call to support skills in the Agri-food sector which we feel are not supported via other funding streams. This could include workforce development pathways in intermediate engineering and technical skills, professional skills development in areas such as innovation, technology development, change management, problem solving, engaging leadership and community engagement.

**LEADER funding** is for small rural businesses and communities delivered through Local Action Groups who decide which projects should be funded to address local needs.

### **Calls/projects up-date**

We have four areas across Lincolnshire eligible for LEADER funding where we have received over 117 outline applications, 16 projects have now been contracted and 9 are under appraisal. Projects contracted include: a mustard plant to purchase and install an up-to-date mustard seed cleaning, conveying and drying piece of equipment which will increase productivity and reduce electricity consumption and a play barn which will support farm diversification and improve a visitor attraction in the area.

LEADER has been operating on a rolling programme basis since its launch in November 2015 but following the EU Referendum we were only allowed to accept applications but not contract with them. On 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016 we could advise projects that they had been approved and issue contracts but we still couldn't promote the programmes and could only accept applications that could be approved prior to the Autumn Statement.

The latest minutes from the National LEADER Exchange Group confirms that **the former Autumn Statement deadline of 23<sup>rd</sup> November to get LEADER projects agreed no longer applies** and that the RPA and Defra will be writing jointly to LEADER groups to confirm this. We haven't

received this correspondence yet, but once we have we hope to plan some publicity events to raise the profile of the LEADER programmes again and encourage more applications to come forward.

### **Forward planning**

The ESIF Committee is meeting on 15th November 2016 to prepare for the launch of future calls particularly around ERDF and EAFRD. All calls that are agreed will be publicised on the LEP website, Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub (as appropriate) and through our intermediaries/stakeholders. Further workshops/events will also be held to promote our LEADER programmes once we have written confirmation from the Rural Payments Agency about how we can proceed.

Preparation work for future calls has already been underway with an extra-ordinary stakeholder's event held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016 where ESIF Committee members & local representatives were invited to review where we are at on each of the ESIF programmes, including LEADER. We also reviewed the pipeline projects that are likely to come forward if further calls are to be announced which was good preparation for the recent decision to allow us to open calls in December 2016.

Government officials are now starting to consider how to structure funding and policies once the UK leaves the EU. This affects economic development, skills, and rural/agricultural funding.

The Forum for Agriculture and Horticulture held a workshop to produce a position paper on "a domestic agricultural policy" to take the place of the Common Agricultural Policy. The priorities that the forum wanted to see in a new programme were:

*The greater Lincolnshire Forum for Agriculture and Horticulture encourages government to replace EU agricultural policies with a robust, focused, and well-resourced UK policy which:*

- *Combines actions on agriculture, food production, energy and landscape so that the contribution of the food value chain to the economy, environment and community is increased*
- *Helps the United Kingdom to grow more, produce more and sell more of its agri-food products and knowledge – achieving the twin aims of increased food security and increased exports of both food and agri-food technology*
- ***Invests in efficiency and higher productivity in the food value chain – focusing more investment on innovation, skills, automation, and land and water management***

The LEP Network has been given the opportunity to contribute to government thinking on a replacement for the EU's economic development funding programmes. Justin Brown from LCC has been asked to represent GLLEP in those discussions. The LEP network have produce a paper which seeks the following principles from within the replacement programme, and these will be debated at a meeting between the LEP Network and senior government officials in early December.

Balance to be struck between economic need and growth opportunity (recognised in LGF Deals) which will help to achieve the prime minister's ambition of having "an economy that works for everyone".

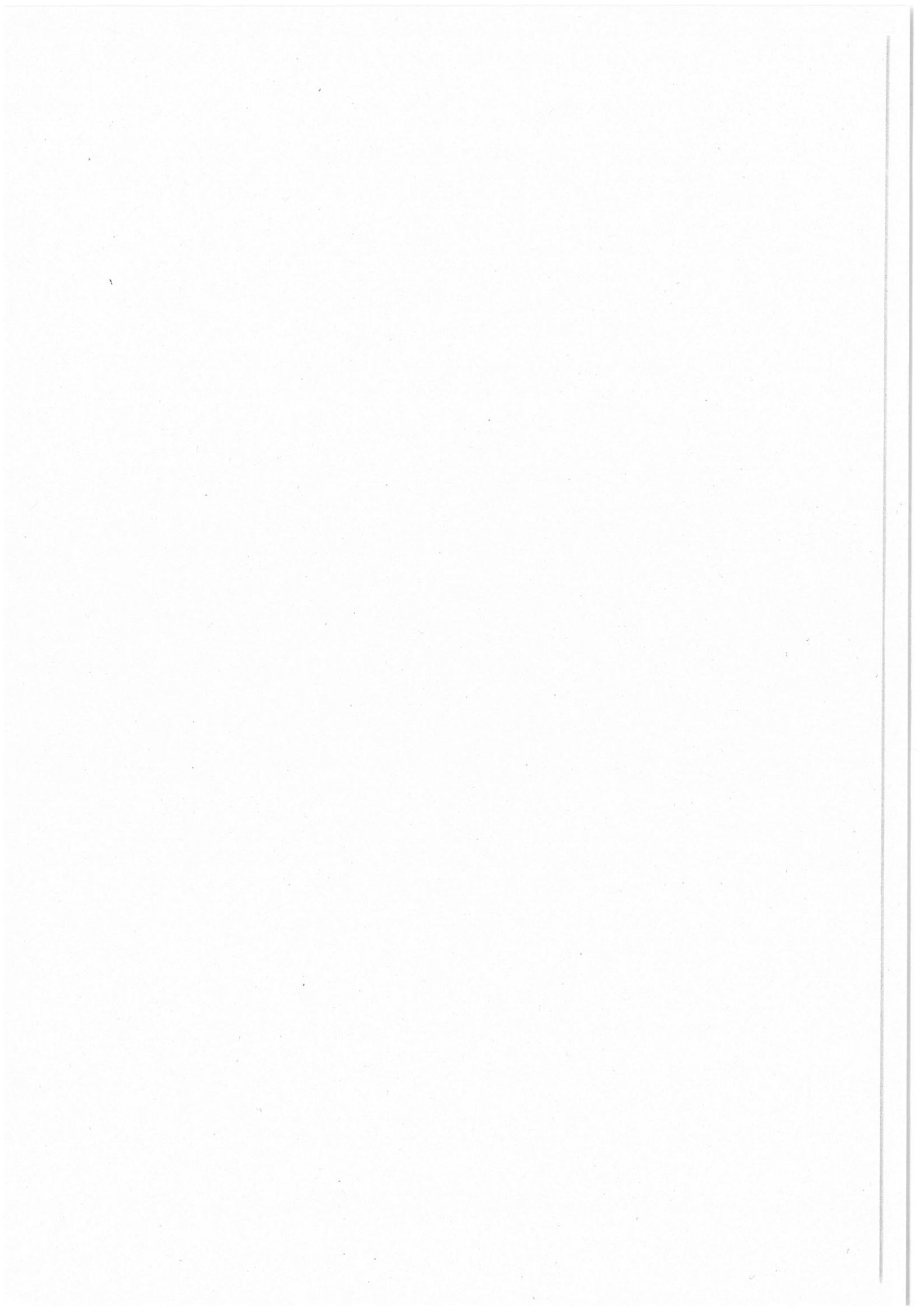
**Medium to long time period (covering a period of time that gives the longer term certainty, LEPs like the 7 year EU programmes offered). As a minimum, the Future Funding should operate on at least a 5 year period from 2020 to 2025.**

- a. Single investment programme (covering a mix of capital and revenue, with the freedoms to move funds between capital and revenue to take advantage of unforeseen opportunity and need).**
- b. Mix of 5 year core investment settlements that are “topped up” annually through several rounds of funding (for areas to be rewarded, bid for more as growth opportunities arise, dealing with unexpected issues particularly the unknown from Brexit).**
- c. Locally run schemes (delivering more effective local integration of public investment which leads to additional benefits when programmes are locally aligned; and is more cost effective to administer).**
- d. Leverage of private sector investment (to increase value of money and also delivers more) which is appropriate to the area in which the investment takes place.**
- e. Culture of investment not grant (encouraging different ways of raising capital by unlocking other investment schemes – off balance sheet, investment bonds, hypothecated land duty tax etc.).**
- f. Cross LEP collaboration (both with neighbours in shared sub-national geographies and linking with other areas across the country with places of similar strengths on particular themes).**

Include those things that are important to economic growth but which were excluded from EU funding programmes: young people, schools, careers advice, sectors such as tourism/visitor economy, and projects which improve connectivity.

- g. Linking strongly to the Industrial Strategy (there is likely to be reference to future of ESIF in Industrial Strategy Green Paper).**

**Recommendation - It is essential that GLLEP continues to promote its needs for the future programmes, and it is recommended that a detailed piece of work is carried out to establish an agreed position statement.**



### Recommendations

LEP Board Directors are asked to note the content of this report and it is recommend that the LEP ask the chair of the ESB via the ESB and Officers to:

- Ensure that deliverers of Careers Advice have access to good local information about sectors and industry.
- Explore opportunities and develop a scheme that helps local employers engage with schools
- Circulate the new Government Careers Strategy when it is published shortly

### Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to inform the Board of the current Career information, Advice and Guidance landscape, and to seek a recommendation for officers to explore funding opportunities to fill relevant gaps in provision.

**Board members are asked to consider the existing gaps in Career Information, Advice and Guidance and discuss the role of the LEP is filling these.**

### Background

Over the past five years there have been a number of changes to the way careers guidance for young people is delivered. Until 2012, responsibility rested with local authorities and was delivered through the Connexions service. The Education Act, 2011 and subsequent extension, means that schools and Colleges have the statutory duty to 'secure access to independent careers guidance' for pupils aged 12 – 18 (Year 8 to Year 11).

Career guidance -services and activities intended to assist individuals to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers.

Career Advisors are not required to know about local industry but they would be expected to know where to look for information about it.

The Employment and Skills Board has considered this topic many times, and from 2012 to 2015 carried out a joint initiative with Lincolnshire County Council to raise awareness of Greater Lincolnshire's important sectors to schools, parents and teachers through a variety of projects. They include teacher workshops and conferences; bus advertising campaign about important sectors; options booklet for all parents of children in year 6; Aspirations magazine to all secondary schools about local industry; Have-A-Go skills events for schools.

There is a general view amongst stakeholders and politicians across the country that the advice provided to young people in schools is too often influenced by the funding that is available for learners staying on at sixth form, and focused on progression to further academic learning rather than job outcomes. Whilst schools are now required to collect information about the destination of pupils upon leaving, there is no

incentive for them to prepare young people for work.

Two recent publications provide useful information and recommendations:

House of Commons Committee report, July 2015

<https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmese/205/205.pdf>

Useful summary of challenges on Page 3 with reference to LEPs: "The Government should ensure that Local Enterprise Partnerships have the capacity—and are encouraged—to provide up-to-date, good quality labour market information to schools, colleges and careers professionals in their area".

### **Good Career Guidance, Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2015**

<http://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/programmes/good-career-guidance>

What are the specific gaps relating to Careers Information Advice and Guidance in Schools?

The Case Study in Appendix 2 describes some of the barriers that schools face in engaging with activity outside of its statutory responsibilities around delivery of the curriculum. Assuming that schools overcome these barriers and are open to receiving support then the main gaps are:

#### **Co-ordination of the national offer**

Appendix 1 highlights a complex web of national organisations offering free support to schools, if they choose to access it. LEPs are already asked to get involved in some of this provision, by adding information about local sectors and officers supporting the Employment and Skills Board have undertaken this. In addition there are hundreds of providers and websites in the marketplace with a service offer. Many schools will not have a dedicated member of staff co-ordinating these schemes and so it's likely that students will not have access to more specific careers related information within sectors, for example.

#### **School – Employer Engagement**

Schools and businesses are not necessarily gravitating towards each other and there need to facilitate this process. There are a number of schemes that promote business ambassadors or mentors that can offer time to work in schools but unless schools know about the scheme and its viability from a geographic and financial perspective then the school is unlikely to engage. There are over 80 schools in Greater Lincolnshire.

#### **Local Labour Market Information**

Schools and students are not sufficiently aware of the industry and jobs that are available locally. National data (job vacancies, average pay, future growth forecasts) has limitations and can be misinterpreted resulting in negative perceptions about locally important sectors. The public sector is a good example where access and information into job and career opportunities is still difficult to navigate and pathways into those careers is not always apparent. School teachers do not have the skills to advise students on specific pathways into particular sectors and this is where industry needs to align itself closer to schools in order to facilitate this gap in the process.

The Employment and Skills Board is developing a project using ESF funds to provide a solution to point 3.



**Appendix 1: Free Career Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Support Available to Schools and Learners**

The Offer	From who	Offer Detail	LEP Involvement
<p>Information and advice to young people over aged 13 via web and enquiry line</p>	<p><b>National Careers Service</b> <i>Funded by BIS (now DfE) through the Skills Funding Agency.</i></p>	<p>Information and advice about education, training and work for young people <a href="https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk">https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk</a> The service also provides a good range of on-line tools and resources for teacher to access.</p>	<p>Employment and Skills Board provides the text for the Greater Lincolnshire page. Update not permitted very regularly : <a href="https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/LMIMaps/Pages/East%20Midlands/Greater-Lincolnshire.aspx">https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/LMIMaps/Pages/East%20Midlands/Greater-Lincolnshire.aspx</a></p>
<p><b>Project Lumen</b> Created to increase the number of encounters young people have with employers while in education.</p>	<p><b>Education Business Partnership</b> <i>Funded through Careers &amp; Enterprise Company</i></p>	<p>Project Lumen, will help 2,700 young people in Lincolnshire to interact with representatives from businesses, raising awareness and stimulating interest in the range of careers open to them. It forms part of a national scheme, funded by The Careers &amp; Enterprise Company, to help prepare nearly a quarter of a million 11-18 year olds across England for the world of work.</p>	<p>Employment and Skills Board supported the bid, and have highlighted the initiative and a number of business members are supporting students within the project.</p>
<p><b>Careers Inspiration</b> One to one support to 5 Lincolnshire schools per year (3 years) to help them engage with employers.</p>	<p><b>Futures, National Careers Service</b></p>	<p>Across the East Midlands, the National Careers Service delivers a service called Careers Inspiration. The purpose of Careers Inspiration is to provide information and guidance to schools to make them aware of the range of services that are available to them to inspire young people in making career decisions and preparing them for the world of work.</p>	<p>Employment and Skills Board has direct contact with the Career Inspiration lead, steers their activity locally and receives reports. Have co-produced a brochure about local sectors (below)</p>
<p><b>What Work Lincolnshire</b> A booklet produced through</p>	<p><b>Futures - Career Inspiration</b></p>	<p>Copies distributed to every secondary school in Lincolnshire. It's also available on-line and is free to all</p>	<p>Employment and Skills Board has supported and advised with the content of the booklet.</p>

<p>Careers Inspiration (see above) highlighting careers on offer within Lincolnshire</p>	<p><i>Commissioned through National Careers Service</i></p>	<p>secondary schools</p>	<p>3 year contract commissioned by the LEP via Career Inspiration ( a small budget set aside by the National Careers Service specifically for schools)</p>
<p><b>Advice and support to 12-18 years olds</b> Support to schools to offer work experience</p>	<p><b>DWP</b></p>	<p>Announced this year, local Jobcentre Plus advisers will offer 12 to 18 year old pupils insight into the world of work, advice on options like traineeships and apprenticeships, and information about the labour market.  Advisers will help schools to offer high quality work experience opportunities so that young people can gain direct insights into what potential employers are looking for.  Each school will decide what level of support they want.</p>	<p>DWP contact attends the Employment and Skills Board meetings</p>
<p><b>Apprenticeship Ambassadors</b> Network is an employer-led body sponsored by the Skills Funding Agency in England. Its remit is to encourage more employers to become involved in apprenticeships in England.</p>	<p><b>Skills Funding Agency</b></p>	<p>The Network has presented Honorary Apprenticeship Awards to prominent people who have served an Apprenticeship and/or have had significant involvement in work based learning or achieved success via social enterprise or their profession. These Honoraries in turn then act as role models for young people and other employers.</p>	<p>Employment and Skills Board aware of the scheme through our relationship with the Skills Funding Agency</p>
<p><b>STEM Ambassadors</b> Use their enthusiasm and commitment to encourage young people to enjoy STEM subjects. They open the doors to a world of opportunities and possibilities which come</p>	<p><b>STEM Ambassador Hub East Midlands</b> <i>Run by Leicestershire Education Business</i></p>	<p>STEM Ambassadors cross all ages and backgrounds, representing thousands of different employers across the UK. STEM Ambassadors range from 17 to 70 years of age:  60% are under 35 years of age 30% are women and around 13% describe themselves as from BAME (Black &amp; Minority</p>	<p>No direct involvement - STEM ambassadors was until recently run by EBP in Lincoln but the programme was transferred to Leicestershire Education Business Company Ltd in October 2016 as a regional contract.</p>

from pursuing STEM subjects and careers.	Company Ltd	Ethnic backgrounds	
<p><b>Sector Specific CIAG</b></p> <p>Tasty Careers Ambassadors promote careers within the Food and Drink sector</p>	<p><b>The National Skills Academy – Food &amp; Drink</b></p>	<p>Young recruits across the food and drink industry have profiles on the NSAFD website with links to jobs vacancies, job descriptions and training courses linked to specific careers within the sector <a href="http://tastycareers.org.uk/">http://tastycareers.org.uk/</a></p>	<p>The Employment and Skills Board held a workshop with many of the relevant Sector Skills Councils, and has promoted the Tasty Careers website to local schools.</p>
<p><b>Industrial Cadets</b></p> <p>An 8 week programme of work experience with an accreditation as an Industrial Cadet at the end.</p> <p>The majority of employers are large blue chip companies.</p> <p>UK wide initiative</p>	<p>Inspired by HRH Prince of Wales</p> <p>Managed by the Charity EDT (Engineering Development Trust)</p> <p>Co-funded by UKCES</p>	<p>A national industry-led accreditation designed to enhance workplace experiences for young people.</p> <p>Industrial Cadets works with UK employers to create a talent pipeline and a future skilled workforce, whilst helping young people to develop the skills they need to enter industry with confidence.</p> <p>Providing a flexible framework for all sizes of employers to enable them to run accredited workplace experiences, Industrial Cadets ensures that young people aged 11-19 can develop the skills they need during these programmes, giving them a valuable workplace experience and a nationally recognised award at the end.</p>	<p>Initial contact with Employment and Skills Board following their success in securing additional funds from the Careers &amp; Enterprise Company.</p>
<p><b>Mentoring</b></p> <p>Development of a mentoring "community" bringing together students, schools &amp; colleges, employers and mentoring organisations</p>	<p>Careers &amp; Enterprise Company</p> <p>£12m available to scale up existing mentoring projects in areas of most need</p>	<p>In January 2016, the Government announced the launch of a national mentoring campaign that will connect a new generation of mentors to pre-GCSE teens at risk of disengaging and under-performing. The Careers &amp; Enterprise Company is delighted to have been asked to provide a coordinating role in this important mission.</p>	<p>Local winner has just been named (Nov 2016) named as EBP, and they will be presenting at future Employment and Skills Board.</p>
<p><b>Other Careers Support</b></p>	<p>Universities, FE</p>	<p>Many of these institutions employ their own careers</p>	

	Colleges and 6 <sup>th</sup> Form Colleges	advisers in order to recruit students onto their courses and qualifications.	
<b>Examples of Other Products</b>			
<p><b>CEGNET</b> An independent, free on-line resource for teachers and careers professionals delivering advice and guidance</p>	<p><i>Supported and hosted by the charity Adviza</i></p>	<p>The website is used as a blog for information relating to careers advice and guidance. This ranges from information on the latest initiatives, through to the latest news about funded activities within specific areas.</p>	<p>Cegnet was established by VT Careers Management (now Babcock) in 2001 as part of a DfE funded national support programme for CIAG. The website is edited by Anthony Barnes an independent careers consultant who is actively working to establish memoranda of understanding with potential supports who are also committed to promoting career development.</p>
<p><b>Job Explorer Database</b> This is an interactive multimedia careers resource from Careersoft. Comprehensive information on over 840 jobs with pictures, videos, quizzes and text. Includes First Jed, with reduced text, World of Work map, and Quiz Trail.</p>	<p><b>Careersoft</b></p>	<p>Makes careers information understandable, interesting, and engaging. It has information on over 847 jobs.  Careers education and guidance is made interesting because it taps into the user's natural sense of curiosity. Jed has a 'get clicking' attitude with lots of pathways through the program, including over 330 high quality video case studies, pictures, quizzes, 'top tens', career facts of the day, and text.</p>	<p>This product is not free but at £245 per school per year, this comprehensive tool costs an average school 27p per pupil per year and therefore represents excellent value  <a href="https://www.careersoft.co.uk/Products/JobExplorer_Database/">https://www.careersoft.co.uk/Products/JobExplorer_Database/</a></p>
<p><b>GL Ambassadors</b> Pledge by Gloucestershire Businesses to support schools and offer industry related careers support</p>	<p><b>GFirstLEP – Gloucestershire LEP</b></p>	<p>Delivered through Gloucestershire LEP this initiative aims to work directly with businesses to raise awareness of Gloucestershire as a great place to do business. Individuals and businesses are asked to make a pledge which could include mentoring students in a school or supporting a careers event. Businesses benefit by having their profile on the LEP website</p>	<p>LEP co-ordination of the website and the pledges.  <a href="http://www.gfirstlep.com/gfirst-LEP/GL-Ambassadors/">http://www.gfirstlep.com/gfirst-LEP/GL-Ambassadors/</a></p>

**Case Study: West Lindsey District Council and The Gainsborough Academy**

**Background:**

In June 2015, the school agreed to work strategically with WLDC to plan and develop a range of enrichment activities that would support students to develop their employability skills and prepare them for working life. The programme was intended to enhance the statutory requirements that schools are now required to implement around Careers Information, Advice and Guidance.

Despite a number of changes in sponsorship and leadership, the Gainsborough Academy continues to have a poor reputation in the community due to lower than average examination results. Approximately 50% of the students are Free School Meal status and statistically fit with the stereotype that students from deprived background tend to yield the lower attainment at school. The average school attainment of 5 GCSE or more inc. Maths and English is still between 20 -25%.

The council recognised that in order to mend the community they needed to fix the school. Over the past 18 months the following programmes and initiatives have been developed:

- A Mentoring Programme for students – staff from WLDC have been volunteering to mentor students in Year 11 who are approaching their GCSEs. The purpose of the scheme is to motivate and unlock barriers that may prevent students from being at their best when they sit exams.
- Careers Day – all students attend a Careers event hosted by the Academy. All four local Colleges are invited including Gainsborough/Lincoln, North Lindsey, John Leggot and Bishop Burton. In addition we invite several private training providers including some from Doncaster and Lincoln. The University Of Lincoln, Bishop Grosseteste University and the Outreach Network are also invited to represent Higher Education. Local businesses are invited to talk about Apprenticeship and Work Experience opportunities.
- Work Experience – two years ago less than 50 out of 150 students in Year 10 successfully applied for work experience, last year this increased to around 80 students. This year, through the mentoring programme and 1-1 support we are aiming for over 100 Year 10's to have access to at least 1 week work experience. West Lindsey District Council has offered several work experience placements to students already.
- Job Application and Interview Techniques – Planned towards the end of Year 11 this is an activity whereby students apply for a job using a real job description and person specification. The students are then invited to interview panels with local business people. Students also have to travel to the council offices for their interview!
- Peer Mentoring – the school have engaged with the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School for the first time and are discussing a collaborative mentoring programme for teachers. The aim is to improve motivation, confidence, productivity and self-esteem amongst teaching staff, in particular NQT's and those within the STEM departments. The programme also aims to reduce hours lost due to staff absenteeism.

In addition to the in-kind support from the local authority, the Academy has also been encouraged to pro-actively engage in other funded and co-funded initiatives. For example – the Lumen Project through the Education Business Partnership who are funding a programme of support around CIAG and employability skills. West Lindsey District Council are also match funding a programme through Young Enterprise. This is available to all secondary schools across the district and aims to stimulate Entrepreneurship for those who may want to set up their own business.

## **The Challenges and Opportunities for Businesses working with Schools:**

### **Community**

The local community, including local politicians, are understandably very passionate and vocal about schools, particularly those that are failing or underperforming. Highlighting the problem has a negative impact on the choices parents make for their children when leaving primary school. We know that in West Lindsey, many of the surrounding villages would prefer their children to travel 10+ miles to schools around the Lincoln fringe or towards Scunthorpe, rather than send them to a school on their doorstep.

The challenge for businesses working with schools is how to highlight "improvements" rather than "failings" and what role they can play in helping a school to shake off a bad reputation. A commitment to offering work experience and Apprenticeships may not be enough and actually businesses may need to work more closely with parents and children within primary schools to present the opportunities and long term benefits that may be in place for students choosing schools where a close relationship between educators and employers exists.

### **Financial**

Academies are publically funded independent schools and they are funded directly from the government rather than local councils. Academies can also obtain sponsorship from local businesses, other schools or groups, but the expectation is that the sponsor will take responsibility for the performance of the school. This will become more of a challenge for poor performing academies.

In September 2015, BAE became the sponsor of Furness Academy in Cumbria, after it was placed in special measures. As the main local employer, BAE has a keen interest in the skills of school-leavers and the academy will benefit from corporate support at the trust level, as well as leadership development opportunities for staff. In Lincoln, Siemens is the sponsor of the University Technical College which specialises in engineering and science. Businesses and entrepreneurs can also support academies through the Academy Ambassadors programme, which places talented business leaders on academy trust boards as non-executive directors.

### **Security and Data Protection**

In order to work closely with schools, businesses need to be aware that individuals must have DBS clearance (Disclosure and Barring Service). Whilst working with the Gainsborough Academy to set up the mentoring programme there were a number of delays to DBS applications. In some instances Mentors were waiting up to 7 months for clearance.

In addition to security, there was a need to protect the mentors and mentees with regards to safeguarding. It was imperative that the school, the employer and a local training provider worked together in the early stages to ensure that mentors were clear about their safeguarding responsibilities, confidentiality, disclosure of information and the storage and management of sensitive written data.

### **Ofsted and Statutory Requirements**

Schools and academies are very supportive of enrichment and extra-curricular activities that support students. However, priority has to be given to statutory responsibilities around delivery of the curriculum and careers advice and guidance. Ofsted inspect a range of measures that define the overall performance of the school and levels of academic attainment feature as part of that assessment. Poor performing schools and academies that are subject to a damning report from Ofsted, ultimately impacts the reputation of the school and future student choices. As a result it can be challenging to get full commitment from the school to engage with activities. For example, the mentoring programme has to fit around tutor sessions or lessons such as PE because there is a reluctance to pull students from academic lessons such as Maths, English and Science. As a result the Business mentor is restricted to specific times and days that are not always convenient. The challenge for businesses and schools is how these initiatives are managed and who takes overall responsibility for them.

**Impartiality**

Another challenge for schools working with specific businesses or organisations is a lack of impartiality. Organisations such as the National Careers Service provide impartial CIAG about a range of different sectors, careers and job opportunities. Our experience suggests that students feel that sponsors may be reluctant to provide access to information that is not in the interests of that sponsor, made worse because the sponsor has preferential and timely access to students in order to market and promote their own "offer."

We know that the same happens in schools with a Sixth Form offer – in some cases the perception is that schools will try to retain their students for financial gain rather than to meet the individual need of the student.

