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NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE TODAY – A SPATIAL PORTRAIT

Introduction

- 2.1 To achieve and sustain the vision of North Lincolnshire being the north of England’s Global Gateway, the area must plan not only for the needs of existing communities, but ensure that it remains a destination of choice; a place where people and businesses choose to live and invest in. The strategy to get there must be based on a good understanding of the area’s characteristics and the key opportunities and challenges presented by them. This portrait sets out some of these characteristics.

Location/Settlement Pattern

- 2.2 Covering an area of 328 square miles (84,952ha) on the southern bank of the Humber Estuary, on the United Kingdom’s east coast, North Lincolnshire is home to 160,250 people¹. However, North Lincolnshire is unlike many of its counterparts in Yorkshire and Humber in that its population is growing and is expected to reach 184,000 by 2021 and 198,900 by 2031². These projections indicate that the younger age groups lose population whilst the older age groups increase in significant proportions. This change in demographics is projected to be more acute in North Lincolnshire than across England and Wales as a whole. In North Lincolnshire the proportion of total population aged 65 and over is projected to increase to 27.1% in 2028 from just 17.7% in 2006. Across England and Wales this change is expected to reach 21.9% in 2028 up from 16.1% in 2006³.
- 2.3 North Lincolnshire has a very distinct settlement pattern. It comprises the large urban area of Scunthorpe (population 71,003)⁴, located in the centre of the area, which acts as the main service centre. Scunthorpe is identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy as a sub-regional town. It is complemented by six market towns - Barton upon Humber (population 10,043) and Brigg (5,296) to the east and Crowle (4,400) and Epworth (3,919) to the west as well as Winterton (4,834) to the north and Kirton in Lindsey (2,860)⁵ to the south, which are also important service centres. Outside these settlements North Lincolnshire is predominately rural with around 80 villages of varying sizes spread across an attractive countryside.

1 ONS (2008), Mid Year Population Estimates

2 ONS (2006), Populations projections

3 North Lincolnshire Council Housing Needs and Market Assessment 2006 final report November 2006

4 ONS (2007) Mid Year Population Estimates

5 ONS (2005) Mid Year Population Estimates

A Global Gateway - South Humber Gateway

- 2.4 North Lincolnshire's geographical location in the United Kingdom allows the area to take full advantage of the trading opportunities with the countries bordering the North Sea. The ports at Killingholme & Immingham are the busiest in the United Kingdom accounting for 12% of all port traffic. In 2008, this totalled 65 million tonnes of cargo⁶. These ports are part of the multi-modal North European Trade Axis (NETA), the broad trade and transport corridor from Ireland and across Northern England to mainland Europe. Collectively the Humber Ports are the fourth busiest in Europe. It is the Global Gateway for trade to and from the United Kingdom.
- 2.5 The South Humber Bank Industrial Area provides significant employment opportunities and potential for economic growth. It is currently the largest area of undeveloped land in England adjacent to a deep water estuary, which places it at a significant advantage compared with its other UK competitors. Recent years have seen significant levels of private and public sector investment including a planning application submitted by Able UK that was approved by North Lincolnshire Council on 14th October 2010 subject to Secretary of State call in, which could signal direct investment in the region of £100 million. The proposed development would see the creation of transport depots, warehousing and external storage areas, together with offices, a business park linked to the estuary, motel and truck stop restaurant.
- 2.6 To aid the development of this area £95 million has been agreed through the Regional Fund Allocation to upgrade the A160 between the A180 and the port entrance. When the Government assessed major infrastructure needs in the UK they committed £300 million nationally, with successful lobbying a further £30 million was secured to ensure that the best possible enhancements could be achieved. Currently, the precise details for the start of construction are unknown, however it is anticipated to be by 2015.
- 2.7 The railway lines are also a key artery for freight to and from the South Humber Bank ports. Around 25% of the freight carried on the country's rail network starts and ends its life there. Network Rail have already undertaken improvement works on the Doncaster – Immingham and Brigg lines which will further assist the development of the South Humber Bank. Further improvements are in the pipeline with the proposed development of the Killingholme Loop, which will create a new rail access to the site, allowing for an increased number of freight trains to and from the area.
- 2.8 Due to the strategic importance of the Global Gateway, the South Humber Gateway Board has been created to drive forward ambitious plans for the location. Some of the key functions of the group are shaping the strategic direction of the South Humber Gateway, co-ordinating planning and planning gain and marketing. The board comprises the leaders and chief executives of North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire councils, plus the directors of economic development from the two councils, and an executive director from Yorkshire Forward, the Regional Development Agency. Overseeing environmental issues and developing green infrastructure will be of significant importance over the coming years to complement and support the growth of the Global Gateway.
- 2.9 The Global Gateway is equally important with regards to the Green Economy around the estuary, and the area has great potential for green energy with regards to bio fuels and wind turbines. Due to the current types of industry already in this region this would be a natural progression. Drax Biomass (Immingham) Ltd recently announced a £700m renewable energy power plant for the South Humber Bank. The need for green energy is only going to increase and the South Humber Bank is an ideal site having already established links to the power and energy industries.

6 Department for Transport, (Maritime Stats 2008)

An Expanding Economy

- 2.10 North Lincolnshire's economy is buoyant and has an ever developing diversity. Recent significant investments by major companies show that there is a willingness to invest in North Lincolnshire. At the South Humber Bank both Total Fina Elf and Conoco Phillips have invested a total of £600 million since January 2007. Elsewhere major investment by Nisa Today's has taken place in recent years at Normanby Enterprise Park in Scunthorpe, whilst Humberside Airport has seen the development of a £1.6 million Perishables Hub for the food industry. More recently CanPack opened a £60 million manufacturing plant in Scunthorpe creating 300 jobs. The green economy was further enhanced when North Lincolnshire's first wind farm opened in 2009, consisting of 8 wind turbines on a 300 acre site at Bagmoor.
- 2.11 Manufacturing still plays an important role in North Lincolnshire's economy. The Tata steelworks remains North Lincolnshire's single largest private sector employer and is one of the most productive plants in Europe. Tata's presence has created an abundance of skills in the metal and engineering sector. Many companies operating in this sector use cutting-edge engineering and manufacturing techniques and take a global lead in advancing the technology.
- 2.12 Key growth sectors and clusters within the area are food and drink, metals and engineering, logistics, chemicals and electronics. Tourism and the service sector are also expanding. In 2007, the majority (67%) of the working population was employed in the service sector with 23% being employed in manufacturing. Distribution, hotels and restaurants and public administration, education and health employ around 22% of those in the service sector. This is also borne out in the job structure as there is a greater than average concentration of jobs within the skilled trades, operatives and elementary occupations, whilst jobs at managerial and professional levels are below average. Trends show that this is likely to continue in the short to medium term.
- 2.13 The unemployment rate in North Lincolnshire currently sits at 5.5%, which is broadly similar to the national and regional averages, but significantly lower than some neighbouring Yorkshire and the Humber districts. Wage levels in North Lincolnshire are above the regional and national average. Mean annual salaries in North Lincolnshire are £24,118 compared to £19,900 in Yorkshire & Humber and £22,360 in England and Wales. On first examination the average wage for North Lincolnshire compares well to that of the region. Closer examination highlights that much of North Lincolnshire's workforce is actually receiving well below the average annual wage. 20% of workers are earning less than £10,183 per annum and 30% are earning less than £13,296 per annum⁷. An important fact for North Lincolnshire is that wages include allowances paid for shift work. This means that there are a high proportion of employees earning above average due to the shift allowances. Therefore, as the above figures show, there is a growing disparity between those on higher and lower incomes.
- 2.14 Tourism is an increasingly important part of the area's economy. During 2008, visitors brought £167 million into the local economy and supported around 4,000 jobs. Alongside existing attractions such as Waters' Edge Visitor Centre and Country Park, Alkborough Flats and Normanby Hall and Country Park, North Lincolnshire offers great opportunities to develop "green" tourism via the natural assets such as the Humber Estuary and the River Trent together with the area's landscape and countryside.

7 North Lincolnshire Council Housing Needs and Market Assessment 2006 final report November 2006

Town Centres

- 2.15 Significant changes to Scunthorpe town centre have included the opening of The Parishes retail and leisure complex, and £40 million of private sector investment. This provided 250,000 sq. ft of retail floorspace and attracted a number of national retailers such as HMV, H&M, Wilkinsons and Costa Coffee. As part of the development a new multi-screen cinema, a new bus station and multi storey car park were provided. However, the town continues to face competition from nearby centres such as Doncaster, Grimsby, Hull, Lincoln, Meadowhall and Sheffield. Further significant change is proposed for Scunthorpe town centre as part of the Scunthorpe Urban Renaissance programme.
- 2.16 The area's market towns of Barton upon Humber, Brigg, Crowle, Epworth, Kirton in Lindsey and Winterton are key service centres for the local community and those of the surrounding settlements. All are characterised by their historic centres and have a good range of shops, services, facilities and thriving evening economies. Brigg is well known for its markets and fairs which attract visitors to the area. Crowle is currently undergoing major rural renaissance improvements.

Transport Infrastructure

- 2.17 North Lincolnshire is in the fortunate position to have one international airport within its boundary as well as another within easy reach. Both provide major opportunities for the area and the region in terms of economic growth and the development of air freight. Both Humberside Airport and Robin Hood Airport Doncaster Sheffield plays host to a range of scheduled and charter services which operate to a variety of destinations. Humberside Airport is also the second largest heliport in the UK reflecting the area's strong connections with the offshore oil and gas industry. To maximise these opportunities, particularly for Humberside Airport, surface access including public transport connections need to be improved.
- 2.18 The A160 provides a crucial link to the South Humber Bank ports and employment area. It is programmed to undergo major upgrading works to support the continued growth of the ports. The M181/M180/M18 connects North Lincolnshire to the M62 trans-pennine routes and A1/M1 north-south routes. These motorway links bring most of the UK's major cities within a four hour drive of the area. The M180/A180 have one clear advantage, as they are relatively congestion free. However, outside North Lincolnshire there are issues regarding the wider motorway network and its capacity, in particular on the M18 between its junction with the M180 at Thorne and its interchange with the A1 (M) to the south of Doncaster. The A15 also provides a key route for the area, linking it northwards to Hull, York, the north east of England and Scotland via the Humber Bridge and south to Lincolnshire and the East Midlands.
- 2.19 The Trans-pennine rail route is an important part of the national rail network providing fast, convenient links to the main north-south and east-west rail services, via connections at Doncaster. There are also direct links to Sheffield, Manchester and Manchester Airport. Other services link the area to Lincoln and Newark, whilst Barton upon Humber is also served by a regular service to and from Grimsby and Cleethorpes. A limited passenger service operates between Cleethorpes and Sheffield using the Barnetby to Gainsborough line via Brigg and Kirton in Lindsey.
- 2.20 With the majority of North Lincolnshire being rural, public transport services are largely limited. Services are generally good on the main transport corridors between major towns in North Lincolnshire and surrounding large towns and cities, and within the Scunthorpe urban area. Away from these corridors and the urban area, bus services can be infrequent and limited.

A Place to Live

- 2.21 North Lincolnshire has a range of housing spread across its towns and villages. As a result of its attractive environment, good services and buoyant economy, it has become a desirable place for many people to live, therefore residential development has increased considerably in recent years. The area has approximately 70,000 dwellings, however due to expected population growth and economic developments an additional 12,000 new dwellings will be required up to 2026.
- 2.22 The profile of the area's housing stock differs considerably from the region as a whole as there are considerably more detached or semi-detached dwellings, whilst the quantities of terraced houses and flats are substantially less. In terms of tenure, North Lincolnshire has a greater proportion of owner occupation and lower levels of renting.
- 2.23 By national standards, North Lincolnshire's house prices are relatively low. Pre 2008 property price increases had seen homes becoming unobtainable. Since the economic downturn the average house price has fallen to £107,892⁸, a decrease of 11% on the previous year. Although this has helped to make housing more affordable, due to mortgage lenders being more stringent with their lending requirements and the drop in price being a fraction of the previous years increases, this is still resulting in a general lack of affordable housing for local people, especially in rural settlements where house prices are considerably higher. At the opposite end of the spectrum the former Crosby renewal area of Scunthorpe still appears in the top 10 most deprived super output areas in England with a gradual decline of owner-occupiers
- 2.24 As a greater proportion of the population is move toward pensionable age, there are clear implications for housing policy. This generation are likely to very different from those that have retired previously. It is likely that they are going to want greater independence, to live in their own homes and will exercise more choice and make demands of different services. Demographic trends also indicate movement towards greater number of households being small in size.

Deprivation, Health & Wellbeing

- 2.25 In 2007, North Lincolnshire was ranked as the 132nd most deprived local authority in England out of 354, which means that it is amongst the top 50% most deprived⁹. This, however, is an improvement on its 2004 ranking of 121st. The area has 9 neighbourhoods in the top 20% most deprived in England all of which are concentrated in the Scunthorpe Urban Area, in particular in the Crosby area. These areas suffer from unemployment, low incomes, poorer quality housing and there are high incidences of crime and low educational attainment.
- 2.26 In comparison to the rest of the United Kingdom, the health and well being of people who live in Yorkshire and the Humber is some of the poorest in England, especially during the last two decades. Health in North Lincolnshire is good overall, but there are significant variations in health levels across North Lincolnshire with neighbourhoods in Scunthorpe experiencing high levels of deprivation. NHS North Lincolnshire identified rising levels of obesity in the area and the fact that North Lincolnshire is statistically one of the worst areas in the country.

8 Land Registry data – May 2009

9 ONS, Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007

- 2.27 The Director of Public Health's 2007 Report for North Lincolnshire identified three key priority areas for health improvement over the next three years, which are likely to have a major impact on our population's future health if they are not adequately addressed. They include tackling coronary heart disease, maintaining a healthy bodyweight, and tobacco control. Other important issues include the promotion of mental health and emotional well being amongst the local population and encouraging sensible drinking.

Education

- 2.28 In terms of educational attainment, North Lincolnshire generally mirrors the national and regional averages for those gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A to C. Locally this is 61.4% of students compared with 62.1% regionally and 65.3% nationally. Whilst John Leggott College and North Lindsey College provide further education opportunities for around 15,000 full and part time students, at degree level however, the proportion of residents achieving a degree or equivalent in North Lincolnshire is 19%, below both national (28%) and regional (24%) levels. This is mainly due to the lack of opportunities locally for students to access higher education, as well as the lack of job opportunities in the area for graduates. As part of addressing this issue, the Scunthorpe Urban Renaissance programme proposes to create a Knowledge Campus in Scunthorpe.

Environment

- 2.29 Flood risk and climate change pose a number of challenges for North Lincolnshire. The Humber Estuary and the area's rivers have extensive flood plains, which could flood in extreme circumstances. The risk may increase in the future with rising sea levels. The Humber Flood Risk Management Strategy includes a programme to improve flood defences and areas for storing flood water are being created. So far one such area has been developed at Alkborough Flats. Other areas for potential flood water storage include Flixborough Grange and land close to Goxhill Haven.
- 2.30 North Lincolnshire has a varied natural and built environment. The area has an abundance of wildlife habitats, which range from the world class, internationally important areas of the Humber Estuary and Crowle Moors, through to nationally and regionally important wildlife and geological sites, and sites of particular local importance. These sites include five international designations (one Ramsar, two Special Areas of Conservation and two Special Protection Areas), 29 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), 10 Local Nature Reserves (LNR's), 200 Local Wildlife Sites (Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation – SINC's), and 22 Local Geological Sites (Regionally Important Geological Sites – RIG's). North Lincolnshire is also characterised by a variety of landscapes ranging from the clay pits of the Humber Estuary, the rolling chalk escarpment of the Lincolnshire Wolds, the Ancholme Valley, the Lincoln Edge, the Trent Valley and the Isle of Axholme.
- 2.31 Significant changes to the landscape have resulted following the extraction of minerals where semi-natural landscapes, such as Barton Clay Pits and the Ironstone Gulleys, have been created, and also from the development of large scale industry such as at Killingholme at the mouth of the Humber Estuary. The southern Isle of Axholme has the most extensive surviving examples of a medieval landscape in England, notably the medieval open strip fields and Turbaries, both of which are of considerable national importance. These attributes together with enclosed land and the overall settlement pattern of the area make it unique in the country.

- 2.32 The wetland areas of the Ancholme Valley, the Trent Valley, and the Humber coast, have high archaeological potential, particularly in relation to the preservation of organic finds and palaeo-environmental remains. There are a number of high quality ecclesiastical sites, particularly those at the Thornton Abbey Augustinian Monastery and St Peter's Church in Barton-upon-Humber. The area has 1,088 listed buildings, 17 Conservation Areas and 44 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs). The proportion of Grade 1 Listed Buildings is twice the national average, which indicates the historic importance of the area. However, the 2009 Heritage At Risk Register showed that over 30% of North Lincolnshire's Scheduled Monuments and 40% of its Conservation Areas were at risk. The need to reconcile the development needs of the area with the protection of heritage assets is an important issue for the plan to address.

Urban & Rural Renaissance

- 2.33 North Lincolnshire is also undergoing a renaissance. The Scunthorpe Urban Renaissance programme aims to bring about a major change in the town's image and to make it a more effective economic driver for the area. A number of major transformational projects are now underway, including the Lincolnshire Lakes, town centre developments, Baths Hall - new entertainment venue and rejuvenation of Doncaster Road, creation of a knowledge campus in partnership with further and higher education providers, The Pods - a new state of the art sporting and leisure facility, and improvements to Central Park.
- 2.34 Elsewhere in Scunthorpe, other projects are underway to regenerate local neighbourhoods. In the Crosby area, the Advance Crosby programme is working to improve housing, communal areas, green space and education in an area of deprivation, whilst in the Westcliff area, a project to improve the existing shopping precinct is also underway.
- 2.35 In the rural areas, the Crowle Market Place redevelopment will transform the town's market place, providing a functional, attractive and safe environment for residents. The proposed redevelopment includes changes to the road network to create an easier flow of traffic and ensuring the market place can be accessed safely by both vehicles and pedestrians. It will also allow for the relocation of existing facilities to open up the market place, a brand new bistro/café in the market place, including an area for outside seating and extra parking spaces.