



Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place

Report to:	Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Date:	24 May 2022
Subject:	Greater Lincolnshire Internationalisation Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2024

Summary:

This report invites the committee to consider the work undertaken to date to develop the draft Greater Lincolnshire Internationalisation Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.

The Greater Lincolnshire economy has an international presence driven by the manufacturing and service sectors of the economy, with businesses exporting and importing goods and services across the globe.

The Greater Lincolnshire Internationalisation Strategy has been produced by independent economic development consultants operating on behalf of the Department of International Trade, DIT. The strategy sets out a series of recommendations that could help DIT and its stakeholders increase international trade levels across the Greater Lincolnshire region.

There are a range of partners providing international trade support services and this strategy sets out the services and how they can continue to work more closely together to encourage international trade via to export and import practices.

The Strategy identifies how different partners play important roles in supporting businesses and how current services can be enhanced through an agreed joint Action Plan. Through consultation with the business and stakeholder community, five immediate priorities have been identified. These include;

- How current online material could be promoted through a single gateway, delivering information in a manner that can be understood and acted upon quickly.
- How technology can be used to share market information and events programmes more efficiently.
- How the Humber Freeport can promote the value of international trade to Greater Lincolnshire businesses.
- How partners can build and develop collaborative practices to support

international activities.

- How an export/ import focused 'Peer to Peer' network could provide knowledge to new or early-stage exporters/ importers.

Actions Required:

The Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee is invited to:

- (1) Consider the strategy and action plan and determine whether it provides a local cohesive, evidence-led response meet Greater Lincolnshire's internationalisation challenges and aspirations; and,
- (2) Consider the report and action plan and provide comments or refinements on the priorities that are being developed in relation to the Internationalisation Strategy for Greater Lincolnshire.

1. Background

The Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub, funded and lead by Lincolnshire County Council, has been for some time working with international trade expert Mike Stokes on a contractual basis to deliver valuable bespoke support to Lincolnshire's small businesses. This support continues, and Mike has more recently taken on a triage role, whereby he fields export/import related queries and either supports the business directly, or instead routes the query to a trusted partner better placed to deal with the specific needs of that business.

This external support currently available consists of services from the Department for International Trade (DIT), Lincolnshire has access to two dedicated advisors who cover Lincolnshire, and in addition a further DIT international trade advisor linked to the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership. These advisors offer one to one and sector specialist support, via a regional team to Lincolnshire's larger and more established exporters, in addition to a wide range DIT of events and webinars designed to support all needs. Great.gov.uk is a fantastic online information resource for exporters and those interested in or planning to export.

In addition, the Growth Hub contract with external partners The Export Department to deliver a successful support programme to both importers and exporters as follows:

- International Trade Clinics (2 hours dedicated support to both importers and exporters)
- International Trade Intensive Support (6 hours of dedicated support to both importers and exporters)
- Export Manager Programme (30 hours of dedicated support)
- International Trader Peer Support Programme (12 hours of group support)

Finally, our colleagues at Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce, host an International Trade Hub which continues to provide an excellent service to members interested in or already exporting and specialise in helping them to navigate the international trade documentation which is required for exporting.

The Chamber plays a unique role in supporting and boosting Lincolnshire's trade activity, offering help and advice, as well as providing export documentation services, whilst also having the resources to connect with organisations all around the world, plus other Chambers of Commerce within the UK and internationally.

2. Development of a new Internationalisation Strategy for Greater Lincolnshire

In 2021, the Department for International Trade (East Midlands) commissioned consultants Deyton Bell to research and draft a new Internationalisation Strategy for Greater Lincolnshire, setting out the perceived challenges and opportunities for Greater Lincolnshire businesses, and how they could be supported by the diverse range of business support agencies and public sector stakeholders in the region, led by the Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub.

Subsequently, the Growth Hub convened a steering group comprised of both internal and external stakeholders:

- DIT Officers
- International Trade Advisers
- Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce,
- Lincolnshire Export Champions
- Private sector businesses including product and service exporters
- Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub export/import advisers

All of these group members had an interest in internationalisation in the region, with the intention of considering the draft strategy and identified actions therein. They were invited to give their views on the document and on the direction of travel for this work area.

As a result, a number of clear areas of further development within the strategy were identified, as follows:

- Ensure that the Internationalisation strategy focuses on recognising both the manufactured products and digital/consultancy services
- Ensure there is a focus on supporting importers as well as exporters
- Establish a baseline so that targets can be set and progress measured (It should be noted that DIT/HMRC cannot share client data, sector or contract value information)
- The strategy needs to include principles of responsible/sustainable exporting, what is it and how do we do it.

- Clear communications plan to ensure all advisory services are informed and updated on the service offers and that a PR and Marketing campaign is devised to reach and inspire businesses.
- Focus time and resources on getting existing exporters to export more and promote these good news stories to inspire others.
- Work with the Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce to create a peer network to support Greater Lincolnshire exporters

As result of discussions, the strategy document and associated action plan have been refined. The enclosed draft is considered a robust, forward thinking and effective plan to support Greater Lincolnshire's exporters and importers (both existing and aspiring) over the next two financial years.

A more detailed Delivery Plan setting out milestones and success measures will be put in place and will be reviewed on a six-monthly basis.

Options:

- 1) Do nothing. Retain the current level of support and provision and reject the new strategy and action plan.
- 2) Accept the new strategy, action plan and direction of travel in its entirety and approve the direction of travel suggested.
- 3) Accept the new strategy, action plan and direction of travel with identified specific revisions/suggestions.

Option 2 (above) is recommended, as it brings together both the best of existing support, and in addition strategically coordinates the extensive range of internal and external resources and partners to provide an effective, efficient, and well promoted support to Greater Lincolnshire's importers and exporters. It clearly identifies both strengths of current provision, and perceived gaps in provision, and via the attached action plan assigns clear responsibility to both internal and external stakeholders to make improvements where they would be required.

The vision outlined in the strategy would be a much clearer and more accessible internationalisation offer to businesses and constitutes a genuine partnership approach.

3. Year 1 Activities 2022-23 Current Priorities and High-Level Action Plan

The below activities were identified for action during 2022/23:

- How current online material could be promoted through a single gateway, delivering information in a manner that can be understood and acted upon quickly.
- How technology can be used to share market information and events programmes more efficiently.

- How the Humber Freeport can promote the value international trade to Greater Lincolnshire businesses.
- How partners can build collaboration to support international activities.
- How an export/ import focused Peer to Peer network could provide knowledge to new or early-stage exporters/ import.

Agreement to joint working on the following areas in phase 1

- **Export campaign – promote opportunities to develop and grow a business/enter new markets.**

Business Lincolnshire’s export adviser Mike Stokes carries out a ‘triage’ role, fielding export related enquiries from businesses and linking them with the appropriate support for their needs. We continue to work in partnership with DIT and external partners such as Export Dept and Lincolnshire Chamber to ensure this support and information is easily accessible. We will work with partners to develop campaign materials for dissemination and promotion purposes.

- **Trade Deal Information and Factsheets**

DIT Factsheets corresponding to new trade deals with other territories are collated and promoted (via all available Business Lincolnshire channels) as they become available. There is an opportunity to circulate to advisors to tailor discussions with businesses as appropriate.

- **Business benefits of Freeport(s)**

The Business Lincolnshire website hosts outline information on the newly formed Freeports in Lincolnshire and the East Midlands, and we await detailed information from Central Government on the specific financial benefits which Greater Lincolnshire businesses can expect. This will form part of a concerted communications campaign to inform businesses, in order that opportunities can be maximised.

- **Online exporting promotion linked to Website/social media/ adviser briefing etc.**

Development of the internationalisation content hosted on the Business Lincolnshire continues, to encourage the region’s businesses to engage with the suite of support on offer both internally and by partners and stakeholders such as Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce and Department for International Trade. Advisers continue to be engaged and upskilled to enable them to effectively communicate with businesses about internationalisation opportunities and support. A longer-term communications strategy is planned as part of this Strategy work to better communicate to businesses the help they can access.

- **Clear information on available internationalisation support.**

An infographic to be made available to interested businesses to reflect existing, new and expanded internationalisation support available in the region. This will be visible on the Business Lincolnshire website and shared as widely as possible on all platforms and via all advisors, with the aim of making it as clear and simple as possible for businesses to understand the support available to them and how they can access it.

NOTE - Delivery of the above actions will be overseen by the officers from Economic Development working alongside DIT and Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce. The strategy and action will be funded through planned business reserves.

4. Context

The purpose of supporting international trade

Supporting businesses to trade internationally is an important part of economic development. There is evidence to show that businesses who trade internationally will invest more in research and product development, staff training, and facilities for their business.

The EU Exit, and globalisation more generally, mean that an area's ability to trade internationally will become more important.

International trade within Lincolnshire

43.9% of Lincolnshire's products and services were exported to the EU in 2017. While there is only limited data at County level, ONS data indicates that Lincolnshire exports more goods to EU countries compared to the rest of the world, with a 63%:37% split in 2015. Lincolnshire's largest exporting industry is food and drink, with the greatest volume traded to European countries. Other national and regional data also identifies that the USA and is also an important market. These markets will remain important to Lincolnshire exporters in the future.

The infographic below gives more detail on exporting and importing in Greater Lincolnshire.



The table below shows Greater Lincolnshire’s top 10 export countries within the EU in 2019.

Country	Statistical value
Germany	£149 million
Irish Republic	£129 million
Netherlands	£114 million
France	£87 million
Spain	£79 million
Italy	£41 million
Belgium	£41 million
Sweden	£26 million
Poland	£24 million
Czech Republic	£24 million

5. Conclusion

Current and ongoing work by the Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub to support Greater Lincolnshire businesses with their internationalisation aims and plans, is well established. The draft strategy, action plan and stakeholder consultation and feedback has identified

areas where this can be further developed, and partnership working improved, to give the region’s businesses the right tools to do so, and to effectively promote the wide range of exporting/importing support available across the region.

Members of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee are invited to review and comment on the draft Strategy and Action Plan and highlight any recommendations or further points for consideration.

6. Consultation

The draft Strategy has been reviewed by the Executive Councillor, members of the business community, Lincolnshire Export Champions, DIT regional team, Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce and wider business support stakeholders.

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

7. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Greater Lincolnshire Internationalisation Strategy 2022-2024- DRAFT
Appendix B	Greater Lincolnshire Internationalisation Action Plan 2022-2024 - DRAFT

8. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Simon Murphy, who can be contacted on 01522 568735 or simon.murphy@lincolnshire.gov.uk.