

EAST LINDSEY COASTAL SKILLS PATHFINDER EVALUATION REPORT

May 2012

Practical responses to the Visitor Economy
employment and skills challenges of the
Lincolnshire coastal strip



Practical employment and skills projects making a difference and plotting a way forward

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East Lindsey Coastal Skills Pathfinder Evaluation Report

MAY 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
The Big Questions	2
Headline Opportunities	4
SECTION ONE : PATHFINDER COASTAL SKILLS DELIVERY PILOTS	5
Introduction	5
Skills Pilot - #1	6
Skills Pilot - #2.....	8
Skills Pilot - #3.....	10
Skills Pilot - #4.....	12
Conclusion.....	14
SECTION TWO : CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	15
Challenges	15
Opportunities.....	16
SECTION THREE : LOOKING FORWARD.....	18
Coastal Employment and Skills Hub.....	18
Raising Demand for Skills - A Coastal Skills Progression Model.....	20
APPENDIX ONE : BACKGROUND.....	21
Pathfinder Objectives.....	21
Method and Timescales	21
Our Approach.....	22
Partnerships and planning	23
APPENDIX TWO : COASTAL SKILLS NEEDS	26
Skills gaps.....	26
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	28
BACKGROUND TO SKILLSREACH.....	28

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Big Questions

1 Are the employment and skills challenges of this area unique?

The East Lindsey seaside strip is a unique 'micro-employment and skills zone' in relation to the rest of Lincolnshire and far-beyond: due to a heavy reliance on seasonal hospitality jobs and its remoteness, in both travel to work and transport infrastructure terms, from sustainable alternative employment opportunities

2 How well do the skills needs of the economy match up with the skills capabilities and aspirations of the local community?

There is a mismatch between the priority skills needs and investment patterns of the seaside economy and the skills aspirations of the local community, including low participation in Apprenticeships. This mismatch is especially evident in the Tourism Hospitality and Care sectors

3 Is seasonality a problem?

The employment and skills patterns of the acutely seasonal hospitality sector are proving major obstacles to both businesses and local residents benefitting from skills investment

4 Is it purely down to locality?

The Visitor Economy sector itself, irrespective of locality is particularly challenging from an employment and skills perspective due to its intensity. New entrants are very quickly and necessarily involved in pressurised situations, at the heart of customer interactions and therefore the heart of business success. Many businesses respond to this environment with robust, in-house standards, requiring multi-skilled front-line employees who are up-to-speed very quickly; roles for which many young people appear unprepared

5 Where are the key skills gaps?

Hospitality employers almost universally emphasise three key Skills Gaps:

- Front-line customer service skills, especially young people
- Chefs and skilled kitchen staff
- Owner Operator development and business support

Employers also express concerns about higher level skills such as management (especially people management) and specialist technical or professional roles

6 Is public funding readily available for coastal employment and skills development?

Skills funding and provision is generally available through a range of local and specialist skills providers to meet basic, pre-employment and workforce skills needs. Mainstream funding is available through national Skills Funding Agency budgets for Adult Learning and Apprenticeships. Funding provision often does not, however, dovetail into the unique rhythms and patterns of the seaside season, and employer-led take-up of such funding appears to be relatively low. Challenge funding is also potentially available from sources such as JCP Flexible Support Fund, BIS Growth and Innovation Fund, BIS Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot and CLG Coastal Communities Fund, although such funding could be best sourced through a cohesive local partnership approach.

7 What particular skills funding challenges have been identified?

- Promoting stronger employer awareness, take-up and benefit from public employment and skills investment opportunities
- Supporting work-based learning in the local hospitality sector since national Apprenticeship frameworks do not easily align with seasonal employment patterns (for example, minimum 12-month requirement) ; potentially leaving local residents (especially young people) marginalised in terms of this high profile area for national skills investment
- Funding customised, locally-rooted learning provision to meet the needs of residents / businesses based in and near the isolated seaside town of Mablethorpe: an area that has specific local challenges, some quite distinct from Skegness

8 How can local skills development be best structured to meet the needs of local residents and employers?

Training needs to be:

- Timely, to fit in with the quite unique rhythms of the seaside season
- Accessible, both in terms of location and through offering bite-sized opportunities
- Progressive, even if learners commence a qualification in one 'off-season' and complete it in the next
- Locally-rooted, with local employers and providers working together to develop learning pathways to upskill local people and meet local business need
- Attitudinal, i.e. supporting soft skills and work-readiness as well as the technical

Headline Opportunities

- Turn a challenge into a strength by developing and promoting the Lincolnshire Coast as an Area of Excellence for Tourism and Hospitality related skills development
- The development of a virtual or actual employment and skills hub for the Lincolnshire seaside strip that would seek to:
 - Plan, co-ordinate and promote upskilling and employment opportunities for local residents, ensuring that local business and resident needs are at the heart of skills initiatives
 - Proactively support local employers to recruit and develop the skills they need to support business success and growth, for example with local 'skills-passporting'
 - Proactively support local residents to benefit from local up-skilling and employment opportunities
 - Recognise and work within the opportunities and constraints of an acutely seasonal, intensive economy : perhaps with the 'off-season' becoming the 'peak-season' for skills and business development, with supported progression routes for Learners to build upon qualifications each off-season
 - Challenge negative perceptions and stereotypes about tourism and hospitality opportunities through initiatives such as Work Experience, 'work-tasters', schools-business partnership, success case-studies
- Work with local leadership groups such as the newly-established Destination Management Organisation (East Lincolnshire Destination Management Organisation), ELDC, SECWHA, Skegness Chamber of Trade, MASCOT to develop and implement a local skills plan, utilising national funding models where suitable, and lobbying / bidding / gaining bespoke funding (such as BIS Growth and Innovation Fund or DCLG Coastal Communities Fund) where strong business cases can be made. For example, local skills development models which optimise the upskilling of young people and adults living and working in a seasonal environment
- A focused, locally-customised initiative to develop key Kitchen / Chef / Professional Cookery skills for residents and businesses, perhaps based on 'bite-sized' (!) accreditation / progression opportunities
- A focused locally-customised initiative to develop customer service skills through a model such as World Host, considering the potential and benefits of Skegness and Mablethorpe becoming World Host towns, or East Lindsey becoming a World Host District in partnership with the local employers and the Sector Skills Council for Hospitality, People 1st
- Customised supervisory and leadership skills, tuned into the realities and standards of the Hospitality sector

SECTION ONE : PATHFINDER COASTAL SKILLS DELIVERY PILOTS

Introduction

Based upon a practical analysis of the skills needs by local employers, stakeholders and learning providers, four small-scale skills pilots were set up, in partnership with local Learning Providers and, with the exception of the Mablethorpe provision, funded via public funding streams or providers' own resources. The pilots sought to tackle the following challenges:

1. The needs of Mablethorpe-based unemployed young people and adults for locally-based employability provision with specific connections into the Hospitality / Visitor Economy sector
2. The need to establish clearer, off-season skills development routes for young people to develop and accredit skills as Kitchen staff and ultimately Chefs
3. The case for 'bite-sized' unitised provision for individuals to have short 'skills tasters' in key Kitchen skills and begin a route towards full qualifications
4. Test out with businesses and employees the Olympics-inspired World Host skills initiative that focuses upon front-line world-class Customer Service

Skills Pilot - #1

The needs of Mablethorpe-based unemployed young people and adults for locally-based employability provision with specific connections into the Hospitality / Visitor Economy sector

Background

Through the project, it was identified by a range of partners that it was proving especially difficult to source and deliver front-line employability support in Mablethorpe for Mablethorpe residents. Provision was readily available and accessible in Skegness, but public transport options are very limited in the winter season. In line with the overall project objectives, extensive efforts were made to source existing public funding sources such as JCP Flexible Support Fund and FE Budgets, but these efforts were unsuccessful in the tight project-timescales. To 'fill the gap', provision was directly commissioned from pathfinder project budgets to deliver customised employability provision, with strong employer-involvement and a local bridge between the highly successful Mablethorpe Job Fair and the imminent seasonal recruitment period.

Provider:

CG Partnership, Mablethorpe Learning Centre, Seacroft Road, Mablethorpe

Course Title /Name:

SPRING INTO WORK (Mablethorpe area)

Course Content:

Employment-focused courses that will support local unemployed and economically inactive people understand, apply for and gain employment opportunities in the local area. The course was centred on the needs of the specific learners, and included understanding the local job market; CV-building; application forms (including online applications); Interview Skills; employer connections, including work experience; work trials; interview guarantees. It also included an employer visit via partnership with Mablethorpe Town Centre Partnership Manager, sharing an employer perspective of seasonal recruitment.

Qualification/s Offered:

The provision itself only initially offered in-house accreditation, although it aimed to link into specific employability / job-specific units and / or 'Get into' provision. CG Partnership were awaiting final confirmation for these two funding applications that will add value to this provision, but, in the context of the seasonal economy, it was decided to get initial high quality provision in place, connecting with the Mablethorpe Jobs Fair.

Provider Evaluation:

- Number of Learners: 10
- Male: 7 Female: 3
- No with disability: 0
- No with learning difficulty: 2
- Age of learners 3 (20-24) 3 (25-39) 2 (40-50) 2 (51-65)
- Length of Unemployment 4 (0-5mths) 3 (6-12) 1 (24-35) 2 (over 36 mths)

Outcomes:

- 7 participants gained an interview
- 4 have found paid employment and have started work
- Refuse Collector / Caravan Park Cleaner / Pizza Shop Assistant /Retail floor walker
- 1 is currently doing a work trial as a window cleaner
- 2 are waiting to hear back from their interviews at large caravan parks
- 1 has withdrawn to health issues
- 1 is progressing into further learning (Basic numeracy and Literacy)
- 2 are still actively looking for work (plus 1 more if work trial is not successful)

LEARNING POINTS:

- **Highly successful local provision that was funded through the project, as external funding sources proved unsuitable**
- **The importance of a local base for skills development that can support individuals beyond the end of the programme with further learning / job-support**
- **Real connections with actual employment opportunities at the time they arise is critical to optimising the success of this type of provision**
- **In particular, anecdotal evidence suggests that supporting young men to access Visitor Economy opportunities is a particularly important aspect to this provision**
- **Positive connections with Town Centre Manager for 'real' employer engagement / local intelligence and with JobCentrePlus for referrals of participants**
- **Such provision can support local individuals become competitive for and achieve front-line, 'first rung on the ladder' opportunities**
- **The importance of this provision for 'ground-level' opportunities**

Skills Pilot - #2

The need to establish clearer, off-season skills development routes for young people to develop and accredit skills as Kitchen staff and ultimately Chefs

Background

A particular priority of the project was to establish the potential for extending Apprenticeship provision on the Coast through exploring the possibility of an Apprenticeship that operated all-year round, but where learners would engage in the great majority of the learning and assessment 'out of season'. Discussions were held with local providers about this possibility and the following barriers were identified;

- Lack of employer demand for all-year-round employment and training commitments
- Training provider risks in respect of maximising achievement ratios in a labour market of high seasonality

In light of this, it was agreed with JobCentreplus partners to run an FE-funded pilot for off-season hospitality training based in the training kitchens at Lincolnshire Regional College. The pilot sought to recruit a small group of Learners who would, whilst being unemployed off-season, commence (and ideally complete) a Level 1 course. That qualification would strengthen their position once seasonal posts were recruited for, and it was hoped that the same learners would return in the next off-season to complete their Level 2, hence supporting upskilling.

Provider Evaluation Report : Lincolnshire Regional College

5 Students enrolled on the HAB NVQ 1 Certificate in Hospitality Services course at Lincolnshire Regional College on the 20th February 2012.

Gender	Age	Employment Status at the Beginning of the Course	Employment Status at the End of the Course	Outcome of Course as on 10/05/12
Male	22	Unemployed	Employed	Passed (awaiting internal IV)
Male	25	Unemployed	Employed	Passed (awaiting internal IV)
Male	19	Unemployed	Employed	Passed (awaiting internal IV)
Male	20	Employed	Employed with a promotion	Passed (awaiting internal IV)
Female	20	Unemployed	Employed	Passed (awaiting internal IV)

Provider Comments

The original proposal for this project was that students undertake the theory/college based elements of an Apprenticeship over the winter months and then work with an employer in the summer. This proposal was not possible as it did not fulfill the requirements of an Apprenticeship. As an alternative the students were enrolled on a College based NVQ L1 course which could be completed over the Winter months and would up skill the students, enabling them to either secure Hospitality based employment or promotion with their regular employer once the season began.

The investigation into the possibility of running an apprenticeship delayed the start of the project and the number of learners expected to participate was considerably less than first predicted (5 instead of 10-12) However the five that did attend were excellent learners and have all passed their course (pending internal verification) All of the learners agreed that the concept, delivery and style of qualification was exactly what they and the area needed.

The staff at Lincolnshire Regional College were very happy with the way that the course ran. This year's successful L1 students will all be able to study Level 2 in the next academic year and we hope that another group will start on Hospitality Level 1. We are also willing to look at the possibility of extending the project into other curriculum areas if there is a demand.

LEARNING POINTS:

- Due to the efforts made initially to adapt Apprenticeship opportunities for seasonally-unemployed young people, recruitment to this course started later than would have been ideal and there is general confidence that a group of at least 10 Learners could have been recruited if recruitment had commenced from late October, rather than February
 - Excellent achievement levels, especially considering the timescales
 - Despite the timing challenges, the course proved to be popular with young people
 - The support of JobCentreplus in referring people proved invaluable
 - Achievement levels in these very tight timescales were excellent and there are already commitments made by the young people and Lincolnshire Regional College for the next qualification level to be available ready for the next off-season
 - Demonstrable fit with seasonal working patterns
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Skills Pilot - #3

The case for 'bite-sized' unitised skills provision for individuals to have short skills tasters in key Kitchen skills

Background

It was identified that there was scope to offer 'off-season' skills units to individuals considering either pursuing a Kitchen-based job / career or alternatively looking to accredit the skills that they already have to strengthen their CV.

Provider:

First College, North Parade, Skegness

Course Title /Name:

Food Preparation / Cooking Skills

Course Main Aim:

To provide short introductory, practical skills opportunities in a Training Kitchen for those with some experience of kitchen work/food preparation (including domestic), but without qualifications; or those without any experience, looking to work in the local hospitality sector.

Course Content:

Prepare vegetables

Cook vegetables

Prepare and finish simple salad and fruit dishes

Prepare Hot and Cold sandwiches

Qualification/s Offered:

Units towards City and Guilds Level 1 in Food Cooking

Benefits:

Protective clothing and all equipment / food provided

Attendance Requirements:

Learners could attend for one day minimum for which they will aim to attain one Unit of the qualification or for all four days covering the different kitchen skills. The programme ran on an entirely flexible, rolling basis.

Provider Evaluation Report: First College

Participation

18 Participants who achieved 30 Units in total

15 of those Participants achieved more than 1 Unit

Only 3 Learners achieved just a single Unit showing a high rate of retention for participants beyond the initial commitment to one day / one learning

Comments

We have to-date delivered 30 individual units to 18 clients. We have a rolling 8 week programme which is well supported and engaging with new clients ongoing.

Once we have engaged the learners on a one day course, they will then come back and do more units. The course is set at an appropriate level and the standard of work that has been produced has been excellent. The learners all receive a City and Guilds certificate for each unit and this boosts their confidence in coming back and developing more kitchen skills.

From initially running a 4 week course we have now started another 4 week course with different units.

All referrals have come from our own work programme and recruitment teams, and we received no referrals from stakeholders such as JobCentrePlus or local IAG / Employment services providers.

The sustainability of such provision is entirely reliant on referrals from across the wider employment and skills partnership.

This provision is not only a benefit to the learners but also First College as learning provider as it promotes our resource and we could also identify potential jobs, employment opportunities as we are assessing the learner's practical skills before they enter the workplace.

LEARNING POINTS:

- **Highly accessible, flexible, job-related provision that focuses upon the practical**
 - **Useful skills development, even for those that ultimately do not achieve work in a Kitchen**
 - **Great opportunities for people to move towards full qualifications in a 'bite-size' way that does not appear too daunting**
 - **Literally, a taster opportunity for people to self-assess their potential in an important role for the coastal economy**
 - **Need for better connections / promotion with potential referral partners such as JobCentrePlus, CICT (IAG Provider), Work Programme, Community sector etc.**
 - **Opportunities to connect with employers recruiting for junior Kitchen staff**
 - **Ideal 'off-season' upskilling opportunities**
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Skills Pilot - #4

The opportunity to test out with businesses and employees the Olympics inspired World Host skills initiative that focuses upon front-line world-class Customer Service

Background

As a balance to the pilot projects that sought to support individuals to gain the right skills to gain and thrive in employment in the Visitor Economy sector, this pilot project aimed to gauge the level of interest from local employers in a new, high profile customer-service skills initiative connected to the London 2012 Olympics, aiming to upskill the existing workforce.

Provider:

Boston College, in partnership with Gordon Stokes, and People 1st, Sector Skills Council

Course:

World Host Customer Service Tasters

Course Main Aim:

To promote front-line customer service standards and training through a short high-profile course connected to the London Olympics sponsored World Host programme. In particular, to generate interest and raise demand for business-focussed skills investment by local employers.

Course Content:

'Principles of Customer Service'

Welcoming people skills / customer communications / first impressions / customer concerns / effective listening / broader visitor needs / value of tourism / personal action plan

Qualification/s Offered:

World Host in-house Accreditation by People 1st with the opportunity for Unit accreditation is being explored

Benefits:

Recognised, tested customer service skills for frontline staff

Employer branding and association with World Host

Locally accredited Trainer

Attendance Requirements:

Half-day taster in March 2012 with a view to gaining employer commitment to gain World Host recognition thereby training its staff to World Host standards

Typical Participants:

Businesses seeking to develop customer service skills through World Host recognition, including representative members of staff

Participation

The taster session was attended by 10 businesses and 25 people in total with some businesses bringing along staff members.

Provider Evaluation: Boston College

Very positive feedback from those that attended the taster sessions, with at least 3 relatively large employers declaring an interest in an in-house course, with this being followed up.

One larger business is exploring World Host Resort status and two other significant local organisations are exploring recognised Business status, including for their Volunteers

Considerable investment and time was put into marketing the World Host tasters, including links with all local business groups in Skegness, / Mablethorpe; and a Lincolnshire Chamber event at Woodhall Spa. The final number of business attendees was therefore disappointing.

World Host receives no public funding subsidies in an area where qualifications or part qualifications in Customer Service often receive full or part funding support for eligible businesses or individuals. If part-funding had been available, there was considerable confidence that take-up would have been stronger.

LEARNING POINTS:

- **Especially at the present time, coastal businesses are very cautious about skills investment, particularly where funding subsidies are not available**
 - **Encouraging employer involvement and investment in skills development is a big challenge on the Coast**
 - **Local employers do not see themselves as automatically connected into and gaining benefits from national or visitor economy sector skills development opportunities, even where no cost is involved.**
 - **There was initial exploration about the potential for World Host to be a skills incentive and reward for volunteers, especially through JobCentrePlus referrals, although this was ultimately not tested out**
 - **There is the potential for an initiative such as World Host, or even a locally-designed programme, to set standards for the local area and provide a training framework / accreditation programme for existing employees and those seeking work**
-

Conclusion

These pilots, although modest in scale have demonstrated the following:

- 1 The importance of employer involvement in local skills development
- 2 The opportunity to deliver relevant training and upskilling in the 'Off-Season' and for supported progression in successive off-seasons
- 3 The importance of employability provision being delivered as geographically close to learner and employer as possible
- 4 The benefits of short, taster qualification opportunities which allow individuals to progress in a measured way
- 5 The challenges of encouraging employers to investigate new skills initiatives
- 6 The need to ensure that a motivating, high quality, local vocational training opportunity is available to young people and local employers if the national Apprenticeship model is not able to incorporate sufficient opportunities for young people in a highly seasonal economy

SECTION TWO : CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges

- Seasonality:** The employment and skills patterns of the acutely seasonal hospitality sector on the Lincolnshire Coast are proving major obstacles to both businesses and local residents benefitting from skills investment and longer-term employment planning. There is a mismatch between the priority skills needs of the seaside economy and the skills aspirations and investment patterns of the local community
- Intensity of Job Roles:** The sector itself, irrespective of locality is particularly challenging from an employment and skills perspective due to its intensity. New entrants are very quickly and necessarily involved in pressurised situations, at the heart of customer interactions and therefore the heart of business success. This inherent intensity is compounded by acute seasonality which increases business pressures and makes skills investment for the long-term very difficult. Many businesses respond to this environment with robust, professional in-house standards, requiring multi-skilled front-line employees; roles for which many young people appear unprepared
- Work Readiness, especially Young People:** Many employer concerns expressed about the work-readiness of Young People for the sector; an issue which is not necessarily preventing business investment at this time, but which will cause longer-term economic and community-based challenges if not tackled. These issues are combined with employer concerns about provision such as Work Experience not providing proper insights for young people, and frustrations with their Apprenticeship experiences. Almost universally, employers are prepared to 'train the skill' as long as they can 'hire the right attitude', often irrespective of other common employment barriers such as numeracy and literacy. Work-Readiness is a major barrier to young people entering front-line positions in the Visitor Economy
- Mutual, negative perceptions:** Stereotypes about employment and skills prevail in relation to this sector – both for individuals in respect of the potential of the sector to offer identifiable, fulfilling career routes and from businesses in respect of the work-readiness of young people and the benefits of public skills investment in areas such as Apprenticeships to support their business
- Chefs:** Lincolnshire Coast employers express concerns about the ability to recruit and retain Chefs and Trainee Chefs from the local area. Especially emphasised was the skills to prepare from fresh ingredients rather than 'snip and ping' approaches based upon preparing and presenting ready-made meals
- Owner operator support:** The need for better business support for local Owner Operators, micro-businesses to support their own skills developments in areas such as technology, managing the customer experience, marketing, staff management, quality standards, environmental issues, legislation etc.
- The publicly-funded skills system:** It is often not understood, never mind owned by local employers, leading to missed opportunities. A demand-led system will not always support apt skills investment where low aspiration for skills development exists in both local employers and communities

Opportunities

- Opportunities for young people:** The Visitor Economy can provide regular, predictable, ground-level opportunities for people with relatively low levels of formal qualifications. This is particularly important in the current economic climate. There are opportunities for greater investment in 'work-preparation training' for young people, perhaps with a blend of key sector skills and qualifications such as Food Hygiene plus a focus upon work-readiness through 'real' work-experience, employer connections. There is certainly scope to boost participation in structured work-based learning by both businesses and individuals, although there may be a case to develop a local vocational learning alternative to Apprenticeships if the national model cannot be flexed to the seasonal, seaside economy. *'A recovery in retail, hotels and restaurants is particularly important for young people as this is where they are most likely to find work'*. Brendan Barber, TUC, April 2012, as reported by CIPD

- Area of Excellence:** To turn a challenge in to a strength by developing and promoting the Lincolnshire Coast as an Area of Excellence for Tourism and Hospitality skills development; aligning the high aspirations of local stakeholders with customised local skills investment supported by funding streams such as the BIS Growth and Innovation Fund, Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot or the CLG Coastal Communities Fund

- Seasonal Skills Hub:** The development of a virtual or actual employment and skills hub for the Lincolnshire seaside strip that could seek to:
 - Align with employer/stakeholder groups such as the DMO to ensure local employer leadership and collaboration on skills
 - Plan, co-ordinate and promote customised upskilling and employment opportunities for local residents in areas of continuing employer demand such as Chefs, front-line customer service
 - Support local employers to recruit and develop the skills they need to support business success and growth
 - Support local residents to benefit from local up-skilling and employment opportunities
 - Recognise and work within the opportunities and constraints of an acutely seasonal, intensive economy : perhaps with the 'off-season' becoming the 'peak-season' for skills and business support
 - Explore opportunities for a local Coastal Skills Passport designed and owned by local employers
 - Develop creative approaches to Apprenticeships or alternative work-based learning routes to ensure that young people and businesses are not marginalised from these opportunities due to a seasonal, weather-related economy
 - Ensure new opportunities such as the Youth Contract are optimised for young people based on the coast
 - Support Owner Operators, especially new investors, with integrated skills investment and business support

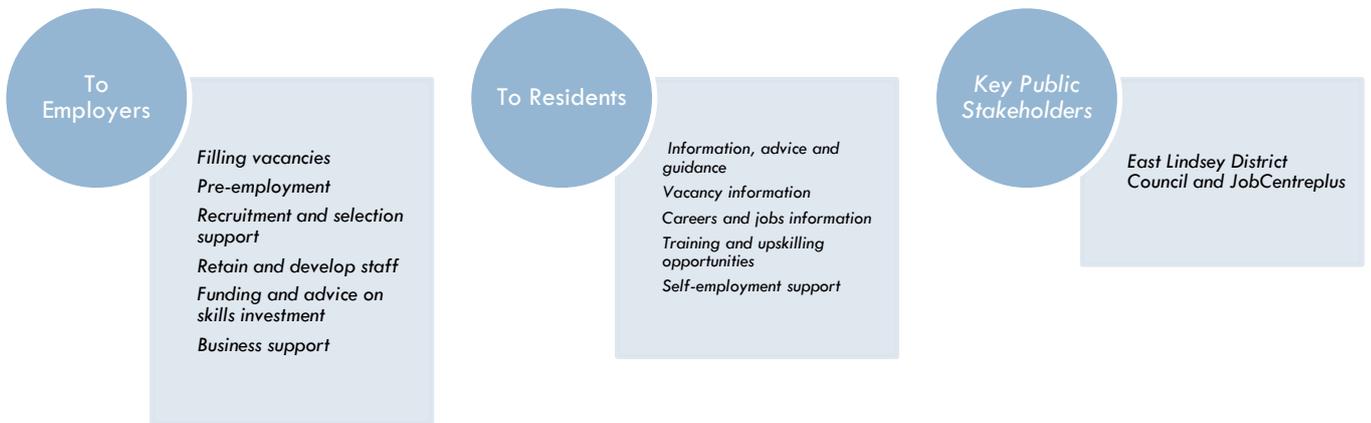
- Local Skills Initiatives:** A customised customer service initiative such as the Olympics-inspired World Host to provide business-focused skills opportunities: for those already working in the sector, and also the 'future workforce' currently in education, training or unemployment
- Volunteering:** The Visitor Economy provides high quality Volunteering opportunities on a major scale. For example, events such as the SO Festival and Olympic Torch procession; Stately Homes such as Gunby Hall; Zoos such as The Parrot Zoo; Nature Reserves such as Gibraltar Point etc. These opportunities are sometimes dominated by people who have retired. There is a chance to better connect such volunteering opportunities with those young people and adults in need of structured work experience and training to help them find employment within the Visitor Economy. There are early signs that this is already happening with some switch of emphasis for Volunteers from the retired to disadvantaged groups

SECTION THREE : LOOKING FORWARD

Coastal Employment and Skills Hub

A locally-led, co-ordinated skills-development and recruitment service, attuned to a seasonal Visitor Economy, meeting the needs of local residents and businesses for the benefit of the local economy and community

Services



Important Elements

Local, local, local

- Locally owned and driven, centred on the needs of local residents and local employers with objectives focused upon local economy and community gains – local jobs for local people.

Local partnership

- Close collaboration between all key stakeholders in the surprisingly complex, multi-agency employment and skills infrastructure; including employers, community organisations, learning providers, funders

Local connectivity

- Between local employers and residents

Local Employment and Skills plan

- Identify local skills priorities, secure employer ownership and plan provision and additional support to ensure that it is in place at the right time to complement the season. (Opportunities to either focus upon the visitor economy jobs, or to have a focus upon all local vacancies, in partnership with JobCentreplus)

Local accountability

- Accountable to an identified local stakeholder group

Local Technology

- Best use of technology, especially social media to share information on jobs, Apprenticeships, training, upskilling and work-experience opportunities with local residents and with employers in terms of availability of work-ready candidates and support to upskill existing and future employees.

Local Learning Provider partnerships

- Partnership and effective communications with learning providers to avoid duplication and ensure that gaps are filled.

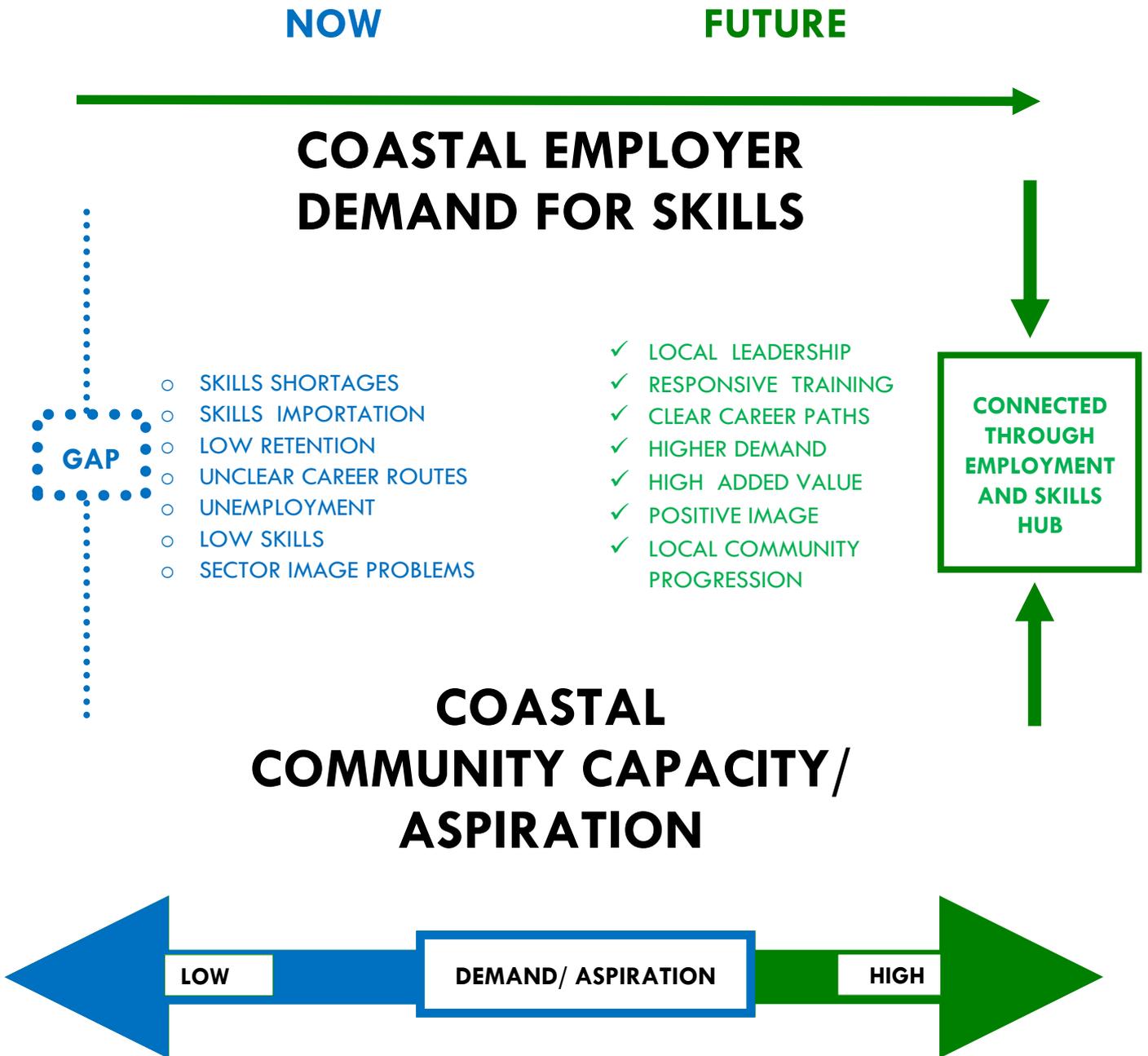
Local Business Support

- Supporting local businesses to sustain and grow through information, advice and access to funding opportunities and skills investment

Local Marketing and promotion

- Ensure that the hub is high profile for all local employers (as best source of job and training opportunities) and for residents (as best source of local people).

Raising Demand for Skills - A Coastal Skills Progression Model



APPENDIX ONE : BACKGROUND

Pathfinder Objectives

Commissioned by East Lindsey District Council in partnership with JobCentrePlus, supported by Lincolnshire & Rutland Employment and Skills Board:

- To understand the nature and scope of the current training provision within the hospitality sector in East Lindsey. This should also pick up any emerging provision arising out of the Get Britain Working campaign
- To assess the recurrent underlying skills needs of employers within the sector, based on available job opportunities
- To identify any gaps or issues in accessing current provision
- To facilitate pilot training events within the coastal strip to address this shortfall and provide local job seekers with the skills they need to access local job opportunities
- To work with referral agencies and support providers to recruit learners to the training events

Method and Timescales

- Not designed as a formal research exercise, but rather 'here and now' intelligence and pilot activity, delivered in partnership with local employers, skills providers and other stakeholders
 - Project Inception 16/09/11
 - Stage 1 - Introduction / Planning Sep 2011
 - Stage 2 - Stakeholder Engagement Oct 2011
 - Stage 3 - Research Local Training Offer / Local Intelligence Oct 2011
 - Stage 4 - Understand / Articulate Skills Demand Nov 2011
 - Stage 5 - Consult / Design / Plan Training Provision Dec 2011
 - Stage 6 - Identify / Recruit Participant Jan 2012
 - Stage 7 - Co-ordinate Training Delivery Mar 2012
 - Stage 8 - Evaluate / Disseminate / Sustain Mar 2012
 - Post Project Monitoring Jun 2012

Our Approach

'An Open Mind / No Assumptions' – although respecting and taking full account of the considerable research already undertaken, this project and its training programmes sought to be fresh, engaging, challenging and action-oriented

'Employer led / Learner centred' – whilst being highly sensitive to the needs of important stakeholders such as training providers / skills funders, it was founded on understanding and articulating what employers need and planning training that is designed to understand and meet the needs of local individuals looking for local hospitality (or other) jobs

'Inclusiveness and shared airtime' – the project sought to interact and partner with any other initiatives locally that have similar objectives – for example LCC ESF projects that seek to build higher level skills in hospitality SMEs. This minimised the likelihood of employer, learner or stakeholder confusion

'Independent, yet collaborative' – the project was not structured to work with one specific employment services or learning provider, but rather to identify employer / learner-based priorities first, and then establish vendor-neutral, delivery partnerships with one or more employment services or learning provider

'Sustainability' – From Day 1, the project sought to contribute to lasting improvements to the coastal skills economy through employer and stakeholder partnerships, and innovative, results-oriented training

Partnerships and planning

Establish informal partnerships with key stakeholders with a key focus upon local economy and community priorities.

What we did

- Strong, often day-to-day, productive partnerships established with a range of partners across the coastal strip. These included:
 - East Lindsey District Council
 - JobCentrePlus
 - Lincolnshire County Council
 - Lincolnshire & Rutland ESB / Greater Lincolnshire LEP
 - Large majority of active SFA-funded learning providers
 - Local information, advice and guidance providers
 - Business representative groups including SECWHA, Skegness Chamber of Trade, Town Centre Managers, Lincolnshire Chamber
- All stakeholders readily embraced the broader economy and community objectives of the Pathfinder and operated positively and proactively. This was vital to the project success as it gave broader credibility and representation
- Due to its short duration, the 'identity' of this project remained low-profile which proved to be the right decision, particularly as new, representative structures such as the DMO were developing and the wider employment and skills policy context evolved significantly
- The JCP-co-ordinated Integrated Employment and Skills (IES) Group proved an ideal forum and communications platform for the project

Learning points

- A partnership approach is vital to making a difference: employment and skills leadership needs wide ownership across the wide-ranging interest groups that exist
- Training providers and other stakeholders will work enthusiastically on coastal economy / community developments and the Jobcentreplus led IES (integrated employment and skills) group proved an ideal regular forum for the project. There does need to be recognition, however, that service providers in both skills and employment services have their own interests and operate in an open market environment.
- The new stakeholder model developing through the DMO provides real opportunity for employer leadership on coastal employment and skills developments for the visitor economy

Establish working relationships with key local training providers to develop provision which could be funded through national funding models such as FE / Apprenticeship funds

What we did

- The following learning providers were directly involved in the project:
 - Boston College: in respect of world host / customer service developments particularly
 - Lincolnshire Regional College, part of the Grimsby Institute Group: in respect of customised FE provision for trainee chefs
 - First College, Skegness: in respect of 'bite sized' units for kitchen skills
 - CG Partnership, Mablethorpe: in respect of the 'Spring into Hospitality' employability provision developed and delivered in Mablethorpe
- Positive communication lines were also established with A4E Skills, Seagull, CICT (IAG providers) and Skegness Vocational College

Learning points

- There was a great willingness from learning providers to adapt and customise provision to meet the economic and community objectives of the pathfinder
- In some cases, national skills funding models do not seem to meet locally identified circumstances. In particular, the national Apprenticeship model does not apply easily to the predominantly short-term nature of employment on the coast resulting in low participation levels of both employers and young people. This situation is likely to be exacerbated by the proposals for a minimum 12 month Apprenticeship
- Particular difficulties were faced in identifying funding to meet the very localised needs of Mablethorpe, and surrounding areas in a short timescale

Understand how the seasonal employment cycles operate on the Lincolnshire coast

What we did

- Listened to the viewpoints of employers, individuals, training providers and stakeholders on the peaks and troughs of employment on the Coast and the impact of seasonality
- Piloted off-season provision with four different training providers

Learning points

- Seasonal employment is not as straightforward as peak season and off season, with smaller peaks and troughs within
- Seasonal issues in Skegness and Mablethorpe are not the same, with a significantly shorter high season for employment in Mablethorpe
- Many employers spoke of low retention rates of seasonal workers between seasons
- The visitor economy, seasonal employment cycles, taking into account the sheer lack of accessible, alternative employment opportunities, are a major barrier to sustainable employment and skills development for local residents
- There is a real opportunity for employment and skills developments to work in greater harmony with the seasonal peaks and troughs – for example, the main off-season between November and February inclusive could become a local peak season for upskilling
- Especially in Skegness, the off season between November and February is a very narrow window of opportunity to focus upon upskilling, especially when one considers the Christmas period
- Off season skills provision needs to be established and planned well in advance of the November surge in unemployment so that upskilling opportunities are ready, maximised and can be promoted through information, advice and guidance provision able to respond to the large increase in referrals
- The highly successful Mablethorpe Jobs Fair could be replicated with similar results and on a larger scale in Skegness to support seasonal recruitment and job-seeking
- The opportunity for learners to continue their training and qualifications in successive off-seasons may result in individuals attaining full qualifications and upskilling to improve their options

APPENDIX TWO : COASTAL SKILLS NEEDS

Skills gaps

A skills need or gap is either a

- Recruitment / Retention challenge or
- Workforce Development challenge

The table below identifies the key local skills needs identified by Visitor Economy employers:

Skills Need	Recruitment	Workforce Development	Skills / Attitudes
Chefs / Skilled Kitchen Staff	Yes	Yes	Knife Skills Using original ingredients Prepare stocks / sauces Prepare and cook poultry and meat dishes Prepare desserts Presentation of dishes Team working Communication skills Staff motivation and development
Semi-Skilled Kitchen Staff	Yes	Yes	Prepare and cook vegetables Prepare and finish simple salad and fruit dishes Prepare hot and cold sandwiches Prepare and present ready-made meals Team working
'Work-Readiness'	Yes		Enthusiasm Reliability Personal Presentation Politeness / 'Manners' Verbal / non-verbal communication Flexibility Ability to tackle wide range of jobs Consistency
Customer Service	Yes	Yes	Understanding the importance of excellent service Demonstrating the right attitudes and behaviors Identifying and responding to customer needs Clear communication Developing customer loyalty / repeat business Complaint handling Product knowledge and up selling

Skills Need	Recruitment	Workforce Development	Skills / Attitudes
Owner Operators	N/A	Yes	Business Support Legislative requirements Employment and development of people Marketing Technology Customer-service management
Managers / Professionals	Yes	No	Leadership Costing and Budgets Sourcing Health and safety management Food Safety Management Financial management

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Skills Stakeholders: Including Skills Funding Agency (Di Pudney and Jon Poxon), National Apprenticeship Service (Mike Crosby), Guideline Careers Services (Sarah Bull), Employment and Skills Board (Clare Hughes) and Lincolnshire County Council (Nicola Radford)

BACKGROUND TO SKILLSREACH

SkillsReach is a Lincolnshire-based business that specialises in providing insight, intelligence and strategies in response to employment and skills challenges.

Web connections: www.SkillsReach.co.uk