

CABINET

DATE	14th January 2026
REPORT OF	Councillor Philip Jackson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Regeneration, Devolution and Skills
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Carolina Borgstrom, Director for Economy, Environment and Infrastructure
SUBJECT	Humber Economic Strategy
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	CB 01/26/05

CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR AIMS

An effective pan-Humber approach to economic development will support our key priorities of developing a Stronger Economy and by association, Stronger Communities, by having a coherent approach to investment across the key sectors in the functional economic geography around the Humber.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to support the strengthening of Humber collaboration and partnership working, the Government provided financial assistance to support the production and implementation of a Humber Economic Strategy and Investment Plan. The Humber Economic Strategy 2025-2035 at Appendix 1 has been developed through extensive engagement with key stakeholders including the Humber Freeport, Humber Energy Board, Local Authorities and the Mayoral Combined Authorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Endorses the Humber Economic Strategy 2025-35 and notes the intention, following endorsement by each Humber local authority, that the strategy, if required, be approved through the Humber Leaders' Board (pursuant to Regulation 9 of Local Authorities (Arrangement for the discharge of Functions Regulations) (England) 2012), confirming the Strategy at Appendix 1 including the strategic economic priorities for the Humber region.

REASONS FOR DECISION

Through the devolution deals negotiated with Government, North East Lincolnshire Council, Hull City Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and North Lincolnshire Council recognise that optimising the Humber's economic potential will require the public and private sectors on both banks of the Humber Estuary to continue working together on pan-Humber economic opportunities alongside the Hull and East Riding Combined Authority, the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority, the Humber Energy Board and Humber Freeport. The Humber Economic Strategy sets the framework for this to happen.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1. The Humber Economic Strategy 2025-2035 has been developed through extensive engagement with key stakeholders including the Humber Freeport, Humber Energy Board, Local Authorities and the Mayoral Combined Authorities. The role of this strategy is to articulate the distinctive economic opportunities for the region and the national significance of these. Hull City Council secured Government funding through the Levelling Up Partnership and working with stakeholders and the other Local Authorities, commissioned ARUP to lead the development of the strategy. Regular monitoring of progress to develop the strategy has been reported to Government who have supported this approach and the partnership working across the Humber.
- 1.2. The Humber Leadership Board has been in existence since 2014. The Board is a joint committee which was established to facilitate cooperation and collaboration between the four Humber local authorities on cross-Estuary working. On 31 October 2025 the Leadership Board which includes representatives from North East Lincolnshire Council, received the draft Humber Economic Strategy 2025-2035. This strategy identifies three priorities that require a pan-Humber approach to activity in the Humber Estuary Industrial Growth Corridor. These strategic opportunities for the Humber are:
 1. Energy Security and Resilience
 2. Freeport, Ports and Logistics
 3. Environment and Natural Capital
- 1.3. The following five investment and growth priorities for the Humber are intended to enable and guide the allocation of resources and investment towards achieving the long-term vision across the strategic opportunities for the Humber. This includes enhanced ways of continued joint working among the Humber stakeholders.



- 1.4. The Humber Economic Strategy sets out the Humber proposition for investment and an indicative longer-term route map to deliver the economic opportunity in the Humber. The investment and growth priorities set out the principles for investment and set the strategic direction and scope for future investment in the Humber to unlock growth
- 1.5. At its meeting on 31st October 2025 the Humber Leaders' Board determined to seek the endorsement of the strategy through the member local authorities and the combined authority mayors prior to formal approval.
- 1.6. The Humber is on the cusp of securing transformational investment. There is an unprecedented level of private sector investment interest (£15bn+) ready to be unlocked in new energy, advanced manufacturing and port-related growth. The Humber is uniquely positioned as the UK's Energy Estuary, a critical trade and logistics hub, and home to globally significant natural capital.
- 1.7. The strategy will also place the area in a prime position to be competitive in securing inward investment and government funding as it provides economic viability evidence demonstrating the resilience of the Humber to support government objectives and missions around creating a more competitive, secure and resilient economy to provide the stability needed for long-term investment and attract business investment and jobs in high growth sectors.
- 1.8. Liaising with Government and the Humber local authorities, Hull City Council has led on the transitional arrangements for Humber working and secured funding for the production of the Humber Economic Strategy.
- 1.9. This builds on the strong strategic partnership working in the region between partners over recent years in the form of the local authorities and the Local

Enterprise Partnerships working together and more recently engagement with the Humber Freeport Board, Humber Energy Board and Mayoral Combined Authorities.

- 1.10. This Humber Economic Strategy sets the strategic direction for growth in the region. Central to realising the Humber opportunity is ensuring clarity of purpose between the multiple organisations and leaders in the Humber exists alongside confirmation of the delivery mechanism to achieve this. There is agreement among leaders in the Humber that Humber-level executive arrangements would drive the implementation of this Humber Economic Strategy.

2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

- 2.1. Government has been clear it expects the Humber to continue to function as a valuable economic geography. Not progressing a strategy to achieve this risks losing confidence, and therefore funding, investment and jobs, with both government and investors.
- 2.2. There is a clear opportunity to better promote the Humber offer and enhance the chances of realising further investment and the wider opportunities that brings.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Given the approach taken to date, the only realistic alternative option is to not endorse the Humber Economic Strategy. This means there would be no strategy and partnership approach across the Humber region for economic development and growth. This would undermine private sector inward investment and any future bids for external funding that often require a strategic context or fit within applications.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

The endorsement and approval of the Humber Economic Strategy will aid interactions with potential inward investors and the two Combined Authorities

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no immediate financial considerations arising from this report although it is envisaged that the Strategy, if endorsed, will provide a stronger platform to secure enabling funding.

6. PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND MARMOT IMPLICATIONS

A more coordinated approach to investment across the Humber geography builds further on the growth aspirations the Council holds together with that of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority. It is an accepted principle that having a job is a key determinant of health and thus, the Humber Economic

Strategy provides a greater opportunity to secure further investment and by association, further job opportunities.

7. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate implications arising from this report although on the basis the strategy is successful in enabling an enhanced level of investment, this naturally provides greater opportunity for our communities.

8. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate implications arising from the endorsement of the Humber Economic Strategy. Individual investments will be considered at the appropriate time, have due regard to legislation and regulations.

9. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

There has been no engagement with Scrutiny.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Section 151 Officer notes the recommendation to endorse the Humber Economic Strategy which confirms the strategic economic priorities for the Humber Region. The strategy will help to ensure the region is in a prime position to secure inward investment and Government funding.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Humber Leaders' Board was originally established pursuant to what was s71 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. That provision was repealed following the implementation of the Localism Act 2012 and replaced by the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012. The regulations allow at regulation 9 for the executives of local authorities to make provision for the discharge of a function by the executive of a local authority to be discharged jointly with the executive of another authority. The proposed Humber Economic Strategy, as a cross area strategy can therefore be agreed through the Leaders' Board, as a body exercising powers pursuant to regulation 9, subject to consultation with the relevant authorities. The Executive may endorse the strategy to enable its subsequent approval through the Humber Leaders' Board. It is noted from the minutes of the Humber Leaders' Board on 31st October 2025 that there is an intention to amend the structure of the Humber Leaders Board following the establishment of combined authorities for the area. It is anticipated that this will be by way of an amendment to the Humber Leaders' Board pursuant to regulation 10, it should be noted however, that under s88 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 the Secretary of State is prevented from establishing an economic prosperity board for an area consisting of two or more local government areas

where a part of the area forms part of a combined authority or a combined county authority.

12. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct HR implications arising from the contents of this report.

13. WARD IMPLICATIONS

All wards are affected.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Humber Economic Strategy at Appendix 1.

15. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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COUNCILLOR PHILIP JACKSON

**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ECONOMY,
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Appendix 1