

A SOCIAL ECONOMY STRATEGY FOR LINCOLNSHIRE

With funding from the County Council and Research England, this research has developed a strategy for Lincolnshire's Social Economy. It gives consideration to developing alternatives to the 'growth' economy: the circular economy, the inclusive economy, the sharing economy, social innovation and place-based development. All of these are seen to offer potential for tackling inequalities, climate change, and creating employment for those furthest from the job market.

University of Lincoln research has:

- Critically evaluated current thinking on the social economy in a research report
- Assembled a community of interest to steer the development of a social economy strategy
- Produced a social economy strategy for Lincolnshire 2021 - 2031

The SOCIAL ECONOMY is made up of charities, social organisations (including Community Interest Companies), cooperatives and self-help initiatives that produce and distribute market and non-market goods and services, for societal, environmental and carbon reduction purposes, employing people inclusively, fairly and with dignity.

It does this through democratic participatory processes and distributes surpluses amongst members in a variety of ways. It also includes supportive anchor institutions such as universities and housing associations who hold a clear social purpose, able to spend their revenues, procure services and deliver contracts in ways that make the whole economy more social, inclusive, and just.

Often those involved in the social economy will campaign on behalf of others who have less power to influence, and who may find themselves excluded from mainstream markets. The strategy developed for Lincolnshire embraces all of these principles in setting out mechanisms required for social economy development in the County

Social Economy Workforce Development - Better Considered

On the face of it, Better Considered is just another company that makes soap. But they actually are in business to provide fair employment and decent wages for disabled people. Over 80% of their staff are disabled, so it works. But they do more than that. Their 'Steal Our Staff' scheme actively seeks to give their staff work experience, and then act as a shop window for others to take them into different types of employment, in line with their respective ambitions. That works too. You can steal these staff here: <https://betterconsidered.org/stealourstaff>



Yvonne

Would love a job in public transport.



Michael

Great leadership skills.



Sareet

Wants to work in the car industry.

ADVANTAGS OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

The Social Economy (SE) is good at tackling complex issues - for example, justice and equity - with multiple objectives.

The SE is good at nurturing partnerships, particularly in relation to inclusion and cohesion.

Social Economy Organisations (SEOs) are good at creating non-market benefits.

SEOs are particularly effective at creating economic activity in rural areas.

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SEOs are good at developing place-based local economies rather than just individual enterprises.

SEOs are good at creating employment for those furthest from the job market.

The SE is well placed to tackle growth economy externalities in relation to climate change, low carbon, and the environment.

The SE is good at creating community benefits with high multiplier effects.

Facts and figures about the context and/or research.

Volunteering is worth over £30 billion a year to the UK Economy and the voluntary sector employs nearly 900,000 people.

More than 7,000 UK Cooperatives contribute £37.7 billion to the UK economy.

There are nearly 15,000 UK Community Interest Companies – growing in number by 9% a year: highest growth is in the East Midlands.

Greater Lincolnshire had 3181 Charities, 70 Mutual Benefit Societies, 8 Community Land Trusts and 305 Community Interest Companies in 2020.

The Social Economy employed about 14,000 people in the County in 2015 and this is growing faster than the 'growth' economy.

In 2015 the value of volunteering was estimated to be nearly £300 per head of the County population in the year.

Social Return on Investment (SRoI) analysis shows non-monetised benefits to be much higher than monetised ones for the Social Economy

IMPACT ON POLICY

Local economic policy is dominantly concerned with economic growth (Gross Domestic Product – GDP) and productivity (measured in rural areas by 'balanced' Gross Value Added - GVA). Both measures have been shown to create non-market externalities that have increasingly pervasive negative impacts on all of us. Principal amongst these are increasing inequalities of all kinds, and the ubiquitous and catastrophic effects of climate change and global warming.

Social Economy strategies have the ability to tackle 'growth' economy externalities head on because their measures of performance success embrace them explicitly. SEOs commonly also eschew growth objectives in favour of redistributive ones.