

Understanding of the task:

Research Partner supporting the 'Coastal Sustainability through Careers and Business Skills in Greater Lincolnshire' Coastal Communities Fund project

This research forms part of the wider Coastal Communities Fund project 'Coastal Sustainability through Careers and Business Skills in Greater Lincolnshire'. It is an opportunity to build on the previous data evidence base to provide **actionable insight** into the nature of the visitor economy on the Lincolnshire coast and understand the extent to which seasonality is impacting upon investment, skills delivery and uptake, business and resident aspirations and **how unique the Lincolnshire coast is compared** to other coastal destinations in the UK. **The report has the potential to significantly build understanding and influence future local and national coastal and visitor economy policy.**

The research project will explore the seasonality of the Lincolnshire coast compared to other coastal destinations, identify three comparator destinations that have a similar visitor economy model but may be at a different stage of economic regeneration and share lessons learnt and best practice. The project will understand the current investment levels on the coast and uptake by businesses in funded skills programmes to establish whether coastal areas are being left behind and then through primary research with businesses and residents start to understand the extent to which their aspirations are influenced by the seasonal nature of the economy.

This research project will get beneath the skin of the existing secondary data to really start to build understanding of the challenges, barriers and opportunities for coastal destinations and the level of influence that seasonality has. The research will explore the **aspirations, investment, and skills participation** across the Lincolnshire coast and understand how unique Lincolnshire is.

The report will make recommendations for local and national policy for both the coast and the visitor economy which could have far reaching benefits to tackling community aspirations, skills improvement, investment, economic growth and seasonality.

Once the report is complete the findings will be disseminated at a local and national level to businesses, residents, stakeholders and policy makers across the coastal and visitor economy industries.

This research is focused on the Lincolnshire Coast from Skegness to Mablethorpe and will cover the core research themes:

- A. **ASPIRATION:** Greater Lincolnshire's Coastal Communities and perceived 'low aspirations.'
- B. **INVESTMENT:** Perceptions of low private and public sector investment in Lincolnshire's coastal areas, and also perceptions of low take-up of national or locally channelled funded employment, skills, and business support. (For example,

- C. SEASONALITY: How seasonal is the Lincolnshire coast? What is the impact of seasonality on residents and businesses?
- D. COMPARISONS WITH OTHER COASTAL COMMUNITIES: How unique is the Lincolnshire coastal strip?
- E. NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS: What are the implications for national and local stakeholders in respect of policy priorities such as 'Levelling Up' and Local Economic Growth
- F. DISSEMINATION comprehensive (national and local), innovative dissemination of the findings, implications, and recommendations of the research.

Delivery Methodology:

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Given the highly seasonal nature of the visitor economy on the coast and pressure this year to recover from Covid-19, the NCTA proposed methodology and timing for this research project has been carefully designed to ensure that activity involving businesses and stakeholders is not taking place during their busy school holiday periods.

The methodology consists of:

- Literature and data review (complete by end of August) – which will commence as soon as possible once the set up meetings have been completed to review all existing national and local data relating to the aspiration, seasonality and investment and comparison aspects of the project. The process will include analysis of STEAM economic impact data, ONS and NOMIS data on businesses and employment, and GBTS/ GBDVS/ IPS and Cambridge / Steam economic impact model data for wide range of coastal locations as well as the national seaside data.
- Business survey (live during September) – an online survey with different collectors for Lincolnshire, each comparator destination as well as a national coastal sample distributed the NCTA business and DMO network. The business survey will be designed once the literature and data review has been completed to ensure it is focussed on gaps in knowledge.
- Resident survey (live in September) – an online survey targeted at Lincolnshire coastal residents to explore the aspiration and skills themes in more detail.
- Depending on the STEAM input data available for the Lincolnshire coast, the NCTA propose an optional very simple occupancy by month data collection for a selection of targeted visitor economy businesses across the Lincolnshire coastal strip to help inform an understanding of very localised seasonality beyond the existing data sets – this may be incorporated into the Business Survey.
- Focus groups (businesses) – 3 business focus groups will be held across the Lincolnshire coast in October (avoiding half term) to explore themes from survey results and build the qualitative input into the key areas of aspiration, investment and tackling seasonality.
- Focus groups (residents) – 3 qualitative resident / community focus groups will be held across the Lincolnshire coast in October to explore the aspiration and skills themes from survey results

- Stakeholder interviews – 6 stakeholder interviews will be undertaken in September and October covering 3 Lincolnshire coast stakeholders and a key stakeholder (most likely the Destination Management Organisation) from each of the three comparator destinations to further explore themes from the data, explore best practice and lessons learnt.

A draft report with policy recommendations will be prepared once all the primary and secondary data has been completed in time for Milestone 2 at the end of December. Once feedback has been received in January the final report will be designed and prepared for dissemination.

The NCTA propose that the dissemination consist of a series of webinars, distributing the report to key contacts locally and within national government and the wider visitor economy and coastal industry through representation at key stakeholder meetings which the NCTA are connected to covering all the key visitor economy and coastal stakeholder groups. However, the project delivery programme suggests that the detail of this dissemination plan is agreed and finalised once the draft report has been completed and the project team understand the nature of the findings and recommendations.

The NCTA are very open and collaborative organisation and will share all questionnaire, focus group and stakeholder discussion guides with the project team for their feedback in plenty of time for comment before go live as well as sharing initial results from each activity if that is of interest to the project team. We appreciate not all projects wish for this level of involvement and so the NCTA would be keen to agree this at the project set up meeting.

The project delivery plan has been designed with time to allow for any unforeseen delays and to account for any future local or national lockdowns as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. All activity can be undertaken remotely if needed and timing further adjusted to undertake parallel activity from the start of September if needed. The Focus Groups are the most significant risk but could be completed virtually if needed and the NCTA have experience with these changes due to covid-19 from other projects. As the NCTA is part of BCP Council we can draw upon colleagues from the Destination and Culture team within the council if needed all with relevant experience in the fields needed to deliver this project.

Key dates (see project plan for further detail):

- Project set up meeting w/c 21 June 2021
- Data and literature review complete by w/c 16th August 2021
- Business and resident surveys live 9th - 27th September 2021
- Focus groups w/c 11th and 18th October 2021
- Stakeholder Interviews – September and October
- Draft report delivered w/c 20th December 2021
- Final report 28th February 2022
- Dissemination complete 31st March 2022

Overview of the Organisation

The National Coastal Tourism Academy is a project team within BCP Council who specialise in development and understanding of the coastal visitor economy in the UK. Our work focuses on research, strategic development, business support, sharing best practice, marketing the coast and project management. The NCTA have recently delivered projects for Coastal Communities Fund, ESRC, UKCES, and the Discover England Fund project England's Coast (www.englishcoast.com) Delivering real change for the coastal visitor economy has always been at the heart of our work and we have extensive knowledge and experience of the coastal visitor economy.

Our capabilities include:

- undertaking qualitative and quantitative research with businesses, stakeholders, consumers and residents
- developing Visitor Economy / Destination Management Plans
- developing recovery plans
- undertaking an independent review of a destination
- marketing and communications (with specialism in branding, PR, digital)
- stakeholder engagement and consultation
- Project Management and delivery
- evaluation

Over the last 9 years, NCTA work has included:

- Undertaking and disseminating new research into the off-peak growth opportunities for the coast, including Empty Nesters (55+), Under 35s, Wellness Tourism, Activity Holidays and International Visitors.
- Delivering business support and training for SMEs
- Sharing best practice
- Development of the National [Coastal Tourism Vision](#) and Action Plan
- Delivering the Discover England Fund project [England's Coast](#)
- Undertaking commissioned research and strategic development projects for local authorities, LEPs and other tourism organisations to aid their understanding of the local environment, business and consumer needs and develop future plans and policy recommendations for the development of the visitor economy. See below for examples.

The NCTA have demonstrable National experience of research into coastal economies and the visitor economy including utilising socio-economic data sources and economic impact models such as Cambridge and STEAM. With an in-depth and up to date knowledge of coastal and visitor economy policy and particularly the importance of addressing seasonality to alter the fortunes of seaside towns, the NCTA have an extensive network of Destination Management Organisations covering the whole of the coast to draw upon in order to complete the requirements of this project.

As the NCTA is part of BCP Council we abide by their Ethics, Equality and Data Protection policies which are comprehensive and in line with many local authorities across the UK. For further details please see:

- Information Governance Policy
<https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/Privacy/Documents/Information-governance-policy.pdf>
- Information Security Policy
<https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/Privacy/Documents/Information-security-policy.pdf>
- Equality and Diversity Policy <https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/About-the-council/Strategies-plans-and-policies/Documents/equality-and-diversity-policy.pdf>

All other BCP Council policy documents can be found here if required:

<https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/About-the-council/Strategies-plans-and-policies/Strategies-plans-and-policies.aspx>