

Coastal Communities Alliance policy strategy, Spring 2018

The Coastal Communities Alliance

What is the CCA?

The Coastal Communities Alliance is a collaboration of Coastal Local Authorities from around the UK seeking to drive long-term and sustainable socio-economic development for coastal communities.

It does this by:

- Providing a voice for socio-economic deprivation in coastal areas within Government
- Drawing together a wide network of resources / contacts for coastal authorities and partners

How it works

Formed in 2007, the CCA has a membership of Coastal Authority Officers with a background in socio-economic development. We work in partnership with a range of other coastal organisations also working in this space on various coastal and maritime issues such as tourism or the marine economy.

Within this, our focus is on long-term socio-economic strategies for coastal areas. We do this by drawing together experience and evidence from across our coastal authority members and other partners in order to build a shared knowledge base of what works.

There is no membership fee, instead members provide support such as local economic research and case studies as well as resources enabling us to host national conferences. This means that we can provide equal access to all members regardless of size of authority allowing for wider debate and networking.

Working across this broad constituency puts the CCA in a unique position to provide an overview and work in partnership with the MHCLG towards a joined up strategic approach. In the past much of this work has been framed by the findings of the 2007 Select Committee Inquiry into Coastal Towns. We also worked closely with MHCLG on the development of the Coastal Communities Fund, the Cross Departmental Working Group and have provided support for the Coastal Community Teams.

This document aims to reevaluate the key issues facing coastal communities and consider the key strands of the CCA's engagement in the future. This re-appraisal follows a number of significant wider policy developments, not least the UK's decision to leave the EU.

Coastal narrative: the distinctive challenge of the Coast

1. Peripherality: the physical location of coastal communities limits connectivity and means that they are particularly susceptible to environmental change

Of course the critical defining feature for coastal communities is that they are on the edge of this island. Much analysis of this has focussed on the limitations of a 180 degree hinterland given that the boundaries of Coastal Communities include a foreshore. This geographical fact means that coastal communities experience the impact of environmental changes including coastal erosion, flooding and marine pollution whilst seeking to overcome reduced access into other markets and opportunities inland.

It is fair to say that the other socio-economic factors described below feature in other areas seeking to tackle decline but it is the peripherality of coastal communities that both intensifies the impact of these factors and potentially limits the range of appropriate interventions. This situation is often made more acute by poor infrastructure and transport connections. And it can be difficult to make the case at national level for significant investment given the dispersed nature of these communities and the overriding driver to focus on areas most likely to grow.

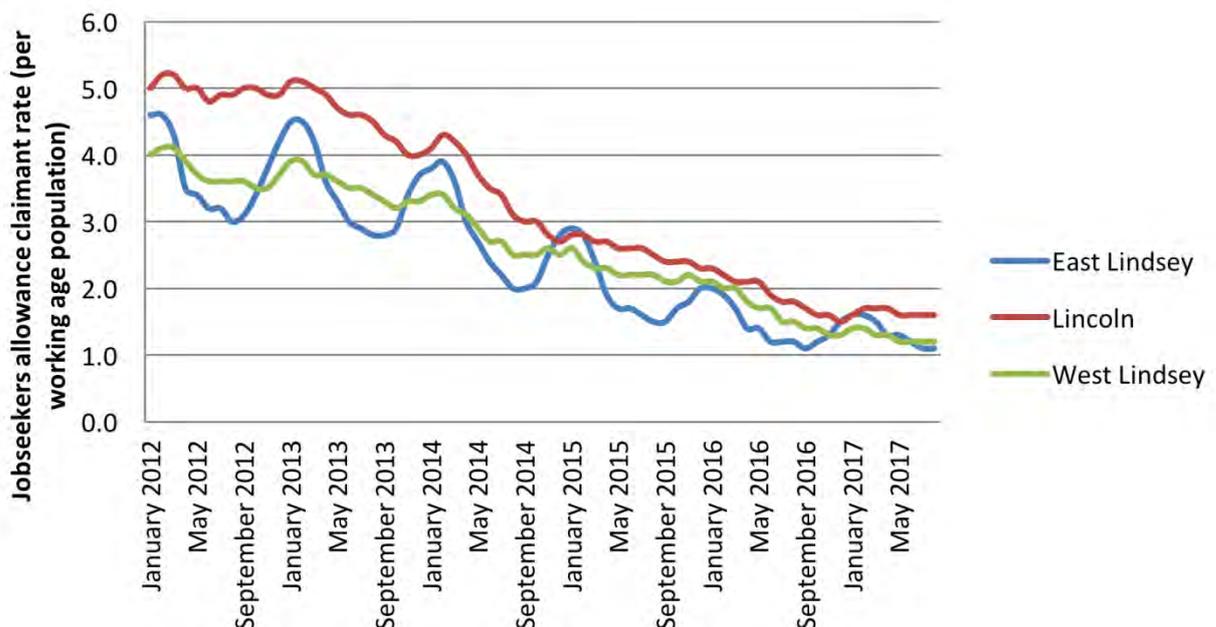
As the CCA's Handbook to Coastal Regeneration in English Resorts found back in 2010, the distinctive blend of these issues in coastal areas requires new thinking and creative solutions are required (CCA, 2010). This remains the case and should continue to be a central focus for the work of the CCA. For example, the suggestion made by Symons and Leslie that local authorities should be able to raise capital through alternative routes, including capital markets, in order to generate infrastructure investment is still worth investigating (Symons and Leslie, 2009). The regeneration potential of investment in sea defences remains an opportunity. And creative thinking is needed to both develop and make best use of digital infrastructure in a way that will be different to the approach taken in cities.

2. Employment: is often low-skilled, low-paid, affected by seasonality whilst residents can find it more difficult to take up opportunities that require a commute

There are significant and distinctive employment issues in coastal areas. On average, these areas have lower rates of employment. The availability of jobs is affected by the seasonal nature of the economy and the work available is often low-skilled and low-paid. The ONS found that (at the time of the 2011 census) in some coastal settlement, such as Jaywick, Lynemouth, Aberystwyth and Great Yarmouth, the unemployment rate among people aged 16-64 was between 15 and 19 per cent nationally (compared to 7.4 percent at the time of the census, nationally) (ONS, 2014). A decline in traditional industries such as fishing, engineering and manufacturing coupled with a lack of – or limited awareness of opportunities outside the immediate area and poor transport connections have contributed to these conditions.

While unemployment remains generally higher than national average in coastal areas, it has been reducing, in line with national trends. At national level, reports that overall unemployment in the UK is now at its lowest since 1975 (ONS, 2017) together with analysis that of the 13.5 million people in poverty in the UK 7.4 million (55 percent) are in working families (RSA, 2017) is shifting the focus to creating good quality jobs. This is an important consideration for coastal areas too given the existing predominance of low skilled, low paid work. The graph below compares three districts in Lincolnshire; East Lindsey, Lincoln and West Lindsey. The comparison between East Lindsey and West Lindsey is particularly telling as they both have similar rural characteristics, but East Lindsey is coastal. The graph shows how pronounced the seasonality effect is on the labour market in coastal areas compared to non-coastal rural, and non-coastal urban. It also shows that the trajectory for all three is reducing levels of unemployment as reported at national level.

Figure 1: Seasonality still a clear issue but overall reduction in unemployment should increase focus access to quality jobs

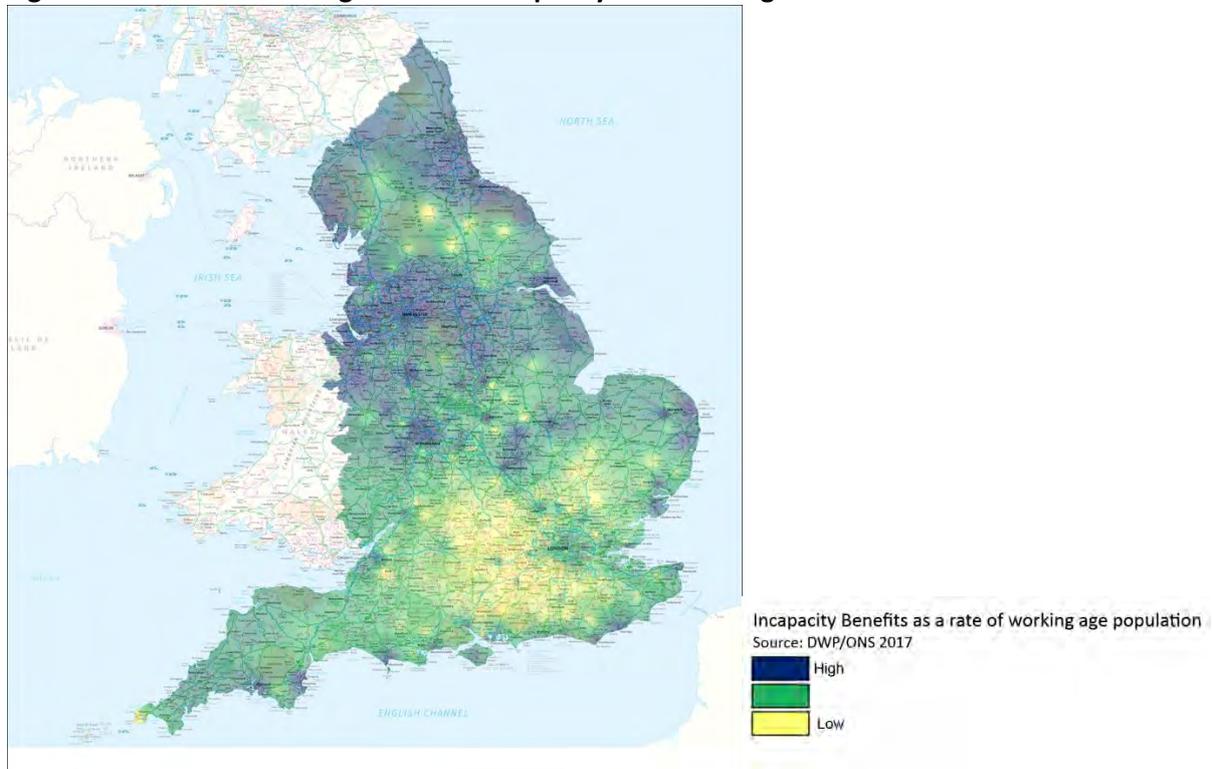


Source: Jobseeker's Allowance with rates and proportions (ONS, 2017)

The other aspect of unemployment in coastal areas that it is important to be aware of is the proportion of incapacity claimants. Within this, the poor mental health of younger coastal residents

has been documented (Cave, 2010). A study of East Lindsey's incapacity claimants in 2008 also found that a high proportion of claimants were extremely detached from the labour market, with around 40 per cent of claimants having been out of work for more than 10 years (Beatty et al, 2008). The report made a link between the in-migration of older people and number of incapacity claimants.

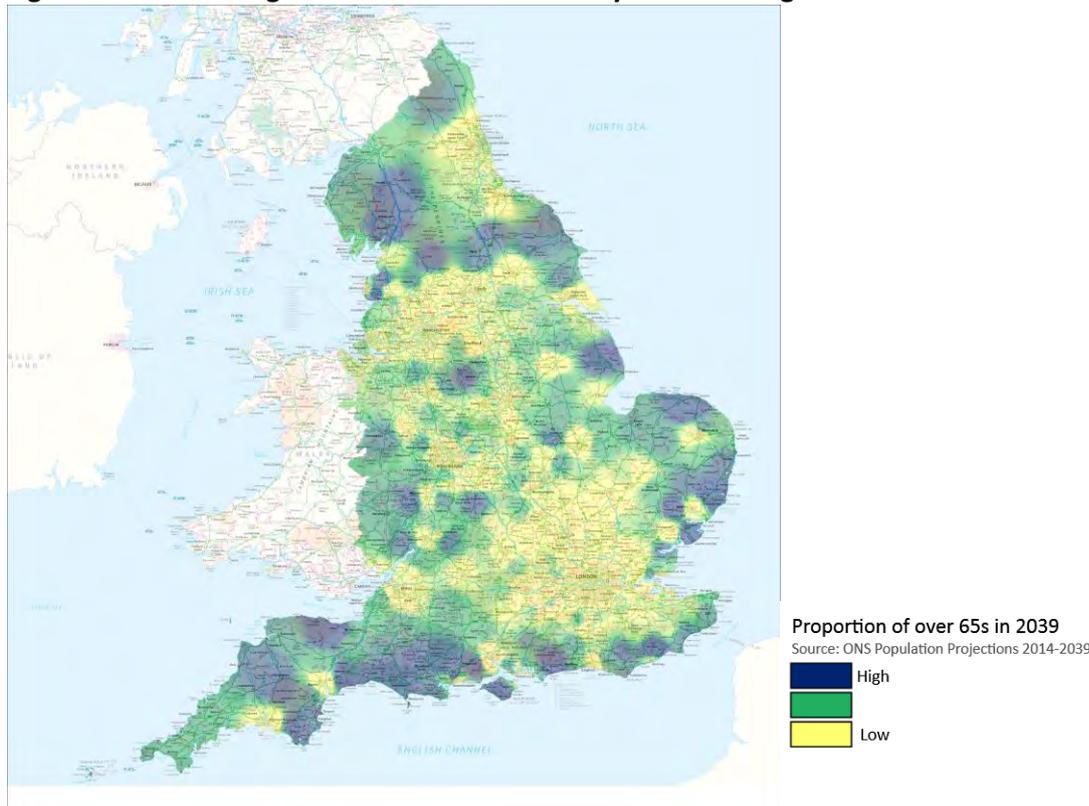
Figure 2: There are often high levels of incapacity benefit living in coastal areas



3. Demography: in-migration of older people and out-migration of younger people is causing a significant demographic imbalance

In a sample of 274 coastal communities (England and Wales), 20 per cent of the population were aged 65 years or over (compared with 16 per cent nationally) Coastal local authorities are projected to be most affected by an increase in the proportion of the oldest population group over the next 10 year period (2011 census – Office for National Statistics 2014).

Figure 3: There is a high concentration of over 65 year olds living in coastal areas



As the recent Government Office for Science report reflected, the seaside is an aspirational destination for retirees, a phenomenon contributing to the rapidly aging profile of coastal populations in the UK and elsewhere (Depledge et al, 2017) - 65 percent of people aged 65 or over retiring from London moved to coastal local authorities (Pennington 2013). Coastal communities are also experiencing outward migration of young people, and the inward migration of transient workers attracted by seasonal employment opportunities. The transient workforce has resulted in primary schools in some areas experience up to 30-40 per cent turnover of pupils within a school year (Lancaster City Council 2006). As the 2007 Select Committee report concluded this can place significant additional demands on public services, particularly health and social care (CLG Select Committee, 2007)

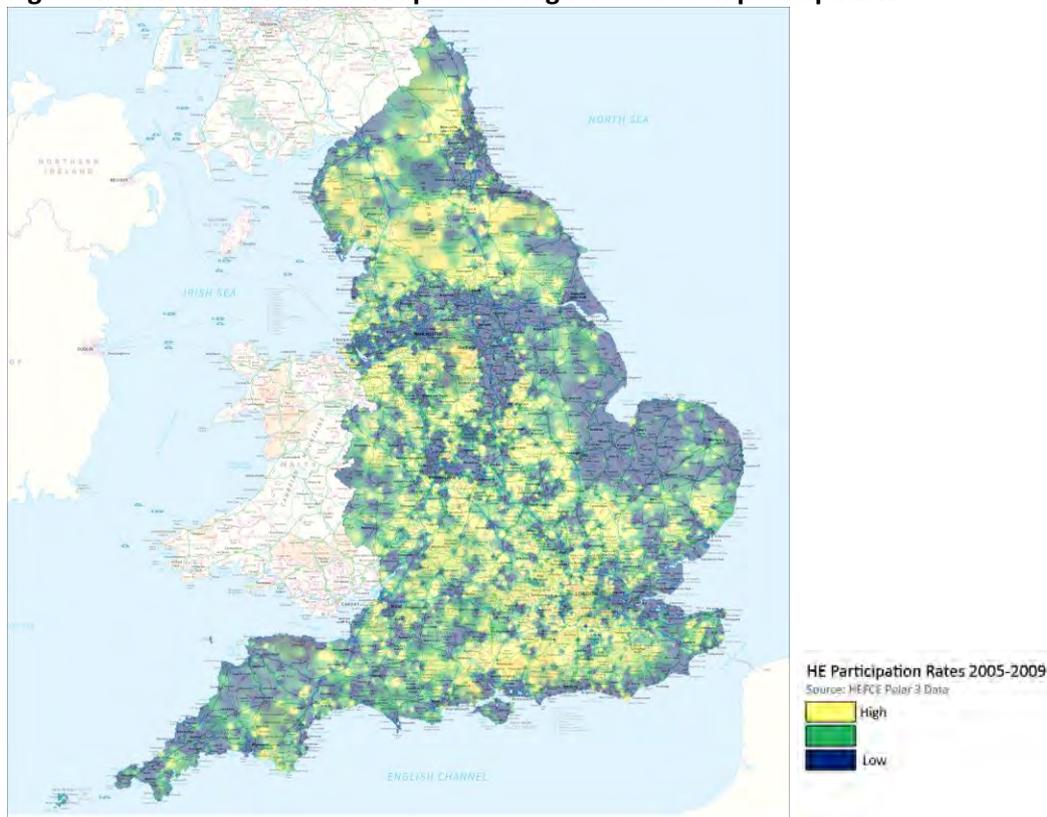
Again creative solutions will be required to deliver regeneration that reconciles the needs and desires of older and retired residents with attempts to build new markets and rebalance the demography. There will likely be untapped opportunities from the older population. For example, research shows that older people, including those approaching or over state pensionable age, want to remain economically and socially active. There is also evidence to suggest that older people are more successful in starting and sustaining a new business than their younger counterparts (CCA, 2010).

4. Education and skills: challenges across all levels of the education and skills system are affecting low educational attainment

The reasons for patterns of comparatively low education attainment in coastal areas are of course complex and multi-faceted. Some of the features include:

- a transient workforce resulting in primary schools in some areas experience up to 30-40 per cent turnover of pupils within a school year
- there is often a lack of further education and a tendency for colleges to provide lower level qualifications NVQ1 / NVQ2 in hospitality and catering, without offering managerial / professional qualifications
- access to higher education is limited – both in terms of the presence of a higher education institution in some coastal areas but also the ability of local residents to commute in order to access higher education. Universities report that they see this barrier during outreach activities. It can be difficult to build up relationships with schools in these areas due to the number of issues they are already tackling and at the same time it can be difficult to persuade potential applicants from remote coastal communities to travel to open days and in order to see what the university experience could be like.
- a lack of employment opportunities and investment in skills development
- a mismatch between the demand and supply in education and training provision
- many jobseeker allowance claimants have predominantly low-skill manual experience and no formal qualifications
- in-work professional development needs to adapt to peak and low season patterns of employment

Figure 4: Coastal areas are ‘cold spots’ for higher education participation



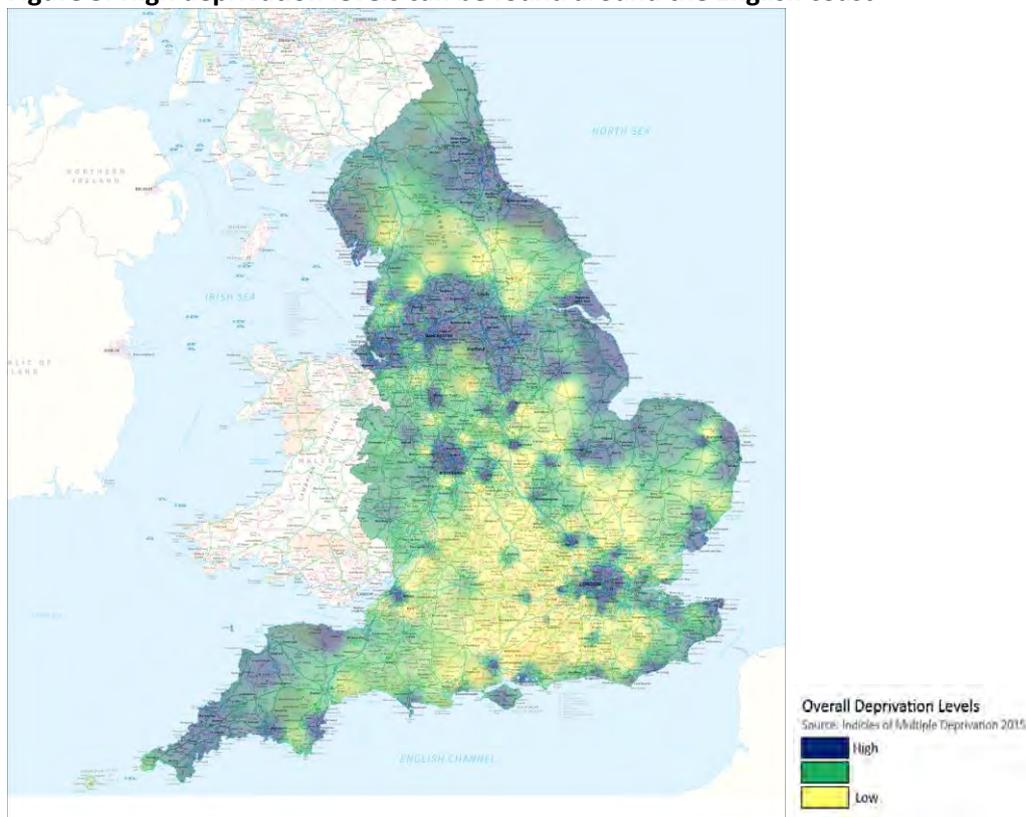
These features put coastal communities further at risk of being left behind considering the impact of technological change which is already affecting the nature of work across the UK. The recently published IPPR Future Proofed Report predicts that how we work will change radically in the 2020s. “Technological change will not displace human labour, but it will lead to significant changes in the tasks we undertake, with a greater emphasis on problem-solving, creative work and interpersonal skills over routine and manual tasks. This will polarise what people do – different jobs will lead to ever more different lives” (IPPR 2016).

This goes to the heart of the goal to create an economy for all – how do we increase productivity and global competitiveness within further widening the gap between those who benefit and interact with globalisation and technological change, and those who don’t? Skills are central to this; to stay competitive we need to ensure that businesses are able to access the skills they need. Employees that will need to be ever more adaptable as the pace of global change accelerates. Skills providers and educational institutions will need to work in close partnership with employers and key sectors to jointly identify how best to deliver against future skills needs. This is true across the UK and is a central focus of the Government’s Industrial Strategy. Given the acute issues of low skill levels in coastal communities this should be a central concern.

5. Social deprivation and instability

It could be argued that the conditions described above produce the conditions for sustainable deprivation. For example, the availability of cheap rental housing maintains a transient population that can be very disruptive in schools. The ready-supply of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and care homes, converted from hotels and guesthouses, can result in vulnerable people from other areas being placed in coastal areas (CLG Select Committee, 2007). Similarly, the ageing coastal population and the influx of Summer visitors can make considerable demands on medical and social services, as indeed do higher teenage pregnancy levels, high numbers of benefit claimants, and established coastal worklessness. The additional demands placed on coastal public services can be further compounded by the difficulty of recruiting public and private sector professionals in many coastal areas (CCA, 2010). It is perhaps no surprise then to find a pattern of high deprivation levels around the English coast.

Figure 5: High deprivation levels can be found around the English coast



Compounding the effects of resort deprivation is the local authority funding formula that does not cover the costs generated by transient populations, looked-after children, mental health issues, homelessness, housing benefit dependence and worklessness. Overstretched service budgets can undermine efforts and the resources available for community engagement, developing attractions, stimulating business growth and engaging in the costly uncertainty of inward investment promotion.

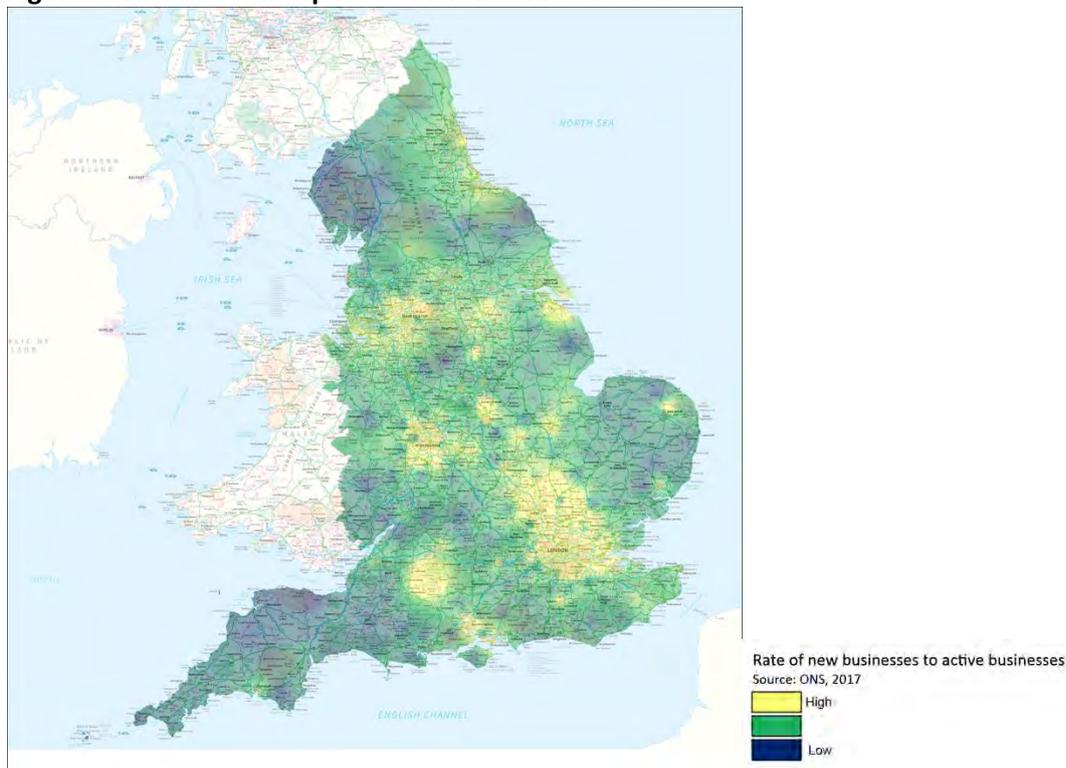
6. Enterprise: there is a lack of business development and growth and fewer opportunities for economic diversification

In many resorts the key sectors are sea-based, diversification has proven to be difficult and business are often particularly susceptible to environmental change (Wood Holmes and Optimal Economics, 2012). The Government Office for Science report provides a helpful overview:

- **Tourism:** is of particular importance to coastal communities; employing over 250,000 people across 150 seaside resorts, with seaside tourism revenue estimated at £17 billion. Associated economic and wellbeing benefits are particularly significant to more-remote communities.
- **Fishing:** in some coastal regions, the fishing industry (including aquaculture) provides up to 20 percent of jobs (Marine Management Organisation 2013). Declines in the industry, shifts in populations and other pressures (such as the rise of second-home ownership) have threatened the social stability and wellbeing of those communities which are dependent on fishing.
- **Marine services:** other industries, such as marine services, dominate some communities. Oil and gas production is the highest value marine industry in England, and one of the largest contributors to gross domestic product. However, total UK oil and gas production peaked in 1999 and has since declined. A key challenge will be the extent to which the associated skills base in these communities can be transferred to the marine renewables sector.

At the same time, peripherality, a weak employment market, demographic imbalance, low skill levels and high levels of deprivation have been found to inhibit new business development. Coastal areas often have lower levels of business start-up and development activity – and work in this area has previously found insufficient commitment, enthusiasm and active involvement from local private enterprises (CCA, 2010).

Figure 6: Business start up rates are lower in coastal areas



As with other issues, a different approach is needed on the coast in order to generate new forms of enterprise. In its 2010 Handbook, the CCA suggested that one of the key tests for resort regeneration, especially in smaller resorts, would be the ability to generate niche markets based on demography, leisure, risk, authenticity, history, culture, design and the environment. Growth in coastal areas will look different and the opportunities for growth will not necessarily surface through an approach that seeks to identify leading UK sectors.

As the Government Office for Science found, there is a risk that many potential growth sectors may not be based in coastal areas. There is potential for high-value-added activities associated with, for instance, marine renewable energy, blue biotechnology and marine technology to remain in urban hubs, with minimal increases in the labour force in coastal communities (Morrissey, 2017). Port infrastructure, small labour pools, and greater distance to central markets could mean that larger companies will continue not to invest in coastal areas. This would prevent the development of local, small and medium enterprise-based supply chains in coastal settings (Depledge et al, 2017).

The CCA has tracked and evaluated interventions to support enterprise and diversify coastal economies since its beginning. Findings to date include:

- **A lack of access to finance and funding:** The remoteness of many resorts and their distance from main centres of population and business has resulted in a lack of private sector investment in basic employment infrastructure (CCA, 2010). The New Economics Foundation recently suggested that Government should encourage a more diverse network of local and regional banks to channel investment into sound local businesses (NEF, 2017).
- **Resilience and local commitment:** While comparatively small in number, there is evidence of innovative business models and ideas all along the coast. In addition, there is strong evidence that local businesses tend to be as (if not more) resilient than larger organisations. The commitment of local enterprise owners to their locality should not be underestimated. These green shoots should be understood and encouraged (Wood Holmes and Optimal Economics, 2012).
- **Exclusion from ERDF funded development support:** Many of the business types that dominate the business scene on the coast are either tourism or retail based. These are both business sectors that are expressly excluded from other business support funding e.g. from the EU. Added to this real barrier is the perception of many coastal businesses that they are missing out on publicly funded business support, partly due to the ERDF issue. This perception in itself can be a barrier to their engaging with programmes (LCC, 2015).
- **A bespoke approach:** a locally owned and tailored approach should seek to tackle, locally, challenges such as: supporting programmes that respond to Digital Reluctance, low ambition and capability. local independent (and often isolated) retailers reluctant to invest in their own skills-base and their business development potential. Taking into account seasonal start-stop coastal economies that make programme like Apprenticeships, Business Start Up more challenging (LCC, 2015)

Yet there is still much to be done in order to understand the different pattern of enterprise on the coast as well which interventions really make the difference over the longer term. Without access to such evidence, there is a danger that programmes are supply-led rather than demand-led.

Relevant policy developments and interventions

Industrial Strategy

The Government's Industrial Strategy was published on 27th November 2017. Fundamentally, the White Paper sets out a strategy that is aiming to address issues affecting low productivity and regional disparities to create growth and improve living standards across the country. Rebalancing the economy is a central theme, as Theresa May highlights in the introduction "For me it is not enough to see growth in the national economy if your local economy is shrinking" (HMG, 2017c)

The White Paper highlights the fact that the UK is currently experiencing record employment levels and yet within this there are issues about productivity levels, in that we produce less per hour than our competitors, and a need for more good quality jobs with higher wages. The White Paper states that

"Our relatively weak productivity performance is, to a significant degree, a problem of composition: we have some of the most productive businesses, people and places in the world but also a 'long tail' of underperformance. Britain's top businesses are among the most admired in the world, but if the long tail of lower productivity persists, it will hold back UK growth, wages and living standards"

As the Industrial Strategy Green Paper previously highlighted, the differences hidden beneath the UK's headline rate of productivity are also of great significance. "Our country has significant disparities in economic performance. The productivity gap between different parts of the country has been widening for decades, and it is these differences that ultimately impact on how much people earn" (HMG, 2017a)

The White Paper seeks to address the UK's productivity gap through interventions in five areas – the five foundations of productivity that are the "essential attributes of every successful economy."

- **Places:** focusses on reducing UK economic disparity and supporting all places to realise their potential. The role of Local Enterprise Partnerships, drawing together Local Authorities, Business and other local leaders, is a significant focus. The Places section includes details of the intention that Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Authorities should develop Local Industrial Strategies (LIS's), this was a Manifesto commitment. The development of these Strategies provides a new opportunity for coastal areas to engage and raise the profile of coastal issues. The White Paper stated that Government planned to work in partnership with local areas to develop LIS's in phases. The first set of Strategies are due to complete in March 2019.
- **Ideas (innovation):** focusses on increasing investment in R&D, boosting the 'D' research translation and improving linkages into local economies, strengths & clusters.
- **People (skills):** focusses on improving the quality of technical education, the shortage of STEM skills, entrenched regional disparities in education and skill levels and ensuring that people (throughout their working lives) are not left behind by technological change. The announcement of Skills Advisory Panels and Career Learning Pilots, both of which Greater Lincolnshire has been chosen to participate in, fall within this strand.
- **Infrastructure:** focusses on making investments more geographically balanced and becoming more forward looking in terms of significant global economic trends.

- **Business Environment:** focusses on spreading best practice of the most productive businesses, access to finance, increasing exports, management and leadership skills and making better connections between high-performing businesses and their supply chains, building skills and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity of good work and high-paying jobs. A central focus within the Business Environment section is the development of Sector Deals - partnerships between government and industry aiming to increase sector productivity. The first Sector Deals are in life sciences, construction, artificial intelligence and the automotive sector. Deals are being developed in Industrial Digitalisation and Food & Drink.

Brexit and development of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Plans to develop future funding post-ESIF in the shape of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) were announced last year but precise details will be dependent on the outcome of Brexit negotiations. It was initially intended that the UKSPF would be in place ready for the conclusion of ESIF spending commitments in Spring 2019. However, the announcement before Christmas that there will now be an implementation or transition period for around two years following the leave date of 29 March 2019 means that the timing is less certain. The new fund will replace the £4.6bn ERDF and £3.9bn ESF. Alignment with a successor for Local Growth Funding is also being considered.

Technical Education

There was political consensus across the Conservative and Labour Manifestos on the need to tackle the gap in provision for technical and intermediate skills. By 2020, the UK is set to fall to 28th out of 33 OECD countries in terms of developing intermediate skills. This translates into cross-party support for increasing the number of apprenticeships and various solutions to improve Further Education. The latest development is the policy to create new Institutes of Technology as high quality and prestigious institutions specialising in delivering higher-level technical skills (at levels 4 and 5 and extending to degree level and above). The aim of the Institutes was to significantly increase the number of learners with higher-level technical skills which are crucial to national, regional and local productivity growth and attract a wide range of learners to maximise the social as well as the economic impact of this new type of institution.

Coastal Communities Fund

In 2012, the UK government's Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) was launched to support 'coastal communities that are able to use their assets (physical, natural, social, economic and cultural) to promote sustainable economic growth and jobs'. The initiative, administered by the Big Lottery Fund, reinvests some of the profits made from coastal and marine assets, managed by The Crown Estate, back into the communities closest to them. Since 2012, it has awarded grants to 218 organisations across the UK to the value of £125 million, and this funding is forecast to deliver over 18,000 jobs UK-wide, and help attract over £240 million of additional funds to coastal areas.

In 2015, the government announced that the CCF will be extended to 2021 with at least £90million of new funding available. Also in 2015, the UK government supported the creation of 118 Coastal Community Teams in England – bringing together local residents, business, and councils. The teams were tasked with coordinating regeneration projects in their area and helping to shape bids for the Coastal Communities Fund and were given priority within the bidding process for the CCF.

The next funding round was announced for England, in February 2018.

Coastal Flooding

Defra's policy position, which underpins the new 'Partnership Resilience Funding' mechanism of allocating flood defence grant funding (Flood Defence Grant-in-Aid), is that the beneficiaries of flood risk management should contribute directly to its costs, rather than relying solely on general taxation. This principle was enshrined in the Pitt Review, and insofar as the Review dealt with surface water flooding, which generally affects specific communities and is localised - it is entirely reasonable. However, Defra has, in effect, extended the principle from inland flood risk management to coastal defence, which tends to be much greater in scale, cost and impact in the event of failure. In line with this, the Autumn budget announced an additional £76 million to be spent on flood and coastal defence schemes over the next three years. Of this, £40 million will be focussed on deprived communities at high flood risk, boosting local regeneration (HMG, 2017b)

Recommendations: Policy asks and next steps for the CCA

The following recommendations build on the analysis throughout this paper. Four areas have been identified for the CCA and suggestions are made in relation to both policy asks and the future development of the CCA itself.

1. CCA Industrial Strategy Toolkit

The CCA could lead a piece of work to develop some guidance in relation to coastal issues that can be used in each locality to inform the development of local industrial strategies. Key elements to consider include:

- **Innovation:** How can we support businesses on the coast to be more innovative? Are there clusters based along the coast that would benefit from engagement with universities and other research bodies?
- **People:** How might emerging policy to develop technical education address coastal skill shortages? Is there scope to pilot the delivery of high quality training courses based around seasonal term times?
- **Business:** Whether there are opportunities for Sector Deals in key coastal industries such as tourism and retail. What support can Government provide to help the coast attract and retain inward investment? What positive support should be put in place to enable business to adapt to ongoing coastal change, as opposed to one-off severe weather events?
- **Infrastructure:** Are there innovative solutions for addressing the peripherality of coastal areas (both physical and virtual)? Can coastal defences be established as an important part of the local infrastructure, which protects jobs and prosperity.

2. What works in Coastal Areas?

The Government aim of rebalancing the economy first emerged in the Coalition – although the UK's economic imbalance has of course been a well know problem for much longer than this. However, to date policy interventions have largely focussed on the the North-South divide (Northern Powerhouse) and often the main focus has been on big cities outside of London. There is growing recognition about the need to develop new solutions for other areas and this provides a new opportunity for coastal areas but is important to recognise the emphasis on developing ground up development of solutions – not waiting for something from National Government.

This places ever more importance on the need to know what works. The issue of a lack of evidence about what interventions have long-term impact, highlighted in the 2007 Select Committee report, remains to a large extent. CCA have played a key role to collate and share practice amongst its members and the Coastal Communities Fund has funded a significant number of projects across coastal areas. It is recommended that a meta-analysis should be undertaken to look across this work and draw together conclusions about what works.

This work could draw on the NEF offer to continue to work with coastal communities to help them reinvent and take control of their local economies (2016). The What Works Centre for Local Growth may also be a helpful partner.

3. Future Funding Opportunities

New positions need to be developed across a number of funding streams. Key considerations include:

- **Coastal Communities Fund:** The single outcome the CCF seeks to achieve is creating sustainable jobs and safeguarding existing jobs (HMG, 2016). Given the analysis that with record employment levels and 55% of UK people in poverty are in working families it might be time to consider broadening this aim to include a focus on good quality jobs. How can the CCA work with Government to support a review of the CCF, keeping a clear focus on strategic economic development, and set in case clear parameters for the development of the fund post 2020 (links to the what works point above).
- **Alternative sources of finance:** How the CCA can help Government champion the combined impact of private sector investment; aided by a suite of public resources such as CCF, RGF, TSB, and Assisted Area incentives. Co-ordinating how the use of all potential resources in a coastal area can be brought about to help create what Big lottery define as vibrant communities.
- **UK Shared Prosperity Fund:** How can Government influence the future post European funding, with the recognition that not all coastal areas fit funding moulds? For example, ERDF funding didn't support tourism or retail, both of which can be fundamental in the economy of a coastal town, flexibility needs to be in built into national funding programs.

4. Partnership working

Cross Party Group (Coastal MPs) working on coastal issues has been a central aim of the CCA since the beginning with the establishment of the Cross Party Group (Coastal MPs) seen as a major success. It has been identified that the Group should be re-established and that renewed efforts should be made to coordinate work across key coastal organisations as well as Government. It is recommended that the CCA should develop its position as the voice of socio-economic deprivation in coastal areas and a key coordinator of organisations working on this issue. The planned Coastal Spring Conference could be a focus for this activity acting as a focal point to bring together key organisations (e.g. MHCLG, LGA Coastal SIG, British Destinations (formally BRADA) as well as new stakeholders.

Growing interest in areas left behind means that there are a number of other organisations that the CCA should consider engaging with including: The New Economics Foundation, the What Works Centre for Local Growth, the RSA Inclusive Growth Commission, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Social Mobility Commission (who have been working on a regional report and interested in issues along the coast).

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