

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

REGENERATION CABINET MEMBER

INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To consider renewing the council's membership in the Industrial Communities Alliance.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Industrial Communities Alliance is a local authority association. It campaigns on behalf of councils. The Alliance Membership subscription is now due for renewal. This paper considers our membership including value for money and the role of the Local Enterprise Partnerships.

3 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The options available for consideration are either to continue or cancel our membership of the Industrial Communities Alliance.

4 ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 The council has participated as a member of the Alliance since its amalgamation of the Coalfield Communities Campaign and Steel Action. Coal mining related issues now regularly dominate the business of the Alliance. Alliance meetings, both national and regional, are predominantly focussed on coalfield related matters. Examples include the National Coal Board Pension scheme. The council is therefore not benefiting from membership of the Alliance as much as it did before.
- 4.2 The issue of coal dominating the Alliance agenda was initially raised in 2008. Council's representing past and current steel areas raised the lack of business relating to steel issues. This has had little effect to date.
- 4.3 A return to two separate bodies representing coal and steel areas is not considered feasible. In the current economic climate there are wider issues where joint lobbying might provide greater advantage for North Lincolnshire. These include issues such as power generation, carbon reduction and carbon capture and storage.
- 4.4 The Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) provides the necessary lead on the strategic direction for the local economy. They are better placed to influence the

key economic drivers affecting the area. They are better placed to lobby for change. North Lincolnshire are members of two LEP's. As such, we can work via the most appropriate LEP depending on a particular issue. Both the Humber LEP and the Greater Lincolnshire LEP undertake targeted lobbying with appropriate organisations on a wider range of issues than the Alliance has previously done.

- 4.6 The level of information and advice received from the Alliance has become more limited. This is because they represent a wide range of partners. As such, they must strive to provide a consensus approach.
- 4.8 There are no lobbying costs that arise from our membership of the LEP's. They also provide a more focussed basis of support from the economic partners in the sub region, particularly from the private sector.
- 4.9 Both Regional and National Alliance meetings take place every six to eight weeks. They are held at different venues across the country. The aim is to visit every member area. This means that a considerable amount of officer and member time spent travelling around the country. The majority of venues require overnight accommodation. This is both costly and time consuming.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

The council could save around £5,000 if it chose not to continue its membership of the Alliance. Savings do not include any costs for elected members.

5.3 Staffing.

The average amount of officer time involved in supporting our membership of the Alliance equates to around fourteen days per annum. This time could be redirected to other key areas of work, including supporting our role in the LEP's.

5.4 Property & IT

There are no property or IT issues requiring consideration.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

- 6.1 There are no implications on Statutory, Environmental, Diversity or Section 17 requirements.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the Cabinet Member decides whether to renew our membership of the Industrial Communities Alliance.

- 7.2 In the event of withdrawing from the Industrial Communities Alliance to use our involvement with the Local Enterprise Partnerships to deliver an improved cross sector lobbying facility to provide optimum benefit for the North Lincolnshire economy.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

Civic Centre
Ashby Road
SCUNTHORPE
North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB

Author: Sheryle Price-Jones
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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report
Previous National and Regional Alliance meeting agendas and minutes.