

£2bn investment commitment... and counting

North Lincolnshire is proving to be fabulously positioned for business, but what's driving the economic boom? **Alex Bell** reports

“Everything we are doing is about creating a new future which will be characterised by rising prosperity and living standards, massive opportunity and soaring local pride.”

These words by the leader of North Lincolnshire Council Rob Waltham come after the pipeline of committed investment into the area hits £2bn.

A “perfect blend of public-private partnerships” is driving greater prosperity to the area, according to Cllr Waltham.

But there's national recognition of North Lincolnshire's growing importance, too, underlined by the government's £27m Town Deal revealed during the Autumn Statement. It's an exciting time for the evolving region, with plenty in the pipeline.

PIONEERING ‘HYDROGEN TOWN’

■ Sally Brewis is head of regional development (East and London) for gas distribution network operator Cadent.

At the end of 2021, Cadent and energy company Equinor signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to bring forward one of the world's first low-carbon ‘hydrogen towns’. With a hydrogen transmission pipeline already at detailed design stage, Brewis says North Lincolnshire is primed to play a major role in the UK hydrogen-for-heat revolution.

She says: “The government has committed to a hydrogen village conversion by 2025 to inform its decision on whether hydrogen is used for domestic heating or not. This decision will be made in 2026.

“If it favours hydrogen for heating, the town pilot will be part of its hydrogen roll-out plan and would be delivered by 2030 at the latest.”

She adds: “Equinor is looking to produce low-carbon hydrogen in the Humber region, and is a member of the East Coast

Scunthorpe's planned innovation hub



Cluster and Zero Carbon Humber consortium, which have published plans for a hydrogen transmission pipeline that runs across Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire.

“Cadent and Equinor are working together to look at what it might take for a town in northern Lincolnshire or South Yorkshire to be converted to hydrogen.”

A NEW DAWN FOR SCUNTHORPE

■ Just weeks ago, the green light was given to a revolutionary new high-street concept in Scunthorpe town centre.

The project includes a new 27,000 sq ft enterprise and innovation hub, a 46-bed unit for young professionals and medical students, the delivery of gigabit broadband to hundreds of businesses, the creation of an advanced manufacturing park, new green energy schemes for schools and community buildings, a blue light facility, and hundreds of new homes. A contractor will soon be appointed to build the hub.

Cllr Waltham describes the £30m

investment from the Towns and Future High Streets Funds as clear evidence of ‘levelling up’ in action.

He says: “Building the enterprise and innovation hub is a huge part of our vision to attract new businesses and new jobs. The heart of the vision is to create a vibrant place which attracts a wide range of people, from shoppers to families and young professionals.”

Work on the second phase of an urban park in Church Square is also ongoing.

Holly Mumby-Croft, MP for Scunthorpe and deputy chair of the Towns Fund Board, says: “This is a major step forward in delivering the money that the government has given us for Scunthorpe. It is more than £10m of direct investment, which is being spent to create a new future.”

THE UK'S FIRST CARBON-NEUTRAL ADVANCED MANUFACTURING PARK

■ An influx of world-leading businesses is expected following the council's

purchase of a 60-acre site at the edge of Scunthorpe. Around 2,000 jobs will be created as the project moves through the planning process. If given the go-ahead, the scheme will house more than 4m sq ft of advanced manufacturing space.

Cllr Waltham says the positive impact on the area will be felt for generations.

"It will create hundreds of well-paid, high-skilled jobs in advanced sectors and will be a globally significant hub for research, development and innovation."

OFFSHORE WIND FACILITIES TO BRING 750 JOBS BY 2030

■ A new £117m site at Able Marine Energy Park (AMEP) on the Humber will create hundreds of jobs by the end of the decade. SeAH Wind's planned factory has already struck a deal with Danish clean energy group Ørsted to be a key supplier of monopiles to its Hornsea Three offshore wind project in the UK.

Operations are expected to start in 2023 at SeAH's facility, which is supported by government grant funding.

Joosung Lee, chief operating officer of SeAH Steel Holdings Corporation, says: "As the only monopile supplier in the UK offshore wind supply chain, we expect promising results from commercial negotiations with our UK and European customers. We plan to target the US and Asian offshore wind substructure market with the successful UK business model."

LARGEST QUARTZ-MAKING SITE IN EUROPE

■ A 150,000 sq ft Scunthorpe North manufacturing site is now open, bringing around 300 jobs. Wren Kitchens, the UK's largest independent kitchen specialist,

Able Marine Energy Park



transformed the former DHL facility on Foxhills Industrial Estate.

Kes Serelis, Wren Kitchens UK manufacturing operations director, says the site caters for the unprecedented demand of affordable quartz stone worktops and complements its current quartz manufacturing facility in Barton-upon-Humber.

EUROPE'S FIRST COMMERCIAL SCALE WASTE-TO-JET-FUEL FACILITY

■ Construction of a facility that will convert waste into aviation fuel is due to begin in 2024. Altalto Immingham, a subsidiary of sustainable fuels technology company Velocys, believes Portlink 180 will operate at full scale from 2027.

The 80-acre site will be located on Hobson Way, between Immingham and Grimsby in North East Lincolnshire.

The plant, being jointly developed by British Airways and Velocys, will take more than 500,000 tonnes per year of household

and office waste left over after recycling, and convert it into more than 60 million litres of cleaner burning sustainable jet and road fuel each year.

It will lead to an estimated net CO2 saving of more than 80,000 tonnes a year.

SOUTH HUMBER BANK ENERGY CENTRE (SHBEC)

■ A £300m energy-from-waste centre will create up to 600 construction jobs, with work due to start this year. Once operational, it's expected to meet the electricity needs of nearly 100,000 homes.

James Crankshaw, head of business development at EPUKI, an owner and operator of a number of power stations in the UK and Ireland, says: "This new energy centre will play a key role in supporting the path to net zero by reducing the amount of waste going to landfill, supporting the local economy and contributing to the security of electricity supplies nationally."

GATEWAY FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT

■ With its freeport status secured, North Lincolnshire is confident of its future as a global business hub. Classed as "special economic zones", freeports are subject to rules that enable business to be done more easily and at a lower cost.

This includes infrastructure planning, customs and favourable duties and taxes.

Operations set to benefit are British Steel in Scunthorpe, Inter Terminals in Immingham, P&O Ferries, IBL Bulk Liquids, AAK International, two UM Group sites in Hull as well as ABP's ports in Grimsby, Goole, Immingham and Hull. ■



The UK's first carbon-neutral advanced manufacturing park will sit just outside Scunthorpe