

2017 JUST Lincolnshire – Position Statement on Lincolnshire and migration.

As an organisation JUST Lincolnshire is keen that Lincolnshire is a county built on **fairness, respect and compassion** for all members of its communities; those long –term residents of the county as well as those more recently arrived in the county.

Central to the ethos of JUST Lincolnshire and its work is an approach firmly grounded in **Human Rights** and promoting **equality** for **all** of Lincolnshire’s residents. Alongside these rights is a **responsibility** for us all to ensure that Lincolnshire’s communities become richer, more creative and more productive environments. These responsibilities apply not just to us as individuals but to our community groups, our public authorities and services as well as business’ in the private sector.

Lincolnshire has a long history of welcoming migrants - whether that is engineers involved with draining the fens, labour working on the land, many different nationalities based on the many Royal Air Force bases there have been in the county or the workforce that make up our health services. **The net contribution** made to Lincolnshire over the years by a diverse and varied workforce is evident throughout the county.

However, JUST Lincolnshire recognises that there has been a rapid change in demographics over the last decade; and this has been particularly keenly felt in areas such as Boston and South Holland.

This has brought many challenges to certain areas in the county, perceived by some to be particularly testing for local infrastructures and services. JUST Lincolnshire welcomes **honest, open and transparent conversation** around these issues. We recognise that successful responses to some of these challenges have been where these conversations have happened - and communities have **worked together imaginatively** in response.

We do however; take a strong stand against discourse that encourages xenophobia, racism and the spread of hate in response to potential challenges. We challenge and are particularly concerned by media stories that are based on fear and stereotyping, generating suspicion and discord amongst communities. Of equal concern is the **‘politicisation’ of migration** adding further to an increasing distrust of those newly arrived to the county?

Whilst JUST Lincolnshire does not underestimate the demographic challenges that may be facing the county over the next few years we recognise that with these challenges will come opportunities to create **vibrant and healthy communities**.

If there are any crises to be highlighted at the present time it is a crisis of imagination and the ability to identify **potential and possibility** within the county. There is an opportunity for all of us to creatively use what we have learnt during the last few years of demographic change. We wish to facilitate a better dialogue to ensure that current and future challenges are met in a way that embraces the full **diversity and richness** of Lincolnshire's population ensuring that the county becomes a **fairer, vibrant and more attractive** place to **live, work and invest**.

¹ Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration. *The Fiscal Effects of Immigration to the UK*, November 2013 http://www.cream-migration.org/publ_uploads/CDP_22_13.pdf

² The Migration Observatory. *Migration in the News: Portrayals of Immigrants, Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees in National British Newspapers, 2010-2012*, August 2013 <http://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/reports/migration-news>

Notes to Editor

JUST Lincolnshire

Just Lincolnshire, founded in 2010, is the only single equality and human rights organisation operating in Lincolnshire. JUST Lincolnshire works towards the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion alongside advancing education and awareness in equality and human rights.

JUST Lincolnshire works actively alongside communities to foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds and cultivate a sentiment in favour of equality and diversity.

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Comment on the position statement or Equality and Human Rights issues in general is available for General Manager, **Wesley Shelbourne on 07867 385826**