

## Suffolk Business Board: Meeting on 25th July 2024

### Minutes & Actions

#### Attendees

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role &amp; Organisation</b>
Mark Pendlington	Chair
Doug Field	CEO, East of England Co-op
Oliver Paul	Director, Suffolk Food Hall
Lisa Perkins	Chair, Tech East
Kelly Boosey	Commercial Manager, Oxford Innovation
Leanne Gittins	Managing Director, LME Recruitment
Tom Ball	CFO, Ipswich Town FC
Hannah Reid (R)	CEO, Community Action Suffolk
Gurpreet Jagpal	Pro Vice-Chancellor Business and Entrepreneurship, University of Suffolk
Nikos Savvas	CEO, Eastern Education Group
Cllr Matthew Hicks	Leader, Suffolk County Council
Cllr Richard Smith	Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Skills, Transport Strategy and Waste, Suffolk County Council
Cllr Andrew Mellen	Leader, Mid Suffolk District Council
Cllr Neil MacDonald	Leader, Ipswich Borough Council

#### Apologies

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role &amp; Organisation</b>
John Dugmore	CEO, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
Paul Ager	Divisional Port Manager, ABP
Peter Brady	CEO, Orbital Group

#### Guests

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role &amp; Organisation</b>
Mark Bretton (R)	Chair, Business Board Network
Mark Livesey (R)	CEO, Business Board Network
Mike Todman (R)	Norfolk & Suffolk Area Lead, Cities and Local Growth Unit (representing Department for Business and Trade and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities)

## Officer Team

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role &amp; Organisation</u>
<u>Lisa Roberts</u>	<u>Head of Strategy, Suffolk County Council</u>
<u>Rob Hancock</u>	<u>Assistant Director, Suffolk County Council</u>
<u>Ian Gallin</u>	<u>Chief Executive, West Suffolk Council</u>
<u>Hannah Brown</u>	<u>Executive Assistant &amp; Project Support, Suffolk County Council</u>
<u>Michael Gray</u>	<u>Head of Skills, Suffolk County Council</u>
<u>Andrew Cook</u>	<u>Executive Director Growth, Highways and Infrastructure, Suffolk County Council</u>
<u>Julian Munson</u>	<u>Head of Innovation &amp; Sectors, Suffolk County Council</u>

<b>Actions</b>
<b>ACTION 1.1</b> LR to work with MP to arrange a meeting with Andrew Summers from Transport East. LR to circulate an email to the Board to confirm meeting details, once confirmed, to allow any interested board members to attend. <b>Lisa Roberts.</b>
<b>ACTION 2.1</b> Board members to submit any feedback to LR on the draft elevator pitch document included in the slides. <b>All.</b>
<b>ACTION 2.2</b> LR to circulate after the Business Board meeting the deep dive session topics that are planned to enable board members to sign up. <b>Lisa Roberts.</b>
<b>ACTION 3.1</b> A productivity review session to be set up to dive deeper into the issues and theoretical solutions. <b>Lisa Roberts.</b>
<b>ACTION 3.2</b> Further drill down session to refine Skills proposal for the economic strategy. Hannah Brown setting up. <b>Hannah Brown.</b>
<b>ACTION 3.3</b> LP and tech/digital working group to further refine 'flywheel' proposal and costing. <b>Lisa Perkins – Tech/Digital working group.</b>
<b>ACTION 3.4</b> AM to present update on Net Zero at September Board. <b>Cllr Andrew Mellen.</b>
<b>ACTION 5.1</b> HB to extend the September board meeting to a half a day session. <b>Hannah Brown.</b>
<b>ACTION 5.2</b> SCC to circulate a note to the board containing all activity and meetings over the summer period which board members can sign up to be a part of. <b>Lisa Roberts / Rob Hancock.</b>

	Item Description, Notes of Discussion and Actions Agreed	Action Lead
1	<p><b>Agenda, apologies and minutes</b></p> <p>MP welcomed the group to the meeting and introduced Mark Bretton, Mark Livesey and Mike Todman who joined virtually. MP shared his thanks regarding the Suffolk Economic Strategy workshops that have been held over the past few weeks.</p> <p>The minutes captured at the previous Suffolk Business Board held on 28/5/24 were agreed and signed off by the board.</p> <p>RS suggested engagement with Andrew Summers from Transport East to present an update at a future board meeting. MP and LR confirmed that they are in discussions with Andrew Summers to arrange engagement.</p> <p><b>ACTION 1.1</b> LR to work with MP to arrange a meeting with Andrew Summers from Transport East. LR to circulate an email to the Board to confirm meeting details, once confirmed, to allow any interested board members to attend. <b>Lisa Roberts.</b></p>	<p><b>Lisa Roberts</b></p>
2	<p><b>Summary of July strategy workshops</b></p> <p>LR asked if the board had any objections to some photographs being taken during today's meeting to share on social media to promote the boards work. No objections were noted from the board.</p> <p>LR shared a presentation noting reflections on the attendance at the Suffolk Economic Strategy workshops having exceeded expectations with 71% being from businesses. LR noted positive feedback has been received. Areas to improve on were suggested as representation across the energy, micro businesses and manufacturing sectors.</p> <p>LR commented on consistent themes from the workshops which included Ipswich centre, and a very strong local focus on growth. General support for the suggested priorities of Agrifood, Energy and Ports and Logistics. An emerging theme was around housing growth, reflecting the national government stated priorities.</p>	

<p>LR noted a short and punchy strategy document is required and set out proposed framework for this documentation.</p> <p>LR shared a draft version of the ‘elevator pitch’ discussed at the previous board meeting. LR noted she was keen to hear feedback and thoughts from the board on this document.</p> <p><b>ACTION 2.1</b> Board members to submit any feedback to LR on the draft elevator pitch document included in the slides. <b>All.</b></p> <p>LR noted a focus on ambitions being longer term, and Board discussed merits of including specific targets. RH noted that ‘XX’ is noted on the slides due to a query to the board as to whether they wanted to agree to commit to specific targets and numbers.</p> <p>Regarding the elevator pitch LR noted a need to ensure substance is behind our claims and finally LR noted the next steps as arranging deep dive sessions around the key priority areas and what transformation actions we take to create the desired impact.</p> <p>DF queried who the audience for the strategy will be and who we are targeting. KB in agreement to these points noting similar feedback from the workshops. LR confirmed that Government are a key audience but noted the need to involve Businesses. LP noted need to have a single document to lay out what we expect to happen.</p> <p>NS commented on the need for the elevator pitch to note the Council as a progressive Council and added that health is a massive industry to ensure is included. GJ discussed the need for one statement to be produced so that the elevator pitch is punchy at a high level of detail with sub messages created to follow to address specific audiences. In regard to KPIs and long-term targets GJ noted they would like to see that involved in the strategy so that the achievements can be measured. TB and LG also in agreement to include numbers and figures in our KPIs. LG added as a suggestion to have a mission statement at the beginning of the draft document to work as GJ suggested as the one paragraph pitch.</p> <p>Mike Todman joined the call remotely - noted that the devolution proposal is with ministers who are taking stock of inherited deals and reviewing the existing deals, hoping to have decision through shortly. But the key aspect was noted as being the development of Local Growth Plans, broad headlines being working with local authorities with framework being a set of 3-5 agreed priorities between the area and central Government and for the plan to remain locally owned.</p>	<p><b>All.</b></p>
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MT noted the Economic Strategy provides the evidence base and content for this and will confirm any specific requirements for Local Growth Plan in autumn.

MP noted that a major factor is going to be the devolution plans of the new government. MH noted an event that Business Board Chairs attended an event last week following the Mayors attending Downing Street. MH noted he did raise a question on the Suffolk and Norfolk deal.

MH noted Norfolk have delayed their paper on the county deal and noted that further updates are expected from central Government soon. MH noted as soon as he hears more, he will report back so it is a topic for the Business Board to keep a close eye on.

OP noted need for a Suffolk wide economic strategy so encapsulates all in business, councils and communities. In regards to the elevator pitch, OP agreed with GJ point over it needing to be punchier and a big standout pitch needs further development with more thought around the uniqueness for Suffolk. OP noted the need to include an ask within the pitch. KB noted from close work from other authorities and the need for the strategy to be ambitious noting thoughts around 5 years not being long enough. KB noted a catalyst of where investment comes from sharing examples from other local areas within 10 year strategies.

LR noted her agreement with KBs ambitions and the long-term focus but the plan being on what we are going to action over the next 5 years with clear intentions. OP in agreement for the long-term ambition with a short-term business plan.

In regard to KPIs, OP noted the need to set bold numbers. All noted need for long-term vision but noted the need to have the short-term deliverable plan and in agreement with ambitious numbers with a need to underpin them. Discussed identifying specific sites in Suffolk e.g. Adastral Park.

ML noted similar conversations going on around the Country with local growth plans connecting across sectors. ML noted earlier conversation on a 10-year horizon with clear deliverables with senior officials noting to worry less about the end goals but to focus on the 'how'.

HR noted broadly in agreement with feedback in the workshops, but still lack of clarity over role of VCS sector, if at all. MP noted an inclusive economy is important and noted different perspectives that come from non-commercial businesses.

LR/MP requested Board members to volunteer to sponsor key priorities and deep dive sessions. Officers to circulate proposal following the minutes.

	<p><b>ACTION 2.2</b> LR to circulate the deep dive session topics that are planned to enable Board members to sponsor. <b>Lisa Roberts.</b></p> <p>MP noted need to validate strategy proposals with CEOs/MDs/Chairs of Suffolk’s bigger businesses and for a session to be run to share strategy and their feedback. To schedule post-summer.</p>	<p><b>Lisa Roberts.</b></p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Feedback from Business Board 1 economic strategy take-aways</b></p> <p><b>a. <u>Productivity – OP</u></b></p> <p>OP provided an update on Productivity. Paper has received external input and intended to further inform the Board as to how to treat the Suffolk productivity gap. Paper identified opportunity to boost Suffolk economy by bringing our level up to the national average. Paper set out that productivity should be considered an outcome, and therefore something strategy is measured against. OP noted some potential interventions and activities already happening which need to be critically assessed. OP welcomed thoughts on the pictorial diagram and noted the need for further drill down outside of Board.</p> <p>OP noted productivity as being the principal measure of the economy alongside prosperity and sustainability.</p> <p>OP confirmed the need to share ideas with neighbours as productivity issues are not Suffolk specific. GJ noted the usefulness of the diagram and the need to map against this to measure if interventions the Board support do actually improve productivity.</p> <p>Board agreed with paper and for there to be a further drill down session and working group, with OP leading.</p> <p><b>ACTION 3.1</b> A further drill down session to be set up. <b>Lisa Roberts.</b></p> <p><b>b. <u>Skills – LG, NS, GJ</u></b></p> <p>GJ, NS and LG collectively updated the group on their work focussing on skills.</p> <p>GJ noted a focus on skills shortfalls and the link between the role of education and business. GJ noted a struggle on what is defined as the businesses’ role vs what the education sector produce, noting that it is too late to happen once people have graduated. GJ commented on the ongoing work with businesses and the work the universities are doing already. GJ touched on the recognition that, across Suffolk, we are in a good position on what businesses have access to in terms of curriculum and how the businesses</p>	<p><b>Lisa Roberts.</b></p>

access a comprehensive offer. NS in regard to skills, the vast majority of businesses do not realise the potential and importance of upskilling people within the businesses rather than taking on new people from the market. NS noted a need to change views and perceptions on upskilling, noting a number of barriers are in place the first being funding. NS confirmed that there are two main routes for funding, one being apprenticeships with an urge to ensure engagement with this, the second being adult skills funding. Some discussion about relative levels of funding in Suffolk and how large projects such as Sizewell C and Freeport East are taken into account.

NS noted need to promote and inform the businesses including small and medium businesses as well as existing businesses about the training opportunities available through the HE and FE institutions. The second ask being to ask for more money for the adult funding budget from central Government.

LG noted opportunity to re-engage with local businesses and people. LG noted low budget ways we can make happen without large amounts of funding but a platform that helps with our communication level with a brand and presence. LG shared some AI generated videos. GJ reiterated the huge amount we have on offer in Suffolk with the sticking point being communicating it. Board agreed greater comms work is needed in this space

DF raised a point around a difficulty knowing which college to go to, NS noted that the colleges are working with the University collaboratively. LG noted in agreement with the need to simplify the processes and suggested a full campaign once the board are agreement with the specific topics. NS noted that the difficulty currently isn't that the education providers aren't here or that there's too many but that it is identifying the needs of the business.

MP sought clarity on particular asks. NS confirmed need to start talking to business through our channels to ask for engagement with a second ask on how we build the ask to the Government for an increased adult education budget. MG noted budget doesn't take into account the large infrastructure enroute to Suffolk. MH commented on a lot of lobbying of Government on education as multiple examples of Suffolk being poorly funding vs our peers. MH queried how we can target that to not be multiple letters.

GJ noted an ask around the diagnostic piece and a one stop shop for a business owner to signpost to the help, creating the virtual business link. KB noted the college doing a brilliant job but SME solutions need to be reviewed. TB in agreement to the strategy and approach but noted does it address the need quick enough and whether a sub strategy on skills is needed to attract people to the area in the first place.



	<p>AC questioned is what has been articulated designed to be distinct and specialised to a few aspects of the strategy or designed to drive the overall strategy. LP and AC in agreement that this could form a further discussion outside of Board.</p> <p>OP queried on funding and the existing LEP team and what resources are available to focus on the economic growth. Officer team to revert.</p> <p><b>d. <u>Net Zero – AM</u></b></p> <p>Agreement to defer this update and discussion to the September board meeting.</p> <p><b>ACTION 3.4</b> AM to present update on Net Zero at September Board. <b>Cllr Andrew Mellen.</b></p>	<p><b>Cllr Andrew Mellen.</b></p>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Business Board Network update</b></p> <p>MB shared slides which will be circulated after the board. Noted relaunched LEP network and how this will operate.</p> <p>MB gave some examples of Business Boards being deployed in Combined Authorities. MB will be writing to ministers formally to set out goals and support the Business Board network. MB confirmed that they exist to support the different models and noted the understanding of the nuances of each with an aim to share best practise. Evidence base keen to help keep that going but want to be efficient for ministers. MB noted importance of Growth Hubs, as an immediate priority in forming good relationship with the new Government and a priority to keep the local business voice.</p> <p>MP noted the different approaches across the Country but confirmed that the board are moving at pace in a streamlined way and thanked MB and ML for their support.</p>	
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Next steps ahead of September Business Board</b></p> <p>MP suggested that the September board meeting is extended to a half a day session to allow time to review the strategy and gain full feedback. The board were in agreement to this.</p> <p><b>ACTION 5.1</b> HB to extend the September board meeting to a half a day session. <b>Hannah Brown.</b></p> <p>AOB MP request for a note to be circulated with activities over the summer on what meetings and deep dives are happening for the board to be involved with.</p>	<p><b>Hannah Brown</b></p>

<p><b>ACTION 5.2</b> SCC to circulate a note to the board containing all activity and meetings over the summer period which board members can sign up to be a part of. <b>Lisa Roberts / Rob Hancock.</b></p> <p>The next board meeting was confirmed as being held on 24 September.</p>	<p><b>Lisa Roberts / Rob Hancock.</b></p>
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