



Suffolk Business Board: Meeting 16 January 2025

Minutes & Actions

Attendees

Business Board Members

Name	Role & Organisation
Oliver Paul	Business Board Acting Chair & Director, Suffolk Food Hall
Cllr Matthew Hicks	Leader, Suffolk County Council
Doug Field	Former CEO, East of England Co-op
Hannah Bloom	Director of Philanthropy and Engagement, Suffolk Community Foundation
John Dugmore	CEO, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
Kelly Boosey	Commercial Manager, Oxford Innovation
Leanne Gittins	Managing Director, LME Recruitment
Lisa Perkins	Chair, Tech East
Marek Hornak	UoS Vice-Chancellor Commercial and Academic Partnerships
Cllr Neil MacDonald	Leader, Ipswich Borough Council
Nikos Savvas	CEO, Eastern Education Group
Peter Brady	CEO, Orbital Group
Paul Ager	Divisional Port Manager, ABP
Cllr Richard Smith MVO	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Economic Development and Skills, Suffolk County Council
Tom Ball (R) Attended until 3:15	CFO, Ipswich Town FC

Apologies

Name	Role & Organisation
Mark Pendlington	Chair
Cllr Andrew Mellen	Leader, Mid Suffolk District Council

Ian Gallin	Chief Executive, West Suffolk Council
Michael Gray	Head of Skills, Suffolk County Council
Tom Gooding	Senior Communications Officer, Suffolk County Council

Guests

Name	Role & Organisation
Matt Capp	Senior Manager, Adastral Park Strategy and Operations BT Group
Peter Bell	Managing Director, Fixed Networks, BT

Officer team

Name	Role & Organisation
Andrew Cook	Executive Director Growth, Highways and Infrastructure, Suffolk County Council
Hannah Brown (R)	Executive Assistant and Project Support, Suffolk County Council
Jai Raithatha	Head of Economic Development, Suffolk County Council
Julian Munson	Head of Innovation & Sectors, Suffolk County Council
Julie West	Programmes Coordinator, Suffolk County Council
Lisa Roberts	Head of Economic Strategy, Suffolk County Council
Rob Hancock	Assistant Director, Suffolk County Council
Stuart Catchpole	Space Cluster Development Manager, Suffolk County Council

Actions
ACTION 1.1 Board Members to let SCC Officers know if they have any personal connections with Suffolk MPs to aid conversations around meeting to discuss the Suffolk Economy Strategy. Business Board Members.
ACTION 2.1 MC posed an ask to the Suffolk Business Board and noted for the board to let him know potential opportunities for growth that the board would like BT to explore further, or for opportunities for BT and the Board to partner. Business Board Members.
ACTION 3.1 Business Board members requested to have a written paper on the funding process circulated to them, to gain greater understanding of scope of funding and decision-making responsibilities. SCC Officers.

ACTION 3.2 Board in agreement for offline conversations to take place around the Energy gaps in the interventions planned. SCC Officers to schedule and take forward these meetings. SCC Officers.
ACTION 3.3 – It was agreed the Business Board could support/sponsor a Water Summit, once a clearer plan has been established as to gaps in the current water planning landscape, including current work being done by Water Resources East and SCoC Business Water Group - Business Board Members.
ACTION 3.4 Provide further support and challenge to shape the business plan for the AME Centre including how fits with G14 Skills Centre, business support offer etc, Kelly Boosey, Marek Hornak, Jai Raithatha.
ACTION 3.5 Board requested to receive performance updates of interventions once approved. SCC Officers.
ACTION 5.1 Peter Brady proposals for AI awards (JM to work up detail) and AI growth zone. Julian Munson/Peter Brady.
ACTION 7.1 SCC Officers to circulate an email to all Business Board members asking for their nominations for the next Business Board chair. SCC Officers.
ACTION 8.1 Officers to share proposed plan and agenda for joint Norfolk Business Board meeting. SCC Officers.
Proposed agenda items for the March board were noted as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guest speaker Martin Collinson - Agrifood strategic focus - Suffolk Coordination Office - Devolution Deal Update - Communications and Marketing Plan Update
New Anglia Capital was noted as an item to be reviewed at a future Business Board

	Item Description, Notes of Discussion and Actions Agreed	Action Lead
1	<p>Agenda, apologies and minutes – Oliver Paul</p> <p>OP noted additional apologies since the paper pack has been circulated for Ian Gallin and Tom Gooding.</p> <p>Matters arising from previous meeting minutes. Noted outstanding items were around the Board Chair and SCC Officers meeting with Suffolk MP's to brief them on the strategy. OP noted that a meeting has been scheduled with Jack Abbott MP but that if Board Members have contacts with other MPs to please let SCC Officers know as it may aid with communications.</p> <p>ACTION 1.1 Board Members to let SCC Officers know if they have any personal connections with Suffolk MPs to aid conversations around meeting to discuss the Suffolk Economy Strategy. Business Board Members.</p> <p>Suffolk Coordination Office progress. RH noted SCC and SCoC Officers have met since the approval in principle agreed at the November Board. Progress has focused on refining and simplifying the scope of work required to ensure it is additional</p>	Business Board Members.

	<p>to current efforts. A further progress update to be provided to the March board.</p> <p>OP shared some slides noting the reflections and achievements met by the Suffolk Business Board in 2024.</p>	
2	<p>Guest presentation, Vision of Adastral Park - Matt Capp, BT</p> <p>MC shared slides and talked the Business Board through BTs Adastral Park site, noting the background and vast activities that happen across the premises. MC talked through the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The future vision of Adastral Park - Consolidation - Key Functions – People/Investment/Facilities - Strategy Progress - Opportunities for Growth - IM cluster, events, showcases <p>The slides shared during the meeting will be circulated alongside the meeting minutes.</p> <p>ACTION 2.1 MC posed an ask to the Suffolk Business Board and noted for the board to let him know potential opportunities for growth that the board would like BT to explore further, or for opportunities for BT and the Board to partner. Business Board Members.</p>	<p>Business Board Members</p>
3	<p>Economic Strategy implementation - Lisa Roberts</p> <p>OP noted some political uncertainty due to the Devolution White Paper recently released, noting guidance to Business Board representatives from Government that they still want to see Local Growth Plans. OP reported Government also noted that the growth planning processes should continue regardless of Devolution decisions, however, devolution decisions may change how business boards operate in future.</p> <p>OP noted the need to link up with Norfolk to align similar views. MH noted that Suffolk were invited by the Minister to attend a meeting in London where it was noted that Suffolk are ideal candidates to apply for a fast-tracked devolution deal. MH noted following an extraordinary County Council Meeting held in early January, the Council voted to agree to join the Devolution Priority Programme, noting the Mayoral election is likely to be May 2026 with the unitary elections potentially happening the year after. SCC are hoping to hear further news from government by the end of January. MH clarified that the Unitary Council, if approved, will see all Councils dissolved including the Districts, Borough and County Council.</p> <p>RS requested that a Devolution Deal update is added to the agenda for the March Business Board as further clarity should be available by then.</p>	

	<p>established as to gaps in the current water planning landscape, including current work being done by Water Resources East and SCoC Business Water Group - Business Board Members.</p> <p>ACTION 3.4 Provide further support and challenge to shape the business plan for the AME Centre including how fits with G14 Skills Centre, business support offer etc, Kelly Boosey, Marek Hornak, Jai Raithatha.</p> <p>ACTION 3.5. Board requested to receive performance updates of interventions once approved. SCC Officers.</p>	<p>Kelly Boosey, Marek Hornak, Jai Raithatha.</p> <p>SCC Officers.</p>
4	<p>Economic Strategy comms and launch plan - Kelly Boosey & Rob Hancock</p> <p>RH and KB shared the communications slides circulated and spoke through the launch headlines from December and the upcoming plan for January.</p> <p>RH noted the ongoing work with Capsule Marketing which is now being wrapped up and the branding deliverables that have been generated from this work.</p> <p>Agreed for further presentation about Marketing Plan to be provided at the March Board.</p>	
5	<p>Tech Convergence opportunities - Peter Brady & Lisa Perkins</p> <p>PB shared the slides circulated in the board pack. Noting the success at the recent National AI Awards, National AI Festival and the National AI Hub. PB shared the background information from both events, noting the fantastic attendance, participating organisations and positive comms that came from the events. PB covered the National AI hub lead location for the region in Stowmarket speaking through the innovation and commercial opportunities.</p> <p>PB noted other considerations within the AI space including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suffolk's number 1 AI position - AI start-ups and innovation - Tech convergence - Clean energy - Suffolk productivity problems highlighted for businesses not using AI <p>PBs ask to the board was to consider AI as a priority opportunity supporting the National AI Hub, retaining the National AI Awards in Suffolk either permanently or on rotational basis.</p> <p>ACTION 5.1 – Peter Brady proposals for AI awards (JM to work up detail) and AI growth zone. Julian Munson/Peter Brady.</p>	<p>Julian Munson/Peter Brady.</p>

	<p>OP request for some further statistics to be available, LR confirmed that these are being worked on currently.</p> <p>Stuart Catchpole joined the Board and spoke through the Space East programme and how the National Space Strategy feeds into the work that is ongoing in East Anglia and the opportunities within this sector.</p> <p>The slides presented by SC will be shared alongside the meeting minutes.</p>	
6	<p>Former LEP Functions update – Cllr Richard Smith, Jai Raithatha & Julian Munson</p> <p>RS noted the good work the Board has been focused on developing the economic strategy and the further role needed to monitor the scope and progress of continuing former LEP functions.</p> <p>JM spoke through the paper noting the functions and programmes which previously sat with the LEP and set out recommendations of examples of programmes to continue, stop or change. The Board agreed to the proposals in the paper.</p> <p>LG noted the need from a skills perspective to look at a more robust programme to identify what the output of the programmes is. LR noted the ongoing work on a portfolio to sit underneath the strategy which would hold each interventions outputs and outcomes which could be used in comms and reporting so that we can use these to evaluate.</p>	
7	<p>Business Board administration and documentation – Oliver Paul</p> <p>OP noted the term of the Chair ends in April. OP noted the need for the board to appoint a Chair for the year ahead, and noted that as set out in the Terms of Reference, any Board Member can nominate a potential Chair. OP questioned the Board as to preferences for appoint of a new Chair. Board noted continuity is important with a further change potentially coming up in 12 months time with the Devolution Deal. The Board discussed the possibility of nominating MP as Chair for a further year.</p> <p>ACTION 7.1 SCC Officers to circulate an email to all Business Board members asking for their nominations for the next Business Board chair. SCC Officers.</p>	SCC Officers
8	<p>AOB and Forward Plan – Oliver Paul</p> <p>No AOB was noted, the next time the board convenes was confirmed as the Joint Business Board meeting at Carrow Road in Norwich on 26 February.</p>	SCC Officers.

<p>ACTION 8.1 Officers to share proposed plan and agenda for joint Norfolk Business Board meeting. SCC Officers.</p>	
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The next Suffolk Business Board meeting will be on 20 March at Claas UK in Bury St Edmunds.