

March 2025

Suffolk Business Board Update: Suffolk Economy Programmes and Interventions

Delivery of Programmes and Functions 2025-26

To successfully implement the new Suffolk economic strategy, a series of programmes, interventions and investments will be required. These range from schemes to improve skills, business support, providing companies with advice and investment, funding to support areas where there is market failure, for example funding for start-ups, through to infrastructure investments to unlock growth. These may include some existing or legacy programmes from the LEP, operated in conjunction with Norfolk.

Senior officers from Suffolk County Council and Norfolk County Council continue to meet on a regular basis to ensure alignment of strategy and priorities and programme delivery. They have agreed on continued delivery for joint programmes, at least for 2025-26, where it makes sense to do so.

Following the paper presented to the Suffolk Business Board in January 2025, the table below provides the latest update and confirmation on plans for 2025-26 against each of the key programmes and interventions. These interventions have been identified as quick wins as part of the development of the Investment and Delivery plan, strategic assessment and the EPIC test have been carried out on these.

Recommendations

1. That the Board note the continuation of programme activity joint with Norfolk, any Suffolk specific interventions and the update on current funding arrangements and plans (under 'Update March 2025').
2. That the Board note the update on Skills Boot Camps Programme with additional £2m for the procurement of new bootcamp provision during 25/26. Board to also agree to provide input into the priorities for 2025/26 to help shape the programme activity.

Function/ Programme	Summary	Area	Investment 25/26 (proposed)	Update March 2025	Benefits and Link to Economic Strategy
Skills Bootcamps	Skills Bootcamps are short employer led programmes of training for adults (aged 19 or over) aimed at meeting business needs. The training is procured on both a national and a local level and delivered by training providers	Norfolk and Suffolk	According to the latest information available from the Department for Education the Norfolk and Suffolk Wave 5 Bootcamp Programme for 24/25 is performing very well (4 th in the country in terms of % achieved against initial targets) in relation to learner starts.	In 2024, SCC submitted proposals to the DfE for further Skills Bootcamps delivery totalling £4.1m for Norfolk and Suffolk in the 2025/6 funding year. The DfE have now confirmed their approval. Enables delivery of programmes to 1,345 learners across 14 sectors from Agriculture to the Visitor Economy, aligned to regional requirements. Current ‘Wave 5’ providers will have their contracts extended where performance during 24/25 has been of a good standard and the need for the bootcamp provision continues to be demonstrated. This will leave approximately a further £2m for the procurement of new bootcamp provision during 25/26.	<i>Talent Development; High Growth Sectors.</i> <i>The priorities for this procurement, as set out in the proposals to Government and remaining a priority currently includes the following:</i> • <i>Digital Skills – AI and data analysis, digital marketing.</i> • <i>Infrastructure Development – CAD for construction, engineering, construction/civils operatives</i> • <i>Agriculture Regenerative Land Systems</i> • <i>Leadership and Management</i> • <i>HGV and Bus Driving</i> • <i>Retrofit</i> • <i>Visitor Economy – catering and hospitality</i>

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					• <i>Social Care and Health – clinical and care skills</i> • <i>Early Years Childminding</i> <i>Feedback from Business Board on these priorities or other suggestions is welcomed.</i>
Skills, Employment and Lifelong Development Board	There is a need to establish a Skills, Employment and Lifelong Development (SELD) Board for Suffolk. This Board will focus on ensuring coordination across resources and activity addressing current and future workforce needs, enhancing employability, and promoting lifelong learning and development.	Suffolk	The Board will provide a forum for detailed discussion on the skills, employment and lifelong learning and development required to deliver on the ambitions of the Suffolk Economic Strategy, helping to provide an informed steer to the Suffolk Business Board and all key decision-making organisations across the skills and employment system. It will also provide an overarching strategic steer for several of the main employment and	Government has recently issued guidance for the development of local plans which will set out how areas are responding to the ambitions that Government has set out in the ‘Get Britain Working’ white paper. This guidance requires Suffolk County Council to be the accountable body for the development and delivery of the ‘Get Suffolk Working’ plan which will need to link to and work with the delivery of the Suffolk Economic Strategy. Work will commence with multiple stakeholders on the ‘Get Suffolk Working’ plan which will be published	<i>Talent Development; High Growth Sectors.</i>

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			skills related interventions to be delivered in Suffolk in 2025/26 including Connect to Work and Adult Skills Funding. Crucially, it will also provide the strategic oversight for the development and ongoing delivery of the ‘Get Suffolk Working’ plan.	between the mid-July and late September 2025. The Skills, Employment and Lifelong Development Board will be established in parallel and include representation from DWP, Further and Higher Education, the VCSFE community, employer representatives, local government, Independent Training Providers and Public Health.	
Space East	East of England space cluster, 1 of 15 formally recognised UK space clusters by UKSA.	Initially Norfolk and Suffolk. Now covers East of England (six counties) (hosted by SCC)	Suffolk - £93,500 including 2 FTE posts. Norfolk £25K. Essex and Cambs £25K TBC. Herts in-kind. UKSA match TBC approx £100k	<i>Funding bid submitted to UK Space Agency in March with ask of £60K. Decision expected by April.</i> <i>Additional funding confirmed from Norfolk, Cambs, Herts and Essex of £25K each i.e. budget of £100K.</i> <i>Funding from SCC confirmed £25K + additional hosting costs.</i>	<i>Delivers Tech Convergence; Driving Enterprise and Innovation; Attracting Investment; Talent Development; Boosting Infrastructure and Connectivity</i> Opportunity to engage regional businesses with the £19bn UK space sector. 230+ membership. £4m+ of project funding. Significant tech convergence opportunities. UoS Quantum Optical Lab and Space Enterprise Lab at Adastral Park.

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Generate (Energy sector)	Inward investment and trade promotional campaign	Norfolk, Suffolk & Essex (SCC host BDM)	Suffolk - £30K (+£30K each from Norfolk and Essex)	<i>Requests made to Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex for a contribution of £30K each to enable continuation of Generate activity for 25/26. Final decision expected by April.</i>	<i>Attracting Investment; Driving Enterprise and Innovation. High Growth Sector.</i> Inward investment leads and supply chain opportunities – focus on offshore wind, nuclear, hydrogen
Tech East and Council for Digital Tech	Development and promotion of digital sector.	Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambs (SCC and SCoC hosts)	Suffolk - £20k Other funding from LAs, universities and industry (Tech East patrons)	<i>Patron funding of £10K from SCC agreed with Tech East to support ongoing tech sector activity.</i> <i>Additional funding of £25K for new Fintech East programme (with Norfolk) under consideration.</i>	<i>Attracting Investment; Driving Enterprise and Innovation; Talent Development; Boosting Instructure and Connectivity; Tech Convergence. Emerging Growth Sector.</i> Inward investment attraction. Promotion of digital tech adoption and skills across key sectors. Promotion of tech vertical opps. e.g. fintech, gaming
New Anglia Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering (NAAME)	Development and promotion of the advanced manufacturing sector and local networks.	Norfolk and Suffolk (NCC host)	Suffolk - £26.2k Match from Norfolk.	<i>Agreement of £26.2k contribution with MOU being prepared to enable continuation of NAAME for 25/26.</i>	<i>Attracting Investment; Driving Enterprise and Innovation; Talent Development; Tech Convergence. Value Growth Sector.</i>

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				<i>New 'Made Smarter' East of England programme launches in April. Hosted by NCC it is a £1.2m DBT scheme to support adoption of digital tech in advanced manufacturing.</i>	350 NAAME membership across clusters. Opportunities for innovation and productivity gains. Boost supply chain and job opps./ training
Barclays Eagle Labs (tech start-ups)	Dedicated programme to support tech start-ups and founders in collaboration with SCC, NCC, Connected Innovation, Akcela and Innovation Labs	Norfolk & Suffolk (SCC is the accountable body)	Current funding from Barclays to end March 25. Awaiting confirmation on future funding.	<i>NCC/SCC in agreement to provide financial support of £60K each to enable a scaled back version of the programme to continue in 25/26.</i> <i>No further funding via Barclays Eagle Labs at this stage.</i>	<i>Driving Enterprise and Innovation; Talent Development; Attracting Investment; Tech Convergence. Emerging Growth Sector.</i> Support for founders and early-stage ICT tech businesses.
High Growth Business Support (North Star)	North Star pilot programme to provide a bespoke Information, Diagnostics and Brokerage service for Suffolk based businesses.	Suffolk only (Norfolk has a separate high growth scheme run by NCC)	Current funding from DBT to end March 25. Funding confirmed for 25/26 so plans to continue.	<i>High Growth Business Support service (North Star) to be delivered in-house by SCC, working with key partners such as Growth Hub (GH), LAs, Chamber, MENTA</i> <i>DBT funding confirmed for 25/26 - £311,200, an increase on 24/25 but includes extra funding to support high street businesses and new</i>	<i>Driving Enterprise and Innovation; Attracting Investment.</i> Targeted engagement with businesses with high growth potential, seeking investment, advice and support

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				<i>Business Growth Service implementation. To discuss with LAs/GH.</i>	
Growth Hub	Business support service operated under the Growth Hub (GH) branding for Norfolk and Suffolk.	Norfolk GH run by NCC and Suffolk GH by consortium of LAs and YTKO.	Scaled back funding due to reduction in UKSPF funding allocation for Suffolk.	<i>Local Authority discussions (County/districts) underway to agree service levels and partnership.</i>	<i>Driving Enterprise and Innovation; Attracting Investment</i>
Innovation Grant Mentoring Programme (IGMP)	IGMP inspires and promotes innovation funding and supports businesses working on innovation funding proposals, through Innovation Mentoring, Bid Writing Coaching + delivering innovation webinars and workshop sessions	Norfolk & Suffolk (hosted by NCC)	Suffolk - £60K Match from Norfolk	<i>Confirmed with draft MOU prepared, awaiting sign off by NCC/SCC.</i> <i>Programme to continue for 25/26.</i>	<i>Driving Enterprise and Innovation; Attracting Investment.</i> Supported over 400 businesses over past 4 years and helped secure £2.7m of innovation funding.
Specialist innovation, investment and supply chain programmes	Various – examples ; ACG Halo Angel Investment, Catapult Programmes e.g. Connect, Create Growth, Agri-Tech Launchpad	Norfolk and Suffolk + wider region for some programmes	Short term pilots – future funding to be confirmed	<i>Create Growth extended for 25/26 with extra DCMS funding to operate two further cohorts to support creative businesses.</i> <i>Extension of other programmes subject to further funding required.</i>	<i>Driving Enterprise and Innovation; Talent Development; Attracting Investment; Tech Convergence.</i> Various

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Apprenticeships Suffolk	Project engaging with individuals 16+ helping them to break down barriers to gain meaningful employment through an apprenticeship or signpost into other skills-based opportunities alongside advice and guidance provided for education settings and employers to help drive up quantity and quality of apprenticeships in Suffolk.	Suffolk	UK Shared Prosperity Fund confirmed from the District and Borough Authorities	With funding confirmed from UKSPF* the Apprenticeships Suffolk service will now continue to deliver during 25/26. Opportunities to enhance the service to increase the amount of support that can be offered to employers and education settings will be explored, including support for levy transfer alongside other partner organisations. <i>*subject to further local sign off process</i>	Talent Development, Driving Enterprise and Innovation
Thrive – Young Person Support	Project working with Young People. Primarily NEETs and linking to SCC Family Support Services, Thrive offers specific support to progress back into education or employment, Thrive brings together Further Education and specialists from the Voluntary Sector to provide a personalised	Suffolk	UK Shared Prosperity Fund confirmed from the District and Borough Authorities	Funding confirmed* will now allow the delivery partnership, led by Suffolk New College, to consider the offer of a contract extension and develop delivery plans for 25/26. <i>*subject to further local sign off process</i>	Talent Development

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	support service for young people including signposting to relevant services.				
Suffolk Economy Grants	Grants aimed to help SMEs grow productively, innovate, and become more sustainable	Suffolk	£1m reallocated programme funds from LEP legacy programmes	<i>Programme has launched with 1st April open for applications. Pipeline of 30 business who have registered their interest.</i>	<i>Driving Enterprise and Innovation</i>
Local Area Energy Plan	Whole systems energy plan to ensure energy security and resilience while also meeting decarbonisation ambitions and unlocking growth – Covering energy demand, grid capacity, infrastructure, and integration with land use, water availability, and housing and economic growth.	Norfolk and Suffolk	£100k matched by £100k from Norfolk (total £200k)	<i>Steering group established and met on 11/03/25 agreed scope which will be advertised 26/03/25. Norfolk leading on procurement.</i>	<i>Boosting Infrastructure and Connectivity</i>
Cluster Feasibility	Focusing on developing a clear understanding of key sector clusters to drive innovation and growth in Suffolk with robust cluster growth plans.	Suffolk	£125k	<i>Tender closed 10/03/25. 20 bids received. Interviews 24/03/25. Contact award expected early April with kick off meeting w/c 07/04/25.</i>	<i>All ES enablers</i>