

PRESENTATION TO SUFFOLK BUSINESS BOARD

SUFFOLK CLUSTER ANALYSIS AND FEASIBILITY STUDY

JULY 2025



AGENDA

1. BACKGROUND

2. SECTORAL AND CROSS CUTTING INSIGHTS

3. OPPORTUNITIES

4. DISCUSSION

5. NEXT STEPS

MEET THE TEAM



Russell Gundry
Innovation Director



Ben Edginton-Thomas
Delivery Lead



Francesca Castelo
Analysis Lead



Lisa Perkins
Innovation Director

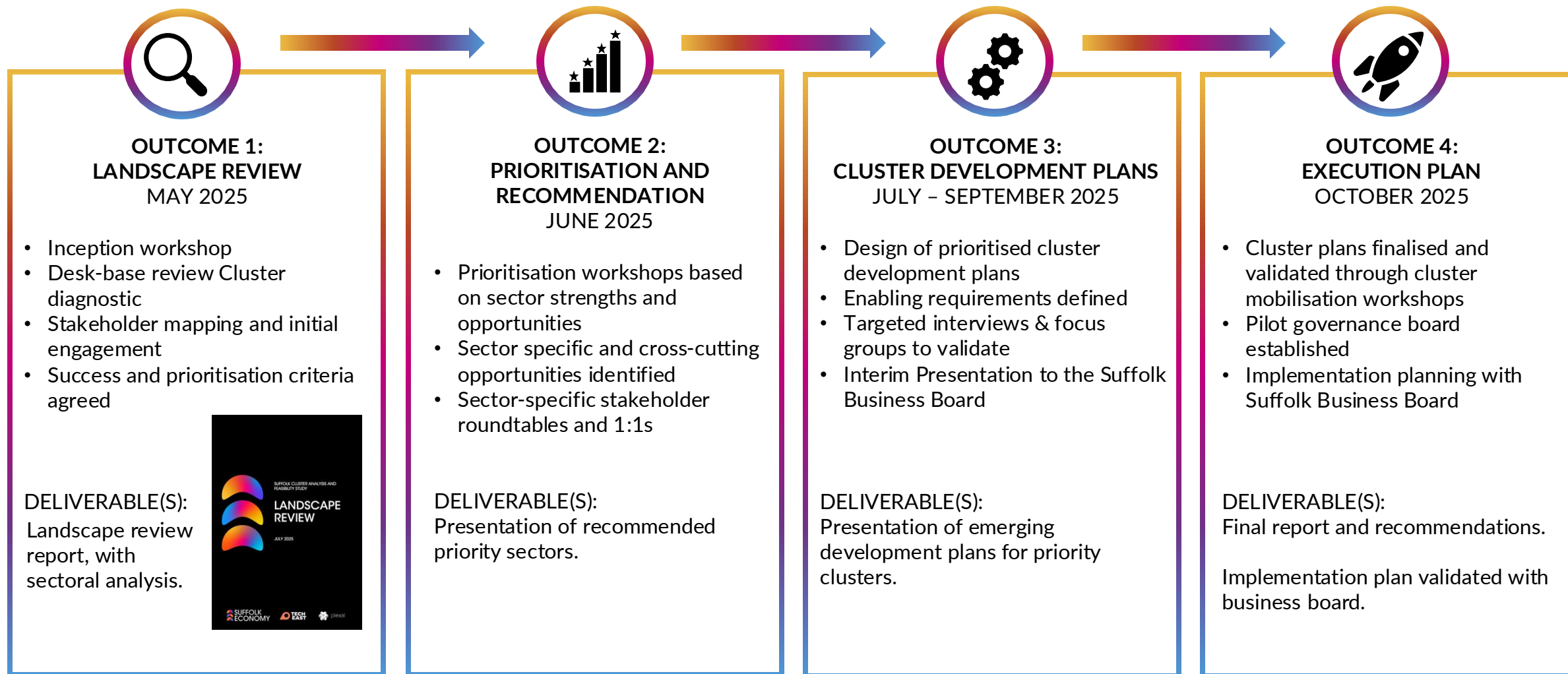


Tim Robinson
Chief Operating Officer



Paul Putland
Tech East Associate

PROJECT TIMELINE



SECTOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Sector	Date of Roundtable	Example of stakeholders engaged (1-1 and roundtable)
ICT Digital	18 th June	BT, Space East, Cyber East, Wonde, Bravegoose, Chorus Intelligence
Advanced Manufacturing	18 th June	NAAME/Made Smarter, Hethel Innovation, Frugalpac, Sudbury Silk Mills, HF Bond
Financial and Professional Services	19 th June	FIPS, Scrutton Bland, WTW, AXA
Ports and Logistics	19 th June	MSC, ABP, Transport East, Freeport East
AgriFood and Drink	20 th June	Muntons, Suffolk Food Hall, Suffolk Agricultural Association, British Sugar
Clean Energy	24 th June	Opergy Group, Orbis Energy, Sizewell C, Insight Energy,
Cross-sector	30 th June	British Business Bank, Innovate UK, Connected Innovation, Oxford Innovation, Districts and Boroughs, University of Suffolk, Orbital Group

One-to-one calls with businesses are ongoing and targeted engagements will continue to take place throughout Outcome 3 to inform the Cluster Development Plans.



SECTOR OVERVIEWS

AGRI-FOOD & DRINK

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Suffolk must define a **long-term mission** for its agri-food system, building on high productivity potential and growing global demand.
- **Strategic opportunities** include: import substitution, high-value exports, use of AI and robotics in precision farming, and branding around low-carbon food.
- **Constraints** include labour shortages, digital connectivity, planning and water access.
- A **Suffolk 'Food Valley' model** could adapt lessons from Lincolnshire, supported by Adastral as a potential agritech testbed.

PORTS & LOGISTICS

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Suffolk has UK biggest ports for container traffic and agriculture products, and a significant port for offshore energy but **lacks a coordinated cluster strategy**.
- Opportunity to develop a **Smart Logistics Hub**, leveraging Freeport (Industrial Strategy Zone) status, electric/rail logistics models, and use of Digital & ICT technologies for improved efficiency and resilience.
- **Anchor organisations** from ports and shipping show appetite for involvement.
- Sector **constrained** by skills (e.g. HGVs), infrastructure (Orwell Bridge, rail), and visibility in national policy.

CLEAN ENERGY

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Suffolk's comparative advantage lies not only in energy volume and diversity (Sizewell C, offshore wind, solar) but in becoming a hub for **smart, secure energy systems**.
- Core opportunity is **convergence** of energy, ICT and ACT: grid optimisation, cybersecurity, and AI-enabled load balancing.
- **Cluster leadership** could link infrastructure (generation, grid), services (O&M), and skills (construction, logistics).

SECTOR OVERVIEWS

ICT & DIGITAL

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Suffolk should position ICT both as a **cross-cutting enabler**, as well as a **standalone sector**.
- Adastral Park and Innovation Martlesham are national assets in secure networking and telecoms (**ACT**).
- **Applications span** energy load balancing, AI for ports, and satellite data for agriculture.
- A **digital spine** strategy could support all flagship clusters.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Advanced manufacturing is not a flagship cluster but plays an **enabling role** in other sectors (e.g. agritech, clean energy).
- **Challenges** include skills shortages, loss of trained staff to larger firms, and ageing workforce.
- Opportunity to **align** with clean energy and food processing investments where local suppliers can add value.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Sector **lacks scale or leadership** for a full cluster approach.
- Most activity in corporates is in **back-office functions**; innovation-led growth as per Norwich's emerging InsurTech cluster unlikely.
- **FinTech** activity is small-scale but growing.
- Possible wider finance triangle (Ipswich-Bury-Norwich) or enabling finance for agrifood and logistics scale-up.

TECH CONVERGENCE OPPORTUNITIES

1

POWERING THE
UK'S GREEN
TRANSITION FROM
THE COAST
OUTWARDS

13

2

LEADING THE
SMART
COUNTRYSIDE
REVOLUTION

10

3

CONNECTED
SUFFOLK: A
NATIONAL
TESTBED

4

BUILDING THE
FUTURE
WORKFORCE WITH
IMMERSIVE,
INCLUSIVE TECH

5

FROM THE COAST
TO THE COSMOS:
ENVIRONMENTAL
DATA

6

'MADE SMART'

7

FINTECH FOR
REAL-WORLD
TRANSFORMATION

8

CIRCULAR
SUFFOLK: CLEAN
INDUSTRY BY
DESIGN

9

COASTAL
CATALYST:
MARITIME
INNOVATION HUB

10

SMART
LOGISTICS,
SMARTER
PLACES

12

No. of
votes

TECH CONVERGENCE OPPORTUNITIES

1

**POWERING THE UK'S
GREEN TRANSITION FROM
THE COAST OUTWARDS**

Clean Energy × AI × Grid Infrastructure

Position Suffolk as the UK's clean energy engine by integrating offshore wind, nuclear, hydrogen and decentralised energy assets with AI-enabled grid optimisation, smart energy logistics, and next-generation O&M systems.

2

**LEADING THE SMART
COUNTRYSIDE
REVOLUTION**

AgriTech × AI × Satellite × Immersive

Make Suffolk a national testbed for high-tech, sustainable rural economies by converging AI, satellite monitoring, and immersive training to transform agriculture, land use, and water resilience.

10

**SMART LOGISTICS,
SMARTER PLACES**

Logistics × Simulation × Connectivity

Transform Suffolk into the UK's most connected logistics corridor through innovative use of ICT and Digital technologies for efficiency, resilience and disruption modelling, electrified multimodal freight, and port-based logistics innovation.

THREE OVERARCHING MISSIONS FOR SUFFOLK

**POWERING THE UK'S GREEN
TRANSITION FROM THE COAST
OUTWARDS**

**LEADING THE SMART
COUNTRYSIDE REVOLUTION**

**SMART LOGISTICS, SMARTER
PLACES**

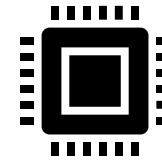
POWERED BY FOUR STRATEGIC CLUSTERS



AgriFood and Drink



Clean Energy



Digital and
Technologies



Ports and Logistics

ENABLED BY COLLABORATION BETWEEN CRITICAL ASSETS AND ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS ACROSS THE COUNTY.
THESE ARE SOME OF THE EXAMPLES...



 **University
of Suffolk**

 **SPACE EAST**

**FREEPORT
EAST** | FELIXSTOWE
GATEWAY 14
HARWICH
A GLOBAL FREEPORT FOR A GLOBAL BRITAIN

 **Suffolk
Chamber of
Commerce**

NAAMEI
North Anglian Area Maritime Enterprise Initiative

ABP
ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS

 **OrbisEnergy™**

 **Cefas**

CLUSTER COMPARATORS

LANCASHIRE

Clean Energy
Digital & Technologies
Ports & Logistics
Agrifood




EAST COAST OF SCOTLAND

Clean Energy
Digital & Technologies
Ports & Logistics
Agrifood



TEES VALLEY

Clean Energy
Digital & Technologies
Ports & Logistics
Agrifood




WEST MIDLANDS

Clean Energy
Digital & Technologies
Ports & Logistics
Agrifood




HUMBER

Clean Energy
Digital & Technologies
Ports & Logistics
Agrifood



GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Clean Energy
Digital & Technologies
Ports & Logistics
Agrifood



SUFFOLK

Clean Energy
Digital & Technologies
Ports & Logistics
Agrifood



SHAPING THE OPPORTUNITIES TOGETHER

- Do you agree with the top three 'missions'?
- Do you agree with the priority clusters?
- Taken together, will these express Suffolk's differentiation, including in funding proposals?
- Given the desire to focus on big bets, are there crucial elements missing from the top three?
- Is there anything else that we need to consider? (e.g. assets, stakeholders, enablers, blockers)
- Is there anything that worries you?
- Does this excite you?

NEXT STEPS

- Commence design of cluster development plans for approved priority sectors
- Co-design with stakeholders – we will undertake targeted engagement of stakeholders to develop the plans and ensure alignment with local and national priorities
- Deliver Social Value roundtable – how can we harness clusters to drive wider social value for communities and places in Suffolk? How can we ensure cluster growth is EPIC?

SUPPORTING THE WORK

- **Mission sponsor** - help us shape the cluster development plans in line with the EPIC framework. Help us champion the missions to your networks.
- **Inform the work** – if you have any further feedback on the work, we would love to schedule an opportunity to discuss.
- **Stakeholder engagement** – help us make sure the cluster development plans are co-designed with stakeholders by:
 - Sharing the project with relevant sector representatives or allies in your network
 - Let us know any further stakeholders we should engage with.

Get in touch with our team:

Ben Edginton-Thomas:

Ben.Edginton-Thomas@plexal.com

Fran Castelo:

Francesca.Castelo@Plexal.com

Tim Robinson:

Tim@techeast.com

Paul Putland:

Paul@techeast.com



THANK YOU

APPENDIX

1 POWERING THE UK'S GREEN TRANSITION FROM THE COAST OUTWARDS

Theme: Clean Energy × AI × Grid
Infrastructure

Mission:

Position Suffolk as the UK's clean energy engine by integrating offshore wind, nuclear, and decentralised energy assets with AI-enabled grid optimisation, smart energy logistics, and next-generation O&M systems.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- OrbisEnergy innovation activity
- Grid balancing + telecoms logic via Adastral Park
- Hydrogen production for ports/agriculture
- Energy-smart ports and data centres
- Integration with workforce planning and digital skills

2

LEADING THE SMART COUNTRYSIDE REVOLUTION

Theme: AgriTech × AI × Satellite × Immersive

Mission:

Make Suffolk a national testbed for high-tech, sustainable rural economies by converging AI, satellite monitoring, and immersive training to transform agriculture, land use, and water resilience.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Precision farming using AI + satellite data
- Smart irrigation + flood management
- Immersive rural upskilling platforms
- Data-enabled biodiversity & soil carbon modelling
Position Suffolk as the UK's clean energy engine by integrating offshore wind, nuclear, and decentralised energy assets with AI-enabled grid optimisation, smart energy logistics, and next-generation O&M systems.



CONNECTED SUFFOLK: A NATIONAL TESTBED

Theme: Clusters × Infrastructure ×
Digital Testbeds

Mission:

Create a unified regional ecosystem of testbeds and shared infrastructure linking Suffolk's major innovation assets to enable real-world experimentation across energy, agri-food, logistics, and telecoms.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Gateway 14, Adastral Park, Freeport East, OrbisEnergy
- Multi-sector R&D and demonstrator environments
- Interoperable data infrastructure and testbed access
- Common procurement and innovation governance



BUILDING THE FUTURE WORKFORCE WITH IMMERSIVE, INCLUSIVE TECH

Theme: Immersive × Education × AME
× Care

Mission:

Redesign Suffolk's skills pipeline using immersive technologies and modular digital tools to enable inclusive, cross-sector workforce development in response to automation, decarbonisation, and demographic change.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- VR/AR deployed for care, manufacturing, logistics and net zero trades
- Work-based learning including modular courses and apprenticeships
- AI tutors and digital coaching tools
- Skills access for rural and underserved learners

5

FROM THE COAST TO THE COSMOS: ENVIRONMENT DATA

Theme: Satellite × Marine × AI ×
Climate

Mission:

Make Suffolk the UK's leader in digital environmental intelligence by combining marine science, climate data, and space tech to inform land-sea planning, biodiversity, resilience, and policy innovation.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Digital Ocean Twin platform
- Real-time climate/flood monitoring
- Maritime emissions and coastal erosion tracking
- AI for ecosystem modelling and policy simulation



MADE SMART

Theme: AME × AI × Net Zero

Mission:

Reboot Suffolk's manufacturing sector as a digitally enabled, clean growth industry through AI-driven productivity tools, low-carbon supply chains, and cross-sector design capabilities.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Predictive maintenance + quality control via AI
- Low-carbon industrial zones tied to Freeport/logistics
- AME skills pipelines linked to renewables and agri-food
- Partnerships with FE/HE and space for R&D prototyping



FINTECH FOR REAL- WORLD TRANSFORMATION

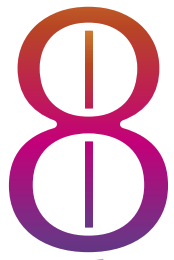
Theme: Finance × Infrastructure ×
Procurement

Mission:

Develop Suffolk's financial and legal services into a platform for enabling clean growth, infrastructure investment, and SME innovation through smarter digital finance tools and procurement reform.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- SME finance platforms for energy + construction
- Procurement consortia models
- RegTech for compliance-heavy sectors (e.g. logistics, agri)
- A14/A140 FinTech corridor anchored in Ipswich + Norwich



CIRCULAR SUFFOLK: CLEAN INDUSTRY BY DESIGN

Theme: Energy × Construction ×
Resource Efficiency

Mission:

Build the foundations of a circular industrial economy in Suffolk by linking energy, materials, and planning policy to support decarbonised construction and closed-loop resource flows.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Waste heat and energy reuse (e.g. Sizewell → agri)
- Circular design in Freeport and Gateway 14 developments
- Low-carbon housing + industrial retrofit pilots
- AI for lifecycle materials planning and embodied carbon



COASTAL CATALYSTS: LOWESTOFT AS A MARITIME INNOVATION HUB

Theme: Ports × Marine × Clean Tech

Mission:

Redefine Lowestoft as a multi-sector coastal innovation zone, combining offshore wind O&M, clean marine logistics, fisheries science, and digital skills to drive jobs, investment and regeneration.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- CEFAS + O&M convergence activity
- Integration of maritime with clean logistics and skills
- Innovation placemaking strategy for Lowestoft
- Exploration of Lowestoft as dual-use hub for defence + renewables

10 SMART LOGISTICS, SMARTER PLACES

Theme: Logistics × Simulation × Connectivity

Mission:

Transform Suffolk into the UK's most connected logistics corridor through digital twin modelling, electrified multimodal freight, and port-based logistics innovation.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Wider use of Digital & ICT for efficiency, resilience and disruption planning
- Simulation of supply chain resilience (Orwell Bridge, Ely etc.)
- Smart Logistics Hub to develop and test new innovative solutions
 - HGV electrification
 - Microhubs
 - AI route scheduling
 - Reduction in empty mile journey