

## Suffolk Business Board: Meeting 5 June 2025

### Minutes & Actions

#### Business Board Members

Name	Role & Organisation
Mark Pendlington	Chair
Cllr Caroline Topping	Leader, East Suffolk District 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 (R)	Chair, Tech East
Marek Hornak	UoS Pro Vice-Chancellor - Commercial and Academic Partnerships
Cllr Neil MacDonald	Leader, Ipswich Borough Council
Alan Pease	Principal and Chief Executive Officer, Suffolk New College
Oliver Paul	Director, Suffolk Food Hall
Paul Ager	Divisional Port Manager, ABP
Peter Brady	CEO, Orbital Group
Cllr Richard Smith MVO	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Economic Development and Skills, Suffolk County Council
Tom Ball	CFO, Ipswich Town FC

#### Apologies

Name	Role & Organisation
Cllr Matthew Hicks	Leader, Suffolk County Council
Alan Pease	Principal and Chief Executive Officer, Suffolk New College
Peter Brady	CEO, Orbital Group

#### Guests

Name	Role & Organisation
Kevin Keable	East of England Energy Group – Executive Chairman
Ian Pease	SCC Business Development Manager - OrbisEnergy

#### Officer team

Name	Role & Organisation
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Alice Tomkins	Economic Development Officer, Suffolk County Council
Andrew Cook	Executive Director Growth, Highways and Infrastructure, Suffolk County Council
Ian Gallin	Chief Executive, West Suffolk Council
Jai Raithatha	Head of Economic Development, Suffolk County Council
Julian Munson	Head of Enterprise and Innovation, Suffolk County Council
Lisa Roberts	Head of Economic Strategy, Suffolk County Council
Michael Gray	Head of Skills, Suffolk County Council
Rob Hancock	Assistant Director Housing, Planning and Growth, Suffolk County Council
Sophie Ward	Executive Assistant and Project Support, Suffolk County Council
Tom Gooding	Senior Communications Officer, Suffolk County Council

Actions	
<b>ACTION 1.1:</b>	Board members to inform RH or JR if they wish to attend the East Anglian Daily Times Business Awards on 10 July. <b>Business Board Members</b>
<b>ACTION 1.2:</b>	Board members to update the team of any conflicts of interest to keep the register up to date. <b>Business Board Members</b>
<b>ACTION 1.3:</b>	Board members to notify MH if they have not yet had their invite to the University breakfast meeting on 1 July. <b>Business Board Members</b>
<b>ACTION 2.1:</b>	Business Board to further consider the final slide of the presentation, slide 33 'Takeaways for the Business Board' as part of Interventions Plan. <b>Business Board Members</b>
<b>ACTION 3.1:</b>	Business Board members/Officers to support KK in putting a plan together of what is required from local government and from national government ready to be present to GB Energy. <b>Business Board Members &amp; Julian Munson</b>
<b>ACTION 5.1:</b>	Sub Board group to be set up to review Interventions Plan ahead of Board meetings. <b>Officer Team</b>
<b>ACTION 5.2:</b>	LR to come back to the Board members again for further update on Suffolk Showcase. <b>Lisa Roberts</b>
<b>ACTION 6.1:</b>	RH/SW to circulate a poll for a new date for the July Business Board. <b>Rob Hancock/Sophie Ward</b>
<b>ACTION 6.2:</b>	LP reminded Business Board Members of workshops being organised and asked Business Board members to keep an eye out for emails. LP may approach Business Board members requesting help. <b>Business Board Members</b>

	Item Description, Notes of Discussion and Actions Agreed	Action Lead
1	<p>Agenda, apologies, conflicts of interest, last meeting minutes, and introduction to new members – Mark Pendlington</p> <p>Welcome and Introductions:</p>	

MP welcomed everyone to the meeting. Caroline Topping and Alan Pease were introduced as new members, with Caroline taking over from Andy Mellen and Alan from Nikos Savvas. Alan was absent due to a visit from the FE commissioner.

MP introduced Kevin Keable, Chair of the East of England Energy Group (EEEGR), and Ian Pease from the County Council, for their presentation on clean energy. MP also introduced Laura Naranjo, Conservative Research Assistant at the Council, attending to observe the Business Board.

MP informed the Board of JR's upcoming retirement at the end of June. MP acknowledged his 27 years of service at Suffolk County Council, contributing significantly to economic development.

MP went through the items of today's agenda listing the following – Presentation on clean energy by Kevin Keable and Ian Pease. Discussion on inward investment and UKREiiF, Investment and delivery plan, Suffolk showcase event and toolkit proposal, and Agrifood sector next steps and actions.

**Apologies:**

Apologies were received from Cllr Matthew Hicks, Alan Pease and Peter Brady.

**UKREiiF:**

MP discussed the recent UKREiiF event, acknowledging that OP and the team attended the event in Leeds, showcasing Suffolk for inward investment. The East of England Investment Prospectus was launched, and OP had a conference call with the Skills Minister.

**Transport East Representation:**

Paul Ager is now a member of Transport East, representing the Business Board with his expertise in transport and logistics.

**Upcoming Events:**

Several upcoming events were mentioned, including the National UKREiiF Leaders dinner, Nick Timothy's business forum, and the East Anglian Daily Times Business Awards.

MP thanked MH for the invitation to Board members to a University breakfast meeting on the 1st of July, focusing on business, innovation, and Digitech.

**Inward Investment and Delivery Plan:**

MP thanked LR for fast-tracking the investment and delivery plan, with additional papers on inward investment, the Suffolk showcase, and the agrifood sector.

**Water Agenda:**

JD was thanked for driving progress on the water agenda, including water credits and coordination with local water companies.

**Transport Infrastructure Funding:**

	<p>AC noted that the recent transport infrastructure funding announcement focused on mayoral areas, but there is hope for further announcements for non-mayoral areas during the spending review.</p> <p><b>Conflicts of interest:</b></p> <p>There were no specific conflicts of interest mentioned in the meeting content. However, MP reminded that Board members should keep the team updated on any conflicts of interest they might have and ensure the register of interests is up to date.</p> <p><b>Minutes Approval:</b></p> <p>The minutes from the previous meeting were approved without any objections. MP noted that the action items from the last meeting were either dealt with or included in the current meeting's agenda.</p> <p><b>ACTION 1.1:</b> Board members to inform RH or JR if they wish to attend the East Anglian Daily Times Business Awards on 10 July. <b>Business Board Members.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION 1.2:</b> Board members to update the team of any conflicts of interest to keep the register up to date. <b>Business Board Members.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION 1.3:</b> Board members to notify MH if they have not yet had their invite to the University breakfast meeting on 1 July.</p>	<p><b>Business Board Members</b></p> <p><b>Business Board Members</b></p> <p><b>Business Board Members</b></p>
2	<p><b>Guest Presentation – Kevin Keable EEEGR</b></p> <p>IP introduced the presentation on Clean Energy and continued to present the following slides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clean Power 2030 Action Plan:</b> Emphasised the government's plan to enhance offshore wind, reintroduce onshore wind, increase solar capacity, and support battery storage and long-duration storage like hydrogen.</li> <li>• <b>Great British Energy:</b> Discussed the establishment of this new government body to support clean energy projects, capture value for British companies, and support local energy generation.</li> <li>• <b>East of England Energy Map:</b> Highlighted the region's significant contributions to energy, including offshore wind, nuclear, solar, onshore wind, bioenergy, and future hydrogen hubs.</li> <li>• <b>Offshore Wind:</b> Detailed the region's substantial offshore wind capacity, employment opportunities, and future pipeline projects.</li> <li>• <b>Project Generate:</b> An inward investment brand aimed at capturing energy opportunities for local businesses and people, promoting supply chain development, and supporting clean energy projects.</li> <li>• <b>Supply Chain Database:</b> A new initiative to map and develop the region's supply chain, identifying gaps and targeting inward investment.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Collaborative Presence at Global Offshore Wind:</b> Efforts to promote the region's capabilities and opportunities at major events.</li> <li>• <b>Key Projects:</b> Highlighted successful projects like the Lowestoft Eastern Energy Facility and Nexus in Power Park, showcasing the region's clean energy innovation and investment.</li> <li>• <b>ORE Catapult:</b> Collaboration with national organizations to support clean energy innovation and business capability development.</li> </ul> <p>KK took over from presenting and shared detail on his background, including experience in farming, oil and gas, and running an e-learning company. He emphasised his passion for contributing to EEEGR, a trade body with 225 members focused on energy sector growth. KK went on to present the following slides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board of Directors:</b> Highlighted the diverse Board of directors, including representatives from various energy-related companies and organisations.</li> <li>• <b>House of Commons Reception:</b> Discussed the annual reception, where EEEGR launched its five core principles: environment, economy, supply chain growth, regional engagement, and skills.</li> <li>• <b>Gas and Carbon Capture:</b> Emphasised the importance of maintaining local gas production and developing carbon capture hubs, particularly at Bacton, to support the transition to clean energy and create jobs.</li> <li>• <b>Offshore Wind Stability:</b> Addressed the need for government support to stabilize offshore wind investment and avoid delays in auction rounds.</li> <li>• <b>Sizewell Projects:</b> Advocated for government approval of Sizewell C and the revamp of Sizewell B, highlighting the potential for significant investment and job creation.</li> <li>• <b>Skills and Hackathon:</b> Announced a hackathon to address the skills gap in the energy sector, involving training providers, industry, and local authorities to find solutions and upskill the workforce.</li> <li>• <b>Growth Potential:</b> Highlighted the region's potential to provide 90% of the UK's energy by 2035 through a strategic regional approach and collaboration between industry and government.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION 2.1:</b> KK requested that Board members further consider the final slide of the presentation, slide 33 'Takeaways for the Business Board' as part of Interventions Plan.</p>	
3	<p><b>Clean Energy opportunity update &amp; discussion – Julian Munson</b></p> <p>Following the presentation by IP and KK, JM opened the discussion to the Board members.</p>	<b>Business Board Members</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Visibility and Supply Chain:</b> Discussion on the importance of creating a comprehensive supply chain database to capture local opportunities and support inward investment. KB emphasised the need for better visibility of regional capabilities and connecting the dots across various sectors.</li> <li>• <b>Investment and Collaboration:</b> The need for a strategic regional approach and collaboration between local and national governments, industry, and educational institutions was highlighted.</li> <li>• <b>Skills and Training:</b> OP addressed the challenge of finding skilled tutors for technical training and the need to digitize more training content. The importance of upskilling the local workforce to meet the demands of upcoming projects like Sizewell C was emphasised.</li> <li>• <b>Government Support:</b> Discussion on the need for government support to stabilize offshore wind investment and avoid delays in auction rounds. Advocacy for government approval of Sizewell C and the revamp of Sizewell B to ensure significant investment and job creation.</li> <li>• <b>Regional Approach:</b> Emphasis on the need for a strategic regional approach to energy development, involving collaboration between local and national governments, industry, and educational institutions. MP asks KK what Board members can individually do to help with this ask. KK confirms that he will be pulling together a plan for what the energy industry wants and would like help from the Board to put things together for a regional strategy ready to be presented in September.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION 3.1:</b> Business Board members to support KK in putting a plan together working out what is required from local government and from national government ready to be present to GB Energy.</p>	<p><b>Business Board Members with Julian Munson</b></p>
4	<p><b>Inward Investment, investable opportunities and report from UKREIF – Jai Raithatha / Alice Tomkins</b></p> <p>JR explained the Invest Norfolk and Suffolk service was established to deliver inward investment services for both counties, funded by the county councils. It provides a single point of contact for government and liaises with districts, Freeport, and major businesses.</p> <p>Both JR and AT discussed the following points:</p> <p><b>Achievements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over the last five years, the service has handled 60 foreign direct investment inquiries, resulting in significant investments such as GCP Cocoa in Hadley (£43 million, 60 jobs) and Assan Panel at Gateway 14 (£40 million, 100 jobs).</li> </ul> <p><b>UKREIF Event:</b></p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suffolk had a stand at UKREiiF, supported by Suffolk Local Authorities, and hosted an event for Norfolk and Suffolk. The event was well attended, with over 100 people in the room and 150 visitors to the stand.</li> </ul> <p><b>Feedback and Follow-Up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive feedback was received, and follow-up discussions are ongoing with visitors and attendees. Plans for next year's event are already being discussed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future Considerations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the mayoral combined authority expected in 2026, there will be considerations on how inward investment work will be managed and integrated.</li> </ul> <p>AT noted the following next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Develop a Strategic Regional Approach:</b> Collaborate to create a cohesive plan for regional energy development and investment.</li> <li><b>Follow-Up with UKREiiF Contacts:</b> Continue discussions with visitors and attendees to convert prospects into investments.</li> <li><b>Prepare for Next Year's Event:</b> Plan for a more impactful presence, potentially with a pavilion to host multiple events.</li> </ul> <p>Discussion points were raised for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Importance of promoting regional assets and simplifying the complexity for investors.</li> <li>Role of the business Board in supporting and leveraging investment opportunities.</li> </ul> <p>DF raised the importance of relationship management in inward investment and the need for a single relationship manager to work with investors throughout the process.</p> <p>OP highlighted the need to package investment opportunities to make them attractive to investors and discussed the role of the Business Board in supporting these efforts.</p> <p>RH emphasised that at the UKREiiF event there was a strong presence and attention paid to the Cambridge tent. RH would like to plan with the Board members of what can be done to make Suffolk more of a focus.</p> <p>MP thanked JR, AT and supporting team for their efforts.</p>	
5	<p><b>Economic Strategy &amp; Interventions update</b></p> <p>LR provided an update on the progress of the intervention pipeline and the investment delivery plan for the economic strategy. She identified nine key interventions to focus on going forward, including the Adastral Park innovation package and the Suffolk Showcase.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strategic Fit Assessment:</b> A light touch strategic fit assessment was conducted on the list of 79 interventions, identifying 40 live interventions that are already <b>in flight</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Monitoring and Evaluation:</b> The team is developing a process for monitoring and evaluating interventions to ensure they continue to align with the EPIC principles.</li> <li>• <b>Gap Analysis Workshop:</b> A workshop with District Authorities is planned for 30 July to conduct a gap analysis and build new ideas for interventions.</li> </ul> <p>DC and LC queried what the Board member's roles are for this. LR asked the Board members to support the next interventions to be developed and delivered.</p> <p>KB explained that she doesn't feel that as Board members they know what the top interventions are or why those 9 have been prioritised. She expressed concerns of wanting to be ready for the mayor with these interventions and be really clear on what they are. LR explained that the team will come back to the Board for each of these 9 interventions with more detail which will help explain how the Board members can help.</p> <p>RS emphasised that the role of the Board is equally important between meetings as it is at meetings and each Board member will have a different level of participation and a different level of influence and interest in various parts. RS also emphasised to the Board members that they should all feel confident that Suffolk County Council officers will always make time to listen to them and help.</p> <p>RH suggested that sub meetings are set up and to take this away and come back with some solid ideas to present at a future Business Board meeting.</p> <p>LR continued her item with a request to the Board members:</p> <p>Instead of a single event, a roadshow is proposed to align with various events happening in Suffolk. The roadshow would need to be supported by a budget of up to £50,000. The aim is to showcase Suffolk's economic strategy and interventions through multiple events across the region. The roadshow will involve collaboration with various local authorities and organizations to ensure a comprehensive representation of Suffolk's initiatives. KH supports this and would like a Suffolk Economy presence at events going forward so that Board members can link into this as well. The Board members were in agreement on this.</p> <p>TB raised a point regarding the marketing and communication of the events outside of Suffolk to ensure it is being shared to the right audiences.</p> <p><b>ACTION 5.1:</b> Sub Board group to be set up to review Interventions Plan ahead of Board meetings .</p> <p><b>ACTION 5.2:</b> LR to come back to the Board members again for further update on Suffolk Showcase.</p>	<p><b>Officer Team</b></p> <p><b>Lisa Roberts</b></p>
<b>6</b>	<b>AOB and Forward Plan – Mark Pendlington</b>	



An update was provided on Local Government Reform (LGR) and Devolution after agenda item 4. RS explained that it is currently a quieter time for LGR, and that the focus is on consulting people in Suffolk and preparing the business case for the government by the end of September.

AC proceeded to update the Board members on devolution:

- **Current Status:** The devolution process is currently in a quiet phase, with a lot of consultation happening below the surface. The real work will come when the business case is put to the government at the end of September.
- **Government Actions:** Three key elements are awaited from the government:
  1. **Spending Review:** Expected next Tuesday, which will provide a better understanding of the size of the investment fund for the mayor of Norfolk and Suffolk
  2. **Statutory Instruments:** Governance devices that will allow the establishment of the new mayor and combined authority across the geography. These are expected in the next few weeks.
  3. **English Devolution Bill:** This will provide additional powers that are not currently possible under the existing legislation.
- **Strategic Focus:** There is an opportunity to push for bespoke elements for the mayor to major on, such as energy, coast, and water resources.
- **Planning for the Mayor:** The plan includes standing up a shadow combined authority and preparing for the mayor elections in May 2026.

Other AOB items were discussed:

- **Interventions and Geographic Impact:** HB raised a concern about whether the interventions are geographically inclusive, particularly for areas like Lowestoft and Waveney. LR acknowledged the need to ensure interventions have a widespread impact and agreed to discuss this further with HB.
- **Suffolk Day Event:** OP mentioned the Suffolk Day event on 21 June in Lowestoft, which will include medal presentations and coincide with the First Light Festival.
- **Suffolk Showcase Roadshow:** The Board supported the proposal for a Suffolk Showcase Roadshow instead of a single event, with a budget of up to £50,000 to develop the toolkit and program.
- **Next Business Board Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for 17 July, but there may be a change in date due to a clash. A poll will be sent to confirm the new date.

MP acknowledged that there were two key themes to take away from today's meeting:

- The need to increase the profile and understanding of Suffolk, Norfolk and East of England as it is a world

	<p>leading energy coast line and not enough people know about it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Business Board member's role and mission.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION 6.1:</b> RH/SW to circulate a poll for a new date for the July Business Board.</p> <p><b>ACTION 6.2:</b> LP reminded Business Board Members of Cluster workshops being organised and asked Business Board members to keep an eye out for emails. LP may approach Business Board members requesting help.</p>	<p><b>Rob Hancock/Sophie Ward</b></p> <p><b>Business Board Members</b></p>
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