Suffolk Cluster Intervention Cards

November 2025

SUFFOLK ECONOMY

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TECH EAST

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Introduction

Four Clusters To Drive Impact

Suffolk's three overarching missions serve as a strategic compass for cluster development, guiding efforts to power the UK's clean growth, lead the smart countryside revolution and advance smart logistics. Clusters are powerful engines of innovation that could help us achieve our three missions.

Building on extensive stakeholder insights, we have identified four priority sectors to develop into clusters that will anchor Suffolk's economic future. Suffolk's four core clusters are:

1. Advanced Connectivity Technology (ACT)
2. Agri-Food and Drink
3. Clean Energy
4. Ports and Logistics

These clusters harness Suffolk's strongest assets and greatest potential to deliver on our three overarching missions. When activated effectively, clusters generate critical mass and agglomeration effects that spark innovation, accelerate knowledge exchange and create greater resilience to economic shocks.

However, scale and concentration alone does not deliver success. The most effective clusters succeed through deliberate design and strategic configuration of the right mix of ingredients: businesses, academia, government and communities working in concert to leverage the right resources in pursuit of shared missions and measurable outcomes.

When aligned, clusters have the power to solve complex problems and drive transformative change. Each cluster will therefore require a tailored development plans to address its sector-specific challenges and seize unique opportunities. Thus, guided by stakeholder insights, this document presents a set of interventions that intends to support and prime the four core clusters. Successfully harnessing our four core clusters to serve our three missions depends on how well we join them up together, alongside enabling sectors such advanced manufacturing. Therefore, this document also proposes a set of cross-cluster interventions that will drive tech convergence and cross-sectoral collaboration, creating an integrated innovation ecosystem capable of solving complex problems and accelerating progress towards our three missions.

The proposed cluster intervention cards mark an important starting point. While informed by stakeholder input, they require further validation and refinement. Detailed plans to mobilise, including costings and confirmed delivery partners, will follow in the next phase as outlines in the Suffolk Cluster Development Plan.

These interventions should not be treated as final, nor do they represent the complete set of actions needed or that will actually be delivered.

Stakeholders must remain proactive—scanning for new opportunities, such as government funding—to strengthen and expand cluster development. For now, these interventions provide actionable steps to begin shaping Suffolk's innovation ecosystem to progress towards its missions.

Four Pillars To Activate Our Clusters

Each of the proposed cluster interventions have been grouped under four pillars. These pillars represent common themes and to grow Suffolk's clusters and tackle sector challenges to deliver on our shared missions.

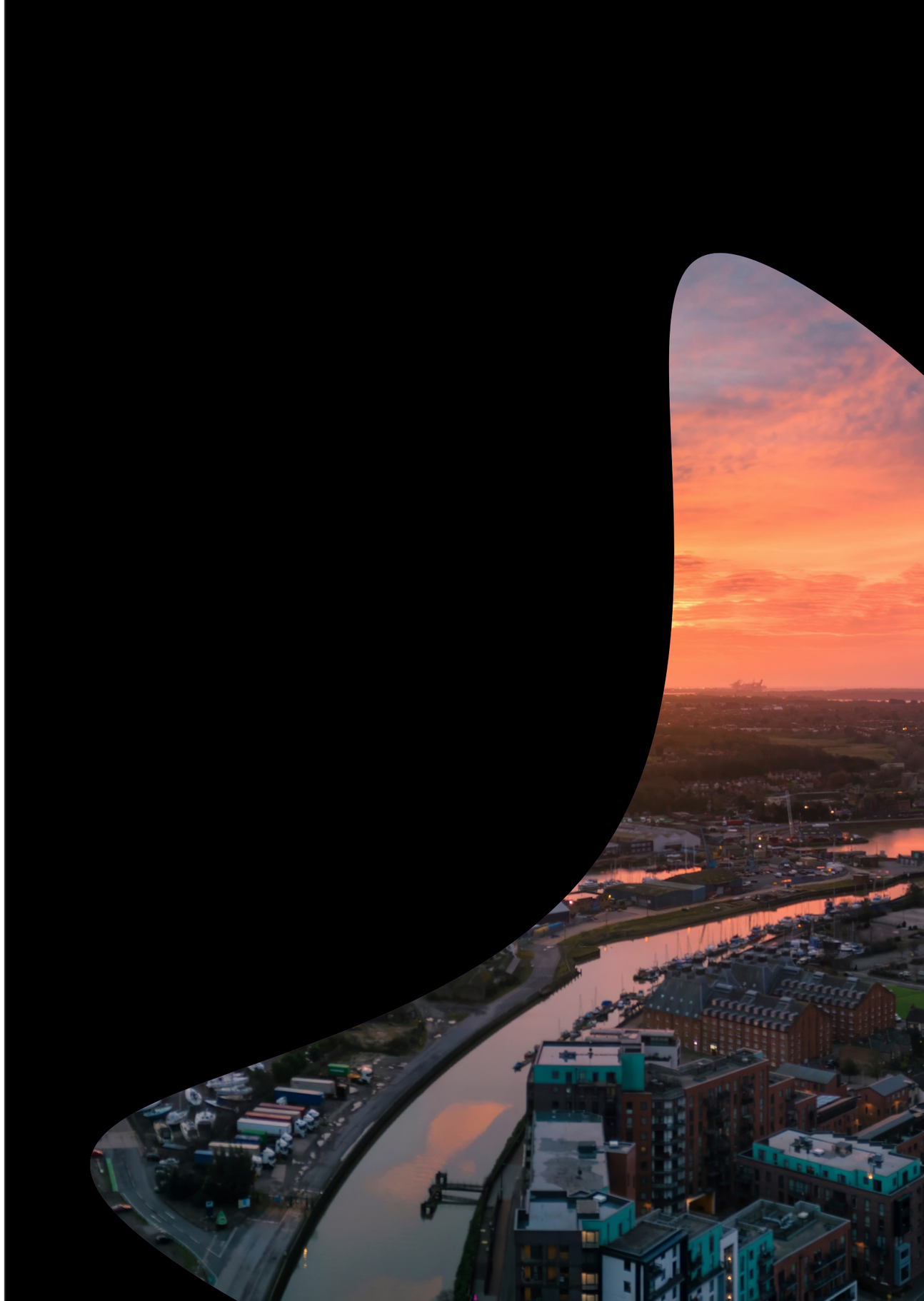
The four pillars are:

Elevating our national influence
Developing a unified narrative that amplifies Suffolk's strengths and national significance.

Strengthening our collaboration
Building mission-driven, multi-sector partnerships to tackle challenges and seize opportunities together.

Igniting innovation and commercialisation
Position Suffolk as the go-to-hub for breakthrough solutions and mission-critical innovation.

Supporting our workforce
Create inclusive pathways and training to power clusters with resilient, adaptable and world-class talent.



SUFFOLK ECONOMY

Advanced Connectivity Technology Intervention Cards

The Opportunity For ACT

Defining what we mean by a digital and technologies cluster is not straightforward. Technology is broad, spanning cyber, software, AI, quantum, fin-tech, health-tech, agri-tech and more. Digital capabilities underpin every sector of the modern economy, yet they also represent a distinct and valuable sector in their own right, with defined boundaries, talent pipelines and centres of excellence.

We can think of Suffolk's opportunity in two complementary ways: The first is as a place where digital entrepreneurship can thrive, supporting a vibrant tech community that enables anyone to start, scale and succeed. The second is as a more focused cluster anchored around Advanced Connectivity Technology (ACT), building on Suffolk's unique strengths in communications, networks and applied research. Together, these strands give Suffolk both depth and breadth — nurturing a strong pipeline of start-ups while positioning the county as a national centre for high value, connected technologies.

The UK is an established global technology powerhouse, anchored by London's capital markets, mature startup ecosystem and multinational presence. Suffolk's opportunity lies in complementing that strength. The county offers an attractive location for founders seeking space, affordability and quality of life, particularly for pre-scale and established businesses looking beyond the cost pressures of London and Cambridge.

In parallel, BT's fifty-year presence at Adastral Park has created a concentrated ACT cluster. Few other locations in the UK possess this level of technical expertise, research capability and intellectual property density. Maintaining and expanding this advantage is one of Suffolk's most immediate opportunities.

80
businesses across AI, ICT, cyber, quantum, 5G and satellite technologies based in Adastral Park.

5G rolled out at Felixstowe & Harwich Ports — one of the UK's largest private networks and

unlocking next-gen tech opportunities

Home to cutting-edge assets:

- Quantum Optics Discovery Lab
- Gemini(test facility)
- SpaceEast and the Space Enterprise Lab

Overview Of ACT Interventions

Elevating Our National Influence

Suffolk's strength in advanced connectivity technology, including satellite communications, give it a platform to play a defining and differentiated role in the UK's digital future. As government accelerates programmes to secure Critical National Infrastructure (CNI), expand AI capability and deliver resilient connectivity, Suffolk's assets make it uniquely positioned to contribute. Yet to fully realise this potential, Suffolk must not only deliver innovation but also help shape the national frameworks and strategies that govern it. By articulating a clear and consistent story about its contribution to secure digital systems, space and the wider technology economy, Suffolk can move from being a delivery location to a recognised partner in national policymaking. Building this presence will ensure Suffolk can attract the partnerships, investment and research activity that follow national recognition.

- AC01: Strengthening Suffolk's National Digital Profile
- AC02: Establish a National Laboratory for Critical National Infrastructure Resilience

Strengthening Collaboration

Suffolk's leadership in ACT and digital technologies (developing the intersections with AI, cyber and quantum especially) can unlock tech adoption and innovation in other priority sectors for the regional economy. This requires an open mindset combined with deliberate 'bridging' interventions to the logistics/mobility, agri-food and energy industries.

- AC03: Create the East Connectivity Alliance

Igniting Innovation And Commercialisation

Innovation is at the heart of Suffolk's ACT cluster. To maintain competitiveness and attract investment, Suffolk must create the conditions for new ideas to move quickly from concept to market. This means supporting research and development, fostering collaboration between established companies and startups, and providing the physical and financial infrastructure that enables innovation to thrive. By connecting entrepreneurs, investors and research partners, Suffolk can turn its digital expertise into commercial success — generating new products, jobs and intellectual property that strengthen both the local and national economy.

- AC04: Reinforce and Supercharge Innovation Martlesham
- AC05: Launch the ACT Innovation Challenge and Industry Partnership Programme

Supporting Our Workforce

Suffolk's ACT cluster depends on a highly skilled, adaptable and inclusive workforce. The pace of change across digital infrastructure, AI, and data-driven industries demands coordinated action to develop the right skills at every level — from entry routes and apprenticeships to advanced technical training and research. This pillar focuses on strengthening Suffolk's talent pipeline, improving collaboration between education and industry, and ensuring that residents of all backgrounds can access high-quality, future-focused digital careers.

- AC06: Evolve the DigiTech Centre as a National ACT Skills Hub

AC01: Strengthen Suffolk's National Digital Profile

To position Suffolk at the forefront of the UK's digital and connectivity landscape, this intervention will strengthen the county's national profile as a recognised centre of excellence for secure and intelligent digital infrastructure using ACT as the primary hook. It will unite local innovation assets under a coordinated national narrative and proactively engage with government departments, regulators, and major industry stakeholders to showcase Suffolk's role in advancing the UK's secure connectivity, AI, and critical systems agenda. The aim is to move Suffolk from being a delivery location to a recognised voice shaping national strategy and investment.

Ingredients

- Creation of a unified national messaging campaign for Suffolk's ACT cluster
- Targeted engagement plan for DSIT, DBT, Ofcom and UKRI
- Development of an "ACT Suffolk Prospectus" highlighting R&D and investment strengths
- Representation on national working groups focused on secure digital infrastructure
- Annual National ACT Forum bringing together policymakers, investors and innovators in Suffolk

Metrics To Track Success:

- Recognition of Suffolk's ACT cluster in at least two national policy documents or strategies by 2027
- 10 new national or international partnerships secured through engagement activity
- 5 Suffolk-based case studies featured in national publications or conferences annually
- Annual ACT Forum hosted with 150+ attendees from government, academia and industry

Steps

1 Activate BT's Role and build National Strategic Partnerships: BT is a key stakeholder; incentivising their leadership will elevate the cluster and requires action:

1. Link BT to DSIT and government innovation agendas.
2. Organise a roundtable with government and BT around ACT mission.
3. Identify other incentives and motivations for BT to support the ongoing development of an ACT cluster.

2 Build out new Nationally Significant Hubs:

1. Build on the current momentum – harness the ambition to create a regionally located AI National Centre. Link this as a major asset into the wider ecosystem.
2. Build on the current work by Space East to create the National Space Centre: Capitalise on all associated assets regionally and cross sector focus to demonstrate purposeful and applied innovation in other sectors.
3. Build on the current ambition to create the Quantum Optics Discovery (QOD) Lab: Establish Suffolk as a major centre of gravity for quantum. Attract all major players, startups and scaleups to the laboratory and run a series of challenges, thought leadership pieces.
4. Reinvigorate the Adastral Showcase: Establish it to be the National Showcase for ACT in action, linking to other sectors.
5. Work with BT to open up the Gemini Test Facility: Actively engage more companies to utilise the offering for testing out their products and capabilities to transform it to be the prime place nationally to test innovations and proof of concepts

3 Create the marketing engine that showcases nationally all of the above:
This includes reports, papers and advisory notes into government.

AC02: Establish A National Laboratory For Critical Infrastructure Resilience

To accelerate innovation and resilience in the UK's most vital systems, this intervention will establish a National Laboratory for Critical Infrastructure Resilience within Suffolk. Anchored at Adastral Park and linked to Innovation Martlesham and regional universities, the Lab will serve as a cross-sector facility where government, industry and academia can test, secure and optimise the digital systems that underpin national energy, communications and transport networks. It will act as the UK's first open-access test environment dedicated to critical infrastructure protection.

Ingredients

- Partnership between DSIT, NCSC, BT, University of Suffolk and UKRI
- Establishment of a secure test and simulation facility for CNI resilience R&D
- Joint innovation calls addressing cyber-physical threats to UK infrastructure
- Collaborative research programmes spanning telecoms, energy, logistics and AI security
- Integration into the UK's Secure by Design and National Cyber Innovation networks

Metrics To Track Success:

- National Laboratory operational by 2027 with at least five live research projects
- £15m of combined public and private investment secured within three years
- 20 industry and government partners formally participating in the Lab
- Two published outputs annually informing UK resilience or cyber policy

Steps

1. **Create ACT skills interface:** Launch a county-wide platform to coordinate ACT-related skills development, audit existing initiatives and support inclusive workforce growth.
2. **Elevate the DigiTech Centre:** Position DigiTech as Suffolk's national ACT skills hub by aligning University of Suffolk's curriculum and research with industry needs and showcasing direct talent pipelines.
3. **Deploy a hub-and-spoke model:** Establish regional centres of excellence, e.g., XR Labs in West Suffolk for immersive tech, AI hub in Stowmarket, and link them to broader sectoral skills agendas.
4. **Build a secure test facility:** Set up a simulation and testing environment at Adastral Park for cross-sector CNI resilience R&D, integrating telecoms, energy, logistics and AI security.
5. **Activate strategic partnerships:** Formalise collaboration with DSIT, NCSC, BT, University of Suffolk and UKRI to co-develop innovation calls and research programmes.
6. **Integrate national networks into the Suffolk ecosystem:** Embed the lab into Secure by Design and National Cyber Innovation frameworks to ensure policy alignment and visibility.
7. **Launch innovation calls:** Run joint calls focused on cyber-physical threats to UK infrastructure, encouraging cross-sector solutions and SME participation.
8. **Secure investment:** Mobilise £15m in public-private funding by 2028 through targeted pitches, demonstrators and strategic engagement with national stakeholders.
9. **Publish policy outputs:** Deliver two annual publications that inform UK resilience and cyber policy, drawing on lab research and stakeholder insights.

AC03: Create The East Connectivity Alliance

To strengthen collaboration across the wider region, this intervention will establish the East Connectivity Alliance — a formal partnership linking Suffolk's ACT cluster with complementary assets across Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex. Bringing together organisations such as Hethel Innovation, University of East Anglia, Cambridge Wireless and Freeport East, the Alliance will coordinate regional innovation efforts in secure and intelligent connectivity. It will position Suffolk as the convening point for the East of England's collective offer to government, investors and industry, enhancing visibility, influence and access to national programmes.

Ingredients

- Buy-in from regional partners, e.g. SCC, Hethel Innovation, University of East Anglia, Cambridge Wireless, Freeport East
- Formal partnership framework
- Regional working group focused on secure digital and connectivity innovation
- Joint UKRI and Innovate UK bid pipeline to attract investment and R&D funding
- Shared communications platform to coordinate engagement with national programmes and industry

Metrics To Track Success:

- Formal Alliance launched with five founding partners by 2026
- £15m of collaborative innovation funding bids submitted within three years
- Annual East Connectivity Forum established with 200+ attendees from industry and academia
- At least five cross-county innovation projects initiated through Alliance partnerships

Steps

1. **Secure buy-in:** Develop a strategy with buy in from all stakeholders as to the key priorities and commitments to support. Have a 'target' list of new stakeholders to actively pursue.
2. **Formalise the East Connectivity Alliance:** Draft and sign a Memorandum of Understanding between SCC, Hethel Innovation, University of East Anglia, Cambridge Wireless and Freeport East to establish shared commitment and governance.
3. **Develop a programme of specific meet ups:** Reach out to wider sets of stakeholders within and outside the sector with deliberate topics for deep discussion to align the right players against the priority themes / initiatives.
4. **Deliberate support for opportunities:** Identify specific initiatives for active support and collaboration that brings new partnerships and new players to the table to widen and strengthen the network. This could include a regional testbed activity with a diverse set of contributors and capabilities.
5. **Develop joint bid pipeline:** Build a pipeline of UKRI and Innovate UK bids to attract investment and R&D funding, leveraging combined assets and regional strengths.
6. **Create shared communications platform:** Establish a digital platform to coordinate messaging, share updates and engage with national programmes and industry audiences.

AC04: Reinforce And Supercharge Innovation Martlesham (IM)

Innovation Martlesham (IM) is Suffolk's most established technology cluster, co-located with BT at Adastral Park and home to over 80 digital and communications companies. Revitalising and expanding IM will unlock its full potential as the county's focal point for digital innovation and commercialisation. This intervention will reposition IM as the heart of the Advanced Connectivity and Technology (ACT) cluster, increasing visibility, attracting new companies and investment, and strengthening Suffolk's reputation as a national hub for secure and intelligent technologies.

Ingredients

- 1:1 engagement with IM community members to refresh participation and gather insights
- Mapping of current members and alignment with the wider ACT cluster mission
- Development of mission-led branding and collateral to promote IM as Suffolk's digital hub
- Hosting of regular networking, innovation challenge and investor events (e.g. breakfast briefings, demo days), leveraging the ACT catalyst project funded by DSIT
- Dedicated cluster coordination resource based at Adastral Park
- Funding from Suffolk County Council (pre-tender notification issued) for independent management of IM business club
- Additional support from Tech East, Freeport East and potentially the LIPF

Metrics To Track Success:

- 20% increase in active IM membership by 2026
- 10 new companies locating or expanding operations within IM each year
- £5m of private or co-investment attracted to support innovation and cluster growth
- Minimum of four collaborative innovation events hosted annually
- Annual ACT Cluster Impact Report published showcasing IM-led innovation outcomes

Steps

1. **Reinforce IM through procuring the Innovation Martlesham Business Club operator -** Through this process, engage directly with existing Innovation Martlesham members. This will be through one-to-one discussions to refresh participation, understand priorities and identify opportunities for growth. Map the current membership base and align businesses with the wider ACT cluster mission to ensure clear strategic focus. Deliver engaging events and networking opportunities to build community and stimulate collaboration. Leverage the ACT Catalyst Project (DSIT-funded) to further engage the community and understand wants, needs and opportunities.

2. **Supercharge IM:**
   1. **Develop new branding and communications collateral:** This will position IM as Suffolk's flagship digital innovation hub and highlights its role within the national technology landscape. Launch this refreshed identity through targeted media, events and digital channels.
   2. **Secure further funding and coordination support:** Key sources of support include Suffolk County Council, Tech East, Freeport East and the Local Innovation Partnership Fund to expand capacity and manage delivery. Establish a dedicated cluster coordination resource based at Adastral Park to drive day-to-day activity and maintain momentum.
   3. **Capture and publish impact data annually:** This will be through an ACT Cluster Impact Report to demonstrate outcomes, strengthen credibility and secure continued investment.

Igniting Innovation And Commercialisation

AC05: Launch The ACT Innovation Challenge And Industry Partnership Programme

To accelerate innovation and commercialisation, Suffolk will create the ACT Innovation Challenge and Industry Partnership Programme — a coordinated initiative that combines cross-sector innovation showcases with direct industry sponsorship. The programme will invite major national and international companies to co-fund and set real-world challenges aligned to Suffolk's missions in energy, agri-food and logistics, using local innovators and SMEs to develop solutions. Annual showcase events will demonstrate outcomes, connect innovators with investors and customers, and attract new entrants into the ACT ecosystem.

Ingredients

- Annual ACT Innovation Challenge co-designed with industry sponsors such as BT, Nokia, Spirent and Amazon
- Funding pool combining industry sponsorship, SCC and Innovate UK support
- Targeted calls for solutions to cross-sector challenges (e.g. digital twins for ports, IoT for agriculture, AI for energy resilience)
- Delivery through Adastral Park, Innovation Martlesham and the Connected Innovation Network
- Showcase and investor event to present prototypes and commercial partnerships

Metrics To Track Success:

- Three annual ACT Innovation Challenge cycles delivered over five years
- 30+ SMEs supported through funding or challenge participation
- £10m of combined private and public investment leveraged
- Ten new commercial partnerships or product launches arising from the programme

Steps

1. **Establish a steering group:** This will include SCC, Adastral Park, Innovation Martlesham and key corporate partners such as BT, Nokia, Spirent and Amazon to design and oversee the programme. Agree challenge themes, sponsorship models and delivery timelines aligned to Suffolk's missions in energy, agri-food and logistics.

2. **Create a funding pool:** Combine industry sponsorship, Innovate UK and local contributions to support challenge delivery and SME participation. Structure the fund to attract co-investment and ensure sustained annual cycles.

3. **Launch targeted innovation challenges:** Invite businesses and researchers to develop applied solutions to cross-sector issues such as digital twins for ports, AI for energy systems and IoT applications in agriculture. Provide winners with seed funding, mentoring and access to testbed environments.

4. **Integration with key assets:** Deliver each challenge through Adastral Park, Innovation Martlesham and the Connected Innovation Network, ensuring integration with other cluster activity and access to technical facilities and expertise.

5. **Host annual showcase and investor events:** Demonstrate results, connect innovators with commercial partners and raise Suffolk's national profile as a testbed for digital and connectivity innovation.

6. **Capture outcomes:** This includes prototypes, partnerships and investment secured, using results to refine the programme and build momentum for subsequent challenge cycles.

AC06: Evolve The Digitech Centre Into A Regional And National ACT Skills Hub

The DigiTech Centre, located at Adastral Park, is already a focal point for digital innovation and skills. This intervention will build on its strong foundation to evolve it into a regional and national hub for advanced connectivity, digital engineering, and applied research. By aligning its curriculum, training, and R&D with the needs of Suffolk's ACT industries, the Centre will serve as both a talent pipeline and a collaborative research base that directly supports local business growth and innovation. The new Innovation and Skills Centre at Gateway 14 can complement the DigiTech Centre, presenting an opportunity for wider linkages outside of Adastral Park.

Ingredients

- Partnership between the University of Suffolk, BT, SCC and Innovation Martlesham
- Expansion of DigiTech Centre facilities to include specialist labs in AI, data analytics and network security
- Joint curriculum development and modular training designed with industry input
- Creation of a residency and internship scheme linking students with ACT employers
- Research collaboration programmes addressing real-world connectivity and infrastructure challenges

Metrics To Track Success:

- 25% increase in student enrolment in ACT-related disciplines by 2027
- 15 new research or training partnerships formed with industry each year
- 80% of graduates from DigiTech Centre programmes progressing into local digital employment
- National recognition of the Centre within one government or UKRI report by 2028

Steps

1. **Formalise partnership and governance:** Confirm collaboration between the University of Suffolk, BT, SCC and Innovation Martlesham with clear objectives, governance and alignment to Suffolk's ACT mission.
2. **Identify skills priorities:** work with the Digital Skills Group to audit ACT industry needs to define priority disciplines in digital infrastructure, AI, data and cybersecurity.
3. **Expand and equip facilities:** Secure investment to develop new labs in AI, data analytics and network security, ensuring industry-grade capability.
4. **Co-design curriculum and pathways:** Work with employers to create modular training, apprenticeships and degree programmes tailored to ACT sectors. Work with FE providers to clarify pathways into learning and training at the DigiTech Centre. Explore partnerships with independent training providers for areas such as short courses and upskilling.
5. **Embed research and industry collaboration:** Launch joint research projects and student residency schemes connecting learners and academics with ACT firms.
6. **Promote regionally and nationally through a branding campaign:** Deliver a branding campaign to promote the Centre's national relevance and capability with clear link to Gateway 14 skills offer.
7. **Track performance and scale:** Monitor enrolment, graduate outcomes and partnerships, securing recognition in national reports and funding for future growth.

SUFFOLK ECONOMY

Agri-Food And Drink Intervention Cards

The Opportunity For Agri-Food And Drink

Suffolk has a strong foundation for an Agri-Food and Drink cluster, built on its long-standing strengths in arable farming, fishing and livestock production spread across all parts of the county, meaning that unlike other clusters there is no anchor client or recognised location that acts as a central hub to drive investment. These traditional sectors have evolved into a diverse and dynamic food and drink economy supported by major producers and processors such as Birds Eye, British Sugar, Adnams and Muntons, and by the Port of Ipswich — the UK's largest agricultural port for imports and exports. There is also the existing Agri-Food Industry Council partnership with Norfolk, and the wide scope of the agri-food sector in the East of England means wider collaboration with other neighbouring counties such as Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire will be key. Taken all this together, the above components provide a powerful platform for future growth, innovation and leadership in sustainable food systems.

There is clear potential for Suffolk to capture a greater share of the food value chain by expanding local processing, packaging and logistics capabilities. At present, a significant proportion of produce leaves the county for processing elsewhere, which limits local economic value and job creation. The construction of Sizewell C and its commitment to sourcing food locally for thousands of workers provides a timely catalyst for change. This opportunity can be used to establish a long-term business case for new processing facilities and an integrated local supply chain, helping Suffolk retain more of the value it creates. Further value can be realised for the food and drink sector through the visitor economy and a buy-local campaign to promote and support specialist local food and drink products.

At the same time, Suffolk's geography presents both challenges and opportunities. As one of the driest regions in the UK, water scarcity constrains harvest yields and business growth but also positions Suffolk to lead the nation in developing solutions for a water-constrained environment. Through innovative management, storage and reuse of water, Suffolk can pioneer approaches that improve agricultural resilience, create exportable knowledge and products, and support national priorities in food security and environmental sustainability.

To realise this potential, Suffolk must deepen collaboration across its agri-food community — from farmers and producers to research institutions and technology partners. By strengthening coordination, fostering knowledge exchange and working closely with complementary sectors such as advanced manufacturing and Digital Suffolk can catalyse innovation, improve productivity and attract new investment.

Suffolk: "the larder for the UK"
– specialising in poultry, sugar, pig farming and horticulture.

GCB Cocoa
£62.2m
investment in Babergh to improve facilities and **create 220 jobs**

54%
more jobs
than the England average

Home to CEFAS
providing world-leading expertise in marine and freshwater science

Overview Of Agri-Food And Drink Interventions

Elevating Our National Influence

There is a need to improve Suffolk's positioning and recognition at the national level to secure more grant funding and investment for the agri-food and drink sector. This can be achieved by demonstrating new approaches to managing water that support the Government's food security and environmental sustainability ambitions in a water-challenged environment, and by working with other counties in East Anglia to create a "super cluster" that has the scale and reach to represent agri-food at a national level. This will be supported by a new Agri-Food Showcase to highlight innovations and boost Suffolk's lobbying power with key funding bodies, attract further expertise into the region and influence over national policy and strategy.

- AF01: Creation of a set of Water Management and Use Projects
- AF02: Agri-Food Showcase

Strengthening Our Collaboration

Suffolk appears to be below average in obtaining innovation funding and grants, so to maximise chances of success there is a need to leverage the Mayoral Combined County Authority to extend existing collaboration with academic organisations in surrounding counties to support joint triple-helix funding opportunities. There are a range of existing clusters within Suffolk where farmers successfully collaborate in local supply chains and work together to support the environment. However, they lack the scale to bring transformational change. This pillar seeks to address this by deepening collaboration between stakeholders to facilitate knowledge transfer and adoption of new technologies and enhance opportunities for funding.

- AF03: Strengthen Agri-Food and Drink Collaboration Within and Between Suffolk

Igniting Innovation And Commercialisation

There is a potential opportunity through the construction of Sizewell C to expand higher value add food processing and packaging capability in Suffolk to enable more of the value chain to be retained locally. The innovation ecosystem within the advanced manufacturing and digital and ICT clusters can be boosted through a programme of activities to highlight the challenges and opportunities in the agri-food sector where technologies and products can be brought to bear, and to run events, competitions and hackathons to encourage new ideas and solutions.

- AF04: Work with Sizewell C for Local Processing
- AF05: Grow Suffolk as an Agri-Tech Hub

Supporting Our Workforce

Local colleges such as Suffolk Rural offer core Agriculture and Agricultural Engineering courses, but the agri-food sector is undergoing change, and there is a wide range of skills needed across the sector, from on-farm machinery and livestock handling, through to butchery skills in abattoirs and factory floor and advanced manufacturing jobs in food production and processing, and on to digital skills to understand the range of new technologies such as automation, AI, robotics and data science. Some of these roles are often very good for social mobility, offering people to work their way up from the shop floor to senior positions, and can support diversity and inclusion.

- AF06: Agri-Food as a Career
- AF07: Skills Development

AF01: Creation Of A Set Of County-Wide Water Management And Use Projects

Actively pursue a strategy for Suffolk to become a leading county in management and use of water. This should encompass existing local projects such as Felixstowe Hydro Cycle and pull in key Suffolk-based institutions such as CEFAS, Space East and University of Suffolk to provide relevant capabilities, as well as other stakeholders such as Anglian Water, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Water Resources East. This intervention will create a clear, consistent narrative that various organisations and groups can rally behind and which can be promoted nationally to attract future innovation funding and investment.

Ingredients

- Seek funding to support local water use and management projects
- Create project steering board from key organisations such as Anglian Water, DEFRA, CEFAS, Water Resources East, University of Suffolk and a range of local farmers and bodies
- Range of existing projects to be captured as input into overall plan

Metrics To Track Success:

- At least 5 organisations agree to be on the steering board of project
- Scope out overall plan by April 2026
- Business case for first project produced by Jun 2026, focusing on agri-food but also including other sectors to support business case
- Funding source identified 2026

Steps

1. **Engage local and regional stakeholders:** Identify groups running projects related to water use for agriculture and invite them to the project. Reach out to other key stakeholders who can either provide solutions or can influence policy and funding from within and beyond Suffolk such as Space East, Digital cluster, Anglian Water, DEFRA and Water Resources East.

2. **Seek funding to support local water projects:** Initial focus should be to support further local water schemes where limited funding can have a significant impact in the short to medium term on issues such as abstraction and storage.

3. **Create initial proposal for a wider project:** Create a project to look at a Suffolk or regional geography, with outline agreement from key parties who will be involved in delivering the project.

4. **Create business case:** Based on project plan, create outline business case showing costs and benefits.

5. **Identify champions to engage with Government and funding bodies:** Engage at senior levels to articulate the project as meeting some of the key aims of UK Government Food Strategy paper, such as food security and environment sustainability.

6. **Bid for funding for wider project:** Approach relevant organisations with the proposal to get political support for the project and to lobby for a suitable funding call to be made available.

Elevating Our National Influence

AF02: Agri-Food Showcase

The Agri-Food sector currently lacks a key location that positions Suffolk in this sector, and to counter this a showcase should be built to highlight Suffolk's contribution and innovations to the Agri-Food industry, and which can be used for VIP and other high level stakeholder visits. The showcase should include innovations, technologies, services and equipment from organisations based in Suffolk and beyond, showing how digital and advanced engineering capabilities can be applied to the Agri-Food sector. The showcase should be complimentary to NRP and be able to highlight capability and innovation either specifically related to Suffolk's contribution or the wider regional strengths dependant on context and visitors.

Ingredients

- Any existing showcase plans/budgets/strategy
- Positioning with other showcases in Suffolk
- Suitable location for the showcase
- Support from Suffolk Agricultural Association
- Range of local companies to be approached who can provide different elements for the showcase (equipment, food processors, agri-tech companies, Space East, University of Suffolk, CEAFS etc.)

Metrics To Track Success:

- Business case produced and budget secured
- At least 10 content providers agree to support
- Showcase created by Q2 2026
- Number of media engagements, VIP visitors

Steps

1. **Explore any existing plans:** Understand if there are any existing plans for any new showcases in Suffolk, and if an agri-food showcase is included in these.

2. **Explore potential locations:** Engage local stakeholders to explore suitable locations, such as Trinity Park.

3. **Explore messaging for different targeted audience(s)** Work with stakeholders on key messages for the showcase, who it will be targeted at, how it could be used etc.

4. **Create content:** Work with a range of organisations to create suitable content for a variety of contexts and visitors. Content could include academic research (e.g. Norwich Research Park, University of East Anglia, University of Suffolk and CEFAS), large organisations (e.g. British Sugar), SMEs (e.g. Diometer), local groups such as Felixstowe Hydro Cycle and farmers, such as from a Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) demonstration farm. Explore with Suffolk Food Hall what could be done to highlight local food production.

5. **Reach out to local and regional organisations for content:** The showcase will require a mix of content showing off different perspective of the entire agri-food value chain and that can be used for a variety of audiences, such as students, farmers, investors and VIPs.

6. **Create business case:** Based on project plan, create outline business case showing costs and benefits for set up and ongoing support.

7. **Look for funding sources:** Seek out potential funding sources.

AF03: Strengthen Collaboration Within And Beyond Suffolk

Collaboration in agri-food and drink exists at many levels – farmers working together in co-operatives and supply chains, between Norfolk and Suffolk with the Agri-Food Industry Council, at a wider regional level to gain national attention and between sectors. We can build on all of these, such as enhancing the Cluster & Landscape Connect (CLC) work, building on the success of the Agri-Food LaunchPad and using the forthcoming Mayoral Combined County Authority for Suffolk and Norfolk to deepen ties with key research and academic institutions in Norfolk. Doing so could help strengthen Suffolk's chances of being involved in key innovation projects in the future that rely on triple helix funding models. Finally, building links with Suffolk's other high-growth clusters can unlock synergies that could help support the missions.

Ingredients

- Agri-Food Industry Council
- Suffolk Business Board engagement with counterparts in Norfolk
- SAA conference in Feb 2026 to engage with Suffolk farmers and landowners
- Pro-actively engage with Norwich Research Park (Earlham Institute, John Innes Centre, Sainsbury Lab, Quadram Insitute) and other organisations such as Ceres agri-tech
- Work with Industry bodies such as AgriTech-E and Tastebud Collective to strengthen links to specific industries
- Existing cluster work by CLC

Metrics To Track Success:

- Suffolk involved in more successful innovate UK and DEFRA funding bids
- Growth of government and business investment
- Development of "super cluster" in agri-food that could also include Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire
- Number of events and network meetings promoting opportunities in agri-food to different sectors
- Number of funding bids applied for that relate to agri-food and other sectors

Steps

1. **Reach out to Suffolk farmers at SAA meeting in Feb 2026:** Take a stand at the Suffolk Agricultural Association meeting in Feb 2026 to describe the creation of an Agri-Food cluster, what opportunities it offers to farmers and how they can engage
2. **Reach out to CLC:** Look for lessons learned and how this work can assist CLC going forwards
3. **Work with Norfolk Business Board:** Agri-Food is a key part of the Norfolk Economic Strategy and there should be a win-win as the two counties come together under a combined mayoral authority.
4. **Engage with NRP, CERES Agrri-Tech and others:** There is indication that they would be keen to further involve Suffolk based organisations in funding bids and working together.
5. **Work with Industry specific organisations:** to run a series of events where the opportunities and challenges of the agri-food sector can be shared with existing sectors within Suffolk. Not exhaustive, but to include: **Digital and ICT cluster** – in collaboration with AgriTech-E, run one of more events for the cluster at Adastral Park, so includes Space East ; advanced manufacturing – in collaboration with NAAME, focusing on opportunities and support for agri-tech as a Frontier Industry in the Industrial Strategy; **Clean Energy** – focusing on need to decarbonise agriculture
6. **Explore case for funding a person to run collaboration events:** An increase in collaboration will not happen without dedicated effort, so creating a specific role is needed to make this happen. This could either be an SCC employee or contracted out to existing organisations such as AgriTech-E, CLC or Tastebud Collective with a well-defined scope to grow events, opportunities and networking for Suffolk-based businesses, and helping to promote Suffolk food sector on a national scale.

AF04: Work With Sizewell C On Plans For Local Processing

Leverage the plans for Sizewell C to source 80% of food locally to create an agri-food hub that can be shared by many users. One option for achieving this is through a collaboration approach with farmers and bringing a group of like-minded businesses together to investigate how a hub could be set up that is shared by all and invested in by all.

Ingredients

- Sizewell C ambition to have 80% of food provided locally, and support from Supply Chain Director to achieve this
- Sizewell C Local Food and Drink Strategy Advisor to support project to plan for creation of a processing capability
- Freeport East to support favourable tax advantages if set up within geography
- Gateway 14 as a potential provider of premises

Metrics To Track Success:

- Amount of food produced locally that is used by Sizewell (target 80%)
- Number of local farmers engaged in agri-food hub to supply Sizewell C
- Number of new jobs created in higher value areas such as food processing and packaging
- Legacy processing and packaging capability that thrives beyond end of Sizewell C construction phase

Steps

1. **Meet with Sizewell C Local Food and Drink Strategy Advisor:** get a detailed understanding of the objectives and scope of what Sizewell C wants to put in place to meet their target of 80% of food to be sourced locally. Further actions dependent on outcome of this meeting, but could include:
2. **Meet with Freeport East:** get clarity on what are the potential tax breaks for setting up capabilities in the Freeport East geography.
3. **Meet with Gateway 14:** confirm if there any locations that could be used for food processing and packaging.
4. **Reach out to local farming groups and supply chains:** understand what needs to be put in place to encourage local farmers to supply produce for Sizewell C and timescales (start and end)
5. **Explore appetite for a wider co-operative business model:** look at the collaboration approach with Suffolk's farmers. Bring a group of like-minded farmers together to discuss how a hub could be set up that is shared by all and invested in by all providing shared market access and logistics.
6. **Secure investment:** Build business case for investment if a new food hub needs to be built.

AF05: Grow Suffolk As An Agri-Tech Hub

Grow Suffolk as an agri-tech production base, supporting one of the frontier industries outlined in the Industrial Strategy's Advanced Manufacturing sector plan. Attract new investment to support new technologies, such as precision agriculture, to boost productivity and reduce emissions. Work with Freeport East to expand current funding programs to create a new set of challenges for local companies focused on agri-food. This intervention would provide support such as finance and mentoring for SMEs to develop ideas. Specific day organised for industry and investors to look at potential solutions from hackathon events.

Ingredients

- Agri-tech included as frontier industry for Advanced Manufacturing in the Industrial Strategy
- Engagement from the digital and advanced manufacturing sectors
- CEFAS opportunities in fish health assessment, multitrophic agriculture, and remote, airborne and satellite sensing capability
- Freeport East innovation funding capability
- Project similar to current Clean Growth Fund but focused on agri-tech
- AgriTech-E to advise and act as judge
- Specific day organised for industry and investors to look at potential solutions from hackathon events.

Metrics To Track Success:

- Winning ideas and proofs of concept could be demonstrated in the Agri-Food showcase.
- Exposing a number of SMEs to a wider range of agricultural businesses and investors

Steps

1. **Engage with the advanced manufacturing sector** – Collaborate with NAAME to undertake this activity. Understand if the Suffolk and the wider East of England's manufacturing sector has any plans to response to agri-tech being a frontier industry, as outlined in the Industrial Strategy.

2. **Explore competitions with Freeport East** – Discuss appetite for running new competitions and funding events for innovation in Agri-Food similar to the Clean Growth Fund.

3. **Link to Agri Showcase** – Use the Agri-Food Showcase to highlight new innovations and arrange specific days for investors and industry to explore new ideas and meet innovative SMEs and start-ups

4. **Look for opportunities to utilise CEFAS expertise** – CEFAS has considerable expertise in various aspects of sustainable fisheries, food safety and climate change amongst others, which can add to growing Suffolk's credibility and IPR in wider Agri-Tech and food sustainability

AF06: Agri-Food As A Career

Create a careers campaign that showcases how agri-food and drink can be a future-facing sectors. Work with schools, colleges, universities and local community groups to reach a wide range of audiences, from secondary school students choosing their GCSEs to parents going back to work. Securing industry representative will be critical to ensure the campaigns break down outdated perceptions, showcase the breadth of roles available (both present and future) and emphasise the digital transformation underway in areas such as food production, logistics and innovation.

Ingredients

- Suffolk Agricultural Association focus on education
- University of Suffolk Business Solutions Centre
- SCC Work Inspiration lead and Careers Hub
- Engagement with colleges and independent training providers
- Government's modern work experience agenda
- Creation of case studies and use cases for schools and colleges

Metrics To Track Success:

- Number of agri-food use cases used as examples for courses in other subjects such as technology or engineering
- Number of school visits to Agri-Food Showcase
- Number of student impact projects at UoS Business Solutions Centre with an agri-food use case
- Change in stakeholder sentiment around roles in agri-food and drink

Steps

1. **Insights gathering and myth mapping –** this will require engagement with multiple stakeholders:
   1. Work with employers and sector networks to get an up-to-date understanding of roles available in the sector, particularly those critically in demand.
   2. Work with schools, universities and community groups to understand the common misconceptions and knowledge gaps around roles in, and pathways into, the sector.

2. **Convene a taskgroup to design and deliver a pilot** – secure participation from employers, schools and/or local community groups to design a pilot campaign activity that will promote careers and pathways into the agri-food and drink sector. Learning from existing initiatives like icanbea, the campaign could develop a series of case studies and video profiles, featuring professionals across the agri-food value chain. This could also include in-person events, such as a careers pop-up exhibition in public spaces like the library. This should link to the Government's modern work experience agenda to embed key messaging around opportunities and careers in agri-food.

3. **Monitoring impact and evaluation** – Track engagement, applications and sentiment change as a result of the intervention. Explore appetite and feasibility of scaling the activity or building other complementary interventions e.g. creating an interactive career pathways tool, hackathons and innovation challenges with agri-food and drink themes.

AF07: Skills Development

Create a formal knowledge transfer programme, in collaboration with agri-food and drink businesses in Suffolk and across the region, to open up new formal development opportunities for people such as shadowing or by mentoring to learn new skills and best practices on the job in different environments and on different farms. This would primarily be aimed at young people new to the industry but would also fit existing employees looking to upskill or re-train in new methods, technologies and ways of working. Local farms and employees would be able to both offer and seek opportunities.

Ingredients

- Funding for a knowledge transfer programme
- Marketing of program to farms and to people in agricultural colleges or similar or new to farming
- Number of farms and other businesses engaged
- Number of students and young people signed up

Metrics To Track Success:

- Budget allocated to run a trial program
- Number of farms and other businesses engaged
- Number of students and young people signed up

Steps

1. **Scope out a trial knowledge transfer programme -** work with a number of farms to gauge interest in providing both people for the program and being able to offer one or two-week opportunities for people to come to their farms and learn.

2. **Create a business case** – scale up the program beyond early adopters. Secure commitment from farms to provide placements.

3. **Marketing and collateral** – produce collateral to promote the program and explain the benefits to both farms and to young people.

4. **Arrange knowledge feedback sessions** – facilitate opportunities where participants of the program meet up and share experiences and learning. Create a network and foster champions to promote the programme more widely.

SUFFOLK ECONOMY

Clean Energy Intervention Cards

The Opportunity For Clean Energy

Suffolk's potential to activate a strong clean energy cluster is rooted in its long-standing strength in home-grown energy generation. The county has played a pivotal role in the UK's energy landscape since 1967, beginning with the Sizewell A nuclear station and expanding to Sizewell B. Today, it hosts some of the UK's largest flagship developments in clean energy generation, including Sizewell C (3.2GW), which is expected to supply 7% of the UK's electricity demand, the East Anglia Array (3.9GW) and Sunnica Solar Farm (630MW). With one of the highest concentrations of NSIPs in the county, Suffolk can establish a nationally leading, end-to-end capability, setting the standard for clean energy delivery from construction and installation to operations and maintenance through to decommissioning.

Alongside existing strengths in nuclear and offshore wind, Suffolk has growing potential in hydrogen to support industrial decarbonisation, with production hubs being explored in the Ports of Lowestoft and Felixstowe. With Suffolk and Norfolk being the largest straw-producing area in the UK, the region can also enhance it biomass generation, building on the existing poultry litter-fuelled power stations in Eye and Thetford.

Indeed, the East of England more broadly is a national powerhouse in clean energy generation, with the potential to power 67% of homes by 2035. Neighbouring Norfolk and Essex host complementary academic, technical and infrastructure assets (e.g. Hethel Innovation, Bacton Gas Terminal, University of East Anglia) that strengthen the region's collective position.

Suffolk's clean energy ecosystem already benefits from strong industry networks, skills alignment and significant infrastructure investment. To fully realise the cluster's potential, Suffolk must unify its narrative, strengthen collaboration between industry, government and academia and secure greater investment through a coordinated regional offer. A cluster development approach will help to achieve this — aligning efforts, amplifying Suffolk's national voice, and positioning the county as a dynamic hub for clean energy skills, leadership and innovation.

14 NSIPs, one of the **highest concentrations in the UK**

55,000 to 60,000
direct clean energy jobs by 2030 – the highest demand in the UK

40%
of the UK's offshore wind target by 2023 will be delivered in the Southern North Sea

Sizewell C in Leiston will support
70,000
jobs across the UK

Overview Of Clean Energy Interventions

Elevating Our National Influence

Suffolk will strengthen its strategic positioning at the national level, becoming recognised across government and industry as one of the UK's leading clean energy hubs. The county's contribution to powering the nation is already significant, but this must now be matched by visibility and influence. Achieving this will require a coordinated narrative that unites Suffolk's energy assets, infrastructure projects, research excellence and skills leadership into a single, compelling story. A clear and confident proposition will enable Suffolk to articulate its role in delivering national missions on energy security and net zero. It will highlight how the county's portfolio of assets underpins the UK's transition to clean power and supports a resilient national grid.

- CE01: Enhance our Narrative to Reflect National Significance
- CE02: Strengthen Strategic Partnerships with Regional and National Stakeholders

Strengthening Our Collaboration

Suffolk's clean energy ecosystem is already rife with network groups setting up a range of events and activities for members. By enhancing connection and coordination between Suffolk's clean energy networks across nuclear, wind, hydrogen and solar, we can amplify Suffolk's position as a leading hybrid clean energy hub powering the UK's energy security, as well as spark cross-sector knowledge exchange within the industry to grow our local expertise.

- CE03: Establish a Pan-Energy Cluster Board

Igniting Innovation And Commercialisation

Establish Suffolk as a 'clean energy sandbox'—a place that brings together innovations to solve national clean energy challenges. Suffolk will not just adopt and deploy innovative technologies in clean energy but also be at the forefront of cultivating next generation solutions.

- CE04: Green Transition Innovation Programme
- CE05: Activating Physical Assets to Support Clean Energy Innovation

Supporting Our Workforce

Suffolk has the momentum and infrastructure to become a national leader in clean energy workforce development. By building on existing initiatives and improving coordination across the full spectrum of clean energy sectors, Suffolk can deliver a unified and inclusive approach to addressing the region's growing skills gap. Clean energy jobs span multiple industries, with construction offering the most immediate opportunities. At the same time, Suffolk must grow a long-term talent pipeline that reflects the future skills profile of a rapidly evolving energy economy.

- CE06: Empowering Suffolk's Clean Energy Workforce for National Impact

CE01. Enhance Our Narrative To Reflect National Significance

Suffolk's diverse energy sectors, networks, and activities position it as a critical player in the UK's green energy transition, but to fully harness this potential, a unified narrative is essential. This intervention will develop a compelling and inclusive branding and story that makes Suffolk's clean energy story visibly tied to its mission, 'Power Clean Growth – Leading the UK's Green Transition'. To do this, it will communicate Suffolk and the East of England's leadership in energy generation, skills development and community-driven green transition. It will ensure all related activities and brands are visible under one 'roof' so prospective collaborators from outside of the region can clearly understand the East of England clean energy offer, as well as how to engage and participate. This is a regional intervention, and therefore the stakeholders participating in this activity will reflect this geography.

Ingredients

- Building on existing brands and marketing materials e.g. GENERATE, sector network materials.
- Buy-in and active support from regional clean energy sector networks e.g. EEEGR, Hydrogen East, EastWind and CleanTech East

Metrics To Track Success:

- Senior stakeholders and decision makers participating in the narrative workshop by sector and stakeholder group.
- Engagement and public support from critical national stakeholders (e.g. DESNZ, GB Energy)

Steps

1. **Form a pan-energy group to oversee this intervention:** See CE03. Given their existing role in GENERATE and pan-energy sector advocacy respectively, Suffolk County Council could partner up with EEEGR (which represents all energy sectors) to kickstart this initiative for the East of England.

2. **Engage local stakeholders:** Initiate conversations and identify champions in other stakeholder groups e.g. industry, SMEs, academia and community groups.

3. **Create a proposal to enhance cluster narrative:** Through desk-based research, one-to-one calls and workshops, develop a content proposal that builds on existing branding materials and aligns with national strategy.
   a. The proposal should highlight Suffolk's unique strengths (e.g., physical assets), complementarity with the wider East of England and active or upcoming projects that showcases its active role in the UK's green energy transition.
   b. It will communicate mission statements shared by stakeholders and showcase opportunities for multi-sector partnerships. It will articulate the role and opportunities for each stakeholders (e.g., industry, education , SMEs, VCSE), presenting a compelling case to support the cluster.
   c. Determine whether this narrative is housed under an existing platform/initiative (i.e., enhancing existing assets) or will require a new one. The former is recommended.

3. **Develop engagement assets:** Create materials to support stakeholder engagement, funding conversations and national policy influence. This could include tailored briefing decks, case studies of stakeholder collaboration, messaging templates for different audiences.

CE02: Strategic Partnerships With Regional And National Stakeholders

Suffolks' clean energy sector holds national significance, with assets and actors that can help the UK meets its ambition of becoming a clean energy powerhouse. To fully realise this potential, Suffolk must strengthen strategic partnerships with regional and national stakeholders through coordinated, priority-aligned engagements. Establishing consistent channels for collaboration (e.g. forums, innovation programmes) will reinforce Suffolk's reputation as a centre of excellence for clean energy generation and innovation. On the one hand, these partnerships could help expand the reach of Suffolk-based stakeholders, amplifying their voice in national conversations. On the other hand, it could attract innovators, industry leaders and policymakers to engage with Suffolk's vibrant cluster ecosystem. By offering compelling programmes (see CE04) and assets (see CE05), Suffolk can become a convening hub for clean energy dialogue and action.

Ingredients

- Buy-in and active support from regional clean energy sector networks e.g. EEEGR, Hydrogen East, EastWind and CleanTech East
- Participation from national and other regional stakeholders e.g. Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), Greater South East Net Zero Hub

Metrics To Track Success:

- Engagement and public support from critical national stakeholders (e.g. DESNZ, GB Energy)
- 4 collaborative events or projects hosted with other regional hubs annually

Steps

1. **Audit existing connections:** Through Influence workstream (see CE03), map current regional and national stakeholder relationships across energy and adjacent clusters. Identify gaps and opportunities for a more unified engagement approach.

2. **Prepare for strategic engagement:** Identify senior officials from key national bodies. Align talking points and asks with the East of England's shared narrative (see CE01) and opportunity/challenge themes (see CE04), tailoring briefing decks as needed.

3. **Engage Key Stakeholder Groups:**
   1. Group 1 (Communicate strengths and funding asks): DESNZ, GB Energy, GB Energy Nuclear, The Crown Estate, Innovate UK, Ofgem, National Energy and System Operator (NESO)
   2. Group 2 (Invite collaboration and influence): Clean Energy Sector Council, Offshore Wind Council, Nuclear Skills Taskforce, Catapults, Greater South East Net Zero Hub

4. **Mobilise local champions:** Brief local leaders and MPs to champion Suffolk and the East of England's energy capabilities in parliamentary and regional forums and help broker connections to national stakeholders.

5. **Initiate inter-regional dialogue:** Connect with clusters in the North East, South West and Midlands to identify shared priorities and opportunities for joint action.

6. **Host regional collaboration events:** Convene summits, workshops, and challenge-led events to formalise partnerships and explore joint initiatives.

7. **Launch joint programmes:** Co-develop initiatives in areas such as skills, innovation, and policy advocacy to demonstrate collaborative leadership.

8. **Maintain communication via Influence workstream:** Use the workstream to monitor progress, share updates and coordinate ongoing stakeholder engagement.

CE03: Establish A Regional Pan-Energy Cluster Board

Suffolk and the wider East of England's clean energy industries is nationally significant, with a diverse portfolio spanning nuclear, hydrogen, offshore wind, bioenergy and solar. However, this diversity risks fragmentation. This group will be regional, recognising that Suffolk's energy story is anchored in an East of England identity. It will unify sector champions to support Suffolk's mission to 'Power Clean Growth' and amplify the East of England's voice nationally and internationally. This intervention intends to build on the previous all-energy sector council, going further by keeping the group mission-driven and action-focused around three workstreams representing priority areas for the cluster: Influence, Skills and Innovation. This intervention will complement, not duplicate, the work of existing sector networks by filling a critical gap: enabling closer cross-sector collaboration on shared challenges, such as skills, infrastructure and innovation.

Ingredients

- Active representation from all energy sectors
- Support from the public and VCSE sector: Local authorities and active community group champions.
- Funding or in-kind resourcing to support programme delivery: Personnel to coordinate activities will be critical to translating discussion into action

Metrics To Track Success:

- 95% Attendance in board meetings
- 85% member satisfaction rate and feedback
- Number of cross-sector programmes initiated and delivered
- Number of joint submission (e.g. to bids)
- Funding secured for joint initiatives, or as a result of join submissions

Steps

1. **Convene and secure buy-in from stakeholders:** Engage representatives from all clean energy sectors. Emphasise the need for a quadruple helix collaboration, especially in the case of clean energy where public sector and community support is critical.
   1. A neutral, independent convenor should lead (representing all energy sectors)
   2. Given their present lack of a specific sector network, secure champions to represent for solar, bioenergy and nuclear.

2. **Co-develop mission and governance:** Facilitate workshops to define the group's mission and align with Suffolk's three strategic missions. Draft and agree a Terms of Reference.

3. **Establish action-oriented workstreams:** The Sizewell C Economic Working Groups and Regional Skills Coordinating Function, delivered by Suffolk County Council, could serve as a blueprint for how the workstreams are governed and managed.
   1. Skills: This workstream will drive inclusive, industry-ready training. Ensure representation from education and the VCSE sector.
   2. Influence: This workstream will lead in developing a shared narrative and communications strategy (see CE01) to elevate Suffolk's profile nationally.
   3. Innovation: This workstream will coordinate innovation programmes (see CE04), leverage Suffolk's assets (e.g. CE05) and link with other clusters.

4. **Resource the activities:** Secure funding or in-kind support for coordination roles.

5. **Launch:** Communicate the group's role and present clear channels for engagement.

CE04: Innovation Programme To Put Green Transition In Action

This intervention will position Suffolk as a testbed for clean energy innovation by launching programmes that explore, pilot and scale solutions aligned with local strengths and national priorities. It will move from discussion to delivery, activating challenge-led initiatives and cross-sectoral collaboration to accelerate the green transition.

Ingredients

- Curated opportunity statements
- Stakeholder participation, e.g. Convenors (E.g. EEEGR, HydrogenEast), Industry, academia, SMEs and research/ innovation bodies (e.g. ORE Catapult, CEFAS)
- Funding to support delivery: E.g. Freeport East Innovation Growth Fund, UKRI
- Physical facilities: Access to innovation hubs to convene and trial solutions
- Programme coordination: A convening body to manage logistics, partnerships and alignment with national priorities.

Metrics To Track Success:

- Number of innovation programmes launched
- Number of pilots or feasibility studies completed
- 60 SMEs and academic partners engaged
- Funding secured for collaborative projects
- Number of learners trained or retrained for clean energy roles

Steps

1. **Activate collaborative innovation ecosystem:** Through this, develop opportunity themes for Suffolk. When defining and refining opportunity statements, build on previous projects/bids (e.g. SuNRISE coast), alongside alignment with national priorities such as Ofgem's priority R&D challenges for the Clean Energy Superpower Mission. The list below suggests opportunity themes to consider. The list is not definitive or exhaustive and will need to be further validated and sponsored by stakeholders.
   1. Next generation O&M technologies to support clean energy production
   2. Digitalisation of energy systems
   3. Cyber solutions to secure UK critical national infrastructure
   4. Finance and policy models for community micro-energy generation to support energy resilience

2. **Secure stakeholder sponsorship:** Engage key partners to sponsor and co-develop opportunity themes. Ensure themes reflect real-world challenges.

3. **Activate cross-sectoral capabilities:** Together with the Mission Catalyst, mobilise Suffolk's manufacturing, engineering, digital and marine research capabilities to support clean energy innovation and increase local content.

4. **Launch competitive calls for projects:** Design and deliver targeted funding to opportunity themes. Formats to potentially consider include hackathons and innovation sprints; feasibility studies and pilot trials; student and researcher placements. Build on previous or existing funded programmes such as Launch Academy, F4OR and Freeport East Clean Growth Pre-Accelerator Programme.

5. **Leverage physical facilities:** Use shared spaces in the county to host activities and showcase innovation (see CE05).

6. **Monitor and share impact:** Track progress using agreed metrics. Share success stories to build momentum and inform future funding bids.

Igniting Innovation And Commercialisation

CE05: Activate Physical Assets To Support Clean Energy Innovation

This intervention will activate Suffolk's diverse facilities and strategic assets to support clean energy innovation through cross-sectoral collaboration and technology convergence. It will turn physical spaces into hubs for convening, co-designing, testing, piloting and scaling cutting-edge solutions that address Suffolk's energy challenges and opportunities.

Ingredients

- Strategic facilities: Examples include OrbisEnergy, Adastral Park and Gateway 14 Skills and Innovation Centre
- Support from critical stakeholders: notably building/ facility owners. Buy-in from wider stakeholders to use and inject activity into the space.
- Funding: This could be used to support capital investment to fund upgrades/retrofit/repurposing of facilities for innovation use, or to fund cluster activities in the spaces.

Metrics To Track Success:

- Number of facilities upgraded for innovation use
- Capital investment secured and deployed
- Facility utilisation rates for innovation activities
- Number of learners or researchers accessing facility-led programmes for clean energy roles

Steps

1. **Audit and profile facilities:** Catalogue Suffolk's strategic, physical assets with potential for innovation activation in clean energy. Assess current capabilities, capital needs and thematic relevance (e.g., solar in the west, biomass inland).

2. **Engage stakeholders:** Convene industry, academia, SMEs, and community groups to co-design how facilities can support innovation. Use innovation workstream (see CE03) to mobilise this activity.

3. **Define opportunity themes:** Map challenge-led opportunity statements (see CE05) against physical infrastructure and facilities, asking the question: where could we host testbeds? How can assets be activated, adapted or expanded to accelerate innovation and deployment?
   1. **Capital activation plans:** If relevant, define capital requirements and build business cases for investment.
   2. **Cross-regional collaboration:** Where facilities or infrastructure may be lacking within the region, seek out collaboration with other regional hubs (see CE04). Catapults, for example, have test facilities across the country.

4. **Secure capital funding:** Identify and apply for relevant funding streams (e.g. Freeport East, Innovate UK, local growth funds) to support infrastructure upgrades and activation.

5. **Launch innovation activities:** Once facilities are activated, host challenge-led programmes (See CE05) and enable cross-sectoral collaboration.

6. **Monitor and share outcomes:** Track progress using agreed metrics. Share success stories to build momentum and attract further investment and participation. Encourage relevant channels and platforms to promote facilities.

CE05: Activate Physical Assets To Support Clean Energy Innovation (cont.)

Physical Assets To Support Clean Energy Innovation

Examples of strategic physical assets (established, in the pipeline or prospective) across Suffolk:

- **Lowestoft:** Lowestoft is one of Britain's most easternly port and close to the UK's largest concentration of offshore wind farms in the Southern North Sea, with purpose-built infrastructure, energy-anchored Enterprise Zone (PowerPark) and a dedicated innovation centre (OrbisEnergy). In addition, it is also home to research institutions and innovation centres, notably CEFAS and the East of England ORE Catapult. With its growing capabilities in renewable energy innovation, operations and supply-chain growth, Lowestoft stands as a natural hub for the clean energy cluster.
  - **OrbisEnergy:** Innovation hub for clean energy, offering shared space for knowledge exchange and hosting challenge-led programmes. Activation will build on collaborative ecosystems (see CE03) and innovation initiatives (see CE04). Orbis II, which will provide conferencing and showcasing facilities, has the potential to become a regional and national hub convening clean energy leaders from across the country and abroad. However, this will require improved transport infrastructure to make possible.
  - **Lowestoft Eastern Energy Facility (LEEF):** Offers state-of-the-art port infrastructure tailored for offshore energy, including capacity for all-tide Service Operation Vessel access and future-proofed infrastructure to support alternative fuels. Lowestoft is already home to O&M bases for ScottishPower and SSE. Together with the O&M Campus in Great Yarmouth and the Sizewell C Campus, the region has exciting potential to become a nationally leading centre of excellence for O&M in clean energy, particularly within nuclear and offshore wind.
  - **CEFAS (Lowestoft Quay):** Lowestoft is home to CEFAS, the UK's leading marine science hub. Its experts and facilities support environmental monitoring vital for offshore and coastal projects. CEFAS has a facility in Lowestoft Quay with potential to support controlled technology testing. Developing a business case for a new wet lab would enable trials in wetland environments applicable for clean energy solutions.
- **Port of Felixstowe:** A key site for freight decarbonisation and alternative fuels, led by Freeport East. Support development of a green hydrogen hub and explore cross-sectoral opportunities at the proposed Green Hydrogen Hub (see PL09).
- **Sizewell C Campus:** A new dedicated campus to cultivate local expertise in civil nuclear infrastructure. While the current focus is around nuclear construction project, this could be expanded to reflect growing long-term regional capability in the full lifecycle, from build to decommissioning.
- **Adastral Park:** Digital innovation cluster with potential for tech convergence. Promote collaboration between ACT, NESO and clean energy stakeholders to support the Energy Sector Digitalisation Plan.
- **Skills & Innovation Centre (Gateway 14):** There is an opportunity to engage clean energy stakeholders to shape activities at this Freeport East site. Leverage logistics capabilities to explore green logistics corridor innovation.
- **AME Centre (Suffolk Business Park):** Strengthen Suffolk's advanced manufacturing and engineering capabilities to increase local content in clean energy supply chains (see CE04 Step 4).

CE06: Empowering Suffolk's Clean Energy Workforce For National Impact

This intervention is designed to position Suffolk as a national leader in clean energy skills, one that is internationally competitive, inclusive and future-ready. By strengthening formal training pathways, aligning with national initiatives and forging strategic partnerships, we aim to build a resilient local workforce that not only meets industry demand but also shapes national policy.

Ingredients

- Strategic partnerships: Between training providers, FE colleges, industry and local government
- Community engagement: critical to ensuring inclusive pathways
- Use of facilities (e.g. XR Labs) to deliver cutting-edge training.
- National bodies: e.g. DESNZ, Skills England, Office for Clean Energy Jobs
- Regional bodies: e.g. Greater South East Net Zero Hub

Metrics To Track Success:

- Number of learners trained annually (by specialism)
- Number of apprenticeships filled
- 90% of employers satisfied with training provision
- 25 collaborative projects between industry and education
- Representation of Suffolk in national clean energy skills forums
- Number of out-of-area learners trained in Suffolk

Steps

1. **Establish the Skills workstream:** See CE03. Maintain a live audit of clean energy skills provision. Mobilise the group to respond to the latest Clean Energy Jobs Plan published by DESNZ.
2. **Audit and map existing provision:** Catalogue current training programmes, facilities, and partnerships. Identify gaps, strengths, and alignment with priority occupations, as outlines in the Clean Energy Jobs Plan.
3. **Convene Skills Forums:** Host regular forums to bring together industry and academia. Focus on themes such as: Decommissioning workforce needs; O&M job clarity and long-term security; Exporting NSIP leadership (e.g. nuclear outage expertise)
4. **Strengthen strategic partnerships:** Cement relationships between industry and education providers. Progress discussions into collaborative projects, curriculum co-design, and accurate job forecasting.
5. **Activate and enhance facilities:** Promote industry engagement with local training centres. Encourage industry to shape activities and invest in facilities that attract and retain local talent.
6. **Monitor future needs:** Track emerging demand areas (e.g. solar installation, O&M) and advocate for responsive training provision, including through devolution deal negotiations.
7. **Foster regional collaboration: B**uild relationships with other centres of excellence and regional hubs to share best practices and strengthen Suffolk's national influence.
8. **Launch campaigns for local talent:** Promote the use of local training providers and talent through targeted campaigns, showcasing success stories and pathways into clean energy careers.
9. **Work with other regions:** See CE02. This includes the Great South East Net Zero Hub, Industrial Strategy Zones Skills Forum and Net Zero Networks who have received funding/support to pilot skills programmes.

CE06: Empowering Suffolk's Clean Energy Workforce For National Impact (cont.)

Meeting Future Talent Needs: Responding To The Clean Energy Jobs Plan

The East of England is projected to triple its clean energy workforce by 2030, the fastest growth in the UK. Suffolk is primed to lead this transformation, particularly in construction roles, supported by assets such as West Suffolk College's Construction Technical Excellence College (TEC) designation. Alongside this, other colleges in the county are reinforcing Suffolk's leadership in clean energy skills provision. In Leiston, Suffolk New College has partnered with Sizewell C to establish a new college in Leiston to meet the workforce needs of the nuclear hub, and will also include an Apprentice Hub and Centre of Excellence for nuclear construction projects. In Lowestoft, East Coast College is delivering cutting-edge offshore wind training through its Energy Training Academy, in collaboration with training partners such as Maersk and Hexis Training.

The East of England is also expected to see a rapid growth in science, research, engineering and technology roles, which is expected to make up over 15% of clean energy jobs in the region by 2030, the highest share of any clean job occupation. Yet, the latest Green Skills Analysis for Norfolk and Suffolk highlights persistent skills gaps, especially in engineering. This is a pivotal moment to future-proof Suffolk's talent pipeline and ensure local people can seize the opportunities of a booming clean energy economy.

Despite the East of England's rapid growth in clean energy jobs, it has been excluded from key government pilot initiatives outlined in the Clean Energy Jobs Plan. This gap must be urgently addressed.

Example of where response could focus include:

- **Position Suffolk to host a Clean Energy Technical Excellence College:** Draw on complementary synergy with existing CTEC at West Suffolk College.
- **Secure priority support for the Strategic Priorities Grant and Engineering skills package:** This will be critical in light of growing demand for science, research, engineering and technology professionals in the region.
- **Diversifying pathways:** Secure national support and funding to establish locally-led diverse pathways that are visible and long-lasting: Build on Mission Renewable's East of England pilot programme for veterans. Work with sector networks (e.g. EEEGR and Skills for Energy) and VCSEs in the region. Discuss potential for training fund to support South North Sea workforce's transition to clean energy.
- **Supporting youth access:** Secure national support to pilot youth programmes in Suffolk that prepare young people for clean energy careers, ensuring the region's high growth is matched by inclusive opportunity and representation in trailblazer initiatives (e.g. Economic Inactivity and Youth Guarantee trailblazers).

Suffolk and East of England should work with other regional hubs to learn from existing pilots or programmes (Oil and Gas Training Fund - Regional Skills Pilot in Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire) and help build the case to secure more support.

SUFFOLK ECONOMY

Ports and Logistics Intervention Cards

The Opportunity For Ports And Logistics

Suffolk plays a nationally vital role in powering UK trade and freight movement. Home to the Port of Felixstowe—the UK's largest and busiest container port, handling around 40% of all containerised trade—Suffolk is a cornerstone of the national logistics infrastructure. Alongside Felixstowe, the Port of Ipswich drives agri-food exports, and the Port of Lowestoft supports the growing offshore energy economy. These globally connected gateways are supported by a wider network of logistics firms, haulage companies, and warehousing clusters, collectively employing over 33,000 people and generating more than £1.6 billion in GVA for the region. Suffolk's connectivity into the UK-wide road and rail system, including the strategic A14 and Felixstowe–Nuneaton rail corridor, places it at the heart of supply chain resilience.

Despite these strengths, Suffolk's ports and logistics ecosystem currently lacks a unifying cluster structure. Stakeholders—ports, freight firms, education providers, and public bodies—are working hard but often in silos. This fragmentation means Suffolk does not always speak with a single voice or compete at the scale its assets merit. National strategy and funding frequently overlook the region's freight corridors, and major opportunities—like clean energy-powered freight, or global trade links—are harder to seize without coordination. Meanwhile, local SMEs and communities are not yet fully capturing the value flowing through the system, and acute skills shortages (in HGV driving, port electrification, and warehouse automation) continue to constrain growth.

But the potential is enormous. Suffolk is home to Freeport East, unlocking ~£300 million of investment, including a £150 million hydrogen production hub at Felixstowe. With a clear strategy, Suffolk can position itself as the UK's testbed for decarbonised, smart logistics—showcasing digital yard management, autonomous freight trials, and integrated clean fuel infrastructure. It has all the ingredients: global infrastructure, an innovation ecosystem (Adastral Park, Tech East), major anchor employers, and national importance. A Suffolk Ports and Logistics Cluster will bring this ecosystem together around a shared mission, unlocking national profile, funding, and delivery.

This ambition will be delivered through a portfolio of short- and long-term interventions—ranging from flagship projects and national demonstrator sites to targeted skills programmes and SME support. These are detailed in the cluster delivery menu. With the right structure and momentum, Suffolk will not just support the UK's logistics needs but shape its future.

Over 1/3
of the UK's containerised trade handled in the Port of Felixstowe

32%
more jobs
in Suffolk than the England average

13,500
new jobs
will be generated in Freeport East, covering Felixstowe and Gateway 14, alongside the Port of Harwich in Essex.

20%
of all road freight along the Freeport East's and East Midlands Freeport's Green Freight Corridor to be **low or zero emission by 2030**

Overview Of Clean Energy Interventions

Elevating Our National Influence

Suffolk's ports and logistics sector is not just a local asset – it's a strategic gateway for UK trade. Elevating national influence means positioning Suffolk at the forefront of national logistics decisions and trade strategy. By showcasing the county's pivotal role – from the UK's busiest container port to key distribution corridors – Suffolk can secure greater government support and shape policies that benefit the region. This pillar focuses on amplifying Suffolk's voice and drawing national investment attention to its ports, ensuring that local initiatives become linchpins of UK-wide growth and resilience.

- PL01: Create a Ports and Logistics Cluster Board
- PL02: National Policy Positioning

Strengthening Our Collaboration

To thrive as a modern logistics supercluster, Suffolk must move beyond transactional relationships and establish sustained, mission-driven collaboration across the ecosystem. The region has multiple anchor institutions, including major port operators, Freeport East, SCC, and Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, but these entities often operate in silos. Stronger collaboration is essential to align public and private priorities, build trusted networks and ensure Suffolk is working as one voice to solve shared challenges. This pillar activates the connective tissue between stakeholders—unlocking supply chain integration, co-investment in infrastructure and innovation, and a shared platform for national influence.

- PL03: Suffolk Logistics Forum

Igniting Innovation And Commercialisation

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- PL04: Felixstowe Hydrogen Hub
- PL05: Freeport East Innovation and Clean Growth Expansion

Supporting Our Workforce

Logistics is a sector defined by its people—and Suffolk faces acute shortages in both entry-level and advanced roles. This pillar ensures that workforce gaps do not hold back growth. It focuses on immediate bootcamp-style interventions to meet employer demand, while also embedding future-ready training for low-carbon and smart logistics systems. The aim is to grow a skilled, local, inclusive logistics workforce that enables the sector's transition and enhances economic inclusion.

- PL06: HGV Driver Academy
- PL07: Green Port Skills Programme

PL01: Create Ports & Logistics Cluster Board

This intervention aims to establish a formal, mission-led leadership group to unite stakeholders including port operators, Freeport East, SCC, logistics companies, and training providers. The board will define a shared mission, coordinate funding bids, hold regular forums, and act as Suffolk's national voice in the freight and logistics agenda.

Ingredients

- SCC and Freeport East to convene the initial group and provide secretariat support
- Stakeholder engagement to define shared mission and establish cluster vision
- Development of Terms of Reference, rotating port industry chairs, and governance model
- Identification of short-term deliverables: shared bids, branding, and early wins
- Transition to industry-led model within 18–24 months

Metrics To Track Success:

- Cluster Board formally established with ToR and governance
- Publication of first annual cluster strategy/mission
- Number of joint bids/advocacy actions delivered, targeting 3+ within 2 years
- Attendance/engagement from >70% of major ports/logistics stakeholders

Steps

1. **Identify and secure founding members:** Engage key stakeholders across the sector including port operators, logistics firms, Suffolk County Council, and Freeport East to confirm interest and participation in the Cluster Board.
2. **Define mission and governance:** Co-develop the cluster's unifying mission and purpose with input from stakeholders. Create a Terms of Reference document that sets out the governance model, leadership rotation, meeting cadence, and decision-making framework.
3. **Recruit dedicated coordination resource:** Allocate or recruit a strategy/policy officer to serve as secretariat, responsible for managing operations, ensuring delivery of agreed actions, and aligning efforts with regional and national initiatives.
4. **Deliver initial cluster strategy:** Run workshops with members to define short-term goals and medium-term roadmap. Publish the first strategy document to establish credibility and a shared public narrative.
5. **Embed into national engagement:** Represent the cluster in national consultations and forums, e.g., Department for Transport and the UK Freight Council. Track engagement and follow through with advocacy actions.

PL02: National Policy Positioning

Suffolk's role as the UK's trade gateway should be more visible in national strategies. This intervention focuses on systematically engaging with the Department for Transport, Treasury and DESNZ to ensure Suffolk is seen as a model for low-carbon, resilient freight corridors and integrated logistics policy.

Ingredients

- Cluster Board to coordinate national engagement strategy
- Development of clean logistics policy paper with local case studies
- Bilateral engagement with DfT, DESNZ, Freeport East and Treasury
- Position Suffolk as national testbed for freight decarbonisation

Metrics To Track Success:

- Suffolk referenced in at least 2 national logistics or clean freight strategies within 3 years
- At least 1 Suffolk-led pilot or demonstration funded through DfT or DESNZ
- Participation in 3+ national forums or working groups per year
- Case studies used in policy advocacy published and cited externally

Steps

1. **Map national engagement landscape:** Identify key government departments, parliamentary committees, and freight strategy forums where Suffolk's presence could influence decision-making.
2. **Develop targeted narrative and collateral:** Use input from PL01 to create policy briefs, case studies, and infographics that articulate Suffolk's relevance to UK trade and low-carbon freight priorities.
3. **Brief Suffolk MPs and champions:** Deliver a tailored engagement pack to regional MPs, equipping them with data and talking points to advocate for Suffolk's logistics role in Westminster.
4. **Coordinate roundtables with national stakeholders:** Convene sessions with civil servants and sector influencers to socialise Suffolk's vision and discuss areas of alignment and co-investment.
5. **Monitor policy inclusion and iterate:** Track outcomes from meetings and submissions. Update positioning based on evolving priorities, e.g., Net Zero Transport plans, union connectivity strategies, etc.

PL03: Suffolk Logistics Forum

This intervention will establish a structured networking and collaboration platform that brings together SMEs, corporates, infrastructure owners, and tech innovators across the cluster. It will provide regular challenge-led engagement events focused on joint problem-solving and opportunity discovery—positioning Suffolk as an agile, connected ecosystem ready to scale shared initiatives.

Ingredients

- Quarterly in-person collaboration events hosted across key logistics sites
- Clear thematic agendas (e.g. digitalisation, decarbonisation, workforce)
- Involvement of Suffolk Chamber and Freeport East as convening leads
- Online digital platform for post-event collaboration and funding alerts
- Integration with SCC's other key cross-sector projects and cluster missions

Metrics To Track Success:

- Forum launched with regular quarterly meetings
- 100+ participants engaged within first year
- 5+ collaborative projects or consortia initiated per year
- Measurable increase in cross-sector partnerships (via annual survey)

Steps

1. **Confirm delivery partners and governance:** Establish joint oversight by Suffolk Chamber and Suffolk County Council, including named leads responsible for programming and follow-up.
2. **Design challenge-led format:** Co-create a calendar of quarterly events, each tied to an actionable industry challenge (e.g., last-mile decarbonisation, data sharing in freight corridors).
3. **Recruit logistics and tech stakeholders:** Build and maintain a participant list with clear value propositions to drive turnout, including SME innovators, infrastructure owners, and solution providers.
4. **Activate funding links and innovation pathways:** Use the forum to link ideas to the broader cross-county or cross-regional funds or Freeport East innovation programmes, offering a route to funding or pilot support.
5. **Create collaboration tracker and toolkit:** Develop a digital toolkit to document pilot concepts, partners involved, and learning outcomes. Share insights via an online hub or community of practice.

PL04: Felixstowe Hydrogen Hub

A flagship project, this intervention supports the delivery of a £150m hydrogen production and fuelling facility at the Port of Felixstowe. Spearheaded by Hutchison Ports and Ryze Hydrogen, the facility will provide clean fuel to decarbonise port equipment and heavy freight corridors. It positions Suffolk as a national leader in hydrogen logistics and showcases UK capability to international markets.

Ingredients

- SCC championing through planning and stakeholder convening
- Ryze Hydrogen and Hutchison leading project development
- Alignment with Freeport East's decarbonisation vision
- Engagement with potential customers including hauliers and port operators
- Infrastructure integration (e.g. pipeline access, renewable energy)

Metrics To Track Success:

- Business case and planning submitted by 2025
- £150m capital investment secured
- Plant producing 13 tonnes/day hydrogen by year two
- 1,300+ logistics vehicles converted to hydrogen by 2030

Steps

1. **Secure enabling conditions and regulatory alignment:** Work with relevant local, regional and national partners to identify and address potential planning or regulatory barriers early. Explore opportunities to streamline approvals, ensure compliance with emerging standards for clean energy and logistics, and coordinate environmental or infrastructure assessments to support timely delivery.
2. **Stakeholder alignment:** Convene a regional taskforce including port operators, freight hauliers, energy regulators and Freeport East to develop a shared deployment roadmap. Ensure alignment on safety, fuel distribution and end-use requirements across the value chain.
3. **Investment mobilisation:** Secure matched funding from UK Government clean growth or Net Zero Hydrogen funds, combined with Freeport investment reliefs. Prepare a detailed investment prospectus and organise a showcase event to attract co-investors.
4. **Infrastructure build-out:** Coordinate site preparation, utilities installation (e.g. electricity, water), and safety infrastructure in parallel with procurement of electrolysis and storage equipment. Commission a specialist engineering consultant to oversee technical integration.
5. **Operational integration and scaling:** Support trials with major logistics operators including container hauliers, port shunters, and fleet companies. Monitor emissions savings and refine fuelling logistics. Explore opportunities for exporting green hydrogen or replicating the model in other UK ports.

Igniting Innovation And Commercialisation

PL05: Freeport East Innovation & Clean Growth Fund Expansion

This intervention will expand the current £800k Freeport East innovation fund into a £2m cross-cluster stimulus aligned to Suffolk's three missions: powering clean growth, sustaining the nation, and delivering smart logistics. The fund will support innovation in clean freight, automation, advanced manufacturing, agri-tech and AI — connecting opportunities across logistics, energy, and digital technology.

Freeport East will act as both a delivery partner and physical testbed, providing sites, data and coordination with port operators and manufacturers. The programme will also explore emerging opportunities in drone corridors and electric aviation, building on the Aviation East and Space East networks to position Suffolk at the forefront of next-generation logistics and low-carbon mobility.

The programme will help demonstrate how Freeports and Investment Zones can be engines of applied innovation, supporting the commercialisation of R&D and strengthening Suffolk's role as the UK's hub for clean and digital trade. By embedding Freeport East within Suffolk's mission-led framework, this intervention provides a clearer remit and measurable outcomes: to de-risk R&D for SMEs, accelerate technology adoption, and increase the economic value retained within the region's supply chains.

Ingredients

- SCC, Freeport East, and Innovate UK to co-fund and co-manage an expanded £2m innovation programme.
- Partnership with Tech East, Hethel Innovation and Adastral Park for SME outreach and investor engagement.
- Challenge calls aligned to Suffolk's missions — focusing on decarbonised freight, AI-enabled supply chains, low-carbon manufacturing and digital energy solutions.
- Integration with Investment Zone and Industrial Strategy Zone priorities to demonstrate scalable regional impact.
- Peer-to-peer learning and post-award mentoring to accelerate market readiness and export capability.

Metrics To Track Success:

- £2m fund launched with first projects backed in Year 1.
- 25+ SMEs supported over two years across all four clusters.
- 12 new commercialised technologies or services developed.
- Tangible outcomes demonstrated: carbon reduction, logistics efficiency, or energy savings.
- Model for mission-aligned Freeport innovation replicated across the region

Steps

1. **Refine remit and scope:** Confirm Freeport East's specific delivery role and align with Suffolk's missions, ensuring measurable outcomes tied to clean growth, digital trade and manufacturing innovation.
2. **Define cross-cluster challenge areas:** Co-design 3–4 thematic calls with partners (e.g. zero-emission freight, circular manufacturing, AI logistics optimisation) to maximise synergies between energy, logistics and digital clusters.
3. **Open competitive call for projects:** Launch targeted funding for Suffolk SMEs, supported by workshops, one-to-one bid support and existing networks like Tech East, Innovation Martlesham and Adastral Park.
4. **Evaluate and invest:** Form a joint assessment panel including SCC, Freeport East, and UKRI partners to evaluate proposals based on innovation potential, commercial scalability and local economic impact.
5. **Track and scale outcomes:** Collect and share evidence of impact — such as job creation, carbon reduction, or trade value — through a regional Innovation Forum linking Freeport East with other cluster initiatives.

PL06: HGV Driver Academy

To address urgent driver shortages, this intervention builds on existing bootcamp models to deliver intensive HGV licence training. Delivered in partnership with Suffolk New College and Road to Logistics, it targets rapid job readiness, especially for unemployed residents and career switchers.

Ingredients

- DfE-funded bootcamp model scaled with local match-funding
- Instruction delivered by accredited HGV trainers in Suffolk
- Collaboration with haulage firms to align job offers post-training
- Learner incentives to improve retention and licence completion
- Targeted marketing in areas with high unemployment

Metrics To Track Success:

- 500+ drivers trained within 2 years
- 80% completion rate across cohorts
- 75% job placement rate within 3 months post-training
- Reduced vacancy rate among Suffolk hauliers by 15%

Steps

1. **Design curriculum with employers:** Use direct input from freight and logistics firms to define key competencies and delivery models, with a focus on employer-validated standards and practical assessment.
2. **Set up bootcamp delivery model:** Launch short-course training at multiple locations with simulation equipment and access to vehicles. Build on training previously delivered by potential partners, including Suffolk New College and Road to Logistics
3. **Attract new talent:** Develop a campaign led by SCC and DWP that showcases logistics careers as high-growth, high-reward opportunities – including targeting underemployed groups and early retirees.
4. **Deliver and monitor:** Run quarterly cohorts, tracking completion, pass rates and placement outcomes. Use employer surveys to adapt programme structure based on feedback.
5. **Track impact:** Collect longitudinal data on trainee retention and career progression and report headline outcomes to national skills councils and DfE.

Supporting Our Workforce

PL07: Green Port Skills Programme

The transition to green logistics demands a new set of roles—from hydrogen safety and port electrification to automation engineers and fleet technicians. This programme will deliver new training provision in clean port operations and smart systems, led by East Coast College and supported by Freeport East's Skills Fund.

Ingredients

- Employer-led curriculum design for key roles (e.g. H2 techs, EV engineers)
- Investment in new training infrastructure at East Coast College
- Alignment with wider Suffolk and Norfolk green skills strategy
- Sector-wide campaign to promote green logistics careers

Metrics To Track Success:

- 3 new accredited training courses launched
- 300 learners trained within 18 months
- 80% progression rate into logistics roles
- 10+ port and logistics employers directly engaged in design and delivery

Steps

1. **Skills mapping and foresight:** Engage with port operators, hauliers and manufacturers to identify emerging roles and technologies, particularly around automation and energy transition.
2. **Design curriculum for future skills:** Work with East Coast College and other partners to translate foresight into short accredited courses and modular qualifications.
3. **Activate Freeport East Skills Fund:** Secure funding from the Freeport East board to incentivise course start-up and scale-up, including capital for simulators and lab kit.
4. **Launch regional training partnerships:** Mobilise local training consortia to pool instructors and facilities, building scale in priority delivery areas.
5. **Build progression routes:** Ensure every course includes mapped routes into higher qualifications or apprenticeships, and ensure learners are signposted into logistics jobs on completion.

SUFFOLK ECONOMY

Cross-Cluster Intervention Cards

CS01: Mission Catalyst And Innovation Challenge Fund

Creating conditions for a genuinely collaborative innovation ecosystem in Suffolk requires a fresh approach. This intervention will put in place structured, intentional opportunities to engage businesses and other partners in targeted innovation activity.

We recognise that some of the most innovative, relevant solutions could be found in areas of cross-sector convergence. While organisations like Tech East, EEEGR and Connected Innovation have made important strides in bridging sectors, more work is needed to solidify these links and ensure broad access to collaborative channels. By activating partnerships, shared spaces, and funded initiatives, Suffolk can foster a more connected ecosystem that accelerates innovation and positions the region as a model for collaborative clean energy leadership.

Ingredients

- Programme coordination: A sector-agnostic convening group to manage logistics and ensure alignment with mission and cluster priorities as well as other funding pots.
- Challenge-led framing
- Funding to support programme delivery
- Active participation from key stakeholders, e.g. academia, ecosystem convenors, industry
- Physical and digital convening and ideation spaces
- Signposting to other relevant support programmes offered locally e.g. IGMP, Local UKRI-backed programmes

Metrics To Track Success:

- Relevant challenges set against missions
- 25 collaborative (including multi-sector) projects facilitated annually
- Number of events hosted to facilitate cross-sector collaboration/networking

Steps

1. **Appoint a Mission Catalyst to oversee the programme and design the fund:** They will gear innovation towards the three missions by:
   a. Setting the framework for innovation activity and tech convergence
   b. Developing funded challenge calls to incentivise businesses to participate.
   c. Connecting research capabilities with business

2. **Stimulate existing collaboration ecosystem:** Audit current partnerships between academia, industry, public sector and community groups involved in Suffolk's priority clusters To generate interest, the following are important to involve:
   1. Convenors: Organisations like Tech East, SpaceEast, EEEGR, CleanTech East, Agri-Tech E each have a network of members within their respective areas of focus.
   2. Research institutions: The University of Suffolk and CEFAS, alongside neighbouring universities such as University of East Anglia, provide critical research expertise.
   3. Innovation organisations: These are entities that support businesses with their innovation and commercialisation activities e.g. Catapults, Hethel Innovation and professional services firms.

3. **Create opportunities to engage:** Include matchmaking sessions to understand shared priorities and show how partners can feasibly work together on the three missions.

4. **Launch collaborative funding calls:** Secure funding (or in-kind support) to move from discussion to delivery.

5. **Track and share outcomes:** Monitor progress using agreed metrics. Share success stories and lessons learned to build momentum and attract further participations.

6. **Alignment:** Where possible, leverage parallel funding calls from organisations such as Innovate UK and Freeport East

CS02: Inclusive Pathways

This intervention will strengthen the skills pipeline necessary to support the three missions by embedding diversity and inclusion across all entry routes into clean energy, agri-food and drink, ports and logistics and ACT. It will go beyond formal training to narrow the gap between employers and harder to reach residents: creating tailored, accessible pathways for people of all backgrounds, ensuring Suffolk's workforce both reflects the communities it serves and is equipped to lead the UK's green transition, smart countrysides and smart logistics – putting EPIC into action.

Ingredients

- Stakeholder engagement, Local authorities, community groups, colleges, and employers to co-design inclusive initiatives.
- Analysis of accessibility, barriers, and success factors
- Funding mechanisms: e.g. devolution deals, adult skills fund transfers, Strategic Priorities Grant
- Build on existing Get Suffolk Working plan

Metrics To Track Success:

- 100 new entrants into priority sectors from underrepresented groups per year
- 15-20 VCSEs actively involved in programme design and delivery annually
- 85% stakeholder satisfaction with accessibility and inclusivity of programmes
- Visibility of Suffolk's inclusive skills model in national policy forums

Steps

1. **Oversight** through Get Suffolk Working group – discuss what the three missions and the four clusters mean for its work going forward.

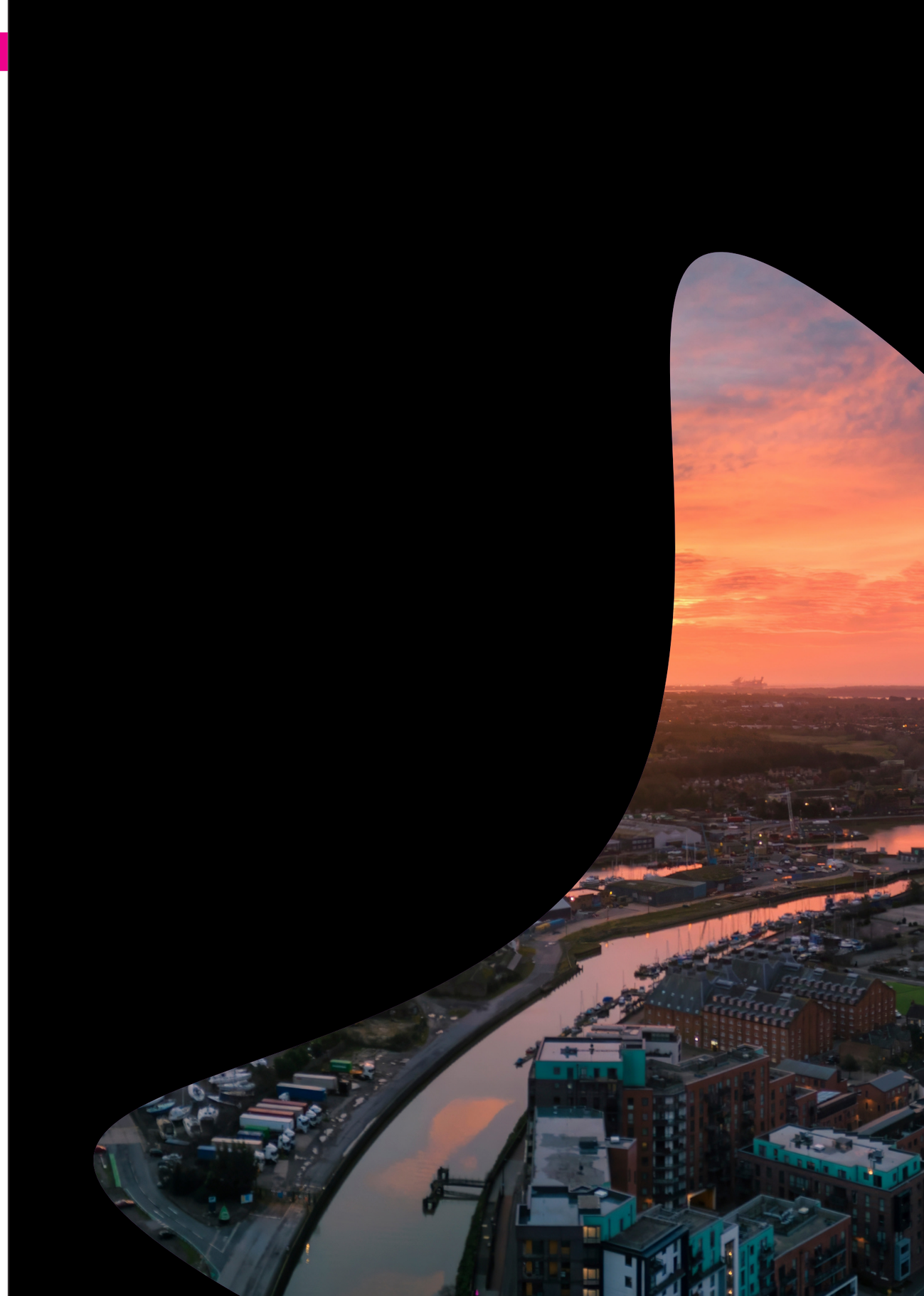
2. **Conduct accessibility analysis:** Gather feedback from VCSEs, industry, education providers and public sector bodies on what's working and where barriers exist. Build on, and connect with, existing insights and work (e.g. Regional Skills Coordinating Function, Get Suffolk Working Plan).

3. **Design visible and inclusive pathways:** Develop tailored entry routes for different groups (e.g., career returners, SEN learners, young care leavers, veterans), with specific emphasis on those who are underrepresented. In the workforce. Ensure cross-sector transferability is recognised and supported. Some of the types of activities to support this could include:
   1. Inspiration and showcasing: Raise awareness of careers into the four core clusters, they will require targeted intervention.
   2. Guidance and mentoring: Providing high-quality careers advice to aspiring talent of all ages and backgrounds. These could include industry partnering with community hubs, charities and schools and colleges to make these mentoring opportunities accessible to specific groups.
   3. Targeted training and industry readiness support: Financial, training or other work readiness support to help target groups successfully secure roles in the core clusters or adjacent sectors.

4. **Secure funding and monitor opportunities:** Track potential funding sources, including initiatives from the Clean Energy Jobs Plan, Freeport East Innovation and Skills Fund, devolution deals and adult skills fund transfers.

5. **Launch stakeholder campaigns:** Create targeted campaigns to attract diverse talent into the four core clusters. Tailor messaging and engagement strategies to different communities and demographics. Work with the LSIP, Skills Hub and sector groups to cascade messages and garner feedback.

6. **Monitor and share progress:** Use the taskgroup to establish and track metrics, as well as share outcomes. Promote Suffolk's inclusive approach in national policy discussions.



SUFFOLK ECONOMY

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