



## Cabinet 11 February 2014

### West Suffolk Six Point Plan for Jobs and Growth (Dec13/06)

#### **1. Summary and reasons for recommendation**

- 1.1 Following consultation with stakeholders during the production of the Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) Strategic Plan and the St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) Corporate Plan it was agreed that a key focus for West Suffolk was economic growth.
- 1.2 To deliver on this key focus, the Economic Development and Growth (EDG) team have the following targets: to engage with at least 100 businesses; help create at least 120 new jobs; and help create at least 10 new businesses here in West Suffolk over the next two years. In addition to these targets, we will provide support to the majority of existing businesses in West Suffolk.
- 1.3 The EDG team has produced a plan of action, entitled 'West Suffolk six point plan for jobs and growth', which sets out what the West Suffolk Councils (FHDC and SEBC) will do to meet these targets and the priority of economic growth. It is essential that we have a plan that enables us to be prepared to capitalise on any opportunities that arise.
- 1.4 The plan is closely aligned to, and derived from, the strategic growth plans of our principal partners, including Suffolk County Council's (SCC) 'Suffolk Growth Strategy' and the growth plans (Strategic Economic Plans) produced by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) and the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (GCGP).
- 1.5 To meet the needs of our different customers, the plan will be communicated in two different ways. The first approach is a more detailed explanation of how and why we will focus on each of the six points. This text will be used for our webpages and will also be available as a document (attached to this report as Appendix A). The intended audience includes Members; officers; our partners; businesses (who want more information) and other stakeholders. This more detailed information will be available to support bids and applications for funding to support our aims.
- 1.6 The second approach is a pocket sized hand out. It will be short, succinct and 'punchy' and the intended audience will be businesses and investors.

- 1.7 The two documents will show how we plan to achieve jobs and growth in West Suffolk; they preface the anticipated inward investment publicity documents and communications plan that are envisaged under the action points in the six point plan.
- 1.8 The projects within the plan will be funded through a variety of funding pots, including departmental budgets, LEP funding and European funding.
- 1.9 The draft plan is attached as Appendix A to this report for Members' consideration.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the West Suffolk six point plan for jobs and growth, as contained in Appendix A to Report E282, be approved.

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### **3. Corporate priorities**

3.1 The recommendation meets the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan:

- (a) Corporate Priority 2: *'Working together for prosperous and environmentally-responsible communities'.*

### **4. Key issues**

4.1 Following consultation with stakeholders during the production of the FHDC Strategic Plan and the SEBC Corporate Plan it was agreed that a key focus for West Suffolk was economic growth.

4.2 To deliver on this key focus, the Economic Development and Growth (EDG) team have the following targets: to engage with at least 100 businesses; help create at least 120 new jobs; and help create at least 10 new businesses here in West Suffolk over the next two years. In addition to these targets, we will provide support to the majority of existing businesses in West Suffolk. These targets are aligned with the targets of our partners, including SCC, NALEP and GCGP.

4.3 The EDG team has produced a plan of action, entitled 'West Suffolk six point plan for jobs and growth', which sets out what the West Suffolk Councils (SEBC and FHDC) will do to meet these targets and the priority of economic growth. It is essential that we have a plan that enables us to be prepared to capitalise on any opportunities that arise. Since EDG covers an extremely wide remit we have chosen a targeted approach, focussing our attention on six key areas for development.

4.4 The six points are as follows:

- (1) meeting and understanding West Suffolk businesses;
- (2) promoting the West Suffolk economic region;
- (3) supporting our market towns;
- (4) ensuring the right conditions for growth;
- (5) developing skills and increasing employment opportunities for all; and
- (6) capitalising upon our key sectors.

4.5 The justification for focussing on these areas in preference to other elements of work comes from three main angles. Firstly, the recent consultation activities of local businesses and stakeholders undertaken during the preparation of the Suffolk Growth Strategy and also the European Funding workshops. Secondly, the priorities of Members expressed through consultation and also the work to produce the Strategic Plan. Thirdly, by the analysis of key labour market information and local monitoring information that provides an ability to understand how West Suffolk compares locally, regionally and nationally. This information also provides trends.

4.6 The plan is closely aligned to, and derived from, the growth plans of our strategic partners, including SCC's 'Suffolk Growth Strategy' and the Strategic Economic Plans (SEPs) being developed by both of our local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) NALEP and the GCGP. The LEPs have to prepare a SEP to enable them to compete for government funding, often referred to as the Single Local Growth pot (see Report E283 contained elsewhere on this Cabinet

agenda.)

- 4.7 To meet the needs of our different customers, the plan will be communicated in two different ways:
- (a) The first approach is a more detailed explanation of how and why we will focus on each of the six points. This text will be used for our webpages and will also be available as a document (the draft document is attached to this report as Appendix A). The intended audience includes Members; officers; our partners including the LEPs; businesses (who want more information) and other stakeholders. This more detailed information will be available to support bids and applications for funding to support our aims. Under each of the six points there are examples of the types of actions that we will deliver; these lists are not exhaustive and remain flexible, since there is a need for our work to be driven by opportunities as they arise. This document also includes some of the reasons why we believe these actions will drive growth. Selected information from this version of the plan will be available on our business web pages which will allow us to easily link to case studies of existing work that we have successfully delivered which can be built upon.
  - (b) The second approach is a pocket sized hand out. It will be short, succinct and 'punchy' and the intended audience will be businesses and investors. It 'signposts' our new local authority focus on economic growth. This document will contain the headlines of the six point plan and will explain how and why businesses and investors should get involved. It will be a designed, fairly 'glossy' document which will be printed in pocket-size for convenience and easy use by Members and all are 'investment ambassadors'. It will also available for download via our websites.
- 4.8 The two documents will show how we plan to achieve jobs and growth in West Suffolk; they preface the anticipated inward investment publicity documents and communications plan that are envisaged under the action points in the six point plan.
- 4.9 The projects within the plan will be funded through a variety of funding pots, and potential sources include:
- (a) Local Authority Business Growth Incentive funds (LABGI);
  - (b) section106 allocations;
  - (c) departmental budgets;
  - (d) Pooled business rates;
  - (e) LEP and SCC funding;
  - (f) national grants; and
  - (g) European funding.
- 4.10 The draft, more detailed plan (as referred to in option (a) in paragraph 4.7 above) is attached as Appendix A to this report for Members' consideration.

## **5. Other options considered**

- 5.1 The 'do nothing' option would be a missed opportunity for the relatively new EDG team to express a clear focus on growth. This option would not provide a clear mechanism for the team to measure whether its work has been a success.

- 5.2 Another option would be to undertake a full economic strategy for West Suffolk. Both FHDC and SEBC have relatively recent strategies although both were prepared in pre-recession times. This piece of work would take longer to complete and would involve a full consultation exercise. Ipswich Borough Council has decided to follow this course of action whereas Suffolk Coastal/Waveney and Mid Suffolk/Babergh are following the same 'action plan' approach as being proposed here.

## **6. Community impact**

### **6.1 Crime and disorder impact** *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

- 6.1.1 No impact from this report.

### **6.2 Diversity and equality impact** *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

- 6.2.1 The action plan will not negatively impact upon any of the equality groups. A number of the commitments under action five 'developing skills and increasing employment opportunities for all' focus specifically on young people and delivery of the county-wide Apprenticeship project and employing apprentices in various departments across the councils. The action plan could be improved so it would have a positive impact by including specific commitments in relation to the following equality groups (where appropriate): gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, faith groups and rural isolation.

### **6.3 Sustainability impact** *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

- 6.3.1 No impact from this report.

### **6.4 Other impact** *(any other impacts affecting this report)*

- 6.4.1 No impact from this report.

## **7. Consultation** *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

- 7.1 The Suffolk Growth Strategy was launched in February 2013 and it followed a number of consultation activities, that themselves followed topic based consultation on broadband proposals. In addition, other recent consultation exercises were held to help set out the priorities for skills development (i.e. 'Raising the Bar') and European funding and these have been used to formulate the priorities for action.

## **8. Financial and resource implications** *(including asset management implications)*

- 8.1 There are resource implications in terms of officer and Member time to plan and deliver the actions within the plan. The majority of the actions within the plan will also need financial support; an internal document will be produced which will clearly align budgets to individual actions.

**9. Risk/opportunity assessment** (potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)

<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
If we do not have a plan for jobs and growth in place then service delivery will not be focussed and the overall impact on growth in West Suffolk is likely to be less successful.	High	Ensure that the six point plan for jobs and growth is approved and implemented.	Low
Without a plan that is communicated to businesses in West Suffolk, the businesses may feel less supported, unclear about the future of local authority support and less able to take advantage of funding opportunities (e.g. via the LEPs), etc.	Medium	Ensure that the six point plan for jobs and growth is clearly communicated to West Suffolk businesses.	Low

**10. Legal and policy implications**

- 10.1 The approach of the plan focusses on the next two years and will be reviewed regularly, including through our governance processes such as the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group.
- 10.2 There is a landscape of both emerging and existing corporate documents which this plan is aligned to. Whilst this document is focussed mainly on jobs and growth it relates well to housing, families, communities, sustainable development and so on. Vision 2031 is an existing corporate document which sets out our long term aspirations for the borough of St Edmundsbury. The West Suffolk six point plan for jobs and growth covers two years and will help deliver the jobs and growth element of the Vision 2031 documents.

**11. Wards affected**

- 11.1 All wards in St Edmundsbury.

**12. Background papers**

- 12.1 None.

**13. Documents attached**

- 13.1 Appendix A – Draft West Suffolk six point plan for jobs and growth.



Forest Heath • St Edmundsbury

**West Suffolk**  
working together

# Six point plan for jobs and growth

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West Suffolk economic region

A vibrant economy with huge growth potential





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# Introduction

Increasing the opportunities for economic growth is a top priority in West Suffolk, which covers the districts of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury and is an economic region with huge growth potential.

Our ambition is to engage directly with at least 50 businesses a year and help create 120 new jobs and 10 new businesses here in West Suffolk over the next two years.

This two-year plan of action for jobs and growth sets out what the West Suffolk councils will do to meet the priority of economic growth.

The six key themes of the plan are:

1. meeting and understanding West Suffolk businesses;
2. promoting the West Suffolk economic region;
3. supporting our market towns;
4. ensuring the right conditions for growth;
5. developing skills and increasing employment opportunities for all; and
6. capitalising upon our key sectors.

This is a 'living' document and will be subject to regular modifications.

This action plan translates the strategic direction set by the Joint West Suffolk Strategic Plan, the Suffolk Growth Strategy and the Strategic Economic Plans of the Local Enterprise Partnerships into the local level. The actions included in this document directly relate to the collective aspiration to promote growth in the region as expressed by our partners and endorsed by us. Furthermore, this plan helps to deliver national growth ambitions:

- UK best place in EU to start, finance and grow a business;
- encourage investment and exports; and
- more educated workforce that is most flexible in EU.

# What does West Suffolk offer?

West Suffolk sits at the very heart of the East of England and covers a geographical area from Brandon to the north (bordering Norfolk), Haverhill to the south (bordering Essex) and across from Hopton in the east to Newmarket (bordering Cambridgeshire) in the west. The area covers a total of 103,472 hectares and has a growing population climbing towards 200,000.

There are six main towns within West Suffolk: Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Clare, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket and there are currently in the region of 6500 registered businesses.

We are located at the crossroads of the main road routes from London to Norwich (A11) and the route between the industrial heartland of the Midlands and the major port of Felixstowe (A14). Cambridge, an international centre of innovation and research and a growing airport, is less than 12 miles away from Newmarket; and Stansted and Norwich airports are also easily reached in under an hour by road.



*Arc, Bury St Edmunds  
– English Heritage  
beacon of excellence*



*West Suffolk College and  
University Campus Suffolk –  
The future of local education*



*Newmarket  
– World Heritage Site*



*Clare – over a hundred  
businesses within a small town*

With a rich variety of natural landscape and many rare wildlife species, the area is renowned for its excellent quality of life, picture-book villages and many tourist attractions, contributing to the vibrancy of the local economy. West Suffolk is a successful, safe and supportive area just over an hour away from London.

With the historic town of Bury St Edmunds at its economic centre, West Suffolk has a thriving, diverse economy. It embraces a number of significant business sectors (including tourism; food, drink and agriculture; life sciences and advanced manufacturing) along with a remarkable entrepreneurial appetite to stimulate and encourage innovation. Its close proximity to the research and development centre of Cambridge, combined with attractive rents, rates and land prices and a 'business friendly' public sector, makes West Suffolk an extremely attractive proposition for businesses looking to locate, grow and expand.

In Newmarket, the globally recognised centre of the horseracing industry is a unique asset – in terms of its local economic impact, its contribution to tourism, its stimulus to a growing local biotechnology sector and its overall contribution to the 'sporting offer' in East Anglia. An important asset for Mildenhall and Lakenheath is USAFE with a population of approximately 4,750 people who contribute towards our local economy.

# 1

## Meeting and understanding West Suffolk businesses

Visit employers and business organisations on a regular basis and support them with proactive engagement in their future plans

*We will:*

- **Produce a targeted business engagement programme - “investment ambassadors”**

This will determine when and where we will engage with businesses to understand what they need to grow their business. This work will involve resources throughout the councils and will be aligned with our Communications Plan.



- **Build a comprehensive Customer Relationship Management system**

This system will ensure a joined-up approach and enable us to monitor and record contact with businesses and assist us in developing detailed knowledge of businesses in West Suffolk.

- **Identify and support businesses with plans to expand**

Businesses in this category are a key priority because expansion will lead to growth. Specific support will be determined on a case-by-case basis, but could include identifying land and premises, leveraging in external funding and liaising with relevant internal and external partners.

- **Engage with business representative bodies**

We will further develop our support of business representative bodies (e.g. Chambers of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses) through information sharing and jointly funding and managing initiatives that deliver growth.

- **Improve public sector procurement opportunities for local businesses**

Working with partners across Suffolk we will continue to improve the procurement process, making it simpler and jargon-free. We will develop a new procurement strategy and work with organisations, including the Chambers of Commerce, to ensure local companies are fully aware of available contracts.

- **Encourage and help businesses to export products and services**

Working closely with UK Trade and Investment we will ensure that relevant businesses are offered a range of services to help with understanding and accessing overseas markets, regulations and business practices.

- **Help businesses to use resources more efficiently**

We will continue to support small and medium-sized businesses (including suppliers) to become more resource efficient, with the aim of reducing business operating costs and cutting carbon emissions. We will also investigate opportunities for increasing local business activity in the environmental goods and services sector.



Examples of why these actions will help drive growth

**Procurement**

Business feedback says the public sector should make it easier for local businesses to bid for contracts. "Keep the Suffolk £ in Suffolk."

**Exporting**

UK Trade and Investment research shows that 'most businesses overestimate the risks and underestimate the benefits of export'.

**Understanding business**

As our knowledge of local businesses and their growth cycles improves, our support will have more impact.

**Greener Business Grant case study**

**Andrew Hunter, who runs Bury Physio, applied to the council for a £1000 Greener Business Grant.**

**Upon getting his grant application approved, Mr Hunter put the money towards the cost of a project to replace 40 fluorescent tube lights with low wattage energy efficient LED lighting.**

**The project will reduce the company's carbon footprint by 3.2 tonnes per year and save over £400 per year in electricity.**



**Business Festival case study**

**In 2011 St Edmundsbury Borough Council created the first business festival of its kind, an event that has now become the eastern region's leading Business Festival.**

**In 2013 St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath councils worked together with 28 partners, ran 25 events and in excess of 1500 people attended over a ten day period.**

# 2

## Promoting the West Suffolk economic region

Invest in the creation and promotion of a West Suffolk investment brand which clearly sets out West Suffolk's unique selling points

*We will:*

- **Create and develop a West Suffolk investment brand**

Actions will include the development of an 'Invest in West Suffolk' website for investors to easily find out about West Suffolk and to encourage businesses to relocate here; and trained West Suffolk ambassadors to drive the brand. This brand will complement existing borough/district, town, county and Local Enterprise Partnership level brands.

- **Produce information packs for potential investors on 'Reasons to invest in West Suffolk'**

These packs, which will be web-based and downloadable, will include vital current information for investors including house prices, local education providers, plus information tailored to individual enquiries – with the aim of making their choice to locate to West Suffolk easy.

- **Deliver and market activities, events and facilities to promote West Suffolk**

We will encourage visitors and businesses into West Suffolk to contribute to the economy and consider investing in the area.

- **Collaborate and take advantage of county level initiatives**

We will review the Suffolk Growth Strategy and Delivery Plan and we will play a key role in county-wide schemes, for example on inward investment, apprenticeships and procurement.

- **Exploit opportunities available beyond county boundaries**

We will maximise global links – for example Newmarket, the global home of horseracing and our close proximity to Cambridge. We will build stronger relationships with UK Trade and Investment and embassy and consulate-based representatives and facilitate activity undertaken by our strategic partners including Local Enterprise Partnerships.





Examples of why these actions will help drive growth

### Highlighting our most attractive features

West Suffolk offers an extremely high quality of life in terms of our significant investment in leisure, arts and heritage activities; landscape; historic towns and modern shops; and good value housing. It is a great place to start a business, build business and move entire corporations to. Strategically, it is at the heart of the East of England, close to Cambridge and on the A14, well-placed for three airports, including Stansted, and the East Coast ports. If businesses should encounter barriers to growth, West Suffolk will work hard to remove these and will proactively promote the unique selling points of West Suffolk through a brand that strikes a chord with national and international business investors.

**Unique selling points:**  
Lifestyle, Location,  
Problem-solving

### Invest in success

West Suffolk has been assessed as one of the best areas in the country for “small but rapidly growing firms” that “show entrepreneurial skill, appetite for business risk and real international outlook”, according to research carried out by data analysts Experian. An example of an entrepreneurial business is Go Ape, which now has 29 courses in the UK (one of which is in Brandon) and three in the USA. The co-founder of Go Ape praised the local authority for “supporting new businesses and understanding their needs”.



### Inward investment case study

**We are working closely with Suffolk County Council to develop the 'Invest in Suffolk' brand. This brand will involve a suite of marketing materials and a proactive, coordinated and effective inward investment service to support companies seeking to locate or expand in Suffolk. We are also working with the emerging 'Think Cambridge' brand, which places Greater Cambridge (which includes West Suffolk) at the top of the esteemed list of forward-thinking European city areas.**

# 3

## Supporting our market towns

Focus resources on the appropriate development of our market towns

*We will:*

- **Help existing town centre organisations to prosper**

We will work closely with organisations including Our Bury St Edmunds (a Business Improvement District), Brandon Town Team; Newmarket Retailers Association; Newmarket Experience (a partnership of attraction and accommodation providers in Newmarket), and ONE Haverhill (an independent partnership that brings organisations and resources together to make them more effective and efficient in Haverhill).

We will continue to deliver innovative projects through these and other partnerships (e.g. the World Host initiative to provide exclusive training to businesses in Newmarket).



- **Develop our provisions markets**

We have created a new Market Development Officer role because market development is core to town centre animation and tourism activities. This officer will be responsible for ensuring that the areas of Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Clare, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket are thriving, healthy destinations.

- **Deliver regeneration projects in our market towns**

Working with partners, projects will include the effective re-use of existing sites that are underused or vacant. For example in Station Hill and Tayfen Road in Bury St Edmunds we will encourage a mixed development of residential properties, offices, retail premises, leisure uses, parking and landscaping.

- **Produce plans to future-proof our market towns**

This will include helping the community to play an integral role in the Haverhill Master Plan process which will set the context for the regeneration of the central area and provide the framework for individual development proposals to come forward.

- **Improve the appeal of our market towns, making them the destination for tourists and businesses alike**

Initiatives will include exploring the opportunities for a Destination Management Organisation in West Suffolk and further Business Improvement Districts; enhancing and extending our shop front improvement scheme and implementing the Prince's Foundation findings for Newmarket, as well as building on our tourism offer.

- **Deliver outstanding events in our town centres and surrounding areas**

We will continue to deliver events such as the Business Festival, Bury St Edmunds Christmas Fayre and the Two Counties Business Exhibition, building on the success of these events.



Examples of why these actions will help drive growth

### **Improve shop fronts**

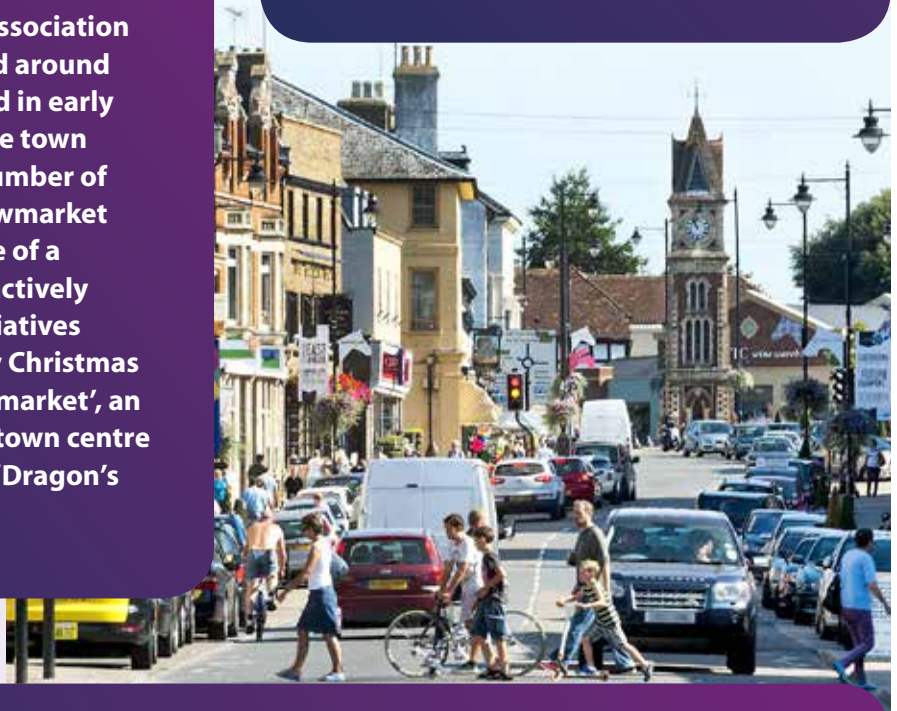
Since 2009 we have awarded over £19,000 to 38 shops across Brandon, Lakenheath, Mildenhall and Newmarket, helping to maintain or improve the vitality and vibrancy of those locations. We intend to expand the scheme across West Suffolk and increase the offer to businesses beyond improving their shop frontage. Strong local centres are an important element in the quality of life and the overall 'offer' to businesses and the workforce they need to operate successfully.

### **Newmarket Retailers Association case study**

The Newmarket Retailers' Association (NRA) promotes retail in and around Newmarket. It was launched in early 2010 to help reinvigorate the town following a decline in the number of shoppers and visitors to Newmarket Town Centre over the course of a decade. The NRA has been actively involved in a number of initiatives including the Annual Family Christmas Day and 'Strictly Come Newmarket', an initiative to regenerate the town centre and fill vacant shops with a 'Dragon's Den' style competition.

### **Our Bury St Edmunds case study**

In 2010 a Business Improvement District was formed in Bury St Edmunds. Its priorities are marketing, safety and security, Christmas lights, environment, events and business support, and its role is to help businesses improve and grow. The 'ourburystedmunds' website can be used to promote businesses alongside the twitter facility @ourburysteds. We work in partnership with Our Bury St Edmunds on events and initiatives across the town, including the Christmas Fayre, Whitsun Fayre, Christmas Lights switch on and the 'Free from 3' car parking offer in town every Tuesday.



### **Vision for Newmarket case study**

In partnership with the Prince's Foundation, Suffolk County Council and Newmarket Town Council, we held a series of meetings in Newmarket to engage people with an interest in the town. This led to a vision for Newmarket which balances the need for homes, jobs, leisure, horseracing, industry and local amenities. This work will protect Newmarket for future generations and enable its growth in a planned and sustainable way. The Foundation's final report includes numerous actions which will be delivered over the life of this plan, many of which are focused on how to help businesses grow.

# 4

## Ensuring the right conditions for growth

Work to remove the barriers to growth for West Suffolk businesses

*We will:*

- **Assist businesses to secure land and premises**

We will ensure that sufficient employment land allocations are provided through our Local Plans and that there are appropriate start-up opportunities and follow-on space. Specific projects include working to deliver the construction of the Eastern Relief Road and improvements to Junction 45 of the A14 Trunk road at Bury St Edmunds to unlock 68 hectares of employment land at Suffolk Business Park. This will create a flagship business park on the strategic A14 corridor. We are carrying out innovation/incubation studies to assess appropriate incubation provision in West Suffolk.

- **Represent the interests of our businesses**

Officers and Councillors will seek to understand the barriers to growth for businesses and will look to address them (e.g. the shortage of commercial land supply in West Suffolk).

- **Help businesses to access financial support**

To maximise the delivery of funding opportunities for West Suffolk businesses; projects include researching external funding and maintaining a database of current grants, making this information available and accessible to businesses. We are also extending our existing small business loans and grants scheme across West Suffolk.

- **Seek to improve the environment for West Suffolk businesses**

Multiple interventions are required to support future economic growth in addition to those already mentioned elsewhere in this plan, including:

- Connectivity – we will continue to push for digital communications enhancements;
- Housing growth – we are helping to develop a unified housing growth strategy across West Suffolk, based on relevant housing growth targets and demographic data;
- Infrastructure – we have identified and are prioritising key projects (e.g. A14 and A1307 upgrades);
- Networking – we will provide engagement opportunities to assist businesses to develop new supply chains and open up their markets; and
- Facilitation – we will work with our colleagues in regulatory services (e.g. Planning and Licensing) to ensure that businesses are dealt with smoothly and efficiently by the West Suffolk councils.



Examples of why these actions will help drive growth

### **Communication with business**

Many small to medium enterprises have difficulty addressing longer term issues especially in times of no/minimal economic growth, as they are preoccupied with day to day survival. This is why we will continue to improve our communication with businesses so that they are fully able to exploit the economic upturn and any opportunities it generates without delay.

### **Opportunity for reduced business rates at Haverhill Research Park to attract companies**

The Localism Act 2011 provides the power for local authorities to grant business rates discounts entirely as they see fit. Whilst councils need to meet the cost of any discount, the cost should be outweighed by the long-term benefit of receiving future business rates. A pilot package has therefore been developed to encourage the first 'anchor' business to relocate to Haverhill Research Park. A successful anchor business should encourage other businesses to the park.

### **Infrastructure planning and bidding case study**

**We are currently lobbying our Local Enterprise Partnerships to attract funding support for transport infrastructure improvements in West Suffolk (e.g. town centre relief roads and A14 junction improvements).**

### **Business grant and loan scheme case study**

**Since the Forest Heath small business grant scheme was established in April 2011, 20 start-up businesses have received a grant. The scheme was reviewed during early 2013 and, due to its success, a second tranche of funding was added. To date, a further seven grants have been awarded with another four applications in the pipeline. It is likely that this scheme will be extended across West Suffolk.**

### **Lobbying against A14 toll road case study**

**The Department for Transport proposed a toll road as part of the upgrading of the A14 in Cambridgeshire. In September 2013 the Chamber of Commerce launched the campaign 'No Toll Tax on Suffolk' which was supported by both West Suffolk councils. This campaign highlighted the detrimental impact a toll would have on businesses. The campaign was a success; in December 2013 Government announced that the plans for the toll have been axed and the upgrade will be paid for out of general taxation.**





# 5

## Developing skills and increasing employment opportunities for all

Align the skills base and skills provision in West Suffolk with job opportunities

*We will:*

- **Support partners to deliver effective careers education, information, advice and guidance support**

For example, we will work with education providers and other partners to deliver projects that try to bridge the gap between young people and local businesses.

- **Promote entrepreneurship activities to inspire all**

We will support organisations such as Young Enterprise to enhance and develop activities for young people and we will work with partners to deliver lifelong learning initiatives.

- **Encourage the uptake of apprenticeships in West Suffolk**

We will play an integral role in the delivery of the county-wide apprenticeship project, that has the aim of increasing the number of apprenticeships across the whole county. We will continue to 'practice as we preach' by employing apprentices in various departments across west Suffolk.

- **Understand what skills our businesses need to grow**

Through increased engagement with our businesses we will understand what skills they need. We will liaise with our education and community-based partners to ensure that these needs are met through more appropriate training provision.

- **Encourage the creation of high value jobs in West Suffolk**

We will look to increase opportunities for residents to achieve higher salary levels (improving housing affordability) by working to attract and create higher value businesses through our inward investment strategy.



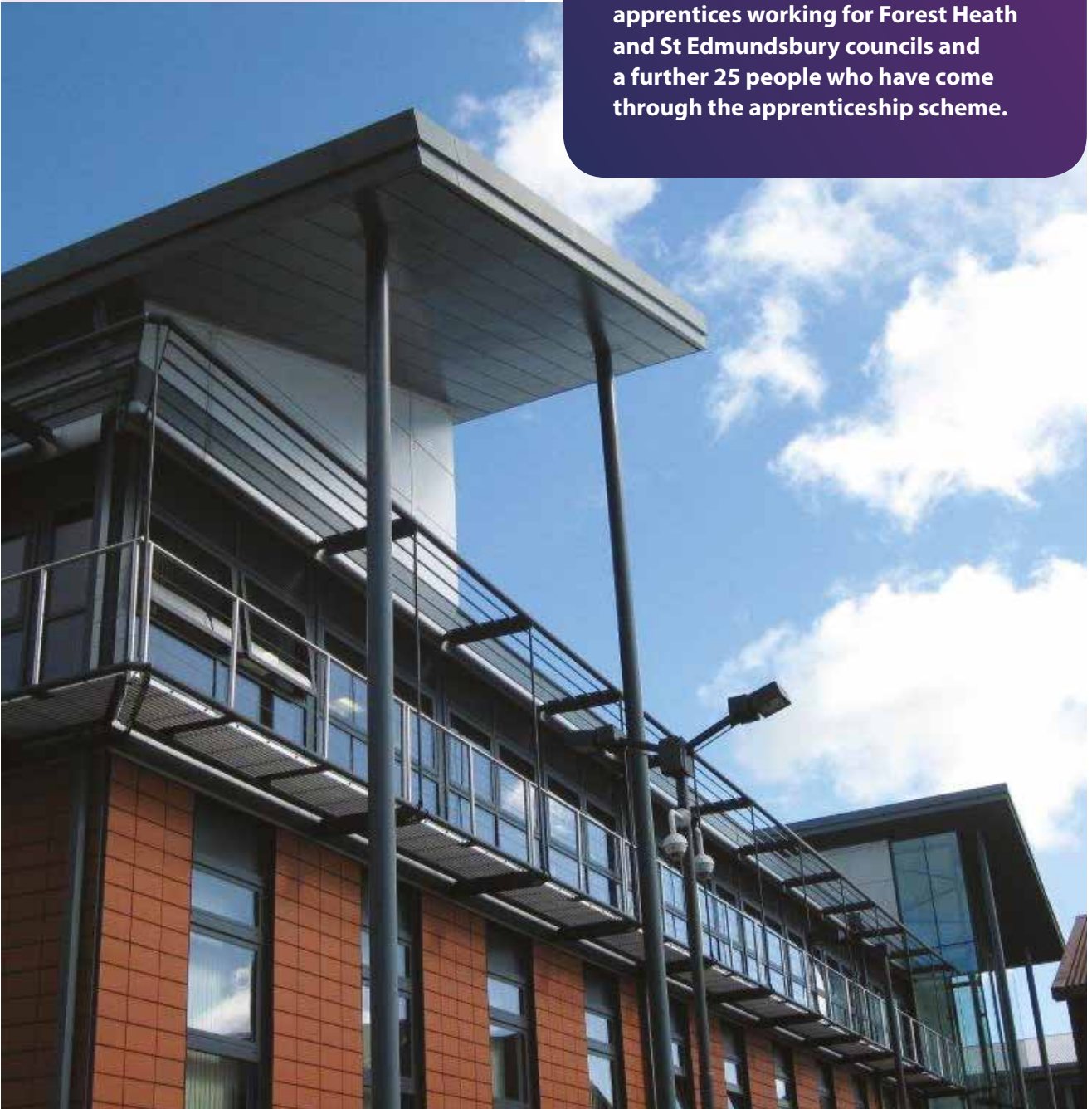
Examples of why these actions will help drive growth

**Opportunity to improve skills levels**

Our aspiration is to lead the way in matching the skills required by businesses to the skills held by potential employees. This will increase employment figures and provide businesses with a capable workforce able to carry out the tasks required of them efficiently.

**Apprenticeships case study**

**We have defined our commitment to apprenticeships through a new Apprenticeship Agreement, which ensures a consistent and supportive approach to employing apprentices. There is considerable public interest in high levels of unemployment amongst young adults and this is an excellent opportunity for us to build quality apprenticeship routes for young people. At present, we have ten apprentices working for Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils and a further 25 people who have come through the apprenticeship scheme.**



# 6

## Capitalising upon our key sectors

Exploit the opportunities for growth available through our key sectors

*We will:*

- **Focus particular support on West Suffolk's top three sectors for growth**

We recognise potential for growth from all sectors, however three sectors probably have the greatest potential for growth in West Suffolk. These are sectors which build upon our competitive advantage and will drive jobs and GVA growth fastest.

### Tourism

- Around 10.5% of total employment, over 67,000 jobs and worth £1.3 billion to the Norfolk and Suffolk economy.
- West Suffolk has attractive villages, market towns and significant tourism assets (e.g. Newmarket for horse racing and Center Parcs in Elveden).
- Initiatives will include encouraging more overnight stays; helping to coordinate marketing and promotional activities; and endeavouring to bring new, large visitor attractions to the region.

### Food, drink and agriculture

- Around 12.7% of total employment, over 81,000 jobs and worth over £2 billion to the Norfolk and Suffolk economy.
- West Suffolk is home to nationally and internationally recognised businesses, including British Sugar (Bury St Edmunds), Direct Table Foods (Bury St Edmunds), Greene King (Bury St Edmunds), Elveden Estates (Elveden) and the Newmarket Sausage produced by a number of Newmarket Butchers.
- Initiatives will include promoting the locational benefits and sector strengths to help target new markets or companies for inward investment; working with the sector to exploit links and opportunities with other sectors; encouraging development of any new skills/training provision required; and supporting the sector to work with school education providers to promote the sector as an attractive employment opportunity for young people.





### **Life sciences and biotechnology (including equine)**

- Around 0.27% of total employment (due to the way in which Sector Industry Codes record employment within sectors, the figures do not fully reflect the actual number of people employed) in Norfolk and Suffolk, with over 1000 jobs, but the potential is recognised as huge.
- West Suffolk is home to internationally recognised businesses including the Animal Health Trust (Newmarket), Genzyme (Haverhill) and Nestor Pharmaceuticals (Mildenhall).
- Initiatives will include promoting Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket ‘hubs’ as life science/biotech employment centres; promoting the New Anglia region as a centre of research excellence to help attract domestic and overseas students; fostering the development of a strong regional ‘Angel Investor Network’ operating outside of Cambridge; and working with the sector to identify specific opportunities to bid for research and infrastructure/development funds.

### • **Support other vital sectors**

#### **Advanced manufacturing**

- Around 3.8% of total employment, with over 24,000 jobs and worth over £1.5 billion to the Norfolk and Suffolk economy.
- West Suffolk businesses include Dialight (Newmarket), Herga (Bury St Edmunds), International Flavours and Fragrances Inc (Haverhill) and Premier Foods (Bury St Edmunds).
- Initiatives will include supporting the development of the Norfolk and Suffolk Advanced Manufacturing Group (NSAMG); supporting NSAMG to lobby on behalf of the sector and align national business support programmes; and working with NSAMG to identify the specific needs of businesses in this sector and their skills requirements.

#### **Digital and cultural creative industries**

- Around 1.7% of total employment, with over 10,800 jobs in Norfolk and Suffolk.
- This sector includes marketing, media and communications, advertising, architecture, crafts, design, designer fashion, video, film and photography, music and the visual and performing arts, publishing, computer games, software, and radio and TV. West Suffolk businesses include Hamlin Brands (Red Lodge) and Music Sales (Bury St Edmunds).
- Initiatives will include making the case for on-going investment in superfast broadband for Norfolk and Suffolk and recognising the importance of broadband for the growth of digital and creative industries; and recognising the critical role of our investment in culture and heritage in enhancing our tourism and overall economic growth offer.

#### **Financial services**

- Around 3.2% of total employment, with over 20,000 jobs and worth £3.1 billion to the Norfolk and Suffolk economy. This is a significant and thriving sector with interesting potential connections.
- West Suffolk businesses include AXA (Haverhill), Baker Tilly (Bury St Edmunds) and Hastings Direct (Newmarket).
- Initiatives will include working with the sector to exploit links and opportunities with other sectors, particularly ICT, digital and creative industries; encouraging development of any new skills/training provision required (e.g. skills and qualifications needed to create or utilise new technologies); and making the case for ongoing investment in and accelerating delivery of superfast broadband, road and rail improvements in West Suffolk.

Examples of why these actions will help drive growth

### **Determining key sectors**

Through the sector work undertaken by the Local Enterprise Partnerships, and research carried out by West Suffolk and its partners during the development of the Suffolk Growth Strategy, we have been able to understand what the key sectors are for our region. This information has highlighted where we can make the most difference in sector development to achieve growth.

### **Competitive sectors for high growth**

Suffolk has strong concentrations of nationally, and globally competitive sectors. With our partners we recognise the importance of building on these sectors to create new jobs and strengthen the economy. These sectors are of significant value to the economy in terms of gross value added, high skilled employment and growth potential, providing business and employment opportunities for all.

## **Genzyme, Haverhill case study**

**Genzyme is one of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies. The Haverhill headquarters have an advantageous position on the borders of three counties – Cambridgeshire, Essex and Suffolk.**

**Their business strategy is based on three key themes:**

- **increasing innovation in research and development;**
- **adapting our structures to meet the challenges of the future; and**
- **exploring external growth opportunities.**

**Genzyme currently has two business units – rare genetic diseases and multiple sclerosis – and therapeutic products currently serve patients in more than 100 countries worldwide.**

**Research and development is key to Genzyme's success and part of this work involves exploring treatments for unmet needs in other medical areas (e.g. neurologic and immune-medicated diseases).**





## Unisurge, Newmarket case study

Unisurge is a trusted manufacturer and supplier of practitioner-specified procedure packs, dressing packs, medical disposables and theatre products to health care professionals. Surgical teams can be confident that all the necessary components for a procedure will be supplied, to their precise specification, in a pre-sterile pack, ready for immediate use. Linked to a significant investment in state of the art information technology, Unisurge use its own fleet of vehicles to ensure that pre-sterile packs arrive at their destination on time and in optimum condition.

## Claydons, Wickhambrook case study

Claydons, who have been farming since the early 1900s, have developed the innovative 'Claydon System' which negates the need for unnecessary and expensive pre-cultivations. It is approximately a third of the cost of full cultivation and with a 6 metre Claydon drill the process takes only a fifth of the time. Results show that there is an approximately ten percent higher yield in most years when farming land using the system. The 'Claydon System' has become the most sustainable direct drilling/strip tillage technique in Northern Europe and there are over 500 Claydon drills in operation across 18 countries in Europe.



## Depden Farm Shop, Café and Training Centre, Depden case study

Depden Farm Shop, Café and Training Centre was launched in May 2012, and in this short time the owners have received several awards, including a Suffolk Greenest County Award and Bury Free Press Business Award. The café, a converted barn, serves a selection of homebaked cakes, tea and coffee, and the farm shop stocks the owners' own lamb, pork, homegrown vegetables and fruit, and homemade cakes. Smallholding training courses and sustainable skills training events are also on offer. The holding is run on sustainable principles and the animals are managed on a high welfare system, with low stocking rates and ample freedom to roam.

# Governance

The actions within this plan will be regularly monitored by officers, and the Economic Development and Growth Portfolio Holders and relevant stakeholders.

The plan as a whole will be reviewed annually by the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group (WSJGSG). This group has been set up with the purpose of advising the Cabinets of Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council on creating the conditions to encourage and support sustainable growth across the whole of the West Suffolk area. During these annual reviews officers will prepare a formal statement outlining the progress made and outcomes achieved for each of the action points, and this information will be available to download on the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury websites. In addition to these annual reviews, the WSJGSG will receive updates on individual projects, as appropriate.

## Contact us today

If you would like to get involved in any of the actions, or you would like to know more about individual projects, please get in touch with the Economic Development and Growth team using the details below.

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