



Open for Business Strategy

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils





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1. Priorities

- 1.1 The Councils' Joint Strategic Plan (2016-2020) sets out how the Councils and the communities they serve can take full advantage of the economic opportunities provided by the changes and challenges we are facing. It provides an overview of the shared direction, pace and common purpose which can deliver the kind of outcomes we jointly wish to see.

The five key strategic outcomes are:



Housing Delivery -

more of the right type of homes, of the right tenure, in the right place



Business Growth and Increased Productivity -

Encourage development of employment sites and other business growth, of the right type, in the right place and encourage investment in skills and innovation in order to increase productivity



Community Capacity Building and Engagement -

All communities are thriving, growing, healthy, active and self-sufficient



Assets and investments -

Improved achievement of strategic priorities and greater income generation through use of new and existing assets



An enabled and efficient organisation -

The right people, doing the right things, in the right way, and the right time, for the right reasons.

Our Joint Strategic Plan

<http://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/The-Council/Joint-Strategic-Plan-2016-2020.pdf>

3

Top priority areas for the
Joint Councils are:



Economy and Environment

Babergh: Shape, influence and provide the leadership to enable growth while protecting and enhancing our environment.

Mid Suffolk: Lead and shape the local economy by promoting and helping to deliver sustainable economic growth which is balanced with respect for wildlife, heritage and the natural and built environment.



Housing

Babergh: Shape, influence and provide the leadership to achieve the right mix and supply of housing.

Mid Suffolk: Ensure there are enough good quality, environmentally efficient and cost-effective homes with the appropriate tenures and in the right locations.



Strong & healthy communities

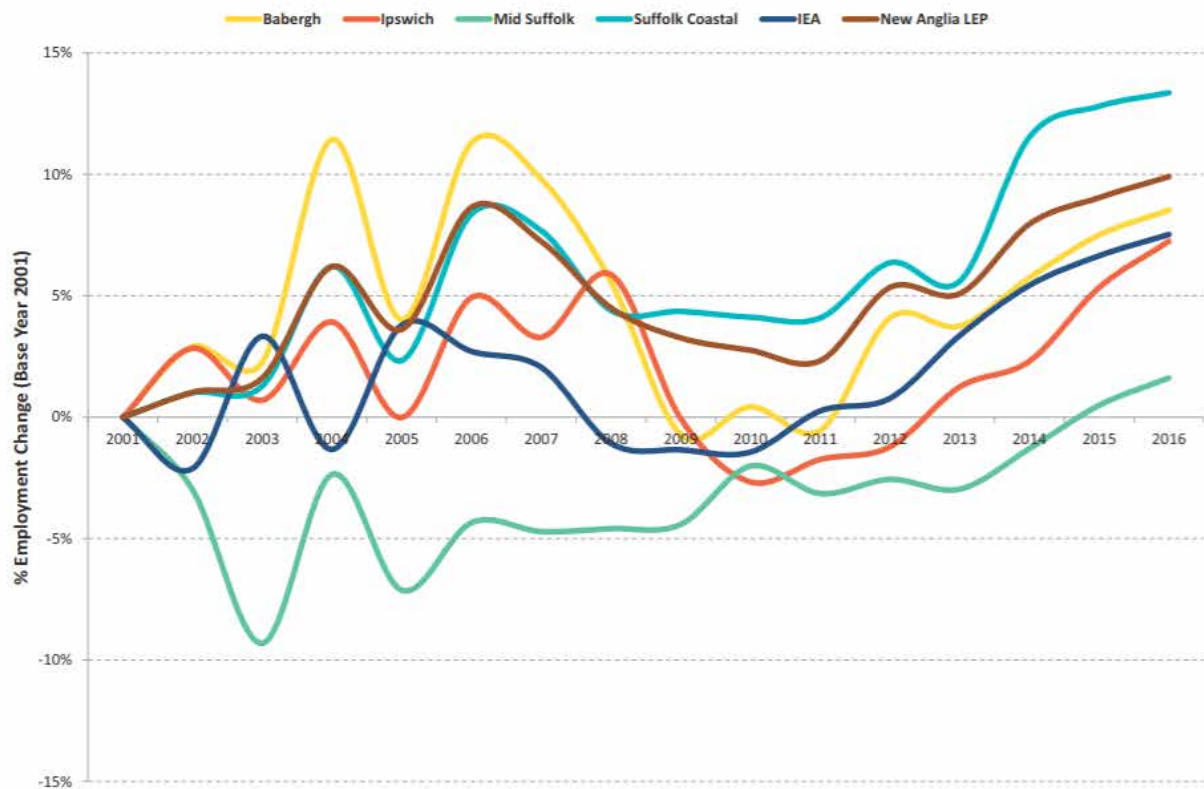
Babergh: Shape, influence and provide the leadership to support and facilitate active, healthy and safe communities.

Mid Suffolk: Encourage and support individuals and communities to be self-sufficient, strong, healthy and safe.

2. Major issues impacting on growth in BMS

- 2.1 The significant challenges, and also opportunities, to the region are expressed within the New Anglia Economic Strategy and emerging Industrial Strategy work and therefore need not be replicated within this document. At a local level however that is reflected and expanded as:
- a)** There are several large local strategic sites in BMS, including designated Enterprise Zone sites, with potential for significant job generation but which need support (including utilities, key infrastructure and services) to bring them to the market
 - b)** There are limited premises options for SMEs - starter/incubator/clustering then scaling-up 'graduation' space
 - c)** There are still slow broadband speeds and patchy mobile phone coverage in rural areas
 - d)** Lower skill levels and educational attainment than the regional/national averages
 - e)** High levels of outward commuting - contributed to by an imbalance between housing and jobs
 - f)** Low levels of entrepreneurship and business start-up (but also fewer business failures)
 - g)** Market towns are in need of support with emphasis on improving the vitality of the town centres, and to become destination areas playing to their individual strengths
 - h)** Limited access to higher education learning provision (although this may now be improving). Limited access to adult learning provision and support across the wider rural areas
 - i)** Rural infrastructure, access to skills and inability to recruit young people to rural locations can be barriers to growth - particularly road and digital network (improving existing as well as lobbying for new links) and specialist/higher level skills and leadership
 - j)** Places which have inherent barriers to growth and development such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Changes in total employment by area 2001-2016 (2001 = 0%)



Source: East of England Forecasting Model (2016) / Lichfields analysis

3. Aims and objectives

3.1 This strategy will, in combination with other collaborative approaches, provide a framework to deliver the following aims and objectives:

- a) Support delivery of the Councils' Joint Strategic Priorities, the Suffolk Growth Framework, New Anglia Economic Strategy and the Government's Industrial Strategy
- b) Protect our employment base
- c) Help to deliver 10,000 new jobs* and nearly 18,000 new homes** by 2036
- d) Deliver a range sites of different types, sizes and locations of employment land and premises to meet both identified business sectoral needs as well as general employment sites.
- e) Safeguard employment land and assets that are able to deliver additional growth beyond these minimum needs
- f) Improve productivity
- g) Raise the quality of local jobs, the value of our businesses, increase average wages, and support gender pay equality
- h) Support local businesses to survive, thrive and grow and in doing so recognise that our local economic bedrock is micro and SME businesses/enterprises and these support, and build identity, within our local communities
- i) Raise the employability and skill levels of our workforce
- j) Reduce the leakage of talent out of the area and helping to retain local skills, innovation and ability
- k) Support a thriving visitor economy sector (including events, activities and attractions)
- l) Rejuvenate our vibrant market towns
- m) Nurture a climate of entrepreneurs and innovation (including sub-sector innovation which may mitigate forecast decline in some sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing)
- n) Improve physical infrastructure to support sustainable growth and enhancement and conservation of our natural and built environment
- o) Secure greater inward investment and access to funding

* <http://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/Ipswich-Economic-Area-Sector-Needs-Assessment-Sept-2017.pdf>

** <http://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/Ipswich-and-Waveney-Housing-Market-Areas-Strategic-Housing-Market-Assessment-Part-1-May-2017.pdf>

3.2 To enable the delivery of the above we will:

- a) Work collaboratively, and smartly, with our partners supported by shared business intelligence, common/open data and evidence base and effective networking - building trusted relationships through open and honest dialogue
- b) Secure or signpost new funding streams or investment financing mechanisms, and make it easier for businesses to access these
- c) Improve the co-ordination of interventions, actions and resources from national, regional and local organisations and agencies
- d) Attract new inward investment into the districts, and consider our own investment interventions, and use of assets, where appropriate
- e) Increase our commercial awareness and understanding of the local business community
- f) Support the requirement for the Councils to be financially resilient
- g) Support the creation of additional commercial floorspace and premises

3.3 The strategy also acts as:

- a) An inward investment prospectus
- b) Material information to inform planning decision-making, including through direct planning consultation responses made via the Open for Business Team
- c) Support for development of a phased and prioritised Delivery Plan (for example, through facilitating Visioning for Prosperity activity with stakeholders and communities)

3.4 The Strategy seeks to achieve this by being ‘Open for Business’.

We will support economic growth across our joint authority areas, being flexible towards the needs and scale of different business sectors, and seeking to find solutions which deliver economic growth.

We are committed to:

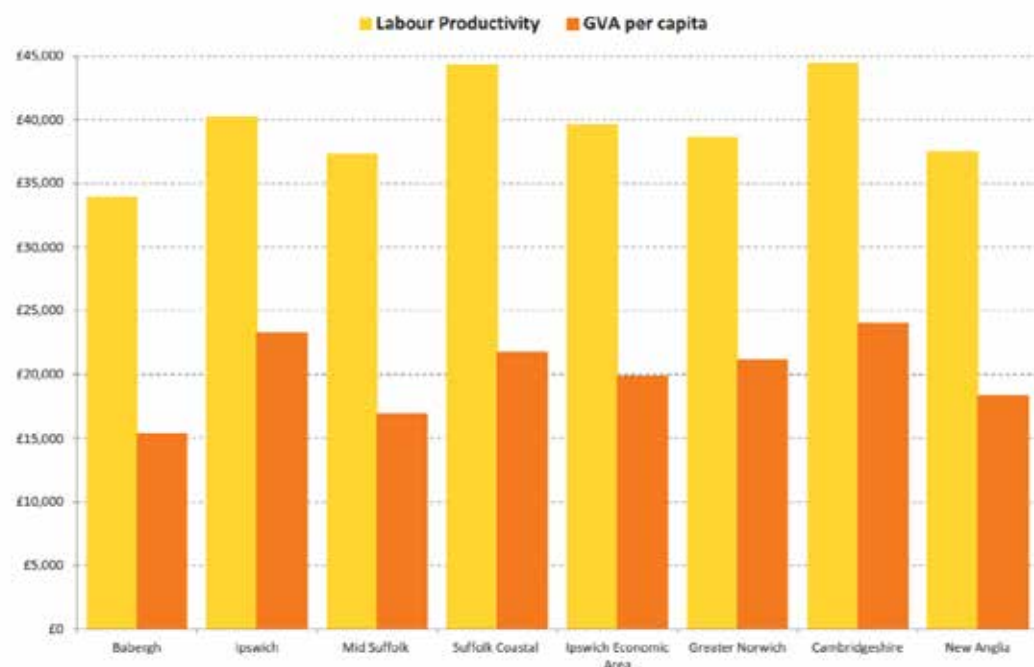
- a) Promoting our ‘Open for Business’ ethos at every opportunity to deliver our Joint Strategic Plan by aligning this framework with other Council strategies, policies and functions (planning, investment, spatial, housing, environmental and regulatory).
- b) Supporting, with our partners, businesses of all sizes and across all sectors, wherever they are located in BMS.
- c) Encouraging a culture of entrepreneurship and supporting new start-up businesses.
- d) Supporting, with our partners, our existing businesses to establish, survive, grow and improve their productivity and competitiveness.
- e) Welcoming and supporting larger businesses looking to relocate or expand in our areas
- f) Developing our investment strategy to join-up investment in land and property, development and regeneration projects to provide sustainable business growth options.
- g) Championing the business community of BMS on the regional, national and international stage to promote growth and trade locally, and boost inward-investment.
- h) Obtaining and maintaining intelligence and baselines of evidence for tailoring/ adapting and justifying our offer. Working with our partners on effective use, collation and analyses of data to inform strategies and actions which deliver growth.
- i) Developing a marketing and brand-building strategy, in collaboration with others, for Mid Suffolk and Babergh to domestic and overseas investors and visitors.
- j) Developing our website functionality and content to enable easier access to relevant and targeted information (including sectoral and transactional)
- k) Publishing information and intelligence that businesses can use to inform growth and investment decisions.
- l) Ensuring there is continuing councillor and officer development and closer working to best serve our businesses - developing training, expertise and locality knowledge.

4. Opportunities for our places in BMS

a) Supporting the region's priority places as 'growth engines'

Babergh and Mid Suffolk are placed at the very heart of Suffolk and the region, and are well placed to support making Suffolk an optimal location for commercial innovation, investment, and business expansion and bringing about sustainable and inclusive growth.

Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita and per job (Labour Productivity) 2016 (2011 prices)



Source: East of England Forecasting Model (2016) / Lichfields analysis

BMS recognise that inclusive growth of the region's priority places, as expressed in the New Anglia Economic Strategy, and advancement of its global scale business operators creates opportunities for our local businesses as suppliers and supply chains, consumers, sectoral cluster innovators and developers of sub-sector specialisms - and with it grow the potential for challenging incumbent operators.

Regional engines are supported by our district level priority places but BMS is an attractive business proposition in its own right – including 'Space to Innovate' branded Enterprise Zones, Food Enterprise Zones, 'greater' Stowmarket and the A14 corridor from the Port of Felixstowe, 'greater' Sudbury and South Suffolk area and the Ipswich fringe/A12 gateway. BMS business can and do help to reinforce and grow the regional economy.

Stowmarket and Sudbury are the main towns and key drivers of growth and prosperity in BMS, with large spheres of influence as the major social and economic hubs for the districts. We will complete a project called 'Delivering a Vision for Prosperity' for both Sudbury and Stowmarket, which is intended to establish:

- a high-level **aspiration**, setting out the community's key desires and wishes for the towns they would like to live and work in;
- the **priorities** for the towns - setting out the main targets, goals and achievements to focus limited resources;
- a **delivery plan** that identifies the intended key projects and action points, and sets out who will be responsible for their implementation, and when.

The purpose of this visioning process is to provide an opportunity for the local community, businesses and organisations to:

- Understand the current projects, plans and strategies that are already shaping their place - seeing that this is not new, just one point along the town's timeline of growth.
- Set out what they would like to see in the future, commenting on development, service delivery and important issues.
- Reflect upon and share what they would like their town to become in the context of the benefits and opportunities that growth may bring.
- Unite behind the strategic, high level co-ordinated vision for the improvement of their area

As Delivering a Vision for Prosperity (VfP) progresses, the towns and their catchment areas will have a clear focus for improved quality of life and confident business decisions.

b) Strategic connectivity and quality of life

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts are well served by major freight and passenger ports, Stansted Airport, and their proximity to London, Cambridge and the Midlands. Weaving these together is a dual carriageway and A-road network which offers convenient journey times. The quality of life on offer in Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts is excellent, with Mid Suffolk in particular consistently rating very highly as one of the happiest places in the UK. Around an hour from London, Norwich and Cambridge by train, with high speed links across the country, Babergh and Mid Suffolk are well connected. With the exception of a few hotspots, traffic congestion is also very low, with ample free and low-cost parking.

The rural nature, open green spaces and low crime rate create an attractive environment to live and work in - encouraging both businesses and families into the area.

c. Diversity of business opportunity

BMS is home to numerous and diverse businesses including global brands such as Akzo Nobel, Bosch, Philips Avent, Tesco, Nestle Purina, Aspalls, Konings (Copella), PPG, Siemens and Muntons – and some sectoral stand out and key local employers including Ichiban, MEL Aviation, Sackers, Breheny, A&B Glass, Celotex, Kersey Freight, Jim Lawrence, Bacton Transport and Vanners, Gainsborough, and Stephen Walters silk weavers in Sudbury.

Our districts site the head office of the East of England Co-operative Society and our businesses regularly feature prominently in the top 100 performing businesses in Suffolk. We have a plethora of artisan, agricultural, creative, technological, food and drink, health and social care, hospitality and other sector micro and SMEs spread across our districts – with some real ‘hidden gems’, unique offers, local provenance and specialist skills, innovation and talent. Some of these micro and SMEs have high potential for growth, and all are of vital importance to our small rural communities.

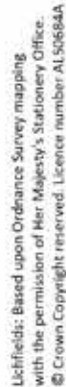
The Lichfields Sector Needs Assessment 2017 points to jobs growth across the Districts at

- **Babergh 3640 (9.3%)**
- **Mid Suffolk 6450 (14.7%)**

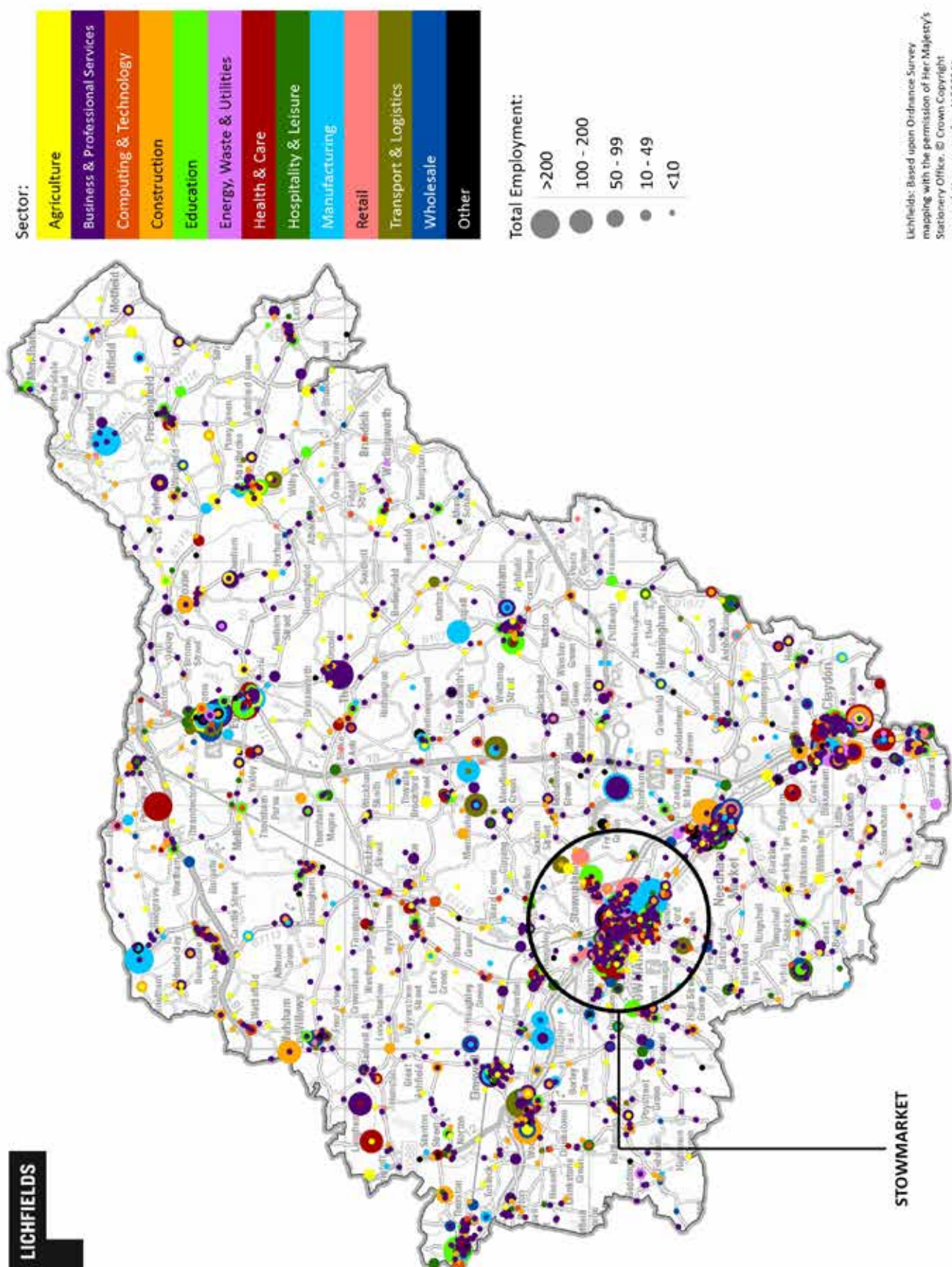
Business Stock by Sector at 2016

	Babergh		Mid Suffolk	
	Number of existing businesses		Number of existing businesses	
Agriculture	110	3%	220	6%
Business and Professional Services	1330	41%	110	113
Computing and Technology	110	3%	110	113
Construction	420	13%	480	13%
Education	90	3%	100	3%
Energy, Waste and Utilities	20	1%	30	1%
Health & Care	200	6%	110	6%
Hospitality and Leisure	250	8%	110	6%
Manufacturing	230	7%	250	7%
Retail	250		210	6%
Transport and Logistics	70	8%	120	3%
Wholesale	200	2%	240	7%
TOTAL	3280		3620	

Babergh & Mid Suffolk Councils - Open For Business Strategy



Key business sector locations in Mid Suffolk



Our importance stretches far beyond East Anglia. Eight key economic sectors for Suffolk have been identified where Suffolk either currently has a large number of businesses, or proportion of people employed in the sector, or where future growth is likely to be focused.



The eight key sectors identified for Suffolk are:

- **Advanced Manufacturing**
- **Biotechnology**
- **Creative Industries**
- **Energy**
- **Food, Drink and Agriculture**
- **Information and Communication Technology**
- **Ports and Logistics**
- **Tourism and Visitor Economy**

Out of the Suffolk sectors, within BMS the number of businesses in the manufacturing, construction, transport services, agriculture, and wholesale sectors is much higher than the national average. Conversely, the number of businesses in ICT, financial & business services and public administration sectors are much lower than the national average.

There are opportunities to build on these strengths and also bridge some of the gaps. Ingredients are here for economic success - our favourable commercial rental profiles, environment, connectivity, business diversity, climate, quality of life and potential to cluster smaller sector and sub-sector specialist and supply chain businesses around global operators.

Finance and Insurance (FinTech) (in addition to New Anglia LEP sectors mentioned earlier) has been identified within responses to the Government's Industrial Strategy. Neighbouring Ipswich is a key financial and insurance centre and place of employment for BMS residents.

Ipswich has a significant amount of activity in both banking and insurance; the concentration of insurance expertise in the town represents a significant driver of employment and income. Recent macro-economic events in the banking and insurance sub-sectors have led to cuts and restructuring but the sector remains buoyant, and the market is likely to remain competitive for the foreseeable future.

Approximately, 16% of the working population of Ipswich is active in businesses associated with some kind of financial services delivery or brokerage. AXA and Willis employ over 1,000 people each in their Ipswich offices, and with Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), are three of the largest single employers in the town. These are further complemented by a range of other major insurance sector businesses such as Call Connection and Liverpool Victoria (LV). The insurance industry expanded its presence in the town - citing the availability of an established and knowledgeable workforce as a major attraction compared to alternative locations. Such examples support the assertion that Ipswich's skills pool for this sector is strong, and Babergh and Mid Suffolk are well placed to capitalise on that growth.

Sectoral jobs growth forecasts for the Districts are set out below, however the context is more fully explored within the Appendices. The reasons for a forecast decline in some sectors may be due to a variety of factors – for example historic trends do not necessarily reflect future opportunities, innovation creating higher value jobs (but an overall reduction in quantity of jobs), migrant workforce mobility, skills and other labour force issues as well as technological/automation advancement. **Therefore a forecast decline in jobs is not an indicator of a weak sector.**

	Babergh		Mid Suffolk	
	Jobs Growth	Jobs Growth as %	Jobs Growth	Jobs Growth as %
Agriculture	-500	-36.8%	-980	-38.9%
Business and Professional Services	2430	34.2%	2460	37.1%
Computing and Technology	90	13.6%	160	31.4%
Construction	1410	45.9%	3130	54.9%
Education	-420	-12.0%	-10	-0.4%
Energy, Waste and Utilities	20	8.7%	20	0.2%
Health & Care	900	23.0%	1200	24.4%
Hospitality and Leisure	900	25.3%	1100	36.3%
Manufacturing	-1900	25.3%	-1590	-33.6%
Retail	160	-27.4%	330	13.8%
Transport and Logistics	-4	-0.3%	100	2.6%
Wholesale	50	2.1%	300	11.9%

d. Tourism, leisure, culture, heritage and creativity

Our outstanding natural and built environment provides places and spaces which truly offer work and life balance that is second-to-none – whether resident, commuter, visitor, small business start-up, entrepreneur or large multi-national.

BMS proudly presents many historic houses, stately homes, country parks, churches, castles, inspirational scenery and archaeological monuments. Enhanced by a multitude of events, festivals, attractions and activities throughout the year and many of which are directly linked to, and showcase, our key sector economic activity as well as our rich cultural heritage (such as agricultural, artistic, literary, wool and silk trades) BMS offers something for all. Shopping, restaurants, museums and theatres abound in our market towns, while our neighbouring destination towns of Bury St. Edmunds, Ipswich, Cambridge, Norwich and Colchester offer great retail within easy reach by car or train in well under an hour. Nearby days out include theme parks, horse and motor racing, zoos, heritage sites, walks and trails, sports and leisure activities or simply taking in the beautiful countryside and coastline with its unrivalled locally sourced food and drink excellence.

Case Study

Kick-starting support for tourism and the visitor economy

(Shotley Peninsula TAG)



In October 2015 BMSDC ramped-up its support to create Tourism Action Groups across the districts - a key recommendation in the AECOM Visitor Destination Plan. The Tourism Development Officer from the Open for Business Team identified key business partners, community groups and other stakeholder organisations interested in developing tourism products aligned to, and promoting, differing characteristics within the districts.

The Shotley Peninsula Tourism Action Group (SPTAG) formed in 2016 and quickly agreed several initiatives, including a year-long festival of activities to celebrate Shotley's connections to C.20th author Arthur Ransome. This coincided with the 50th anniversary of the author's death in 1967, as well as his book 'We Didn't Mean to go to Sea' based on the Orwell estuary and published in 1937. Various events and activities have been

Case Study

Continued...

Gratitude has been relayed from the Chair of SPTAG, Oliver Paul of Suffolk Food Hall, to BMS councillors and officers alike. The collaborative working exemplified by the wider SPTAG partnership has included forging new and strong links with 'All About Ipswich' (AAI), the Destination Marketing Organisation for greater Ipswich area.

AAI supported the SPTAG with promotion and marketing the activities and events, arrangements for the press launch and more recently admin support for the production of a Shotley Peninsula Guide. This mutually beneficial relationship has been successful for all parties and the Councils are now looking to formalise the arrangement to develop some longer term sustainability.



5. Where and how do the district councils make a difference?

5.1) Our 'Open for Business' approach

Our approach to the key sectors will not be at the expense of smaller sectors - we won't just seek to support the large businesses. Our local economy is made up of thousands of micro, small and medium enterprises. 99.6% of registered businesses in Suffolk are SMEs, similar to the national average, but with business survival rates consistently better than the UK average [Source: ONS Business Demography 2015/UK Business 2016].

By working collaboratively with our key delivery partners and business sectors, we will ensure that we understand where we add value for business and industry. This will help us to maximise our influence, impact and effectiveness by tailoring our support to better meet businesses needs and facilitating greater self-service. It should not matter at what point a business interacts with our organisation, they should consistently receive reliable, joined-up and timely advice.

Feedback from our businesses indicates that they have no preference for who provides support but they do value how it is done, and appreciate a comprehensive, value adding and relevant offer – which is all together better for their needs. It is our mission to ensure that we achieve this by working alongside and complementary to existing business support mechanisms offered by organisations and groups such as New Anglia LEP, Growth Hub, Menta, Nwes, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Chamber of Commerce. We also work with local groups such as Ipswich & Suffolk Small Business Association (ISSBA) and the local Chambers/business associations.

If this work is done well, then a more seamless and joined-up support experience for the business results, which can lead to increased confidence and investment to help support growth, jobs and productivity.

The significant strengths within our diverse district business sectors already have the potential to translate to regional and global significance, but we will also not lose sight of the 'hidden' and emerging micro business ventures that operate innovatively in niche, creative, technological, food, agricultural, pharmaceutical, health or energy sectors - to identify just a few. Given the right conditions, nurturing and space to innovate and grow, these could be the real success stories of tomorrow and identify our districts with successful businesses, products and sectors which will attract further skills and investment.

Collaboration across the Suffolk-sector, Sub-Regional and Regional framework and with National initiatives is crucial, as is how we approach working together with our business and industrial sectors, education and skills providers and delivery partners.

5.2) To support being 'Open for Business' we will...

a) Strive to better understand our place in engaging with and supporting our businesses, and will sharpen the focus of our resources in areas that we are best, or uniquely, placed to influence – whether through our expertise, functions, lobbying, access to resources, information or people. We will not seek to do things where others are better placed or positioned to achieve positive outcomes.

b) Improve meaningful engagement and actively listen to the local business community to ensure their needs are understood and acted upon – for example cross-sectoral sharing of knowledge and services and opening up supply and value chain opportunities for local businesses. Many of our growth opportunities involve collaboration and partnership between firms in different sectors. We will help to break down barriers which might otherwise hinder growth. We will also provide a corporate approach to supporting the local economy through such areas as local procurement of goods and services, and developing our own assets (for example our investment to grow the Hadleigh Market offer in support of local businesses and the visitor economy).

c) Work with our partners and other enablers to attract financial investment into the area to support improvements to the local infrastructure – digital as well as physical. We will work in partnership with not only Suffolk County Council and New Anglia LEP/Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough Business Board but also the Haven Gateway Partnership and any other bodies interested in supporting economic growth within our districts.

d) Recognise the strategic importance of the New Anglia LEP, which will improve links not only with the Suffolk Local Authorities and central government, but also our neighbours across the East - Norfolk,

Cambridgeshire and Essex. For us to best support our local businesses and growth opportunities we must be involved and have an influential voice at a strategic regional level, and encourage our businesses to do the same through business-led networks and forums such as Chambers of Commerce or Destination Management Organisations.

e) Through up to date flexible planning policies, take significant steps to enable housing delivery. Our Economic Development Strategy offers another layer which supports this growth and provides opportunities for change. Our aim is to link people to jobs, not trying to steer business, industry and markets, but respond to and champion their needs and help them to grow. The Councils, and in particular our planning and our built environment related services can facilitate and enable sustainable growth rather than seek simply to control it without consideration of the bigger picture.

f) Foster a culture of encouraging proposals for economic development, with applications being assessed on their detail in the context of the Local Plan. Where that detail needs careful scrutiny, we'll keep that culture in the forefront of our consideration if we need to find solutions that aren't on the table.

g) Present a welcoming and can-do attitude. We'll try to find real solutions to obstacles for business, not put up more barriers or simply 'follow procedures'. We will set out our expectations of industry and commerce, and help businesses meet those expectations by providing information, support, and guidance from early intervention through to success.

h) Consider opportunities for BMS to invest in and stimulate infrastructure, land, premises and projects to ensure a steady supply of workspace options for all sizes of business.

We will steer proposals towards existing sites and allocated land, but will be flexible and receptive towards business needs, and supportive of development in other locations (including the open countryside) where the evidence suggests that that is feasible and sustainable and there are no significant environmental constraints.

We will also participate in re-location/ land swap conversations with businesses interested in growing, diversifying or freeing up land to make best use of viable opportunities to benefit the districts more broadly (e.g. increasing sectoral and higher value skills). We recognise the need for, and to encourage and support, growth of start-up business units.

We will look for opportunities to make a difference, such as our current investment and joint-working at South Suffolk Business Centre in Sudbury - encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting new start-up businesses.

i) Commit to minimal red tape, bureaucracy and paperwork – only doing what is necessary in statute, whilst turning interactions (including regulatory ones) into positive relationships and opportunities.

We will demonstrate value-added interventions and speed in decision-making with a commitment to common sense, honesty, rational and logical decision-making. Our decisions will be justified using evidence to clearly and transparently, in plain English, set out why a decision is made in the way it is.

In some circumstances the Councils are the regulatory body for a number of functions which affect business directly and indirectly, including the Planning Authority and Licensing Authority and we have to exercise those functions within the proper legal framework but we'll do that with consideration and good customer service in mind. It is our aim to provide services to help businesses in these areas with a view to compliance and 'getting it right first time'.

Some of these services are fee-charging and some are free. We will regularly review our fee structure where we have any discretion, to ensure that they remain sustainable and provide value for the user whilst allowing us to deliver relevant services with the right resources behind them to be effective.

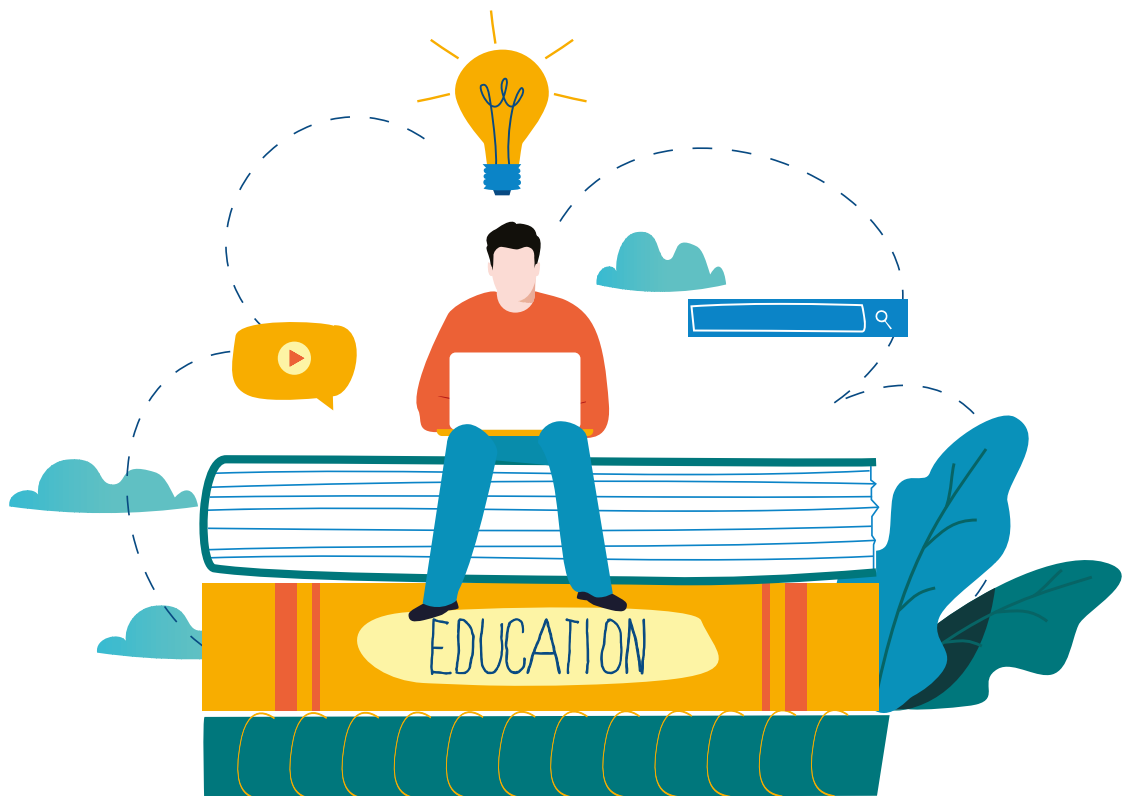


j) Review where BMS can impact positively on the skills agenda by enhancing and adding value to the scale initiatives at a local place level to address specific needs (for example MSDC's investment to enhance the Phase 1 MyGo offer at The Mix in Stowmarket to specifically support the needs of young people in the Stowmarket and surrounding area). We will also explore where we can in partnership work more with schools – for example support sharing information and intelligence about the local economy with schools.

Access to labour market information and employability experience is an increasing challenge, with some schools withdrawing curriculum time completely.

This emphasises the need for a positive relationship and offer with those providers facilitating a progressive connection between education and business. BMS has already committed to gap fill initiatives such as the Navigator project and specific activities we are best placed to deliver such as Planning and Visioning workshops with our high school students.

BMS are well placed to ensure that the challenges faced by both businesses and young people are represented in the regional and local initiatives designed to address and support specific needs. District engagement in the strategic planning and delivery of these can ensure equality of access across our areas. The opportunities presented by the wide range of skills, experience and qualification embedded within the districts are many and varied, enabling us to adapt an approach where sought or appropriate to support schools, students and the unemployed.



6. Key delivery actions (now and future)

6.1) Supporting our micro, small, medium business and enterprise base

The diversity within our local economy micros and SMEs is a real strength, mirrored at a regional level. Our key businesses and institutions see well established businesses and supply chains across our sectors. We will support the integration of investment in skills, infrastructure, housing, innovation and business support to provide the conditions that both new and enabling businesses need to thrive and grow. We are committed, with our partners, to empowering businesses through planning, housing and infrastructure.

Business groups and individual businesses in some areas of our districts, especially rurally-based micros and SMEs which make up over 90% of BMS business volume, are often feeding back that they feel their voice and influence is missing and with it potential opportunities for them to grow, network or compete. We also understand that businesses may prefer small, or are otherwise limited to, incremental steps in their growth journey, to support their sustainability, rather than a big-bang approach to growth and diversification.

Supporting organic growth of SMEs in their localities, particularly in rural areas, can contribute positively to the communities in which they are based including place identity and boosting supply of homes. SMEs within the construction sectors support employment in our rural areas, as well as housing supply, and BMS will support initiatives which assist small scale builders.

From our own business engagement activities, reinforced by intelligence from our partners such as the Growth Hub, there are supply-chain, cluster and lobbying opportunities available to businesses by increasing their awareness of and connections with other businesses, and business-led forums, in their vicinity and the wider local area. **This is an area we and our business partners can assist with or facilitate.**

BMS holds a corporate membership with the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, and it is of high value to our organisation in several respects including our priority to better understand business needs, lobbying central government on major issues such as skills and infrastructure, and growing our own commercial awareness for the onward value to our businesses.

However, this engagement identifies a visible lack of BMS business presence and representation at that Suffolk level, including our larger key sector businesses, whereas other areas of Suffolk are better represented. Access to that forum helps them to raise the profile of their sectors and places and increase lobbying opportunities and shared experiences about matters of support and interest to their local places.

To redress this gap, BMS will actively encourage the districts businesses to support and join functioning networks such as the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Destination Management Organisations and Federation of Small Business so as to amplify impact and develop opportunities. Involvement with the right tier locally can bring additional weight and profile to investment opportunities in a regional and national context.

BMS may support discounted memberships or other mechanisms to facilitate improvements. This may also include working with the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce to develop an Affiliated Chamber to serve the Council(s)/ Central Suffolk to enable a strong business voice within our areas. A strong and unified voice for the business community can itself increase the constructive challenge to the districts on key issues and place shaping.

We will also use our business intelligence and network to identify in which localities poor or inconsistent broadband infrastructure is hindering business, and look for viable lobbying and investment opportunities to improve this situation.

6.2) Supporting a thriving cultural, heritage and creative industries offer will have positive economic impacts on our districts

Successful places are much more than economic powerhouses. They are underpinned by a sense of creative vibrancy, a manifestly strong quality of life, and a clear sense of cultural and community identity. For example, combining creative and leisure industries with technological innovation sectors can quickly build a sense of vibrancy and community, which can support place identity and stimulate growth investment.

BMS will take opportunities to positively promote and further Suffolk's offer in this regard, including through our outstanding local natural and built assets – all within easy reach of London. Through collaboration we will support creative and showcasing initiatives such as Screen Suffolk which promote Suffolk's film service infrastructure, creative talent and fantastic locations with an aim to make Suffolk the most film-friendly county in the UK.

We shall also develop our districts' links with the film industry to generate income and investment, develop a locations library and help to put our places on the map as visitor destinations linked to film and television productions.

BMS, in collaboration with its partners and businesses, will also review what approaches we can take to support maximising the impact of this sector given that research shows that creative Industries are likely to grow as a proportion of our economy, and with it other industries relying on creative disciplines – such as Design and Advertising.

Case Study

Supporting creative arts and the local economy

(Screen Suffolk)

BMS have signed up to Screen Suffolk as the official film office for Suffolk representing all local authorities and Suffolk County Council.

Screen Suffolk offers a one-stop film service, from initial enquiry through to crew sourcing and permitting. The scheme promotes Suffolk's film service infrastructure, creative talent and fantastic locations all within easy reach of London.

Our aim is to make Suffolk the most film friendly county in the UK. Filming locations in BMS can help to attract visitors in support of the local economy and tourism.



6.3) Supporting Large Business and Site Requirements

Working with and supporting investment and expansion enquiries from business with larger requirements - recognising the value of job creation, inward investment and contribution to business rate growth. This also may strengthen the diversity of the business offer within the districts.

We need to influence the creation of site-ready, fully-serviced employment land allocations through the planning application

processes and our influence with strategic partners and developers as this would provide greater surety for sites being delivered and operational in a shorter period of time.

We understand the potential impacts of larger scale businesses leaving our areas and will do more to understand and support this with our partners, including furthering our awareness of supply chain impacts.

Case Study

Supporting new commercial opportunities in key growth sectors

(Port One Logistics Park)

The proximity to Junction 52 of the A14 has proven to be a winning location for the new Port One Logistics Park at Great Blakenham. Planning permission for the 40-acre site was granted in 2016. High levels of interest from e-commerce, distribution and storage businesses has meant that an extension to the site is being planned before the park has even been opened!

BMS's Open for Business Team has forged an effective and supportive relationship with the developer to ensure opportunities are maximised for creation of jobs and economic growth, and will invest the same approach for other sites which can support growth. As the team behind the development were keen to feed back to BMS happily fed back to BMS on the support it received from the Council's teams –

“We are refreshed but also thankful to all the staff of BMS who work to create the best opportunities for the people of the county to prosper in a sustainable market leading development! E-commerce warehousing is considered to be the largest growth sector within the entire property market.



Case Study

Continued...

Mid Suffolk was chosen as a strategic location to offer B8 warehousing opportunities close to the Britain's largest port for importing E-commerce product and being able to redistribute from a location within the hinterland of the Port of Felixstowe.

The Directors approached the planning team of Mid Suffolk DC together with their proactive economic development team and proposed a site adjacent to J52 at Great Blakenham for proposed commercial development.

All members of BMS were extremely helpful in assisting in the creation of

a planning approval to create up to 1200 full time jobs in a world-class E-commerce logistics park. From the very early concept stages the Council's team fully understood the potential of the unique location and its distinct advantages to the county as a whole.

We are now looking to complete the final few pre-lets to make this the most successful commercial development Suffolk has ever produced. It is estimated the projected annual turnover of the commerce park when completed in 2020 will exceed £400m."

6.4) Supporting our 'Space to Innovate' branded Enterprise Zone sites and Food Enterprise Zones

BMS have a long term commitment to supporting our Enterprise Zone sites at Mill Lane, Stowmarket and the former British Sugar site at Sroughton. We are also committed to our Food Enterprise Zones (also at Mill Lane) in Stowmarket and Wherstead.

To capitalise on the availability of allocated employment land along the A14, within our Districts, the Economic Development Team submitted a bid to New Anglia LEP in Autumn 2015 for Enterprise Zone status for two important strategic sites located along the A14. These sites were designated in 2016 as part of the region-wide 'Space to Innovate' initiative led by New Anglia LEP. Designation means that businesses locating to new premises on these Enterprise Zone sites will be eligible for Business Rates Relief, funded by central government, a simplified planning regime, high capacity broadband and a guarantee that a proportion of business rates collected will be used to complete development of the site.

BMS Economic Development Team aim to work with stakeholders and delivery partners to ensure that the Enterprise Zone sites expand the local employment market, and offer higher quality employment. These locations will be attractive to developers of technology focused business parks as well as state of the art logistics developers.

6.5) Economic Indicators and Measures of Success

Due to the significant joint-working, across public and private sectors, which is necessary to deliver broader economic outcomes, it follows to link the districts' economic performance to the County and regional framework, including the indicators expressed within the New Anglia Economic Strategy.

These aim to achieve shared ambitions through action and investment in themes and places and identify eight economic indicators as 'barometers for success'.

These are GVA, productivity, jobs, businesses, housing, median wage, employment rate and skills. This Strategy has set targets for those eight economic indicators to 2036. Given the long term nature of the strategy, delivery plans will also reflect shorter term targets as appropriate. BMS will feed the districts' performance into those indicators.

At a local level, business rates growth for BMS (including that linked to its Enterprise Zone sites at Stowmarket and Sproughton) will be an indicator of progress.

The districts will develop a complimentary package of meaningful local level 'on the ground' performance indicators that,

in addition to supporting the regional framework, demonstrate the local level actions, delivery and impact needed against BMS's joint strategic priorities and key projects.

This will also make evident the contribution BMS business sectors and places make, and further our ambitions to greater support micro/SME businesses and enterprises.

In addition, local district case studies and narrative, to illustrate and demonstrate impact will be collected and promoted by BMS.

This also serves to express to the business community what may be achievable in tangible terms, and how the districts are working differently to deliver successful outcomes.

BMS will report progress on New Anglia and other local economic indicators, and performance (which will include case study narrative), to its Cabinets at least annually.

6.6) BMS understands the links between effective and proportionate regulation, delivered better by those agencies with a regulatory remit, and good businesses

Getting regulatory compliance right first time, through understanding any sectoral regulatory framework and being offered reliable and plain English advice by regulatory agencies who work in a joined-up and smarter way, can make a significant difference to a business.

Confidence to maximise opportunities, create efficiencies, draw in funding or sectoral expertise can be crucial to a fledgling or established business.

Adding value and network to regulatory conversations - such as energy efficiency advice, grants and loan information, exporting information, local knowledge of business supply chains, sites and clusters can all assist in making a business feel positive about a regulatory intervention or visit.

BMS will develop its own local better regulation initiatives, such as its own Joint Corporate Enforcement Policy, as well as support regional initiatives to further the links between regulation and economic development, particularly the emerging 'Better Business for All' programme supported by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Transactional and specific sectoral support will be developed and facilitated through the Council's joint website and/or links to partner, third party or central government digital platforms.

Case Study

Developing Better Business Relationships

(Nethergate Brewery)

The Open for Business Team's approach to joining-up regulatory and economic development services, and leveraging in its network support for the business at the right time, was a very positive experience for Nethergate Brewery who, in 2016, relocated their growing brewery HQ from Essex and diversified by opened up a visitor centre linked to their new brewery facility in Long Melford.

The team's approach to supporting the business included a warm welcome and business account manager allocation from initial enquiry through to granting of authorisations.



Case Study

Continued...

Signposted grant support from New Anglia Growth Hub and energy efficiency guidance from the Bee Anglia scheme made a significant difference. The effective pre-application work meant that the business was granted planning permission and a premises licence within 4 weeks of each other thanks to some joined-up working, including communities and local councillors.

As the company's Managing Director and General Manager fed back to the Councils "Thank you for your assistance with the process, it has been very clear and very efficient. To some considerable degree that was due to your advice and support, and I wanted to thank you for all your help on behalf of all the people at Nethergate. It is very much appreciated"

6.7 Growing our intelligence about our business base. Sharing data, intelligence and analytics

Reliable and up to date evidence and intelligence is the cornerstone of development, focus and delivery of economic strategy - whether local, regional or national. BMS will use feedback, commissioned work (such as sectoral analysis), Enterprise Zone, Food Enterprise Zone and key site support, business rate profiling and modelling, intelligence gathered by business engagement, network and lobbying to further its local business intelligence.

It will also feed this into County or regional work as appropriate. BMS is now developing its own Business CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system with a view to upscaling contributions to regional platforms such as the FAME system being implemented by New Anglia LEP.

Unified collated data, evidence and analysis is of benefit to all stakeholders and supports the lobbying for Industrial Strategy recognition and significant inward investment in infrastructure so as to bring inclusive growth benefits to the East.

Spatial information and mapping of sites shall be transparent to business sectors and available for self-help.

BMS will take appropriate steps to safeguard commercially sensitive, intellectual property or confidential/personal information about specific business engagements, but will use intelligence gathered in general ways to better support the business community.

6.8) Supporting the visitor economy

The visitor economy is of significant importance to the region and especially Babergh and Mid Suffolk. Research has shown that in 2016 the overall economic impact of tourism to the Babergh District was £188.5m (tourism related employment accounting for 11% of all employment) and for Mid Suffolk District £167.5m (9% of all employment) (source Destination Research Ltd Economic Impact of Tourism Reports 2016).

BMS note that the model of networked DMOs (and similar bodies) is seen as the way forward by both central government and Visit England. Accordingly, BMS will also support that approach, including key actions contained within the local Visitor Destination Plan produced by AECOM in 2015.

BMS recognise that the tourism landscape is complex, fragmented and not one-size-fits-all - particularly so for BMS as we do not have a Destination Management/Marketing Organisation (DMO) within our districts. Sustainable funding issues remain of key concern for our sector groups, organisations and funding partners.

We see a place, and a need, for continuing with the Visit Suffolk brand as a recognisable gateway into our county's visitor offer but it needs to operate in an optimum way so as to support pan-Suffolk benefitting marketing campaigns (not just those within Suffolk boundaries) as well as the County's DMOs and Local Tourism Action Groups (LTAGs). Over time we see the County's DMOs as providing further support and link-ups to BMS's places and our sector businesses and attractions, underpinned by and linked to an effective set of LTAGs supporting BMS visitor attractions, products and providing marketing narrative and content.



BMS will also progress its own 'Heart of Suffolk' brand and place identity within this framework, and our approach here may need to change (including a move away from 'Heart of Suffolk' brand) so as to best fit visitor expectations and the needs of our sector businesses.

We do not envisage our District Councils being able to directly core-fund tourism action groups, Visit Suffolk or DMOs. We can however assist with enabling expertise such as scoping bids for external funding and other support or projects where the Districts are best placed to add value.

Where there is a realistic prospect of growth linked to investment in campaigns and marketing initiatives then the Councils will consider opportunities on a case-by-case basis and, given financial limitations, may preferentially invest or make a contribution in those groups and organisations with a track record of delivery and developing sustainability - minimising future reliance on public sector funding.

Where Pooled Business Rates funding is considered it should be towards creating sustainability in the visitor economy sectors, given there are many other potential, and competing, programmes and projects to stimulate economic growth.

We will encourage local Tourism Action Groups to both network with each other for mutual gain and build effective relationships with DMOs. Collaborations at scale also stand greater chance of accessing central and regional funding, broader marketing initiatives and resources.



BMS encourage Local TAGs to create activities and new products in support of the tourism character areas and developing a year round visitor offer, helping to increase visitor spend and stay. BMS will work in collaboration with all stakeholders in the visitor economy sectors to deliver the 'best fit' for our local places as well as the wider region, and see the visitor economy (broader than 'tourism' and encompassing matters such sports and leisure) as a vital component interlinked within broader economic strategy rather than as a separate strand.

The way BMS supports sustainable visitor information provision will be reviewed given the strategic tourism context, BMS's own public access strategy, societal changes in how visitors' research and book day and stay trips and the need for greater business and community ownership - with any targeted public spend being able to demonstrate best value impact and growth outcomes for our districts.

BMS may not be best placed to support visitor information going forward, in the way it has directly delivered and funded with its existing Tourist Information Centres at Stowmarket and Lavenham, and also previous offers at Flatford and Sudbury. Research identifies that this format of face-to-face provision is increasingly seen as being outdated. BMS will therefore explore with its partners, communities and the private sector alternative models for a 'best-fit' solution in support of our key tourism destinations.

For example, this may lead to mix-and-match visitor information alternatives such as mobile or peripatetic, self-service, retail outlet display stands, seasonal or event pop-ups, enhanced digital visitor support (and applications) or other collaboration or divestment opportunities.

Visit England's research on visitor information provision and AECOM's Visitor Destination reporting will also inform BMS's approach on this topic.

6.9) Supporting skills and local jobs for local businesses

'Skills' is regularly fed back as being a key priority concern, and gap, to the business community in Suffolk - especially advanced engineering, leadership and some traditional skills linked to our cultural and agricultural heritage. There are also challenges facing some specific sectors heavily reliant on migrant labour (such as fruit farming, healthcare and manual labour activities) where it difficult to recruit and retain from the wider workforce and Brexit uncertainties have impacted.

1 in 4 respondents to BMS's Open for Business Survey in 2016 reported training needs as a challenge to their business and were looking for further advice about education and training. The skills theme forms a foundation part of the emerging Suffolk Framework for Growth, and the developing sectoral support is within key growth sectors but also the underpinning/ enabling, for example - construction, engineering and 'big data'.

BMS's role is in collaboratively supporting the Suffolk delivery, but also by enhancing and adding value to the scale initiatives at a local place level. This type of investment in local place to address specific local needs is the type of 'supplementing' approach that may also be effective in the future within the skills and productivity arena.

We will strengthen our links to the Developing Suffolk Talent work of the Suffolk County Council Skills Team, and key developments in the skills and labour market across the region and nationally (including Skills Sector Deals through New Anglia LEP). We will however seek to understand root causes of skills and employability difficulties so we can make best and smarter use of our resources towards supporting longer term sustainable outcomes.

We will support and signpost on matters such as impact of the Apprenticeship Levy, which we will work up into support for our businesses, and assess impact on our inward provision. We will continue to speak to businesses about their skills needs/gaps and feed this back through appropriate channels and encourage businesses to link to initiatives such as ICanBeA and engage with current and emerging schemes designed to support this area.

The skills area needs to be on our 'checklist' of topics when we are engaging with businesses. We can assist with business intelligence pickups and facilitating conversations between business, business support organisations (Chamber/Menta/Growth Hub) and higher education/further education institutions and providers. Sharing our sectoral intelligence (including of motivated local individuals and operators) so as to prompt Skills Deal pooling/bids is also practical action we may take, and we are also alert to the potential commercial sensitivity / competition barriers in such conversations.



The gender pay gap and equality is also an issue for Suffolk. Compared to the national average of 18.1% difference between men and women's average earnings, Suffolk has a wider gap of 22.4%. Some larger companies in BMS report that they have difficulty in recruiting and developing females into top and higher paid positions within their businesses. Whilst BMS has little influence in this area, its support for leadership development programmes, skills sector deals and business mentoring may aid broader initiatives to redress this imbalance. Similarly BMS will support initiatives which aim to increase average wage levels and encourage living wage employers.

There are inherent difficulties with start-up and fledgling businesses, as well as established or rural micro/SMEs, having sufficient capacity/business plan to engage in the skills space or have a voice platform (and this is similar to what we see in the Tourism sectors). Encouraging businesses to engage with the Chamber of Commerce and with business support partners like Menta may help to elevate awareness of rural business needs.

There is a place for BMS (in partnership) to work more with schools and to extend its invitation to those students or unemployed people disadvantaged by a lack of relevant experience – and the Councils may extend their influence to address any identified gaps by developing specific or thematic activities. The learning from that, combined with other county initiatives such as the 'Lowestoft Rising' programme, could create the core of a broader scalable offer. Suffolk leader support, such as pooled business rates or local investment, could also elevate that possibility. There is also a clear role for BMS to better support sharing info/intel/sectoral trends about the local economy with schools, and intervening in a targeted and informed way as a place-based catalyst for skills – for example with FEZ advanced apprenticeships using DEFRA grant.

We may also with our partners examine the reasons behind declining sectors, in a skills context, and assess potential for supporting improvements.

6.10) Importance of the A14 corridor, A12 and rail links/gateway

The activity of the district's economic development team, supporting the groundwork for success (including potential Abellio investment at Brantham), is often behind the scenes and not immediately apparent. BMS will continue to deploy its economic development interventions at the right level and timing to best support successful outcomes, and with the awareness that there are often third-party influences which may ultimately impact upon deliverability.

BMS understands that the economic arteries to our places in the heart and south of Suffolk are the A14 and A12, and that both the road infrastructure and the rail network are of critical importance in terms of our corridor connections to the Port of Felixstowe (which handles over 40% of UK container traffic), London, Norwich, Cambridge, the Midlands and Haven Gateway. Logistics and distribution are of high importance to our areas, and many of our key businesses and development seek opportunities to ease access to and from suppliers, increase potential exports, develop, test and use technological advance in this sector, reduce carbon footprint and support effective distribution of fresh produce. BMS's favourable conditions in terms of connectivity, land cost, environment and significant commercial potential have attracted, and will continue to draw, key sector businesses of all scales into the area.

Whilst A14 pinch-point improvements are a short/medium term fix, and BMS will support initiatives such as the 'No More A14 Delays in Suffolk' campaign, in the longer term the A14 needs to be developed to a motorway standard to serve the future economic and housing growth needs of Suffolk. Similarly A12 improvements are needed between Ipswich and Colchester.

The new rail franchise for the East, with twenty new trains to be operational from 2019, and any significant Abellio depot investment at Brantham are also recognition of the strategic potential of our region and districts, and that a supportive rail infrastructure can help to attract investment. District support will be given for rail freight infrastructure upgrades, such as those needed at Haughley junction.

We will lobby to improve facilities at all of our operational railway stations, including Stowmarket railway station (a gateway to Stowmarket currently catering for a 1m passenger footfall each year). Stowmarket station is also likely to take significant further numbers if the SnOasis complex is developed at Great Blakenham. We will use our influence to seek refurbishment of buildings and increased car parking in support of our rail stations.

The Councils will pro-actively lobby to support sustainable and inclusive growth, and played a crucial role in the (Autumn 2017) National Planning and Infrastructure Framework award for A140 improvements at Eye. There are also more localised pinch-points which need improvement, for example the A1071 at Hintlesham, and at peak times impact on productivity as key traffic routes. Other general improvements at the A14 junctions and more locally at the A140, works in and around Sudbury, and works that potentially further unlock the significant economic potential of Eye Airfield and South Suffolk, will be supported (subject to their detail) in an economic and productivity context.

Case Study

Lobbying for better infrastructure to unlock employment opportunities

(A140 improvement NPIF bid)

Since early 2016 BMS Economic Development Officers have been aware that highways capacity issues around Eye Airfield could prevent future commercial development of land for employment. This is due to the high cost of highways mitigation measures, required for planning permission. The Open for Business Team pro-actively liaised with colleagues at Suffolk County Council Highways to ensure that highways improvements around Eye Airfield would be included in a SCC-led bid for funding from the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF).

The evidence for the bid document was delivered within a short window of opportunity to justify the need for funding, improve safety, support an increase in economic growth along the A140 between Norwich and Ipswich and indicate that local landowners would be willing to negotiate with SCC highways.

The Department for Transport made the announcement in October 2017 to confirm funding (of £3.75m) to the County Council from its National Productivity Investment Fund, and BMS will continue to support delivery of this important project to help unlock the significant potential of Eye Airfield.



6.11) Business Account Management and Relationship Development

As referenced at 5.1 of this strategy, businesses are less interested in who provides the support and services they need and more interested in what is delivered, or facilitated, and how.

The District Councils have a statutory remit, often attached to nationally prescribed procedural frameworks, in business-essential services such as Planning, Licensing, Food and Safety/ Environmental Health, Waste Collection and Business Rates Collection.

Whilst this can, and must, create limits and parameters about how the district councils deliver some functions and services, this does not mean that the Councils should close their ears and minds to broader business needs in the context of those services nor the importance of business growth to our places.

Local policies and strategies which sit beneath national frameworks will endeavour to be flexible and business friendly in content, language and format.

BMS has already trialled an approach to better support business enquiries and develop a model of Business Relationship Management that works effectively for business by having less separate interactions with different Council departments and instead being offered access to a single officer that will take the time and effort to better understand their full business enquiry to add value, gain insight and intelligence to tailor support, provide honest and timely advice and best help a business to assess its own options and future plans.

We will strive to embed this approach within our organisational culture.

The further principles underpinning this approach are expressed below, and the Councils will continue to refine and expand this work (in synergy with its Public Access strategy and initiatives such as New Anglia Better Business for All):

- BMS recognises that investment in developing effective relationships with businesses, has benefits to all parties but is often slow-burn and time-consuming. The Council does not have capacity to directly reach all of its 9000+ businesses.
- BMS is not always best placed to deliver business support, nor do some businesses want to engage with the Councils in this regard. However, BMS can often deploy its network to meet a business's need. Where viable, BMS will facilitate greater support and reach for micro and SME businesses through commissioning investment in partner organisation support e.g. Menta/Nwes/ Growth Hub or through managed and serviced work spaces (for example South Suffolk Business Centre in Sudbury)
- BMS will develop transactional and self-help resources including tailored to specific sectors. Where viable this will align with regional/cross-border information and co-design with the business community or business support organisations – such as output from the New Anglia Better Business for All programme.
- For BMS its intelligence and understanding of the business community and local economy may grow through an account management type model which permeates a broader business friendly culture – enabling the Council to focus its influence and interventions in the areas and in ways which most benefit business.
- BMS will strive to deliver its business facing services in a professional, business centric and understanding way.
- BMS will be realistic, rounded, honest and timely in its advice and guidance (including any pathway options) to best support businesses in consideration of their own plans
- Councillors, as representatives of place and community, will work together with officers and businesses to seek successful solutions and outcomes. Care will however be taken to not prejudice any formal decision-making roles or responsibilities.
- Unlocking sites conversations (not just Enterprise Zones) though our work with investors, developers, land owners, utilities and New Anglia LEP – seeking funding and infrastructure investment. Direct engagement with companies wishing to invest in the districts (some multi-million investment opportunities and significant innovation) which also supports local supply chains and clusters and boosts the regional significance of our places

7. Underpinning assumptions for our approach

- We cannot, and should not attempt to, deliver support in isolation. We will strive to complement and not duplicate the range of support available or offered by our partners. Every intervention should add value whether we lead it or not. To this end, we shall maintain an outward focus and use intelligence and networking to maximise positive outcomes for business and industry and the broader benefits those will bring to our communities.
- That to assist existing, new and potential businesses with access to business advice, finance, funding networking and business opportunities we need to impact at the point it will be most valuable, including supporting where we can the export potential of goods and services and creation of higher value jobs and products.
- The national housing shortage and the measures in place to boost significantly the housing land supply. BMS are doing their part to increase housing delivery, and also recognise that this must be coupled with economic and infrastructure growth. Locally, this means a change from a focus on 'large industrial estates in the towns' to being more responsive to the needs of business wherever they are in the districts and whatever their property requirements are.
- That to be effective, and given our resource and financing constraints, we may need to 'get out of the way' or stop doing some things, particularly in relation to sectoral matters which we are not best placed to fund or lead on. An example of this is our transitional support to the tourism sector (Local Tourism Action Groups, Destination Management/Marketing Organisation and Visit Suffolk brand support investment) to help create the conditions for private enterprise and groups to step-in and take forward plans to develop local tourism offers and visitor destination planning.
- We have communicated our strategic understanding and approach within this document for transparency and clarity. The strategy is living, flexible and responsive to local and wider circumstances including delivery progression and evidence. Where updates, clarifications or achievements will add value, the document may be modified accordingly under a light touch arrangement.



Open for Business Strategy

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils





Open for Business Strategy

APPENDICES

- A. Growth Context (National to Local)
- B. Our Role
- C. Employment Sectors Analysis
- D. Key Delivery Partners
- E. Evidence Pack





A. Growth Context (National to Local)

The importance of growth as a policy priority is made clear, supported by a strong theme of enhancing regional growth through a place based approach and better joining up of central government investment with local priorities. The themes of 'Developing Skills' and 'Upgrading infrastructure' pillars are emerging as high priority for our businesses.

To help illustrate the broader context and aims within which this strategy will align and operate, it is helpful to summarise the growth landscape:

NATIONAL LEVEL

The Government's **Plan for Growth** (2011) was published with the aim of achieving strong, sustainable, and balanced economic growth throughout Britain. This was based upon the assessment that the national economy has become too focused on a small number of sectors and concentrated around a few regions of the country. Its four ambitions are to:

- Create a more competitive tax system;
- Make the UK one of the best places in Europe to start, finance and grow a business;
- Encourage investment and exports to make a more balanced economy;
- Create a more educated workforce.

The Localism Act (2011) aims to provide 'a substantial and a lasting shift in power away from Central Government towards local people'. Government policy identifies Local Plans as the key to delivering development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities.

New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) articulated the partners' economic aims: "... to create more private sector jobs and get rid of the barriers that prevent businesses growing. We want to encourage business start-ups, and allow existing businesses to grow and become more competitive. We want to clear the way for businesses to develop and innovate, bringing prosperity and global recognition to our key business sectors."

The Government aimed to achieve these ambitions and create new jobs through the introduction of several changes in the planning system, including a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The **National Planning Policy Framework** (2012) states that planning has a role to play in building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support local growth and innovation.

The national **Industrial Strategy** (2017) sets out the government's plan to create an economy that boosts productivity and earning power throughout the UK.

With the aim of making the UK the world's most innovative nation by 2030, the Government has committed to investing a further £725 million over the next 3 years in the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) to respond to some of the greatest global challenges and the opportunities faced by the UK.

This will include £170 million to transform our construction sector and help create affordable places to live and work that are safer, healthier and use less energy, and up to £210 million to improve early diagnosis of illnesses and develop precision medicine for patients across the UK.

The white paper also confirms government will be pressing ahead with a series of Sector Deals, with construction, life sciences, automotive and AI the first to benefit from these new strategic and long-term partnerships with government, backed by private sector co-investment. Work will continue with other sectors on transformative sector deals.

The white paper focuses on the [5 foundations of productivity](#) – ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment and places – with a clear and complementary vision for each. Each foundation is supported by a range of policies designed to provide businesses with certainty and reassurance that the UK will continue to have a competitive edge, including:

- raise total R&D investment to 2.4% of GDP by 2027
- increase the rate of R&D tax credit to 12%
- invest £725 million in new Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund programmes to capture the value of innovation

From a Local Authority point of view, we are also looking across to the Government's Housing White Paper, which along with the Neighbourhood Planning Bill that is currently making its way through Parliament, should provide much greater clarity around:

- Government's housing ambitions and how these might be delivered;
- the relationship between investing in infrastructure and 'unlocking' housing and employment growth; and
- potential changes to land use planning policy.

REGIONAL LEVEL (THE EAST)

The New Anglia LEP Strategic Economic Plan (NALEP 2017) looks ahead to 2036, but focuses on the actions we need to take over the next four years to help secure long-term success. It is a dynamic and living blueprint to guide the work and investment of many partners.

The Strategy identifies 9 key sectors:

- Advanced manufacturing and engineering;
- Energy;
- ICT, Tech and Digital creative;
- Financial services and insurance;
- Advanced agriculture, Food and drink;
- Transport, freight and logistics;
- Life Sciences and Biotechnology;
- Visitor economy, Tourism heritage and culture;
- Construction and development

The Haven Gateway Partnership is a sub-regional economic partnership that includes the area surrounding and influenced by the Haven ports at Felixstowe, Ipswich, Mistley and Harwich.

The partnership has evolved from an original focus on maritime economic objectives to a broader regeneration partnership that will be an integral player in the significant housing and employment growth expected in that region.

BMS are committed members of this partnership to ensure that economic and tourism benefits are maximised, without compromising the special environment of the eastern half of the district.

SUFFOLK LEVEL

Suffolk is one of the largest county economies in England, ranking 22nd in terms of jobs and 16th in terms of business numbers out of the 206 counties. The County is home to 32,000 businesses and 316,000 jobs (Source: ONS, DCLG IMD 2015).

The Suffolk Growth Strategy (Suffolk County Council, 2013) set out the following four aims:

“First, Suffolk needs a prosperous and vibrant economy which inspires people to succeed. Second, Suffolk needs a high quality, responsive education and training system. Third, Suffolk wants to be an exemplar in tackling climate change. Finally, Suffolk needs all people to be kept safe from harm, to be able to live healthy lifestyles and to be valued.”

The Suffolk Growth Programme Board (SGPB)

The SGPB, formerly known as the Suffolk Growth Group, changed to a Programme Board in December 2016 to reflect its integrated approach to delivering a programme of joint growth initiatives across Suffolk. Membership is drawn from Suffolk Local Authorities; New Anglia LEP (with GCGP invited to attend); the University of Suffolk and Suffolk Chamber of Commerce.

The Suffolk Housing Board has recently joined to reflect the impact housing delivery has on achieving place based growth.

Role

The role of the Growth Programme Board, as agreed in December 2016, is to:

- lead: the Suffolk Growth Framework at officer level, and through collaboration across the County ensure GPB outcomes are communicated to all staff and members.
- deliver: Suffolk’s economic vision and achieve impact through the coordination of programmes and projects directly managed by the GPB and through facilitated work with partners
- influence (through engagement): public / private stakeholders, businesses and politicians about the priorities for growth in Suffolk and the opportunities for improving the region’s competitive position and prosperity
- manage risk: by understanding upcoming risks / unknowns, and responding to these through a flexible & innovative approach to economic growth

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce’s Manifesto (2018) sets out our broad aims and ambitions to maximise the positive role of businesses through promoting this ‘Suffolk PLC’ model aimed at creating inclusive economic growth and improved levels of prosperity for all in Suffolk.

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce is campaigning for three key changes to how business can operate in the county in order to unlock the full potential of our wealth creators:

- Reducing Regulation
- Improving access to all markets
- Giving business the tools to do the job



B. Our Role

Networking and supporting business-to-business engagement

We will facilitate and promote business engagement events organised by our partner organisations, such as coffee mornings and breakfast meetings, trade fairs, small business forums and other networking events. Both officers and councillors will attend regularly to give support to the meetings and offer another access point to the Councils.

The Councils will also from time to time organise similar activities on a spatial or sectoral basis, particularly where the market is not providing the appropriate platforms.

Business intelligence

We will collect, interpret and maintain databases and information, including local knowledge and market activity so that we anticipate where we can intervene and assist growth. We will share this information with businesses on our website and through periodical reports, such as the Annual Authority Monitoring Report.

Regulation and policy development

As the Local Planning Authority and Licensing Authority, we understand and balance the needs of businesses with other interest groups, and we seek to ensure that business activity is appropriate in its location and operations. We seek to be fair and find solutions, not try to dictate or constrict businesses activity, and we will continually evolve to meet the needs of our service users.

We work closely with Suffolk County Council as the Highway Authority and others such as the utility companies, Environment Agency and other in a position of authority and with regulatory powers in order to ensure that our approach is consistent and compatible with theirs for a seamless user experience.

Affiliation and quality benchmarking

The Councils do not intend to endorse local businesses directly, but will encourage and support businesses that seek to obtain industry quality assurances, such as ISO9001, Charter Mark, Gas Safe, Red Tractor, Investor in People and other such schemes.

A schedule of recognised schemes will be published on our website to advise consumers and businesses as to what each is seeking to achieve. The Councils will encourage businesses to obtain industry recognition to ensure that consumers are receiving quality products and services.

Funding - loans and grants

Access to finance is one of the business community's biggest hurdles, so grants and loans are a key component of unlocking business opportunity. There are a myriad of loans and grants available, but they change periodically as Central Government and European priorities adjust. We will work with our delivery partners to ensure that there is a clear path and easier gateway developed to access business finance, and support with regard to developing proposals and application forms.

The Finpoint service is aimed at matching grant offers with businesses to ensure they access the correct option. The Councils will support this service alongside other partners such as Growth Hub who also match business with finance.

Common grant schemes currently available include:

- **ERDF**
- **ESIF**
- **Small Business Grant**
- **Growing Business Fund**
- **Growing Places**
- **Agri-tech grant**
- **LEADER**
- **Coastal Communities Fund**

We will keep our website up to date with current grants and loans schemes, and report annually the amount spent and jobs it has unlocked in our area.

Energy efficiency

The environmental benefits of energy efficiency are well documented, but the Councils will seek to work with businesses to implement energy efficiency measures in order to reduce operational costs and boost productivity.

While all new buildings are energy efficient, most of our commercial buildings are ageing and do not offer thermal insulation. This is particularly problematic for large warehouse and factory units. The BEE Anglia programme offers free advice, appraisal and in most cases grants to install energy efficient measures in commercial (now including some retail) premises across Suffolk and Norfolk.



The Councils are also keen to market the County's energy efficiency as an ethical investment benefit, and further the awareness (including central government's) of the considerable innovation in the energy sectors from businesses in our region.

Business advice will cover reducing energy consumption, but may also extend to micro-generation programmes, advice on tariffs and other options to ensure efficiency and have a positive impact on operational costs.

Celebrating our successes / learning from failings

We know we won't always get everything right, but we will seek to understand and learn from failure as well as championing successes. We will better share, as an organisation and across our collaboration network, learning for the benefit of all.

Through tweets, press releases and other media we will support promotions, awards and key business successes to keep our local economy at the forefront of people's minds.

We also understand the value that incremental steps may have towards better services and positive delivery outcomes. Several well considered or combined smaller steps may cumulatively have the same impact as a single radical change.



C. Employment Sectors Analysis

The Councils' 2017 **Sector Needs Assessment (SNA)** by Lichfields provides a 'business as usual' assessment of the current and future growth potential of key sectors of the economy to help inform policy approaches to accommodating future economic growth and business needs.

Forecasts of employment growth for each sector have been sourced from the 2016 East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM) for the period 2014-2036. These forecasts are based on recent economic trends within the study area and provide a starting point view of how the local economy may change over the coming years.

Between 2001 and 2016, the population of the Ipswich Economic Area (IEA) that includes Ipswich, Babergh, Mid Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal Local Authority areas grew by nearly 12%. Over this period, employment in the IEA saw steady growth of 7.9%. Babergh grew 8.5%, but Mid Suffolk experienced a much more modest growth of 1.6%. There is a need for a significant boost in jobs growth to match population growth, as well as to address the current significant outward-commuting that already takes place (over 40%).

The 2016 EEFM indicates an increase in the total number of jobs in the IEA of 37,070 to 2036, driven by Ipswich and followed by Suffolk Coastal, Mid Suffolk and lastly Babergh. About 8,140 of

these jobs are expected to fall within 'B use class' sectors (i.e. offices, industry and warehousing) - again with Ipswich anticipated to drive this growth. Across all authorities, office based jobs are expected to record the most significant growth, and to a much lesser extent, distribution based jobs. Manufacturing based jobs are forecast to decline across each authority area over the period to 2036.

When translated into spatial requirements, the 2016 EEFM forecasts imply a lower overall scale of employment land requirements across the IEA when compared with earlier 2014 EEFM data used in the 2016 Ipswich and Waveney Employment Land Needs Assessment (ELNA). This position is echoed across each individual local authority area with the exception of Ipswich where there is a projected increase in requirements.

However this is based on past trends through the global recession, and so in the drive for greater prosperity the land requirements set out in the SNA are minimums not ceilings.

The key economic sectors show:

Agriculture



330 businesses, 5% of stock

Analysis suggests that the IEA has some real strength in agriculture-related sectors and emerging USPs and competitive advantage within food and drink and agri-tech sub sectors in particular. This provides a key area of opportunity for growth over the coming years.

Whilst employment in agriculture has increased across the IEA over recent years, the latest EEFM forecasts imply a reversal of this trend going forward with a decline of 1480 jobs (-37.9%). However the technology aspects of agriculture are forecast to grow, as supported by the New Anglia LEP, and already seen in Babergh and Mid Suffolk where there is already a major agri-tech groundswell. This is likely to place an increasing emphasis upon provision of high quality business accommodation within those key areas of market demand across rural areas of Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Business and professional services

2770 businesses, 40% of stock

Ipswich has a particular strength in financial and insurance services, whilst there are also developing specialisms in creative and digital sectors. Forecast growth of 4890 jobs (+37.1%), with the majority of associated demand for office space focused within Ipswich town centre and at Martlesham Heath / Adastral Park, but with a network of new office developments in accessible locations close to Ipswich, for example the potential growth in the A12 and A14 corridors and Sudbury.

The focus of provision of accommodation for business and professional services activity will need to be placed upon good quality, modern space within a range of out of town and semi-rural locations that benefit from strong connectivity and also proximity to key settlements across the IEA.

For some sectors, there will also be a reducing requirement for large scale, large floorplate premises and a preference for flexible premises that provide opportunities for 'agile' working practices and arrangements.

Computing and technology



210 businesses, 3% of stock

The Tech Nation 2017 report notes that the Ipswich area is one of the UK's key locations for computing and technology – particularly with communications technology research at Martlesham – and a reputation as a good place to start and grow a computing and technology related business

This sector is supported by the New Anglia LEP with planned investment in the form of new broadband infrastructure and the government-backed Technology Innovation Centres which will support growth forecast of 250 jobs (+22.5%).

Provision of high quality broadband will be key to growth here, as will availability of high specification office space and a supporting network of funding opportunities, skills provision and a talented workforce pipeline.

Construction

900 businesses, 13% of stock

This sector is distributed fairly evenly across the IEA, clustered along the A12 and A14 corridors, as well as in Sudbury.

Construction is forecast to be the fastest-growing sector to 2036, with growth of 4540 jobs (+50.4%) across the IEA. The development of Sizewell C would present a significant opportunity for the sector locally.

The key transport corridors represent prime areas of market demand, while smaller District settlements also represent popular locations for more localised construction based firms and this should be reflected and supported within forthcoming planning policy relating to employment land provision.

Feedback indicates some consolidation in the sector, particularly to a smaller number of larger offices which could increase demand for this type of premises.

Education

190 businesses, 3% of stock



The role of 'Greater Ipswich' as a centre for education provides a key opportunity to grow and further accelerate the IEA's education offer and employment growth potential going forward, as well as securing the step changes needed in workforce skills, particularly in science and technology.

Forecast job change of -430 jobs (-6.2%) bucks the trend for growth of the population generally increasing demand for education services, particularly in and around Ipswich. Future growth and development plans for education will inevitably be shaped by statutory agencies rather than 'market demand' per se.

Early years, primary and secondary education facilities are planned through their own organisations, but wider opportunities could arise from the expansion of the University of Suffolk and Innovation Martlesham as centres of excellence.

Energy, waste and utilities

50 businesses, 1% of stock

In overall terms, the energy sector tends to be relatively self-contained within the IEA, and concentrated across a small number of key sites and locations. In addition to energy assets themselves, supply chain linkages with other sectors such as agriculture are also significant.

For the most part, premises requirements amongst energy related companies do not differ too far from other sectors, so a flexible approach will be required to accommodate sector growth going forward, alongside crucial infrastructure improvements and a clearer skills strategy to develop workforce skills courses in environmental sciences and energy related subjects.

In absence of strong anticipated future growth of 40 jobs (4.5%), the key component of economic growth going forward is therefore likely to be increased productivity, and generating higher levels of economic output from existing assets and workforce.

The New Anglia LEP and East of England Energy Group are hoping to promote and develop East Anglia's offshore wind sector, and the expansion of this industry as well as biomass projects also indicate greater scope for growth than implied by the low forecasts.

Health and care

420 businesses, 6% of stock



These activities are located across the IEA but focused in the main population centres. Public health services will be planned by the Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group, whilst private care facilities will be driven by private providers. The LEP recognises that there is likely to be an ever increasing demand on health and social care services in the future and from a practical perspective this is likely to place increased pressure upon development sites across the IEA to accommodate an increase in provision, particularly within accessible locations and urban extensions.

Workforce skills represents another key challenge for health and care related growth across the study area over the coming years, with the Clinical Commissioning Group recognising the need to up-skill current members of the workforce and collaborate with local universities (e.g. University of East Anglia and University of Suffolk) to develop a workforce that is capable of responding to changing patient needs and demands.

Forecast growth of 2100 jobs (+23.7%) which mainly reflects growth of population increasing demand for health services and an ageing population demanding care facilities. Should the population of the IEA grow at a faster than projected rate, the demand for health and care services will increase.

Hospitality and leisure

460 businesses, 7% of stock

In light of recent fluctuations and limited employment growth within the hospitality and leisure sector across the IEA, strong forecast job growth over the period to 2036 represents an encouraging trend and significant opportunity. Tourism is an important part of this sector reflecting both the cultural offer and natural environment. Future growth of restaurants, cafes and other leisure facilities will be mainly focused in the main towns and tourism centres.

Employment is expected to grow by 2000 jobs (+30.8%). Given the wide range of facilities that make the IEA attractive as a leisure destination, any strategy to support future growth will need to be suitably flexible and responsive to changing sector needs and demands, including factors relating to business premises, growth and expansion.

A key focus going forward will also be upon improving productivity within the sector and competitiveness at a regional and national scale, and making the most of cross sector synergies and collaborations with other high impact sectors such as ICT and digital creative.

Manufacturing

480 businesses, 8% of stock

This sector is forecast to decline by 3490 jobs (-30.5%) by 2036, continuing the recent trend of job contraction.

Notwithstanding this, the IEA is generally regarded as a strong industrial location in market terms, particularly along transport corridors including the A14, A140 and A12 corridors. Whilst the employment forecasts are negative overall, growth opportunities have been identified in higher value sub-sectors including advanced manufacturing and engineering. Sector-focused technology parks and enterprise parks with scope for university and research collaboration will be required to support these opportunities going forward.

Whilst the evolution and restructuring of the manufacturing sector is ongoing, local strategies for supporting continued manufacturing growth will need to take account of macro sector drivers such as the scope to promote co-location of R&D with production to maintain and build 'industrial commons', diversify the supply of manufacturing workers to avoid future shortfalls and ensure that manufacturers utilise future workers effectively.

Retail

460 businesses, 7% of stock



The locational focus is within Ipswich as the County Town, supported by centres such as Stowmarket and Sudbury, and the various out-of-town retail parks. The retail sector has faced a series of structural challenges over recent years and this is reflected through fluctuating levels of employment and overall employment decline throughout the recession.

This sector is forecast to grow by 490 jobs (+8.7%), and town centre locations will be the focus of future floorspace needs. Recent Retail Studies have been undertaken to estimate the overall spatial requirements that will be needed to accommodate growth in the IEA's retail sector over the coming years. This will be used to inform planning policy, recognising the changing nature of consumer spending patterns and developer requirements, to respond positively and effectively to these changing demands and retail trends.

Transport and logistics



190 businesses, 3% of stock

Employment is mainly focused around the A12 and A14 corridors and port-related activities at Felixstowe.

The LEP identifies ports and logistics as one of four underpinning sectors, generating substantial freight activity along road/rail corridors to UK hubs. The ports in particular are closely linked to other sectors including energy products and offshore installation and maintenance, and represent an important component of the IEA's economy. Wider infrastructure issues provide potential barriers to future development and growth of the sector over the coming years and would need to be overcome, including A14 congestion between Felixstowe and Ipswich.

The sector is expected to grow by 960 jobs (+4.7%) but this does not considered to reflect the scale of growth potential that exists within the study area. Expansion and diversification of activities at Felixstowe has been identified as a significant growth driver for this sector, in particular port-centric distribution centres which would likely be located along the A14 with good connectivity to the Port.

If these opportunities can be realised, this could significantly enhance the job growth potential within transport, logistics and related sectors across the IEA and in turn, increase demand for land in strategic locations to facilitate this type of activity.

Wholesale and distribution

440 businesses, 6% of stock

This sector is highly inter-related with transport and logistics, and therefore expansion of activities at the Port of Felixstowe would also potentially create opportunities for this sector. Transport linkages and provision of strategic infrastructure represent the key drivers and challenges for growth in this sector going forward. Wholesale activity and employment is fairly well dispersed across the IEA and data analysis underlines the important role played by a number of centres – both small and large – in accommodating this activity.

Employment in this sector is forecast to grow by 1,050 jobs (+11%), with a spatial pattern of demand that largely mirrors the transport and logistics sector – i.e. with a key emphasis upon the A14 corridor extending from the Port of Felixstowe to Stowmarket – but also comprises some of the IEA's smaller settlements away from the strategic road network such as Sudbury which remain popular with smaller scale wholesale firms serving a local market or customer base.



D. Key Delivery Partners

To ensure business needs are being met in our area we work with a range of organisations, charities and groups, including;

New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership

In order to encourage businesses to grow and thrive in our area, we have signed up to the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership. There are 39 LEPs across England and they are tasked by Central Government to deliver local growth and economic development.

NALEP represents one of the fastest growing regions in the country, with 1.6 million people and around 55,000 businesses.

NALEP was established by Government in 2010. It is a unique business-led collaboration between the private, public and education sectors across Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. The ambition is to drive economic growth and transform the local economy into a global centre for talent and innovation.

The NALEP executive team is responsible for the day to day running of the Local Enterprise Partnership. This includes delivering its strategy, liaising with Government, local authorities and partners, identifying activities to support jobs growth, securing funding, engaging with the business community and liaising with the media.

In March 2014 NALEP secured a Growth Deal fund from Central Government to the value of £221.5m to 2021. It is forecast to create up to 16,000 new jobs, 3,000 new homes and the potential to generate an additional £240m public and private investment. In January 2015, NALEP was awarded £48.5m with aviation, engineering and innovation at the heart of the government funding. The latest round of funding will deliver up to 2,000 new jobs and 750 homes in the area by 2021.





NALEP's Growth Hub is a free business support programme that can help business grow (including through access to funding and grants), and to develop to achieve their full potential. Information is offered via the website, through the telephone help desk, and at one-on-one meetings with business advisers.

The Growth Hub also works with NALEP to deliver Central Government's economic development funding programmes. The Growth Hub has at August 2017 recorded over 30,000 hours of free support for Norfolk and Suffolk's growing businesses, since its launch in 2014.

Chamber of Commerce

There is a strong and active Suffolk Chamber of Commerce that is the voice of local businesses in Suffolk. Many local Chambers across Suffolk are linked to the Suffolk Chamber – including Ipswich, Lowestoft, Bury and Newmarket. We recognise the importance and weight of the collective representation of businesses and will consider the Chambers as a key delivery partner.

We will also work together on important strategic initiatives such as infrastructure, regional economic planning, skills and mentoring for business, developing the right business and skills institutions and lobbying central government.

More locally, offshoot Chambers or Trade Associations include those at Stowmarket, Sudbury and Hadleigh.



Our Delivery partners

We work with a range of partner organisations to reach out to businesses including NWES, CLA, FSB, ISSBA NFU, and MENTA. More information about these partners is available in the contacts pages at the end of this Open for Business Strategy.





D. Evidence Pack

Our evidence base that underpins the OFB Strategy is made up of a number of studies including employment land, retail trends, business opinion and outlook information as well as public opinions. Our key documents include:

- [BMSDC Open for Business Survey Analysis \(2016\)](#)
- [Lichfields Ipswich Economic Area Sector Needs Assessment \(2017\)](#)
- [New Anglia Economic Strategy \(2017\)](#)
- [AECOM Babergh and Mid Suffolk Visitor Destination Plan \(2015\)](#)
- [Carter Jonas Joint Retail Study \(2016\)](#)
- [Stowmarket Vision for Prosperity](#)
- [Sudbury Vision for Prosperity](#)
- [AECOM Visitor Destination Plan \(2015\)](#)

Looking at our evidence we know that there are some common themes and some sector, location or business-specific needs that we can begin to address to ensure that we are truly Open For Business.



Open for Business Strategy

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

