



Introduction

This document represents a high level statement of intent by the East Suffolk Partnership (ESP) Board and identifies those issues that the Board has agreed it will take forward and how it will address them.

The ESP Board first met on 11 July 2012. Since then it has worked to identify the significant issues for East Suffolk that the ESP will champion and also a range of short to medium term priorities for action. This was achieved by commissioning the first ever "State of East Suffolk" report, followed by more in depth intelligence gathering on the key issues in that report.

Context

The interconnected agendas of public sector reform, growth, and localism have fundamentally altered the framework and context within which local government and the wider public sector operate and have also changed the landscape for the voluntary and community sector, as well as creating opportunities for local businesses.

As a result of these national reforms and the partnership between Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils, the concept of a wider collaboration covering East Suffolk has now been fully developed to replace the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney LSPs.

The East Suffolk Partnership

The changed environment will enable the ESP to operate even more effectively than the previous LSPs and it has been designed to:

- Prioritise localities
- Be flexible
- Operate at multiple structured and unstructured layers
- Be able to proactively interact with other 'systems'
- Avoid being hierarchical or bureaucratic

The ESP will be a voice for East Suffolk and a guiding principle for future work is to manage public expectation of what services are / will be available to them and promote and encourage personal responsibility and community capacity.

Priorities

The partnership landscape within Suffolk is complex (see Appendix A) and therefore the ESP will focus on making a difference where a priority gap exists, rather than duplicating the work of an existing partnership or network.

The ESP Board has identified five key themes they believe represent their primary business although many of the underlying issues within these themes are interconnected and demand a collaborative approach to address them successfully.

1. Building on economic prosperity, growth and infrastructure development

East Suffolk Headlines:

- The main employment sectors are retail, health, manufacturing, transport and storage, and education.
- Over 95% of businesses are small and medium sized enterprises and 75% of businesses are micro businesses.
- 9 million tourist visits annually bringing £500m to the local economy
- Key growth sectors are finance and business services, transport, hotels and restaurants
- Employment is forecast to increase by 6,500 jobs by 2031

The ESP Board's position is:

- We are in favour of growth and we support the aim to make East Suffolk the "energy coast".
- We value East Suffolk's diverse economy comprised of a range of well known large employers together with the high proportion of small and medium sized businesses that are vital to the local economy.
- We want to reach and support a wide range of businesses and we particularly want to understand the needs and local challenges of our small businesses and be a voice for them.

Our priorities for 2013 are to:

- Scope and understand the needs of East Suffolk's businesses to identify what is needed to create a self sustaining economy
- Champion the re-skilling and up-skilling of East Suffolk's workforce

2. Ensuring people have the skills to meet employment opportunities

East Suffolk Headlines:

- Over 7% of the eligible population claim Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) in parts of Lowestoft.
- The rest of Lowestoft, Felixstowe and Beccles have claimant rates between 4-7%
- Overall Suffolk Coastal has low rates of unemployment (1.5% claim JSA).
- Overall unemployment is forecast to drop to 1.5% JSA claimants by 2031
- Suffolk Coastal has 58.5% attainment levels amongst young people achieving 5 A* GCSEs (including English and Maths), Waveney has 48.4%, while set against the UK average of 58.2%

The ESP Board's position is:

- We want to inspire young people with the opportunities in East Suffolk and help to improve the links between schools, colleges and employers
- We support work with young people to help us understand the issues and challenges of not being in education, employment or training (NEET).
- We will explore ways of reducing some of the practical barriers to accessing training and employment, such as the cost and availability of transport and accommodation
- We recognise there is no longer a 'career for life' and that young people today will need a range of skills to enable them to adapt to the demands of different sectors of the economy

Our priorities for 2013 are to:

- Address issues early to stop people becoming NEET
- Help improve the links between schools, colleges and employers

3. Encouraging a growing, ageing population to live well

East Suffolk Headlines:

- The population has grown by 6.4% in the last 10 years
- The population is forecast to increase by 17% by 2035
- 41,000 population increase by 2035 is expected to come in total from increase in 65+ age group

The ESP Board's position is:

- We recognise older people as individuals with different expectations and attitudes and we will build on the positive elements to getting older as well as seeing it as a challenge.
- We want quality support for older people and their carers in East Suffolk now and in the future
- We recognise that East Suffolk is a popular location for people to retire to and this brings additional challenges relating to housing, transport and isolation as people get older so we want to create the right conditions to build community networks and capacity for people to live well.

Our priorities for 2013 are to:

- Ask older people about their aspirations and explore ideas for action including intergenerational activities
- Build pathways to information and strengthening community support for older people and their carers

4. Build strong communities and reduce inequalities in health, housing, and crime

East Suffolk Headlines:

- 92% of residents are satisfied with Suffolk Coastal as a place to live, and 81% of Waveney residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- East Suffolk is a generally safe place to live and work with declining number of incidents in many types of criminal activity and a reduction in antisocial behaviour
- There are high levels of multiple deprivation in Lowestoft as well as pockets of deprivation in some of our rural, urban and coastal communities which are obscured in the average district level statistics.
- The average house price in Suffolk Coastal is £206k and in Waveney is £138k and average earnings make affordability a major issue for some, especially first time buyers and young people. Housing condition is also an issue.
- 80% of residents in the middle part of the area have 60+ minutes travel times by public transport to NHS Hospitals
- The difference in life expectancy in the most and least affluent parts of Waveney is 9.6 years for men and 6.4 for females. In Suffolk Coastal the difference is 3.9 years for men and 3.1 years for females

The ESP Board's position is:

- Inequalities in East Suffolk can be disguised by perceptions of affluence but there are ongoing cycles of deprivation and poverty in some of East Suffolk's communities. We know a lot of the needs and what to do and we will look at the whole system to use resources differently and seek Governments backing for our efforts
- It is really important that we get this right – and we are working together to be a single voice on decisions about resource allocation
- We will facilitate and support local initiatives and community action and provide connections to organisations that can help them progress their ideas
- We will support initiatives that harness community self help and we will focus on specific local areas where there are challenges/issues

- We will aim to strengthen parishes/towns so they are more self sufficient and able to achieve their local aspirations and we will work with them to promote the benefits of affordable homes in their area
- We recognise the need to link housing to wider health and social services agendas

Our priorities for 2013 are to:

- This is complex, so the Board will make it a priority to focus on how to have a significant impact on the range of issues that determine inequalities like economic activity, people longest out of work, housing affordability, accessibility, skills, readiness for school, poor health, and parenting skills
- We will explore the possibility of getting quality needs information about the whole range of provision that might be required across the area.

5. Sustainable activities linked to the environment

East Suffolk Headlines:

- High quality landscape and excellent natural environment with the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB, numerous SSSI's, RSPB Minsmere reserve, gateway to the Broads National Park
- 79 km coast and major river estuaries with net loss of land to the sea with erosion affecting 54% of coastline
- In line with Suffolk trends CO2 emissions in East Suffolk are decreasing while the amount of waste being sent to landfill is dropping)

The ESP Board's position is:

- Sustainable development is something we do well in East Suffolk, it is part of everything we do and we want to keep it at the forefront of people, business and organisation's minds.
- We are confident about the approach which is being taken to manage coastal erosion and flooding and we endorse and support it.
- We appreciate the importance of supporting community activity as part of achieving our aims around the environment, health & wellbeing and addressing inequalities. - We will look at ways of promoting walking & cycling
- We recognise that strong town centres will contribute to the sustainability of our market towns and we will help towns to help themselves through signposting, providing networking opportunities and supporting local initiatives
- We will work with the Local Enterprise Partnership to promote local food and the green economy

Our priorities for 2013 are to:

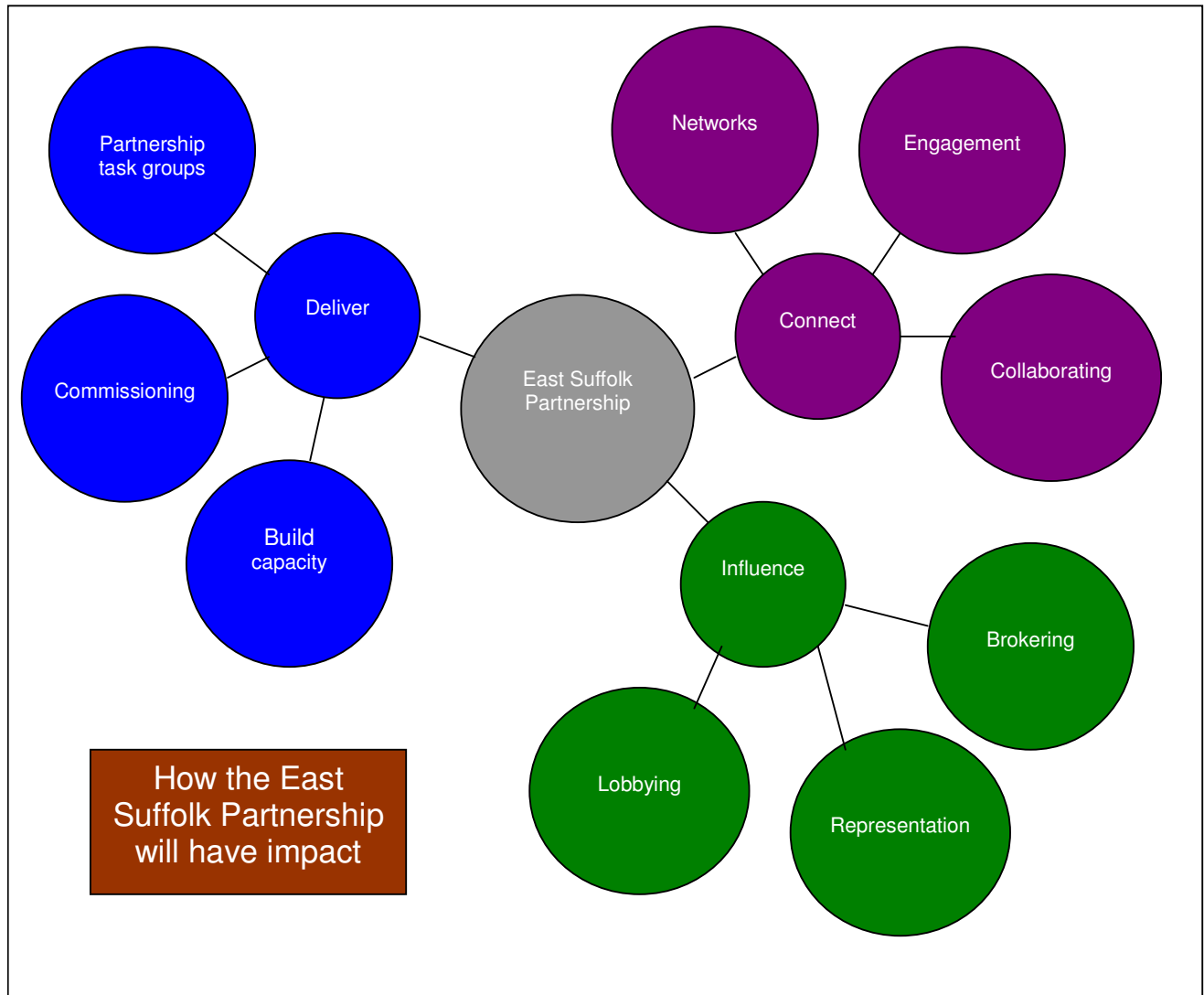
- Promote and communicate the great things going on for our communities and visitors – for example around food, tourism, and heritage.
- We will support activity to signpost / facilitate / inspire local projects and ideas.
- We will help shape the discussion about tourism marketing for the area and branding East Suffolk as a destination.

How the ESP will have impact

Firstly, the ESP will not try to do everything. Resources are limited and success will be achieved by focussing on a small number of key priorities and making sure we deliver on them.

Secondly, it is not about control, it is about collaboration. The partnership Board has a clear set of priorities that will focus effort and resources to ensure it has impact at a comparatively local level across East Suffolk.

And thirdly, the ESP Board understands that there is no one size that fits all when it comes to partnership working. It's about continually exploring new ways of working and being pragmatic about which mechanism to adopt to have the most impact.



Delivery

The ESP will take a flexible approach to delivering its priorities and will proactively interact with other 'systems' and avoid being hierarchical or bureaucratic.

As well as being a voice for East Suffolk and enabling strategic planning between partners, the ESP will also incorporate active engagement in delivery and the Board will commission work or engage partnership task groups to achieve its priorities where this is most appropriate.

The ESP sees commissioning as an important process that can achieve clearly defined impacts, often where there is no obvious delivery mechanism already in place. The Board will be proactive and in each case will engage one of its member organisations to operate a transparent process on its behalf to seek proposals from various service providers to achieve a particular priority. The Board will also decommission projects and initiatives that it considers are not achieving the desired level of impact.

Alternatively, partnership task groups who currently operate in East Suffolk are likely to be engaged or commissioned by the ESP for some of the priority work streams. We will expect these groups to have reviewed their roles to confirm there is “added value” in them existing for strategic and/or operational planning purposes. Working groups will be co-ordinated for governance purposes by the relevant lead partner organisation rather than reporting to the ESP.

Finance and resources

For the East Suffolk Partnership to achieve its full potential and deliver significant outcomes that make a real difference to the communities of East Suffolk it will have to harness the wide range of resources made available through its partners. Crucially, these will include the energy of key individuals with a desire to succeed, the skills and expertise that can be focused on delivery through existing and new groups and networks, additional financial contribution of partner organisations, and by exploiting other funding opportunities as they occur.

Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council and Suffolk County Council have agreed to direct a total of £400k through the New Homes Bonus to the ESP in 2012/13 with subsequent annual payments subject to review.

Although it is important to focus the majority of funding on delivery, the Board does need to ensure that this new partnership is effective and efficient. Learning from Suffolk Coastal & Waveney LSPs backs up the need for effective partnership co-ordination and management. To do this for the ESP does not require a lot of bureaucracy but will need a dedicated resource to manage and co-ordinate its work. Therefore the three funding Councils have agreed that part of their contribution will fund the Partnership Manager role.