

ENSURING ESP IMPACT

Report by Tony Osmanski

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1. Report Purpose

1.1 The next year is crucial to the ESPs development if it is to fulfil its potential and make a real difference in East Suffolk. The purpose of this report is to build on the draft ESP Business Plan and prompt discussion by the Board on how it will establish the ESP to have real impact when delivering its priorities.

1.2 The Board is being asked to:

- i) Confirm the key stakeholders / partnerships / systems in East Suffolk that it will connect with and influence.
- ii) Identify how it will be the “voice for East Suffolk” and respond to significant emerging issues in a way that influences the outcomes.
- iii) Indicate how the Board will develop a constructive relationship with other organisations, communities and the public to ensure it is connected to local issues, its work is relevant and its messages are shared widely.
- iv) Agree how it will incorporate active engagement in delivering its priorities without being hierarchical or bureaucratic.

2. Confirm the key stakeholders / partnerships / systems in East Suffolk that the Board will connect with and influence.

2.1 The “spheres of influence” diagram contained in the ESP Business Plan shows that the partnership landscape in Suffolk is complex. The key partnerships which the Board has already agreed it will seek to influence are:

- New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership
- Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board / Suffolk Children’s Trust
- Safer Suffolk Partnership

2.2 Questions for discussion:

- Are there other partnerships / systems that the Board considers that are key to seek to influence?
- How will the Board actually relate to these partnerships / systems in an influential way?
- The partnership landscape is consistently changing in Suffolk – how will the Board keep connected and influential as change happens?

2.3 Some recommended solutions that the Board may consider are:

- i) The Board agrees the key partnerships it intends to influence and for each one nominates one (or more if appropriate) of its members to take a lead role in representing the ESP and connecting it to the ESP. This would require the individual to be actively engaged in the partnership and lead discussion on how the ESP will add value to the priorities of their particular partnership through collaborating, lobbying or brokering for example.
- ii) Board members identify all partnerships and networks with which they are connected to develop a clear picture of ‘the reach’ of the Board. Having done this, suitable feedback loops can be put in place to promote influence through collaborations and stronger networks.

3. Identify how the Board will be the “voice for East Suffolk” and respond to significant emerging issues in a way that influences the outcomes.

3.1 The Board has already agreed to represent the east of Suffolk and its localities at county-wide, regional and national level and take a leading role in promoting and delivering better government in east Suffolk. Given the breadth of issues that this could involve it is important for the Board to be clear about what it will and will not do. In developing the draft ESP Business Plan the Board has identified a clear statement of intent and the five areas it believes represents its primary business.

3.2 Questions for discussion:

- How will the Board maintain focus on delivering impact in these five areas of primary business whilst maintaining the flexibility to influence new issues, strategies and policies as they occur?
- How will the Board exercise its ‘voice’ – can the Board speak with one voice and still respect different (and possibly opposing) stances taken by its constituent organisations?
- How will the Board ensure that the messages it communicates represent widely held views of the organisations, communities and individuals across east Suffolk?

3.3 Some recommended solutions that the Board may consider:

- i) The Board should operate at all times through consensus building, mutual trust and respect, collective leadership and an emphasis on drawing on skills and knowledge of its representatives to articulate the aspirations of the East Suffolk community.
- ii) The Board should agree to a set of principals by which it will communicate its messages, ideally as part of a wider communications strategy.

4. Indicate how the Board will develop a constructive relationship with other organisations, communities and the public to ensure it is connected to local issues, its work is relevant and its messages are shared widely.

4.1 There is a clear expectation that the Board will work openly and be accountable and the report on communicating the ESP elsewhere on the agenda outlines the task of communicating the work and aims of the ESP. There will need to be an ongoing engagement with stakeholders from the Board, partly developed from Board members’ roles and networks outside the Board, but also by more coordinated approaches from the Board as a whole.

4.2 Questions for discussion:

- The Board has already agreed to meet in public, but should they be held throughout the area, with important local issue under discussion each time to help attract community representatives to contribute?
- If the Board agrees to hold stakeholder events to increase participation in the work of the ESP, how will these be made to work over the relatively large geographical area covered by East Suffolk?

4.3 Some recommended solutions that the Board may consider:

- i) The Board should agree to a set of principals by which it will hold its meetings, ideally as part of a wider communications strategy.
- ii) The Board should agree arrangements to hold stakeholder events, again as part of a wider communications strategy.

5. Agree how the Board will incorporate active engagement in delivering its priorities without being hierarchical or bureaucratic.

5.1 Although the draft ESP Business Plan suggests the Board will remain flexible and continue to explore new ways of working, it does assume that the following methods will be adopted by the Board at different times:

- i) **Commissioning:** The draft ESP Business Plan describes commissioning as an important process that can achieve clearly defined impacts, often where there is no obvious delivery mechanism already in place.
- ii) **Partnership task groups:** There are a range of partnership groups and networks currently operating in East Suffolk that bring together experts and practitioners in their field. These groups and networks have been developed for a number of reasons and vary in their effectiveness; some have a good track record of making a difference on the ground. These groups include sector led networks and also the working groups that were set up by the LSPs to help deliver their Community Strategies.
- iii) **Building capacity:** The ESP is in a unique position in East Suffolk to harness the wide range of skills, knowledge and resources available through the various partners across public, private, voluntary and community sectors. By sharing knowledge and working collaboratively the Board can help build capacity where it is needed across important parts of the system – like supporting communities to build their capacity to deliver more for themselves.

5.2 Questions for discussion:

- Should the Board only focus on issues where a multi-agency solution is required?
- What appetite does the Board have towards risk? By identifying the key issues that face East Suffolk the ESP can help a range of partners to direct their work into complex areas where they can uniquely make a difference by working together. How far will the Board go to support creative or innovative solutions with unproven outcomes to generate solutions to problems that single agencies cannot solve?

5.3 Some recommended solutions that the Board may consider:

- i) It is recommended that when the Board intends to commission work it allocates the work to one of its constituent partner organisations to undertake the commissioning process and manage the subsequent contract through its governance procedures.
- ii) It is recommended that the Board considers engaging with partnership task groups when it wants to collect local intelligence on a particular issue as well as to help deliver its priorities. Any partnership group that the Board engages should be coordinated for governance purposes by the relevant lead organisation.
- iii) It is recommended that the Board helps build capacity in important parts of the system by increasing collaborations between sectors, including the communities of East Suffolk.

6. Recommendations

The Board is asked to consider each recommendation above in turn to decide how it will ensure impact across the range of ESP activity.