



Economic Recovery Restart Plan

Progress Report – Autumn 2020



Supporting the Norfolk & Suffolk
Covid-19 Economic Recovery Restart Plan

November 2020



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Covid-19 Economic Recovery Restart Plan**

This report provides an overview of the progress made since the publication of the Economic Recovery Restart Plan in June 2020.

The multi-partner, multi-level plan brings together commitments and actions from local authorities, businesses, the voluntary and community sector, universities and colleges designed to get the Norfolk and Suffolk economy back on its feet, in a way that makes it more resilient, innovative and benefits all our people. As part of our collective economic recovery plans, we are committed to ensuring clean inclusive growth is at the heart of all our actions and activities.

It remains difficult to accurately predict the long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The progression of the outbreak remains a huge challenge and central government's response will continue to adapt and evolve. As we adapt and find ways of managing the transmission of the virus, it is clear that lockdowns will be a part of the strategy to control the virus. Alongside this, the terms of the UK's departure from the EU are still to be determined.

Given the need to adapt quickly to the ever-changing landscape it may be some time before we can really understand and plan for the longer term.

The actions and initiatives agreed in the Restart Plan will help mitigate the impact of the pandemic as well as supporting the foundations of future growth.

We continue to monitor and analyse the evidence that is available to help shape further interventions and actions to support business and people in Norfolk and Suffolk to be economically active. We are living through the very uncertain times.

Our collaborative approach is to be agile and evolve plans and actions to ensure they remain relevant. There has been an enormous effort from all partners in driving forward the actions within the plan for the benefit of all the business and people in Norfolk and Suffolk. However we are under no illusions that challenging times are ahead and more will need to be done.

What we know so far

The impact of the pandemic has been significant across most parts of the economy, and with rising infection rates, the outlook remains very challenging.

The national level of unemployment stands at around 4.5% as of Jun-Aug, an increase of 0.4% over the previous three months, a larger rise prevented by the furlough scheme. Latest estimates are suggesting unemployment could now peak at 7.5% by the end of 2020 rather than the 10 –15% previously estimated. However, 7.5% is still twice the level of unemployment pre-Covid and represents the sharpest increase in unemployment for more than 10 years. It would be comparable to the peak of unemployment seen as a result of the financial crisis in 2008/9.

Universal Credit claims have increased significantly compared to the same period in 2019. Compared to August 2019, the number of people receiving payments in Norfolk and Suffolk while unemployed has increased by 123% in August 2020, (up to 71,700 in 2020, compared to 32,000 in 2019).

The volume of people receiving payments while employed has increased by 146% over the same period, (up from 19,900 in 2019 to 49,000 in 2020), indicating an increase in people who have seen their working hours and consequently their income significantly reduced. Overall, the volume of Universal Credit claims has increased by 68,900, reflecting a 132% increase.

As expected, the percentage of workers furloughed in Norfolk and Suffolk has increased slightly since June, from 28% to 31%, just below the England 32% average.

Sector composition of specific locations varies considerably, with certain areas having a high concentration of its business base made up of those sectors most susceptible to the impacts Covid-19 restrictions.

Businesses that fall into either the category of ‘Accommodation and Food’ and ‘Art, Entertainment & Leisure’ have been most directly affected by the impact of Covid-19 related restrictions. This impact is reflected in the percentage of the workforce in each sector which has been placed on furlough.

Top six sectors, at a national level, where furlough uptake was highest (by proportion of the sector furloughed):

	% of employees furloughed	Volume of employees furloughed
Arts & Entertainment	45%	8,550
Accommodation & Food	43%	23,220
Construction	22%	7,480
Administration & Support	19%	11,780
Real Estate	18%	1,620
Manufacturing	17%	11,050
Wholesale & Retail	17%	19,720
Prof. Scientific & Technical	17%	7,140

The three sectors which are the centrepiece of Norfolk and Suffolk Local Industrial Strategy (agri-food, clean energy, ICT and Digital) are shown below. While current sector classifications for this data do not map across precisely, the sectors are at the lower end of the list, positioning the area well for future growth.

	% of employees furloughed	Volume of employees furloughed
Information & Comms	12%	1,800*
Agriculture	8%	1,080*
Energy	4%	124*

The percentages of eligible employees in both the Information and Comms, and the Agriculture sector above, have remained broadly the same since the June Restart plan. However, the percentage in the Energy sector has dropped considerably from the 10% figure recorded earlier in the year.

The latest figure for the Self Employment Support Scheme shows that 74% of those eligible for self-employment support made a claim across Norfolk and Suffolk. This is very slightly below the UK average of 77%.

Emerging evidence on the economic and social impact of the pandemic shows that young people aged 12 – 24 are the worst affected groups, particularly in terms of the labour market and mental health.

There is also strong evidence from Suffolk Mind, who carried out research into the mental health and wellbeing of the population – the Emotional Needs Audit- that average wellbeing declined by as much as 11% in May and that this situation has not improved much as we started to come out of the first lockdown. Worries about the virus have been surpassed by worries about the end of furlough, finances, people missing family and friends. Many of the key indicators of wellbeing are still declining - community, attention, achievement. Below 1 is an area of stress – many are down to 0.5.

For employers this means that parts of their workforce are unable to give their best, and this will affect economic recovery.

In the first three quarters of the 2019/20 academic year (August to April), the rate of apprenticeship starts dropped by 8.1% in Norfolk and Suffolk, compared to 12.6% for England as a whole. The number of apprentices under the age of 19 saw the biggest drop.

Survey data from the Chambers of Commerce indicate that there are signs of growth, and a muted recovery. The latest Quarterly Economic Survey indicated that manufacturers and service businesses saw a strong rebound. Positive cashflow, sales volumes and confidence in future growth had all made notable improvements on the lowest points in the aftermath of the first Covid-19 lockdown.

Company incorporation data from Companies House shows that in the first two quarters of the financial year in 2019, 4,979 businesses were

incorporated in Norfolk and Suffolk, over the same period in 2020 5,796 were incorporated, reflecting a 16% increase.

However, it indicated that some of the momentum may have slowed as uncertainty regarding lockdowns persists. This has been echoed by the Lloyds Bank Business Barometer which showed the East of England saw the largest month-on-month increase in business confidence of all UK regions, but this still fell in negative territory.

More than 250 East Anglian businesses responded to a recent Eastern Daily Press and East Anglian Daily Times survey highlighting the impact of Covid-19 restrictions. 79% of independents are reliant on a good Christmas trading period. Just 33% of businesses are confident that they will not need to make any redundancies between now and March 2021. 40% of those businesses have no online presence whatsoever.

The severity of challenges being faced by businesses operating in the broader visitor

economy, including those in hospitality, is evidenced by a regular Great Yarmouth business survey, with 87% of respondents indicating they will need to access some kind of government support scheme over the winter months to survive. Access to grants, business rates relief, VAT and PAYE payments were all cited as areas of concern. With winter months approaching, only 37% had a positive outlook on their likelihood of surviving the next three months.

Businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk have also taken advantage of the loan finance offered through the British Business Bank. More than 1,000 businesses have accessed Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans and another 21,000 have accessed the smaller Bounce Back Loans, with a total of £835m loaned through the two schemes. There does, however, continue to be anecdotal evidence that some companies are struggling to access loan support schemes through major banks. There is further information that suggests new start-ups and entrepreneurs are struggling

to set up new business bank accounts. According to the Federation of Small Businesses, far too many are still excluded from efforts to support business owners – not least company directors and the newly self-employed.

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Key measures

The Restart Plan contains an unprecedented package of measures delivered by partners locally and nationally to get businesses trading, restore business, consumer and community confidence, as well as provide support to individuals made redundant and looking for work. It builds on and promotes support packages delivered by central and local government which have provided a cash lifeline for many businesses and their employees.

Responding to redundancies. We will support individuals being made redundant and help businesses looking for workers, through a new local partnership of businesses and local and national agencies.

Advice and support for businesses. We will ensure every business has access to the finance and support they need, delivered through our new alliance of local authorities, the New Anglia Growth Hub, business representative organisations and trade bodies.

Youth pledge. Every young person in Norfolk and Suffolk will have the support they need to get into high quality education, employment, training, or an apprenticeship.

Transforming skills. We will ensure every individual has access to opportunities to upskill and reskill, adapting the skills provision so that it meets the changing needs of businesses and the aspirations of individuals.

Mental health and wellbeing. We are creating a programme that provides employers and employees with the mental health and wellbeing support they need.

Reimagining high streets. Our local authorities, Business Improvement Districts and other partners are developing a range of measures to help high street businesses reopen and operate safely, to build consumer confidence and rethink the way town centres function.

Visitor economy. We will launch a proactive campaign to promote Norfolk and Suffolk as a destination to live and work with tourism, hospitality and cultural businesses to help them open safely.

Digitisation. We will launch a major campaign to support businesses to build their online presence and to improve productivity, including flexible working practices for their employees, through better use of technology.

Supply chain. We will work with local companies to capitalise on opportunities to sell more goods and services locally, with a commitment from the public and private sector to procure more locally and to support local innovation.

Infrastructure. We will submit support the construction sector through continued investment in key infrastructure and make a compelling case to Government to fund priority infrastructure schemes.

Norfolk & Suffolk Unlimited. Develop a campaign to promote Norfolk and Suffolk as a place rich with investment opportunities.

Safe and sustainable public transport. As the guidance around public transport use changes we will work to support and promote safe and sustainable public transport use, to continue to improve air quality and reduce congestion.

Business environment

Helping businesses bounce back from the Covid-19 pandemic and supporting their return to work and their plans for growth is important. Wider business resilience is also fundamentally important given the new rules around the UK's trading relationship with the EU and the net zero target and businesses' approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation

The alliance of partners from local authorities, the New Anglia Growth Hub, business representative organisations and trade bodies have made great progress towards the actions set out in the Economic Recovery Restart plan.

Together we have:

- Local authorities across Norfolk and Suffolk have provided direct cash support to more than 50% of the business base, awarding £399.33m of grants from the Government's small business grant fund to 34,449 businesses.

- Awarded over 260 targeted grants to businesses totalling £10.2m through the multi-million-pound package of local funding opportunities including New Anglia LEP grants, Norfolk Strategic Fund and other ERDF grants with further funding made available through the recently launched Suffolk Inclusive Growth fund.
- Provided bespoke, free, and impartial advice, through the New Anglia Growth Hub, to support almost 2,000 businesses to restart, reshape their business plans and provide a programme of online training with more than 50% of enquiries relating to grant and finance.

- Suffolk Chamber, with Suffolk local authorities, held the final two Get Fit to Bid procurement workshops, instructing businesses how to prepare themselves to bid for work and how to be in the best possible position to win further procurement contracts. Boosting the skills and knowledge of local businesses and helping our supply-chains in the long-run.
- Launched a peer-to-peer network, with more than 55 business already signed up. It will support 250 SMEs to adapt their business plans, adopt new technology and provide leadership and management support which in turn will help improve productivity.



Clip 'n' Climb in Ipswich is one of the recipients of a Business Resilience and Recovery Scheme grant from New Anglia LEP

- Held a free two-day virtual RESTART Festival for businesses across Norfolk and Suffolk. More than 31 hours of live stream hours of training, panel discussions and information sessions from more than 80 different presenters which remain available for businesses to watch online.
- Funding has been secured to deliver a new cohort for the Investment Catalyst, through the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor, InvestEast and the Low Carbon Innovation Fund. It will connect businesses with investors and help them access private sector funding, which can be matched with public grant schemes.
- Launched the Norfolk and Suffolk Unlimited online Commercial Property Finder platform. It promotes sites to help drive new enquiries for inward investors and businesses looking for new premises. It is updated daily with information from commercial agents, landowners, local authorities and New Anglia LEP.
- Further virtual support to businesses across Norfolk and Suffolk has been delivered by a wide range of partners including Norfolk and Suffolk Chambers of Commerce and local authorities included webinars for the Tech & Tourism and Food & Drink sectors providing assistance to do more business online, mental health and wellbeing, financial support, furlough scheme, and the skills agenda. More events are scheduled, including cyber security and accessing Norfolk County Council procurement framework and Suffolk Chamber meet the buyer event for EDF Sizewell C which will help with Covid recovery.



£6.1m New Anglia LEP Business Resilience and Recovery Grant Scheme has awarded 81 businesses with grants worth £3.1m to date.



£6.75m Norfolk Strategic Fund is in place to kickstart Norfolk's economic recovery and the £2.225m Tourism Sector Support Package was the first project to be approved under this Fund.



£2.3m Suffolk Inclusive Growth Fund is in place with a lead officer to oversee efforts in boosting the visitor economy over the next three years and a £1.6m pot for businesses and projects.



RESTART virtual business festival was watched by more than 650 people each day. It generated more than 3,000 website page views and social media adverts were viewed 93,631 times.

Case studies



Reset-Restart programme

Norfolk Libraries Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC), part of the British Library's BIPC network, has been awarded funding to boost the services it offers to business pre-starts and start-ups in Norfolk and to allow them to further develop the hub and spoke model they have been successfully implementing. The funding has allowed them to recruit dedicated BIPC staff and invest in the breadth and availability of their business database provision. Currently they have three hubs in King's Lynn, Thetford and Great Yarmouth. A further 43 libraries will operate as Tier 3 'Information points' with access to business information resources (databases), live streams, webinars, and online content as well as signposting to further activity and content.



The Nutshell, Bury St Edmunds

West Suffolk Council granted a pavement license for The Nutshell pub in Bury St Edmunds, allowing the pub to open again after six months of closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Following Government's amendments to the Business and Planning Bill 2020 for the granting of temporary pavement licences, West Suffolk Council quickly introduced a free scheme (which runs until September 2021) to allow eligible businesses to put tables and chairs outside their premises to attract more customers and increase trade. The pub is too small to host customers inside and meet social distancing requirements so applied for a pavement license under the extended scheme. Landlord Mr Page said: *"It's a big relief that we can open now. It is just nice to get back to normal. The team were really keen to get back to work and it definitely seems like the table service we are doing has been well received"*.

People

The implications for the workforce go beyond those that have been made redundant or furloughed. For people still in work, much has changed - from adapting to new Covid safe working practices, to those who have seen their working hours reduced. According to the Office of National Statistics, around eight million people are working from home, but almost 20% of them are finding it difficult.

Locally it is recognised that focus on people is vital to building a resilient economy. Skills at all levels will become even more important, with re-skilling, mental health, and wellbeing of significant importance. The investment from local partners to progress the actions in the Restart plan reflect the drive to support people in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Together we have:

- Launched a Job Support Programme which builds on and brings together existing initiatives to support businesses who are either contracting or expanding as well as individuals facing redundancy or looking for new opportunities. The programme will evolve over time as more support and services come on board or are identified currently it includes:
 - an online portal of resources and support information for people facing redundancy which is helping to connect people to new training and employment opportunities. Since its launch in September it has had more than 2,500 visits.
 - Money Advice Service budget planner and navigator which can support individuals to take control of their finances.
- An employment opportunity platform which is helping to plug short-term gaps in essential workforce. There are more than 310 listings on the website covering all our key sectors with nearly 11,000 visits to the platform since May.
- Business health check-ups – more than 60 have been carried out by the New Anglia Growth Hub identifying opportunities to upskill the existing workforce and grow businesses through apprenticeship pathways.
- Strong partnership between DWP, Jobcentre Plus, Local Authorities, training and education providers, mental health services and VCSE organisations who are working to engage with professional services to ensure employers and employees are aware of and have access to available support programmes at the earliest point.

- Worked with all existing ESF programmes running in Norfolk and Suffolk and many other projects that invest in people and have a focus on improving employment and education opportunities and have identify how they can adapt, collaborate and become agile to the changing nature and demands of the workforce. We have bid for £200,000 to provide IT equipment for participants for these projects, which if successful will further breakdown barriers to accessing support where face-to-face interventions are challenging.
- Launched Routes to Work a £2.4m European Social Funded project at East Coast College which supports newly unemployed people in Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Waveney. The project has a range of specialist delivery partners including with Access Community Trust, ACE Training, DIAL and Voluntary Norfolk.

It offers 1:1 mentoring, advice and support to help people progress into work or training. Support is often short and intensive focussing on a specific area of need, such as interview skills or writing application forms.

- Worked with DWP to promote and coordinate the Kickstart initiative – supporting 16 – 24 year olds on universal credit into high quality 6-month work placements to avoid long term unemployment.

The wages for up to 25 hours a week are funded by the government plus additional wrap around support. Organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce and county councils have applied to become Gateway organisations, enabling businesses to apply. As of 10 November, 660 placements have been registered.

- Showcased the practical interventions that employers can carry out around mental health through sessions at the RESTART Festival and case studies/referral options on the Job Support Programme platform.



Senior Enterprise
Coordinator
Jordan Holder
presenting at the
RESTART
Festival

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- Accelerated the delivery of the Youth Pledge projects, providing an integrated offer that links young people to opportunities and support to help them into education, training and employment. West Suffolk College has launched its RYPE Youth Pledge project which has the aim of recruiting 860 unemployed or economically inactive young people (16-24 year olds) in rural areas on to a programme providing support, integration and progression. It will provide on-demand pastoral support, positive mindset development, a match making job service including CV writing and career development support and progression into training and/or employment.
 - Driven forward the levy transfer scheme for over 150 apprentices with a total of £711,531 pledged in 2020 in actual transfers and a further £439,625 in the pipeline and seeking transfer. We are actively supporting the social care sector with four residential care homes applying for funding.
 - Initiated the Recruit, Retain and Reward apprenticeship incentive grant scheme via Norfolk and Suffolk County Council Apprenticeship teams. To date there has been 73 successful applications for the £1000 award for recruiting a new or recently made redundant apprentice due to Covid-19 challenges. The vast majority of successful applicants have been supporting the 16-18-year-old cohort which shows the commitment that our businesses still have for assisting young people at the start of their careers.
 - Expanded the Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hub, increasing capacity to support schools and colleges with their career's strategy. Since September, each Enterprise Coordinator has held a cluster meeting with their schools to share best practice and discuss solutions for challenges being faced this academic year. Weekly careers resource is distributed to Careers Leads and Enterprise Advisors highlight available careers activities to support with achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks
 - Broadcasted 34 episodes of the EAN Careers and Coffee with interviews of people from a wide range of sectors include, IT, engineering, finance, education, law, creative and the manufacturing sector. They have demonstrated future employment opportunities across key sectors to help raise awareness and apparitions of young people. Careers Leads are using the episodes in classes and as designated homework with students. Future sectors to be featured include agri-tech, education, social care, energy.
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Case studies



We are trialling a virtual work experience project in collaboration with Suffolk County Council, NEACO and the Enterprise Adviser Network.

- To be delivered spring /summer term 2021.
- Target audience 300 Year 10 students.
- To provide a structured programme of work inspiration activities for Year 10.
- To help students understand a range of working environments and sectors.
- To provide the opportunity to take part in a mock online interview.
- To engage learners and schools with local companies and employees.



Birketts has worked with New Anglia LEP to transfer some of its outstanding Apprenticeship Levy funds help support the training needs of Feltwell Lodge Care Home. By transferring 25% of its unused annual levy payment, the firm will support the Home's apprenticeship learning costs.



Work Well Suffolk helps people aged 18+ who are unemployed or economically inactive with a focus on those with a Learning Disability, Autism, Mental Health Challenge or other barrier to progression into employment. Suffolk County Council is working with project partners, Realise Futures, Steadfast Training and MENTA to provide coaching, training, mentoring and support into employment or self-employment. The Work Well Suffolk team improves employment opportunities by empowering people to remove barriers, supporting them to engage with education, training and employment, and encouraging work-related activities. Work Well Suffolk has continued to deliver virtually throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, providing 1:1 wrap around support via phone and video conferencing and is well positioned to maximise the support available to the people of Suffolk that have been impacted and to work alongside other initiatives such as Kickstart in order to support participants.

Ideas and Innovation

The pandemic has posed huge challenges to the global economy and people's daily lives with far-reaching consequences. At the same time, this universal period of disruption has been a strong driver of creativity, collaboration and innovation that we want to build into our restart and renew activity.

Innovation is extremely important as those that have the capacity to adapt and innovate have shown their resilience during the pandemic. Investing in innovation and technology will help to ensure the Norfolk and Suffolk continues to be at the forefront of shaping the resilient businesses and markets of the zero-carbon future.

Together we have:

- Awarded 20 grants across Norfolk and Suffolk, totalling £325,332, through the £2m

2m New Anglia Growth Through Innovation Fund to undertake research and development or innovation projects that supports growth and helps businesses to diversify or develop new products.

- Secured £270,000 to launch an Innovation Mentoring Programme which will increase the number of successful applications to innovation funding schemes from businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk. The project provides high quality advice and mentoring to businesses, ensuring they have access to the resources they need to be successful when bidding for innovation funding, including existing and new opportunities with Innovate UK. By the end of the project, it will have delivered more than:
 - **50** businesses engaged via mentor and bid writing workshops

- **20** businesses engaged in bespoke support (mentor and/or bid development)
- **18** successful applications/results achieved over the two years of the project
- Delivered a series of online Funding Fit and Re:Imagine Challenge events related to a different Innovate UK calls. The programme brings together businesses from across the region to identify opportunities to collaborate to develop new products, services and ways to improve our communities. The programme supports businesses to access funding opportunities such as Innovate UK grants to bring their projects forward and to increase the number of bids from the region.

Case studies



Warren Services in Thetford proposed a project to develop an automated, AI-driven distributed manufacturing network of engineering and manufacturing from SME's across the region. Researchers from the Institute for Manufacturing at the University of Cambridge and an additional four companies from Norfolk and Suffolk have been identified through this programme to participated as project partners. If the £1.5m bid is successful it has the potential to drive productivity and open new market opportunities for businesses across the region and put Norfolk and Suffolk on the map as a leader in digitised manufacturing.

Infrastructure

Places and communities are interconnected, depend on transport links, and draw on many of the same labour markets and supply chains. The pandemic has demonstrated the need for resilient and adaptable infrastructure. It has changed the way businesses and communities use services and the infrastructure needs to support these changes.

Infrastructure is fundamentally important as we look to recover, increase employment, and drive growth – from clean energy to the need for broadband investment and significant road and rail infrastructure improvements.

Together we have:

- Secured £32.1m from Government's Getting Building Fund which will fund 13 projects to help deliver jobs, skills and infrastructure in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Projects include North Walsham Town Centre Revitalisation, Cornhill Redevelopment in Bury St Edmunds and the Great Yarmouth Strategic Seafront projects (pictured)

Together, the Getting Building Fund projects will:

- Create 1,100 new jobs
- Safeguard more than 2,900 jobs
- Unlock a further £85m of private and public sector investment
- Assist more than 500 new learners
- Deliver more than 1,000 new superfast broadband connections



- Secured an additional ££2.925m from the second round of the government's Emergency Active Travel Fund adding to the £737,700 secured earlier in the year. Norfolk County Council have been awarded £1,577,000 and Suffolk County Council £1,348,000 for second phase projects with project bids submitted in August. Following the award from the first round Suffolk County Council have implemented 13 schemes at Ipswich, Felixstowe, Beccles and Bury St Edmunds with two further schemes due to be implemented shortly. Norfolk County Council have implemented 31 schemes in key urban areas and market towns.
- Transport East secured £425k from DfT to develop the first sub-national Transport Strategy for Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Southend and Thurrock, in addition to specific strategic studies for Active Travel and Passenger Transport / Rural Connectivity.

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- Phase Two of the Suffolk broadband programme has been completed resulting in superfast broadband coverage approaching 98% of Suffolk premises (businesses and households) with take-up rates over 70% and continuing to rise. They are moving into Phase 3 which will target remaining unserved premises with a full fibre (or fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP)) solution offering Gigabit-capable connections in parallel with, and in many cases ahead of, commercial full fibre deployments in urban areas.
 - Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) is currently deploying Gigabit capable broadband to 325 public buildings in Norfolk, with 21 completed to date and the rest due for completion by June 2021. This is getting Gigabit capable fibre infrastructure into the most rural parts of Norfolk and will create opportunities for the commercial sector to invest further, and for communities to take up fast broadband services. A recent successful bid for a further £2m will add another 80 locations to the programme.
 - Suffolk County Council secured a £5.9m grant from DCMS, matched by local County Council investment to fund fast, highly flexible network connections to public sector sites in Suffolk. Suffolk is a Wave 3 Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) project, one of the few in advanced stages of delivery. Ten Suffolk towns are benefiting from this funding in a network rollout being delivered by MLL Telecom with the fibre infrastructure being provided CityFibre. On the back of this programme, CityFibre has decided to invest in Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich, and Lowestoft. In Bury St Edmunds CityFibre is investing c.£8m, c.£30m in Ipswich and c.£14m in Lowestoft to provide the towns with gigabit-capable full fibre connectivity to all home and business premises.
 - Promoting the Gigabit Vouchers on the better broadband [website](#). Replacing the Better Broadband Voucher Scheme in March 2020
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- the Universal Service Obligation was launched in March 2020. Households and businesses that are eligible to take advantage of the scheme have the installation and hardware costs of their connection subsidised to ensure their first-year costs are no more than £400.
- Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils and New Anglia LEP are working together to rollout a LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network) network covering both counties – the Norfolk and Suffolk Innovation Network. The Network will be used to enable business, public sector, educational organisations, and the public to explore, trial and implement Internet of Things (IoT) technology.

The way we work together is a major strength. Business leaders, local authorities, the VCSE sector, universities and colleges led by the Local Enterprise Partnership have rapidly come together to produce the Restart Plan.

The commitment to work together to align relevant actions and investment and to put in place the support needed to get the Norfolk and Suffolk economy back on its feet rapidly, in a way that makes it more resilient and innovative, and benefits all our people, is reflected in this report.

The focus on places is important as each area has been impacted differently and will require tailored support. Place is embedded through the intervention in the Restart Plan and the close collaboration with partners across Norfolk and Suffolk has ensured actions have been taken forward recognising the different requirements of its towns and urban, coastal and rural areas,

connecting pockets of deprivation which exist alongside the largest future opportunities of an area.

It is vital that, during this unprecedented period of uncertainty for businesses, they have clear and concise information to support their resilience. New Anglia LEP and Growth Hub have worked with the wider partnership, including the Health Protection Board and Local Resilience Forum structures, to ensure businesses have easily digestible and accessible information on prevention and outbreak control as this will shore up business resilience.

Lessons learned from local outbreaks are being shared with the business community to assist their preparations. Furthermore, we are working closely with the business base to provide support around business preparedness for the end of the transition period. The more resilient Norfolk and Suffolk's businesses are, the greater confidence they will have as they strive for recovery and economic growth.

Town Deals

Norwich has secured £25m from the Government's Towns Fund which will help to fund clean growth and ensure residents are equipped with the skills of the future, have access to good jobs with fair pay and progress and are better connected to our growth sectors. The funds will help to create a Digital Hub and a Digi-Tech Factory, which is hoped to give local people and businesses the chance to access state-of-the-art technology to boost Skill and improve services.

Ipswich, King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft have also developed compelling bids and it is hoped that they will also secure a significant share of the funds which are to be announced in stages over the coming months.

Virtual High Street

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils ambitious digital scheme to support local independent high street businesses adapt and recover from the impact of COVID-19 restrictions and adapt to the growth of consumer behaviour towards online shopping, has had a great start. Launching in Sudbury, with over 60 businesses signed up in the first week, consumers can access the full range of high street products and services, with browsing, click and collect or delivery and payment services available 24/7. The platform will be integrating and developing further place-based loyalty incentives and promotions that link the town's events, heritage and business offer.

This bespoke system has been developed with a local entrepreneur and business, QR Technology, who operates as part of the growing Innovation Labs in Stowmarket.

The Virtual High Street has been developed as a system that can provide a one stop high street experience enabling the customer to browse and pre-order and purchase across multiple retailers and shops in a single visit. Over the next 18 months the Virtual High street will be available across all of the Districts' key towns.



Construction work on the DigiTech Factory at City College Norwich is under way. The project is supported by New Anglia LEP's Growth Deal and the Norwich Town Deal

Pic: City College Norwich

Sectors

Foundation industries need support to stabilise, adapt and renew but those sectors that have managed to thrive through the lockdown will play a vital role in growing new businesses and job opportunities and will require support to continue to do so.

Sectors such as ICT, advanced manufacturing and engineering and clean energy can, and will, also play a vital role supporting the foundation sectors in their recovery.

The Norfolk and Suffolk Restart plan recognises that the coming months are crucial as we help to successfully rebuild consumer and business confidence. Sector-specific recovery plans being developed (Visitor Economy and Energy), a delivery plan for Inward Investment across Norfolk and Suffolk is under way and ideas to take advantage of global export opportunities for business post-transition period will additionally enhance business confidence.

There are exciting opportunities for maximising local supply chains and enhancing the productivity and growth of our business base through new innovations and adapted business models.

All our sectors will benefit from the actions and progress set out in the Business Environment, People, Ideas and Infrastructure sections. This section builds on these and provides a snapshot of progress made with some of the sector-specific actions.

Agri-Food

Support for businesses to cope with the immediate disruption caused by the pandemic included Flavours Connexion, a supply chain matching service delivered by The Lively Crew through their Local Flavours platform, and widely promoted by partners. In September, Norfolk County Council, the LEP, Tech East, UEA and other partners collaborated on an innovative digital event, *Rise!* Over 70 food and drink producers registered to attend this event, which featured businesses that have thrived during the COVID-19 crisis, inspiring others to think about recovery and growth.

Opportunities to support businesses to exploit emerging food trends and changed consumer habits have been identified through a research program led by the LEP working with local partners. This work has also identified opportunities to strengthen local supply chains and

promote food brands, assessing different models from across the UK for a regional branding and distribution scheme.

Clean Energy

Significant activity has been undertaken to support the region's critically important energy sector, including support for supply chain mobility, the development of a new all energy brand to promote the region's capabilities and forging relationships between the region's world leading research institutes to drive clean growth.

Partners across the energy sector, through the All Energy Industry Council, are committed to publishing a sector specific recovery plan in January. Identifying sub-sector challenges and opportunities, the plan will outline measures to address to support the sector's resilience and ambitions for clean growth.

In partnership with Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult (ORE), we have launched the first Fit 4 Offshore Renewables (F4OR) programme in England, to support companies in sectors such as oil and gas and manufacturing to transition into the flourishing offshore renewables sector.

- Secured £225,00 funding
- Engaged with 100 companies from a breadth of sectors
- Winning companies announced at EEEGR's Southern North Sea: 2020 conference in September
- 15 companies have begun to receive 12 months of support and mentoring to become 'fit for offshore renewables'

New Anglia LEP has signed a partnership agreement with Virginia Beach in the USA in order to develop opportunities for trade and other collaborative exchanges. Virginia Beach offers the USA's largest offshore wind market and they are

keen to collaborate with our local businesses. We have so far enabled over a dozen businesses to participate and make presentations.

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Norfolk and Suffolk was also represented at the Global Offshore Wind conference during October. Delegates heard about planned and existing capacity at Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft Ports, ORE Catapult, local supply chain capacity and skills base.

ICT and Digital Creative

A central facet of the response, the region's digital tech sector has risen to the challenge, working in a variety of ways to fight the ongoing pandemic from partnering with healthcare providers to provide AI technology to developing online educational

resources. Giving recognition to those innovative businesses the Tech East 100 was launched in September. There have also been several international briefings on the High Potential Opportunity (HPO) at Adastral Park.



The Tech East 100 profiles leading edge companies from across our region

Case Study - Tech East 100

- 100 leading edge businesses located in Norfolk and Suffolk - exciting start-ups, scale-ups with high growth potential, established national leaders and companies who have secured significant investment.
- Livestreamed to experts from tech industry, executives, investors and policy makers from Adastral Park
- Keynote addresses from UK Digital Minister at DCMS, Caroline Dinenage and broadcaster Stephen Fry
- Tech East 100 businesses are being promoted by an interactive website and brochure. They will be offered business support through partners including the Invest East investment readiness programme.
- Launch resulted in over 8,000 impressions on social media and £80k equivalent of media editorial.

Visitor economy

The visitor economy has endured an unparalleled crisis since March. But the sector has pulled together, developing new models of collaboration, publishing a Recovery Plan for the Visitor Economy in July. The plan brings together a shared set of actions to help lead the sector through these difficult times.

The partnership has delivered a resources hub to provide tourism and hospitality businesses with the advice they needed to reopen safely for the summer season, developed an alliance of DMOs to drive forward the campaign Unexplored England, as well as launched a cultural leadership programme Collaboration: Place: Change after securing £450k funding.

There is a renewed commitment to develop and bid to become a Tourism Zone to fully realise the aspirations of Norfolk and Suffolk in becoming one of the most sustainable, accessible and desirable regions in the country.

Case study - Unexplored England

Working together in an alliance for the first time and led by Visit East of England, all the DMOs and Local Authorities in Norfolk and Suffolk have come together to extend the holiday season as part of the UK Government's 'Enjoy Summer Safely Campaign' through a wide-ranging series of advertisements in national print media, posters and social media. The campaign is the biggest ever in support of Norfolk and Suffolk's visitor economy.

The promotion aims to ensure visitors are well informed, reassure them that businesses and local authorities are doing everything possible for a safe return to tourism, promote responsible travel, and follow Government messaging. It is also aligned with VisitEngland's 'Know Before You Go' and 'We're Good To Go' initiatives.

- 14 DMOs
- 26 Partners
- £500,000 secured, £350,000 of which from UK Government
- Significant increase in web traffic +782% at height of the campaign
- 20 blogs were produced for stage 1, featured on the [landing page](#), and including around 500 link throughs to DMOs and businesses.

Health and Social Care

Health and social care partners have been meeting regularly to collaborate on challenges and develop solutions. Although staffing requirements may have changed due to restrictions and resident capacity levels within care homes, there is still a strong demand for well trained and supported staff within the sector. National and local campaigns for entry/re-entry into the profession have been rolled out and supported by stakeholders plus the inception of the Developing Skills in Health and Social Care European Social Fund project will further raise the skills sets locally.

Additional local training has taken place utilizing funding from Health Education England. This has had a health focus but has been run out over the whole sector.

Having a longer term plan for funded training is important focus area that will need to be addressed as training plans are currently based around short term funding pots.

The New Anglia levy transfer scheme has supported many sectors – with the social care sector it has been utilised to upskill staff to be better prepared for COVID-19 in future months. 30 employees across three care homes have taken advantage of the scheme and are completing apprenticeships including the Level 3 Team leading/Supervisor, Level 2 and 3 Adult Care and Level 4 Leader in Adult Care.

Care homes have increasing pressure on their budgets with supplying PPE, additional staff and structural changes to the building to allow for distancing, that this additional cost of training have had to be limited, so the use of levy transfer has been welcomed. A total of £711,531 pledged in 2020 in actual transfers and a further £439,625 in the pipeline and seeking transfer.

The College of West Anglia have secured £597,000 from the Government's Town Deal Accelerated Funding which will be invested in a new nursing school in King's Lynn. Working closely with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the school will develop

high quality nursing training facilities and train Associate Nursing apprentices.

Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise

New Anglia Social Investment Partnership is a new public/private sector partnership bringing together expertise in social investment and outcomes-based commissioning from Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils and the VCSE sector, including Community Action Suffolk and Voluntary Norfolk.

The partnership is developing a capacity-building project to build a pipeline of investable projects in Norfolk and Suffolk and is actively engaging with leading social investors to build that initiative and seek funding.

In order to strengthen and support the VCSE across Norfolk and Suffolk, work has begun on developing a sector skills plan. The initial stages of this will be completed at the end of 2020 and will identify where further investment and support is needed.

Case studies

East Suffolk Community Partnership Board: East Suffolk Council has unveiled the £100,000 East Suffolk Communities Bounce Back Fund, which offers grants of between £250 and £5,000 to support VCSE organisations that play a key role in supporting local communities.

Suffolk Community Foundation: The Rebuilding Local Lives Appeal has now raised £1.7million for charities and community groups in Suffolk, supporting the continued response to the coronavirus pandemic. They anticipate a huge spike in demand for support during winter and must firmly press ahead with finding ways to support the increasing numbers of vulnerable people in Suffolk.

Norfolk Community Foundation raised over £2m from local giving and investment from the National Emergencies Trust.

This funding has been critical in enabling local charities to continue and adapt their support to our most vulnerable communities. Winter will compound many of the challenges our communities are facing and so delivering ongoing support for our local charities remains critical.

The VCSE Group: The VCSE Group was formed in April 2020 and provides an opportunity for SMEs from the social economy sector to share their experiences of adapting to COVID-19. By working together, organisations have been able to measure the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable people. This has led to the development of new partnerships, and an application for funding to support homeless prevention services in Great Yarmouth.

Construction

Building Growth Group has launched a series of events to engage businesses in the construction and development sector. The first event engaged 150 participants and focused on the impacts of the pandemic on the construction and housing sectors with presentations on funding and support available.

Engineering and manufacturing

Businesses in the manufacturing and engineering section have played a pivotal role in the region's response to the pandemic. Working together through New Anglia Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (NAAME), we have supported businesses to transition to manufacture PPE and other return to work items, matching with the long-term demand from across the economy.

£225k has been secured to deliver the Engineering Success project, a collaboration between New

Anglia LEP, Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor and NAAME to strengthen and support the region's emerging engineering and manufacturing cluster and develop a tool which supports businesses to share workforce and fuel new employment opportunities.



The new research facility at the Norwich Research Park had its topping out ceremony in September

Case study

A Talent Sharing Platform which was set up to support increased talent utilization, retention and attraction across Norfolk and Suffolk. The platform enables businesses to share surplus workforce with neighboring businesses and to access talent on a short term or permanent basis. In response to COVID-19, the Talent Sharing Platform has pivoted its focus to support redeployment of workforce facing potential redundancies in a bid to retain talent in the region.

Although still under development, the platform has built a network of approximately 20 businesses and education organisations as early adopters of the platform and has connected two major employers in the region with a shared skills requirement. Once fully operational we expect the platform to be utilized for a wide range of skills requirements across Norfolk and Suffolk.

Financial and Insurance Services

To adequately respond to the needs of the financial industry sector undertook a survey of members which highlighted key areas of concern.

Responding to a survey of members, the Financial Industry Group (FIG), together with Larking Gowen has launched an event to support members with 'Managing through a crisis - focussing on financial best practice'. The event provided useful information on the following core areas: cashflow, systems, data analysis and profitability, supporting businesses with resilience and planning for future economic shocks.

Life Sciences and Biotech

In September, the new research facility at the Norwich Research Park had its topping out ceremony. The facility aims to enhance the region's reputation for scientific innovation in the life

science and agri-food sector.

The Epicentre in Haverhill also opening its doors in September offering innovative shared lab spaces. Together these facilities offer much needed commercial space to fuel this vitally important growth sector.

Finding partner for innovation and collaboration is now more important than ever. New links have been forged with [lanet B.io](#) – a Dutch incubation and innovation hub set up to drive the transition of today's fossil-based, linear economy to tomorrow's bio-based, circular economy, by promoting Industrial Biotechnology.

Looking ahead, New Anglia LEP and partners, Anglia Innovation Partnership and OneNucleus are aiming to address the skills challenges within the life science sector in response to the UK Life Sciences Roadmap through a series of online events aimed at finding opportunities for enhanced skills attraction and retention in the region.

Ports and logistics

The government is working to boost economic activity across the UK, levelling up towns, cities and regions across the country. As part of this, the government wants to establish Freeports, which have different customs rules than the rest of the country, that are innovative hubs, boost global trade, attract inward investment and increase productivity. In doing so, the government wants Freeports to generate employment opportunities to the benefit of some of our most deprived communities around the UK. Local partners are working with the ports in Norfolk and Suffolk to identify how the region can best meet governments objectives and secure Freeport status.

The government has now set out further details around how it will create a number of new innovative Freeports across the UK to create jobs, drive investment and regenerate communities. New Anglia LEP, Suffolk County Council, East

Suffolk Council and other partners are working Hutchison Ports to secure a Freeport for Felixstowe and Harwich. The New Anglia LEP continues to work alongside Felixstowe Port, Connected Places Catapult and BT to exploring how the Port of Felixstowe can transform into an exemplar for blue tech, driving sustainable innovation across the maritime and logistics sectors.

