

# NORFOLK & SUFFOLK ECONOMIC STRATEGY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*An ambitious blueprint for  
the UK's clean growth region*

2022



*We are facing unprecedented social and economic change. The way we live, learn, work, and do business is transforming. The impacts of the pandemic, leaving the EU, the acceleration of digitisation and the need to address our impact on climate change and biodiversity are all contributing factors. There are challenging times to come and more will need to be done to support our people, businesses, and places to adapt, transition and flourish.*

This is the time for strong leadership, bold action and far-reaching interventions. This Economic Strategy is the blueprint for how local authorities, businesses large and small, business support organisations, Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations, colleges, universities, independent training providers and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) will work together, aligning relevant actions and investment, to build a cleaner, stronger and more productive economy where everyone benefits.

**Our ambition is to transform our economy into a globally recognised, technology-driven and inclusive economy which is leading the transition to a zero-carbon economy through sustainable food production, clean energy generation and consumption and digital innovation; becoming one of the best places in the world to live, work, learn and succeed in business.**

Cover images show agri-food research, the Lotus Evija at Hethel, Peerless Plastics, the new CEFAS headquarters and cyclists in Breckland.

*Local partners across business, business support organisations, local authorities, public health, education providers and the VCSE sector have come together to agree this strategy and are all committed to:*

**Collaborating** to secure and aligning investment and actions to build a cleaner, more inclusive, and productive economy.

**Inspiring** the next generation, current workforces, businesses, VCSE organisations and communities to innovate, embrace automation and clean growth through strong collaborative leadership.

**Innovating** by exploiting our expertise and innovation capabilities to pioneer solutions to the major challenges facing the world in the 21st century. Ensuring we capitalise locally on the application and diffusion of this innovation and the emerging growth opportunities.

**Investing** in people, sustainable infrastructure, innovation, social and environmental value, health and wellbeing, leveraging in more investment to deliver on our ambitions.



**C-J Green**  
Chair, New Anglia LEP



**Cllr Carl Smith**  
Chair, Norfolk Public Sector Leaders Group



**Cllr Suzie Morley**  
Chair, Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group

## WHAT WE WANT NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK TO BE:

- A higher performing clean, productive and inclusive economy.
- An inclusive economy with an appropriate and highly skilled workforce, where everyone benefits from clean economic growth.
- The place where high growth businesses with aspirations choose to be.
- A well-connected place, locally, nationally and internationally.
- An international-facing economy with high value exports.
- A centre for the UK's clean energy sector.
- A place with a clear, defined, ambitious offer to the world.

# WHAT WE WANT NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK TO BE:

→ **A higher performing clean, productive and inclusive economy,** where business invest in people and innovation, new sustainable techniques and technology, leading to decarbonisation, increased value in our foundation sectors, reductions in wage inequalities and pressure in overall living standards and productivity improvements.



→ **An inclusive economy with an appropriate and highly skilled workforce, where everyone benefits from clean economic growth.** Norfolk and Suffolk will continue to promote collaboration between business, HE, FE, schools, VCSE organisations and the public sector to provide the training opportunities and work experience that enable businesses and people to fulfil their full potential.



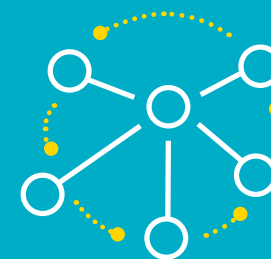
→ **An international facing economy with high value exports,** where our sectors are producing and exporting more sustainable value-added goods and services, entering new global markets and capitalising on new trade links to other economies.



→ **A place with a clear, defined, ambitious offer to the world,** which showcases the strengths of Norfolk and Suffolk as the UK's clean growth region to the UK and beyond. Offering diverse, high quality, sustainable and affordable housing where people want to live, with a strong vibrant culture and leisure offers and a clear sense of why people and business choose to live and work here.

→ **A well-connected place, locally, nationally and internationally.** Investment in sustainable infrastructure – affordable housing, roads, rail and digital – is coordinated to build the communities and connections that people and businesses need.

→ **The place where high growth businesses with aspirations choose to be,** with excellent sustainable sites to locate, grow and innovate, with easy access to support and finance which fit the need of businesses.



→ **A centre for the UK's clean energy sector,** exploiting the strength and diversity of the energy sector and supply chain, our strategic location, skills base and connectivity to other regions. Where local communities and businesses are benefiting from these strengths.

**Technology and Economic Change**

**Global Change**

**Demographic and Climate Change**

**HMT Build Back Better**  
Our Plan for Growth

**Strategic Drivers**

**Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy**  
An ambitious blueprint for the UK's clean growth region

### **Clean Growth: The UK's clean growth region**

At the forefront of tackling the challenges and opportunities of climate change. Strengths in energy generation and usage, and high-tech, sustainable agri-food present major opportunities, in particular the cross-sector opportunities which will have a major contribution to the UK's transition to a post-carbon economy.



#### **Clean energy powering the world**

The epicentre of the world's largest market for offshore wind energy. The only place in the UK where all forms of energy generation exist together.



#### **Agri-food feeding the world**

Advanced and nationally significant agri-food and drink sector, with globally renowned companies. World-leading research base, at the forefront of global food and health research.



#### **ICT and Creative Digital connecting the world**

Global centre of research and development and innovation in communications technology. Fast growing digital creative hub, with an international reputation for producing graduates who excel.

**Underpinning Sectors** *Advanced manufacturing, Construction, Creative industries, Financial, Insurance & professional services, Health and social care, Life sciences and biotech, Ports & logistics, Visitor economy and VCSE.*



**People:** Build a workforce fit for the future and excited about purposeful jobs. Inspire and enable all people to access employment, upskill and reskill.



**Business:** Connect and empower businesses through innovation, supply chain development and access to new markets, accelerating our economy's transition to net zero.



**Place:** Transforming the Norfolk and Suffolk economy into one of the best places in the world to live, learn, work and succeed in business.

Local partners are committed to collaborate, inspire, innovate, and invest to support our people, businesses, and places to adapt, transition and flourish.

# OUR ECONOMY AT A GLANCE



**£38bn**  
contribution  
to the UK plc



**£244,354**  
Median house price  
(England in 2020: £255,900)



**25%** higher salary  
in 'Green Jobs'  
than the economy average



**36%**  
STEM take  
(UK 41%)

**1,675,300 total population**

All people 16-64 (working age pop):  
978,000 (58.4%) vs. 62.3% for England.

65's & over: 406,800 (24.3%)  
vs. 18.5% for England



**£28,452**  
median gross wage  
(England £31,777)



**£5.2bn**  
goods exported  
in 2019



**75.9%** employment  
levels, that's higher than  
the 74.4% UK average



**63,460**  
independent  
enterprises

**Workforce NVQ  
Qualification levels in  
Norfolk & Suffolk**

35% Level 4 (UK 43%),  
19% Level 3 (UK 17%),  
18% Level 2 (UK 15%),  
14% Level 1 (UK 10%),  
7% None (UK 7%),  
5% Other (UK 6%)



**Increasing** our region's  
productivity levels to the UK average  
would contribute an additional £4bn gross  
value per annum to our economy.'



**28%\* at level 4+**  
Only 28% of jobs require  
level 4+ (UK 32%)

\*Our economy is  
skewed towards  
occupations  
requiring lower-level  
qualifications.

# WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK ECONOMIC STRATEGY?



This strategy builds on our local vision and aspirations. It identifies the social and economic challenges, our economic strengths and opportunities and details the actions and commitments which are needed to support growth which is clean, inclusive and productive.

It is our response to the Government's Plan for Growth and provides the foundations to secure government funding. It will bring a wide range of partners together around shared ambitions and actions and help position Norfolk and Suffolk as a place to pilot initiatives and activity and as a place to invest.

It sets out Norfolk and Suffolk's potential at a regional level and will complement and support county, district, sectoral and institution plans.

This strategy looks to 2036 but focuses on the actions we need to take over the next three to five years to secure long term success. It is a dynamic and living blueprint to guide the work and investment of many partners. It provides a framework for partners to develop plans specific to their geography, sector or institutions. Much of the delivery will take place through these plans.

Left – LOTUS Evija at the Hethel track

## *If we succeed, we will:*

- *Accelerate our economy's transition to net zero.*  
.....
- *Connect and empower businesses - through innovation, supply chain development and access to new markets.*  
.....
- *Secure public and private investment through promoting the area's unlimited potential.*  
.....
- *Enable all people to upskill, reskill and access employment, attracting and retaining talent to the area.*  
.....
- *Support our places and communities to be more vibrant, healthy, inclusive, sustainable and resilient.*

# OUR POTENTIAL

*Our diverse economy and our sector specialisms mean that there are few places which are so uniquely equipped to make telling contributions to the major challenges facing the world in the 21st century - food and energy security, healthy ageing and living with environmental change in a world where technology is advancing rapidly.*

## THE UK'S CLEAN GROWTH REGION

There is an urgent need to transition to a decarbonised future and grow a clean economy that protects and restores our natural capital and provides a healthier, more resilient, inclusive future for all.

Norfolk and Suffolk has an established and growing low carbon economy and is at the forefront of tackling the challenges and opportunities of climate change. The area will be affected earliest by rising sea levels and changing rainfall patterns, and has major research, innovation and business strengths

in adapting to the change which present significant cross-sector opportunities for the UK's transition to net zero.

Clean growth is central to this strategy. There are economic and societal advantages for the businesses, communities and places which emerge as leaders, from new markets to new higher paid jobs and improved public health.

As the UK's Clean Growth Region, we are committed to remaining at the forefront of tackling the challenges and opportunities of climate change.

→ *Together we will:*

**Drive leadership and collaboration**

**Support businesses to capitalise on the opportunities and become net zero pursuing a circular economy**

**Create a skilled workforce fit for the future to support a zero-carbon economy**

**Deliver new and adapt existing infrastructure so that it is flexible, resilient and sustainable, supporting people, business and places**

Right – University of Suffolk



## CLEAN ENERGY - POWERING THE WORLD



Norfolk and Suffolk is the UK's epicentre for energy generation with its unique mix of onshore and offshore renewables, gas and nuclear generation and emerging opportunities for hydrogen.

This all-energy expertise combined with a unique blend of ports, infrastructure, transferable skills, and innovation in future energy technologies is the key reason the area will play a leading role in decarbonising the country's electricity grid by 2035 and delivering the net zero ambitions.

### *Local partners will work together to:*

**Promote opportunities** and support for existing and potential supply chain businesses

**Support Hydrogen East** to deliver a viable route map for Norfolk and Suffolk to become a leading 'hydrogen region'

**Develop and deliver the vision for an Energy Systems Integration Centre of Excellence** in partnership with ORE Catapult and local stakeholders

**Collaborate with the Greater South East Energy Hub** to develop and deliver investable clean energy projects which unlock clean growth

**Develop ambitious projects** to further strengthen our expertise in offshore wind operations and maintenance

**Communicate the all-energy inward investment offer globally** through the Generate branding

**Bring forward new investment opportunities on Enterprise Zones** to support future expansion in the energy sector supply chain

## AGRI-FOOD - FEEDING THE UK AND THE WORLD



Norfolk and Suffolk has some of the most productive farmland in the UK. This supports an advanced and nationally significant food and drink sector and a world-leading food and health research base.

But the sector is undergoing the greatest changes within living memory - farming subsidies, trade arrangements, climate change and labour shortages. Norfolk and Suffolk's strong climate science, automation and plant science innovation expertise presents the opportunity to address some of these challenges. We are in a good position to increase value-added processing, exports and embed sustainable practices throughout the food chain by utilising our strengths in clean energy and digital innovation.





### *Local partners will work together to:*

**Deliver a regional innovation support programme** at the Broadland Food Innovation Centre and establish a regional Food and Drink innovation cluster

**Maximise the potential of the Food Enterprise Zones in Norfolk and Suffolk**, capitalising on the Freeport East opportunity

**Develop collaborative investments** where there are economies of scale in storage, distribution and processing

**Develop new projects that harness research strengths** to support clean growth and develop automation solutions to address labour shortages

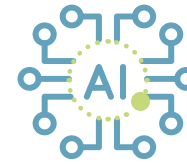
**Develop a world-leading hub for plant and microbial research** at the John Innes Centre with The Sainsbury Laboratory

**Work with farmers, land managers and environmental specialists** to target environmental land management initiatives, maximising natural capital and enabling productivity

**Grow skills provision for the agri-food sector**

**Left** – Our region is home to a world-leading research base which is at the forefront of global food and health research.

## ICT DIGITAL - CONNECTING THE WORLD



**Through thriving digital creative tech clusters, our ecosystem will support the digital transformation required across sectors to deliver net zero and productivity gains. We will support start-ups and scale-ups, with more highly skilled and higher paid jobs.**

Norfolk and Suffolk is a national leader in 5G and future network infrastructure and is at the cutting edge of digital innovation, with distinct strengths in telecoms, cyber security, satellite applications, data centres, software development, quantum technology, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things and user experience design. The region is playing a central role in developing and deploying these technologies, which align with the seven key technology families in the Government's Innovation Strategy.

**Below** – Digi Tech Factory at City College, Norwich



### *Local partners will work together to:*

**Deliver the Adastral Park vision** and work with the Department of International Trade to maximise the opportunities arising from the HPO in 5G and digitalisation

**Develop the potential for a Net Zero Creative Digital Media Studio in Norwich**, led by NUA, to attract digital production to the region, with a linked digital creative business cluster and inward investment offer

**Further develop the cluster's expertise in FinTech**, supporting start-ups and skills

**Deliver hackathons and challenge-led events** to encourage cross-sector innovation and ensure local people including school pupils have the skills to succeed

**Develop the economic case for a Smart Emerging Technology Institute and testbed (SETI)** - a unique advanced high-speed optical and wireless network (including 5G) which interlinks Internet of Things testbeds to support large-scale experiments and data transfer

# OUR UNDERPINNING SECTORS

There is significant opportunity for cross sector collaboration and innovation. Tackling the labour, supply chain and productivity challenges in these sectors and maximising their growth opportunities are key parts of this strategy.

## Construction and development



Large and diverse, with emerging specialisation in Passivhaus and sustainable design

## Creative industries



Strong and diverse sector, with major concentrations around Norwich and Ipswich

## Financial services, insurance & professional services



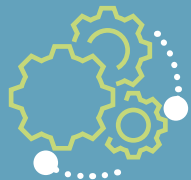
One of the largest general insurance and financial services clusters in Europe

## Health and social care



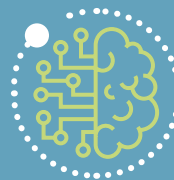
Transformational partnership working to deliver first of its kind Integrated Care Academy and research impact through the Norwich Institute of Healthy Ageing

## Advanced manufacturing and engineering



National expertise in automotive, civil aviation, space, composites, and pharmaceuticals

## Life sciences and biotech



International expertise in the fields of food, health, and microbiome –advanced cluster of animal health and emerging pharmaceutical manufacture

## Ports and logistics



UK's largest container port at Felixstowe and nationally significant ports for the energy and agri-food sectors, with a strong logistics cluster

## Visitor economy



A varied and significant tourist offer, from coast and countryside

## Voluntary, community and social enterprise



The voluntary, community and social enterprise sector has an important role to play in supporting those furthest from the labour market

# PEOPLE

## **INSPIRE AND ENABLE ALL PEOPLE TO ACCESS EMPLOYMENT, UPSKILL AND RESKILL.**

*Our people, whether in traditional or more niche careers, micro businesses, arts and culture or supporting others in the community, are central to all our ambitions. We want to raise and support aspiration across all ages, unlock private sector investment in the workforce and support providers to respond quickly and in a hands-on way to address the long term needs of people and businesses.*

Accelerating trends in remote working, digitalisation and the push to net zero is changing the nature of jobs at all levels but presents significant opportunity for creation of higher-value roles in all sectors. It is leading to increased demand for technical and digital skills.

### → *What do we need to achieve?*

**Build a workforce fit for the future and excited about purposeful jobs. Improve attainment levels and align provision to employers needs and inward investment opportunities particularly STEM, enabling the transition to a zero carbon economy.**

**Address labour market shortages through a combination of automation, reskilling and attracting talent to learn and work here.**

**Empower and enable lifelong learning and progression for all, unlocking private sector investment in the workforce. Enabling residents to capitalise on higher level employment opportunities.**

**Inspire and improve aspirations, connecting businesses, education and young people.**

**Invest in health and promote social and economic equality.**

**Tackle barriers to employment and training supporting all people to access employment.**

Right – BT at Adastral Park

### **Local partners will work together to:**

**Provide a range of opportunities** that enable all residents to upskill, reskill and access employment throughout their lives

**Close the skills and labour gaps**, aligning provision to current and future employer needs and clean growth opportunities, especially in digital and technical skills

**Improve aspirations and continue to develop employability and work readiness** among young people



# BUSINESS

**CONNECT AND EMPOWER BUSINESSES THROUGH INNOVATION, SUPPLY CHAIN DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS TO NEW MARKETS, ACCELERATING OUR ECONOMY'S TRANSITION TO NET ZERO.**

*Our economy is faced with a period of intense change which will impact businesses and sectors in different ways. We want to create more high-growth businesses, increase entrepreneurship and help businesses take the decisions they need to be agile, innovative, productive and sustainable.*

**Norfolk and Suffolk is a great place to build and grow a business, with stable and resilient firms, strong levels of business support and good business survival rates.**

Right – Staff at Peerless Plastics, recipients of a New Anglia LEP grant  
© Peerless Plastics

How we guide businesses through this change, nurturing opportunities and providing business support, will be our measure of success. It is of paramount importance that we equip businesses with the know-how and tools to attract and develop the skilled people needed, adopt the right technologies, and understand the opportunities and requirements as we transition to net zero.



→ *What do we need to achieve?*

Provide agile and adaptable business support that meet the needs of businesses imparting the knowledge and tools for business to transition to net zero, become more productive and resilient.

Empower businesses to innovate, accelerate adoption and diffusion of innovation and access new markets.

Build resilient, shorter and sustainable supply chains.

**Innovation** is developing and executing new ideas to create value - new ways a business or organisation delivers its products or services.

**Local partners will work together to:**

**Sharpen and evolve the high-quality business support offer** to ensure it meets the changing needs of businesses adapting to new ways of working, new technology and transition to net zero.

**Widen the cross section of businesses** innovating and strengthen collaboration, learning and partnership between science, research and business.

**Further define the region's capabilities** to drive forward new innovations, develop supply chains and access to new markets.

# PLACE

## TRANSFORMING THE NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK ECONOMY INTO ONE OF THE BEST PLACES IN THE WORLD TO LIVE, LEARN, WORK AND SUCCEED IN BUSINESS.

*Places and communities are interconnected, depend on transport and digital links, and draw on many of the same labour markets and supply chains.*

The pandemic has changed the way businesses and communities live, learn and work and demonstrated the need for resilient, reliable and adaptable infrastructure. It has impacted places in different ways with the rise of the 'hyper-local' as people have had to stay closer to home, meaning larger centres have taken on a different role too.

Low wages, high levels of seasonal working, rise in cost of housing and connectivity are challenges that are particularly pronounced in rural and coastal areas, impacting certain demographics even more so than others. There are significant opportunities to address these challenges which this Strategy looks to take advantage of.

### → *What do we need to achieve?*

**Promote Norfolk and Suffolk as a place rich with clean growth investment opportunities**

**Deliver local smart energy systems taking advantage of the region's strengths in clean energy generation**

**Ensure everyone has digital connectivity**

**Deliver innovative clean transport solutions that reduce the need to travel, encourage modal shift and support a thriving economy across all our geographies**

**Deliver the right mix, quantity and quality of sustainable, energy efficient, affordable homes, commercial space and communities that are fit for the future and meet need**

**Reduce the demand for water and energy through resource efficiency measures, ensure flood resilience and develop an innovative and circular economy**

**Vibrant, healthy, resilient and reimagined cities, towns and communities**

### **Local partners will work together to:**

**Promote the economic, environmental and social potential and qualities of Norfolk and Suffolk**

**Delivering the right mix** of sustainable, energy efficient, intelligent homes, commercial space and communities that are fit for the future

**Delivering the huge potential of Freeport East** to drive clean growth through clean energy, clean maritime, innovation, skills, trade and investment over its 25-year lifetime

**Developing exemplar clean energy generation, networks and storage** which benefit local businesses and communities

**Nurturing** vibrant, inclusive and resilient cities, towns and communities

Right –  
A family enjoying Bury St Edmunds.  
© Visit East of England



# MAKING IT HAPPEN

This strategy reflects the opportunities and needs of Norfolk and Suffolk's growing clean economy and how it will respond in a fast-changing world. Local partners have put in place a strong partnership that has a track record of delivery.

Norfolk and Suffolk partners know that the economy is most successful when they work together for the benefit of the people who live, learn and work here.

The following tools and systems will support this way of working:

- Delivery and investment plans
- Drive delivery through existing groups and structures
- Collaborate with and learn from other parts of the country,
- Shared economic evidence base
- Shared Indicators
- Identification of funding routes
- An annual stock-take of progress,
- Embedding evaluation

.....

*Local partners have come together to agree this strategy and are all committed to collaborate, inspire, innovate, and invest to support our people, businesses, and places to adapt, transition and flourish.*

