

SOUTH NORFOLK ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027

SUMMARY



Foreword

South Norfolk has a vibrant and dynamic local economy being home to world-leading research institutes and innovative businesses marking the district as a key component for the economic growth of Greater Norwich.

Presently we are facing an uncertain and potentially challenging future, with the rising cost of living and the end of Covid-19 related funding, despite this, the opportunities are exciting with the government's ambitious Levelling Up and Net-Zero agendas taking centre stage. The South Norfolk Economic Growth Strategic Plan presents a 5-year vision to maximise these opportunities for business and investment, create more jobs, and enhance our communities.

Our strategy sets out a clear mandate for growth based on high-value clusters to enhance productivity, improve competitiveness, and ultimately improve prosperity. Key to this will be our collaboration with Broadland District Council alongside our partners in Government, education, the voluntary sector, industry, and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Attracting inward investment with a strong focus on Greater Norwich and the A11 Corridor will be vital, alongside targeted investment in infrastructure, skills, and enterprise to drive sustainable economic growth well into the future.

Lisa Neal, Cabinet Member for Stronger Economy at South Norfolk Council

Vision

Our goal is to give businesses across South Norfolk the confidence to invest and grow, creating opportunities for our residents and improving their quality of life in an already outstanding environment

How Will This be Achieved?

We will achieve this by focusing on four main priorities:



Priority 1: Growth and Investment

Supporting businesses and key clusters and securing capital funding



Priority 2: Quality Locations and Infrastructure

Promote quality and affordable housing, building community resilience, developing a sustainable and accessible transport network by improving infrastructure and connectivity



Priority 3: Skills and Lifelong learning

Addressing the skills shortage, creating high-calibre employment, and tackling long term unemployment while maintaining equality of opportunity and inclusive growth



Priority 4: Innovation and Enterprise

Championing the development of new technologies and networks, particularly relevant in supporting the transition to a Net-Zero carbon economy

Overarching Principles



1. Inclusive Growth

Creating opportunities for all segments of the population and distributing the dividends of increased prosperity, both in monetary and non-monetary terms, fairly across society

2. Clean Growth

Empowering businesses to capitalise on the opportunities provided by the Net-Zero agenda

To deliver these priorities - and often in partnership with others - we will:

- Secure public and private investment for the district with a focus on areas of high potential growth
- Work with partners to address key infrastructure constraints in relation to energy, transport, housing, flood risk and digital connectivity
- Attract and retain talent in the area and encourage targeted skills development so that residents are equipped for the jobs businesses generate
- Build business networks in key clusters, encouraging knowledge exchange, innovation, supply chain development and access to new markets

Cluster Focus

Our work will focus particularly on South Norfolk's key clusters and places

High Performing Clusters

Agri-food and Life Sciences



Manufacturing and Engineering



Visitor Economy and Cultural Sectors



Growth Clusters

Finance, Insurance and Professional Services



Clean Energy and Technology



Why Clusters?

A cluster is a group of related businesses that contributes to a healthy economy - providing good jobs, high wages, and new technologies that expand the economy. They also help define target industries where a competitive advantage exists.

Cluster-based economic growth is all about improving the performance of key clusters, so they succeed, grow, and attract similar businesses. The interconnectivity of clusters also provides the opportunity for an economy to gradually expand.

The clusters in this plan have been chosen as focus points based on potential for growth, location quotient, productivity, and the presence of national or multinational headquarters for businesses within the cluster groups. They also align closely with the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's vision for Norfolk and Suffolk to Feed the World, Power the World and Connect the World.

Actions

To achieve our vision, we have identified key barriers to growth which align to each of our key priorities and have mapped out how we may address them, to deliver positive outcomes.

Growth and Investment



Key Issues	Responses	Outcomes
Smaller town centres and high streets are struggling – and the retail sector is under pressure	<p>Following on from the Harleston public realm improvements, investigate similar opportunities</p> <p>Develop and implement a market towns plan</p> <p>Promote the visitor economy and tourism</p> <p>Continue work on the Housing Cluster Allocation Programme</p> <p>Explore and implement opportunities relating to innovative use of vacant space on the high street</p>	<p>Increased footfall and vibrancy of town centers and high streets</p> <p>Improved rate of retention for high street and town center retailers</p> <p>An increase in visits to key sites throughout the district, including off-season tourism</p>
Relatively low levels of inward investment	<p>Develop business cases for commercial investment opportunities in key clusters</p> <p>Aim to attract larger businesses to the district in key clusters</p>	<p>Increased levels of inward investment across the district</p> <p>Increased levels of employment in key clusters</p>

Quality Locations and Infrastructure



Key Issues	Responses	Outcomes
Housing affordability	<p>Generate an Affordable Housing Development Plan</p> <p>Continue with plans for a new settlement</p> <p>Work with partners to implement the Greater Norwich Local Plan</p>	Increase in new and affordable homes for residents
Existing grid capacity is constrained in many areas and is, therefore, unable to meet the demands of existing planned and future growth	Lobby UKPN and other regional partners in order to ensure appropriate routes for delivery and build resilience into the energy network	A resilient and sustainable energy network which meets the district's existing, and future, needs
The transport network requires improvement in many areas within the district and access to public transport is limited in more rural and remote areas	Work alongside the County Council, as the highways authority, as well as regional partners and networks such as Transport East to ensure the development of a sustainable highways network which meets the needs of our communities and businesses	<p>A sustainable transport network which will enable planned and future growth whilst also supporting the transition towards Net-Zero</p> <p>Increase in Active Travel rates</p>

Key Issues	Responses	Outcomes
While this is under the remit of County Council, there are continuing issues linked to digital connectivity	Implement a Community Infrastructure Action Plan to focus our support of the important growth being delivered by Parish and Town Councils	Improved physical and digital infrastructure
Insufficient existing warehouse provision and move on space to meet demand	<p>Hethel Innovation Centre, Food Enterprise Zone and Norwich Research Park: Progress further opportunities for development on the enterprise zones</p> <p>Work with businesses and commercial agents to locate suitable premises where move-on space is available</p>	Increased space available for start-ups and increased retention of expanding businesses in the area



Skills and Lifelong Learning



Key Issues	Responses	Outcomes
Aging population	Influence the range of training opportunities to support South Norfolk businesses, increase the employability of residents and encourage lifelong learning	Improved employment outcomes for older residents and increased technological confidence
Existing skills and labour shortages across key clusters	<p>Understand skills gaps and evolve the package of delivery to address local needs</p> <p>Encourage relocation for part time London and Cambridge workers to the district</p>	An enhanced local skills base
Lack of social mobility continues to be an issue, especially amongst those of school age who over the pandemic have not had access to the same career advice or support	<p>Work with partners to expand apprenticeship uptake across the district</p> <p>Work with schools, higher education providers, and business partners to advertise available opportunities in the region</p> <p>Feedback our findings to inform national policy relating to Lifelong Learning</p>	<p>More people in apprenticeships</p> <p>Lower youth unemployment</p>

Key Issues	Responses	Outcomes
Low productivity and wages	Provide training and support to help those who are underemployed	Increase in productivity and disposable income in the local economy
A shortage in high-quality employment opportunities resulting in low levels of graduate, and high skilled worker, retention	Continue to work alongside regional partners and higher-education providers to develop a vibrant, accessible and aspirational employment sector	Increased levels of retention of graduates and highly-skilled workers



Innovation and Enterprise



Key Issues	Responses	Outcomes
<p>Many micro and small companies have limited support to grow</p> <p>Low number of business start-ups compared to the national average</p>	<p>Business support and grant funding</p> <p>Review current provision for networking and business-to-business events</p> <p>Assist smaller enterprises in securing move-on space</p>	<p>Higher business growth rates</p> <p>Enhanced relationships with local businesses</p> <p>Increase in business start-up and survival rates</p> <p>Increase in business support and networking events</p>
<p>Under promotion of South Norfolk as a destination in which to do business</p>	<p>Work with partners to promote the Norwich to Cambridge Tech Corridor and associated cluster formation and growth</p> <p>Raise awareness in and generate income for our area as a destination for use by the TV and Film industries</p>	<p>Increased inward investment</p>
<p>Lack of understanding of supply chains in key clusters</p>	<p>Work with cluster groups to better understand the needs of businesses and what support can be provided</p>	<p>Increased survival rate of businesses, inward investment, and trade activity</p>

Clean and Inclusive Growth



Key Issues	Responses	Outcomes
The transition businesses will need to make in order meet central Government net-zero 2050 carbon emission targets	Investigate further opportunities around electric vehicle charging	An overall reduction in territorial carbon emissions with a trajectory in line to meet the Government's 2050 target date for net-zero
	Investigate financial investment and funding opportunities around carbon initiatives for businesses	A sustainable and low carbon economy where business thrives
An increase in extreme weather events has the potential to exacerbate water resource issues. This may increase pressure on water abstraction, leading to further restrictions, whilst increased flooding events may threaten low-lying areas within the district which are vulnerable to the impacts of flooding	Review opportunities for a green bond model	
	Engage with regional partners such as Water Resources East	A sustainable water supply
	Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) - work alongside the County Council and the Lead Local Flood Authority to ensure flood prevention schemes on all new developments	Mitigate and, where necessary, adapt to the impacts of increased extreme weather events
	Promote the use of innovative farming technologies which address water resource issues	SUDs integrated on all new developments
		A more resilient agricultural sector

Key Issues	Responses	Outcomes
The increasing cost-of-living Energy security	Work with regional partners on community and green energy initiatives to promote affordable energy Provide support through other council services	Increase in living standards whilst supporting the transition towards Net-Zero carbon emissions



South Norfolk in Numbers (as of 2021)

Energy

103,611.538 MWh

energy generated each year from renewable sources at current estimates.

Business

5,645 Active Businesses

47.2% 5-year business survival rates

5,295 Microbusinesses

555 business start-ups per year

25 high growth enterprise

Employment and Skills

548

apprentices in post

73.6%

of residents in employment

4,000

houses to be built across both Wymondham and Loddon in line with the South Norfolk Local Plan

674 new homes and

129 affordable homes delivered

4

market towns – Wymondham – Harleston – Diss – Loddon

