

# ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN



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*Nigel Dixon*

# Forward

Welcome to North Norfolk District Council's Economic Growth Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2020), which sets out the approach and the actions the Council will take to support the growth of the local economy over the next 4 years. Our Corporate Plan details the core focus of the Council, setting out what this Council wants to achieve, recognising the importance of 'jobs and the economy' – working to deliver real and sustainable economic growth opportunities for the indigenous businesses as well as those looking to grow and invest in the District from elsewhere. We aim to support businesses of all sizes and sectors, to provide job opportunities for all and valuable career paths for our young people. This Strategy and Action Plan identifies the ways in which we will achieve our Corporate Plan goals and addresses the needs of local communities and the businesses on which they rely. The Council has strong ambitions and wants to go further in capitalising on our assets. The Strategy and Action Plan provides a structured approach to: investment, enabling business growth and unlocking development opportunities. I am proud of the economic prosperity of our area and the opportunities it offers for business growth. I look forward to reporting the further successes once the activities set out in this strategy are fully underway and to working in partnership with a range of organisations to realise our vision for north Norfolk.

## Introduction

Economic growth results from continued investment, improved productivity and development. Growth is needed to improve the standard of living and quality of life of local residents; bring greater resilience to fluctuations in the global and national economy; and create investment in infrastructure, services and facilities. This in turn presents opportunities to enhance the quality of the natural and built environment.

In recognition that economic prosperity is closely linked to community wellbeing, the Council has identified economic growth as a key corporate priority. The Corporate Plan 2015-2019 has clearly articulated the Council's ambition that North Norfolk will be a District with a thriving economy, offering jobs and prospects for local people. The delivery of these actions is via a range of plans, strategies, projects and internal processes, with engagement and partnership between the Council and a range of external organisations.



Jobs and prosperity result from private investment in business creation, business expansion and improvements in productivity. The Council's role in stimulating such investment is manifold, and its success in doing so depends on maintaining positive relations with a wide network of organisations. This Strategy outlines the position the Council will adopt in order to facilitate growth and investment in North Norfolk and the actions that the Council intends to take, in collaboration with its partners, in order to create a fertile environment within which business investment in North Norfolk can flourish.

This Strategy identifies the Council's aims, objectives and actions in relation to:

- Promotion and Marketing
- Supporting Business and Enterprise
- Land, Premises and Infrastructure
- Skills and Employment Opportunities

This strategy is intended to be the framework for actions that the Council and its partners will take. Policies and allocations for employment land use will be included in the North Norfolk Local Plan. This Strategy will work alongside planning policy documents to encourage the uptake of development opportunities and investment in premises.

The Strategy will be monitored and reviewed in the light of local economic indicators and any other factors that will influence its implementation.

## Economic Context

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North Norfolk is a beautiful place, abundant with environmental and cultural assets, including the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Broads National Park, historic towns and villages. It also has an abundance of cultural assets and is an exceptionally safe place with very low crime rates and strong, vibrant and engaged communities. The District is also home to some of the Country's leading businesses, supporting key sectors such as manufacturing, energy and food production. These businesses contribute to the District's strength, dynamism and vitality, particularly in the high growth and underpinning sectors identified within the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan. Combine the strength of these powerful sectors with the District's thriving small business economy and traditional sectors such as primary industries, tourism and retail, and we have a District to be envious of. Above all north Norfolk is a place where business can flourish alongside outstanding environmental character; where businesses can find space to innovate and residents can achieve that elusive work-life balance.

Whilst geographically at the northern edge of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership area, north Norfolk is central to much of what goes on in the region. The District has close links to Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn, with commuting patterns in north Norfolk showing a net outflow of workers from the District, particularly towards Norwich. However, a high degree of working residents of north Norfolk also live locally, with 70% of the District's employees living and working within the north Norfolk area.

North Norfolk offers an outstanding quality of life, with unique leisure opportunities, and the north Norfolk community is characterised by an aging population, low (but positive) population growth, low unemployment and a moderately skilled workforce.

A recently completed study undertaken by the Council found that there is 34.4 ha of gross deliverable and available employment land in north Norfolk. North Norfolk District Council's ambitions for the area have resulted in investment incentives including Enterprise Zones and a range of growth schemes to help bring forward projects that will develop out north Norfolk employment land.

Diversity is one of north Norfolk's core strengths. The economy is characterised by growth across a range of sectors; however certain clusters are prominent. The aim is to help foster closer links within these to assist in overcoming obstacles and help exploit opportunities for success to breed further success. The economy comprises large numbers of micro businesses as well as a thriving tourism sector; whilst at the other end of the spectrum accommodating Bacton Gas Terminal (transit point for a roughly a third of UK natural gas supply) and a burgeoning off-shore renewable energy sector. Whilst geographically north Norfolk cannot be considered central, it has many locational advantages and the economic and environmental characteristics within which investment will yield clear dividends.





# PROMOTION AND MARKETING 01

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Our Aim: We want North Norfolk to be known as one of the best locations to visit and experience the destination for all it has to offer; beautiful landscapes, stunning coastline, variety of attractions and history as deep and old as mankind itself.

## We will: Capitalise on our tourism offer, both inland and along our historic coast by:

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Encouraging a private sector lead to tourism promotion with support in developing a strong brand

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### Action/Intervention:

Promote north Norfolk as a primary visitor destination

### Activity/Project:

- Establish Visit North Norfolk (VNN) as a self-sustaining Destination Marketing Organisation, for the benefit of the tourist economy (through the development of a business improvement district approach)
- Work with VNN to develop, deliver and monitor effective tourism marketing campaigns
- Develop a Destination Management Plan, to coordinate tourism activities and visitor attractions

### Outcome:

- Widespread support amongst tourism businesses for VNN's activities
- Financial sustainability
- Destination Management Plan



## Creating investment incentives

### Action/Intervention

Ensure that the Enterprise Zones deliver business investment opportunities through: business rate relief; simplified planning; superfast broadband

#### Activity/Project:

- Formulate and implement the Egmore Enterprise Zone Development Plan (and work with Norfolk County Council on the Development Plan for Scottow Enterprise Park)
- Investment of Enterprise Zone revenue in the sites
- Marketing the Enterprise Zones
- Apply for funds from the proposed New Anglia Enterprise Zone Accelerator scheme

#### Outcome:

- Optimum occupancy and a pipeline of investment and development at Scottow and Egmore Enterprise Zone sites

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## Investing in our assets to support the tourism economy and promote the 'Deep History' concept

### Action/Intervention:

Develop and implement the 'Deep History Coast' initiative

#### Activity/Project:

- Liaise with communities to set up the team and determine objectives for the Deep History Coast concept
- Develop a project plan for the living landscape museum, identifying funding and resources
- Implement the capital and revenue aspects of the project, including branding and marketing activity

#### Outcome:

- Implementation of Deep History Coast project and the multiple elements within it, including Cromer West Prom and other key sites



## Developing an inward investment strategy for business growth

### Action/Intervention:

Promote investment in north Norfolk and increase the District's profile

### Activity/Project:

- Identify a clear and coherent marketing message for potential investors as to north Norfolk's opportunities by developing an inward investment prospectus
- Promote north Norfolk as a business location in collaboration with Norfolk County Council, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and other channels

### Outcome:

- Inward investment prospectus
- Collaborative effort in marketing the area



## SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESS & NEW ENTERPRISE

# 02

Our Aim: We want North Norfolk to have a thriving and dynamic workforce, to attract, maintain and grow businesses of all sizes, sectors and locations, enabling them to contribute to the success of the District.

# We will: Work to maintain existing jobs and help businesses expand by:

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## Business support, advice and engagement

### Action/Intervention:

Understand and develop means of addressing obstacles to business growth and diversification

#### Activity/Project:

- Establish ways of supporting businesses in addressing issues relating to procurement, regulation and policy initiatives

#### Outcome:

- Well equipped informed and resilient businesses

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### Action/Intervention:

Promote business engagement approaches and celebrate success in the business community

#### Activity/Project:

- Implement the Business Engagement Strategy, which will:
  - Provide information
  - Facilitate networking
  - Hold events and awards
- Establish a North Norfolk series of cluster groups, with the aim of building collaboration, supply chain development, mentoring and product development, which will help promote priority sectors (especially engineering, food and drink, manufacturing and offshore renewables)
- Promoting wider initiatives that help improve business productivity and efficiency

#### Outcome:

- Support for events that help to promote north Norfolk businesses and celebrate success



## Access to Finance

### Action/Intervention:

Ensuring businesses access available funding

#### Activity/Project:

- Promote funding streams
- Develop and maintain a routine method of disseminating funding opportunities
- Develop and maintain a funding application tool kit including glossary of terms
- Support the development of bids with internal and external partners
- Track outputs and outcomes and report on successes

#### Outcome:

- Businesses accessing funding
  - Funding bulletin/web resource
  - Funding toolkit
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### Action/Intervention:

Providing the evidence to make the case for funding support for specific project ideas

#### Activity/Project:

- Local market information (sectoral, geographical and economic impact of existing projects); establishing needs and giving rise to new project ideas
- Development/enabling of projects and applying for funding

#### Outcome:

- Available information for potential project applications

Supporting our market and coastal towns, recognising their importance as economic hubs and local service centres

#### Action/Intervention:

Actively encourage town centre improvements and revitalisation within market towns

#### Activity/Project:

- Support the development of projects which seek to revitalise and regenerate town centres in partnership with local business interests
- Help to maintain effective town-based business support groups

#### Outcome:

- Healthy vibrant town centres



## SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

# 03

Our Aim: We want to develop the skills of the residents and in particular the young people here, enabling them to achieve their full potential using a multitude of initiatives provided by schools, businesses and the Council.



# We will: Improve the job opportunities for young people within the district by:

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Working with partners to bring businesses and schools together to ensure skills match needs and jobs

## Action/Intervention

Identify and develop schemes to address the skills gaps

### Activity/Project:

- Research the skills needs and career aspirations of young people in north Norfolk and the current and future workforce requirements of local businesses
- Establish networks and new initiatives which meet local workforce needs

### Outcome:

- Businesses accessing local labour to meet their workforce needs
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## Action/Intervention

Facilitate effective relationships between business and education providers

### Activity/Project:

- Establish best practice in order to provide consistent and high quality careers guidance and careers fairs
- Encourage business representatives to present information to schools and colleges to generate interest in careers in key sectors

### Outcome:

- High quality, consistent careers advice
- Effective careers fairs/events

### Action/Intervention:

Improve the long-term career opportunities, aspirations and attitudes of young people

### Activity/Project:

- Facilitate work experience, internships, placements and similar opportunities within businesses in North Norfolk

### Outcome:

- Greater interaction between businesses and potential employees
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### Action/Intervention:

Develop opportunities for young people to obtain higher value STEM related careers ( Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)

### Activity/Project:

- Encourage emerging initiatives (including the proposed enterprise centre) to incorporate STEM related initiatives

### Outcome:

- STEM initiatives

Encouraging employers to offer apprenticeships (and other initiatives which help overcome recruitment issues)

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### Action/Intervention:

Help businesses (and other organisations) to overcome recruitment problems

#### Activity/Project:

- Support businesses in developing innovative recruitment processes to attract skilled workers to the area
- Encourage local businesses to sponsor scholarships in Further Education colleges and universities
- Explore the opportunities of creating an 'apprenticeship hub' in north Norfolk for use by apprentices, training providers and employers
- Develop a Local Government apprenticeship trailblazer

#### Outcome:

- Recruitment needs met
- Effective apprenticeship programmes operating





## LAND, PREMISES & INFRASTRUCTURE (INCEZ)

# 04

Our Aim: That North Norfolk will have high growth, high value infrastructure investment with businesses securing and developing employment sites and premises in support of the sustainable economic growth of the District.

## We will: Work to maintain existing jobs and help businesses expand by:

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Ensuring that businesses can connect efficiently and effectively via transport and ICT infrastructure

### Action/Intervention

Support and help fund the provision of ICT infrastructure

#### Activity/Project:

- Work with businesses to understand which areas face significant issues with broadband speeds and identify suitable solutions
- Ensure Better Broadband for Norfolk prioritises key north Norfolk employment sites (including Enterprise Zones)

#### Outcome:

- Super-fast Broadband in key employment areas
- Roll out of 4G

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### Action/Intervention

Capitalise on NNDR, A11 dualling and rail network improvements

Identify opportunities through the Local Plan to implement key highway improvements

#### Activity/Project:

- Support the development of the business case for improvements to the Bittern Line
- Obtain appropriate funding to implement key highway infrastructure improvements

#### Outcome:

- Twice hourly peak time Bittern Line services between Norwich - Sheringham



## Ensuring there is a sufficient supply of employment sites and high quality business premises

### Action/Intervention

Bring about the development of new employment sites by addressing constraints and providing necessary infrastructure.

#### Activity/Project:

- Identify ways of overcoming the constraints to existing employment land supply
- Obtain the funds and develop appropriate solutions to overcome the identified constraints in order to enable the development of the employment sites

#### Outcome:

- Constraints on existing sites addressed and land available for development

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### Action/Intervention:

Ensure there is an adequate supply of employment land to encourage business growth and address the identified needs by allocating and delivering new employment land

#### Activity/Project:

- Identify suitable site options for further industrial land in Cromer, North Walsham and Fakenham, deliverable in the short and medium term

#### Outcome:

- Allocated sites in the Local Plan (with clear delivery mechanisms)

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### Action/Intervention:

Monitor the supply and demand of business premises (including workshops, industrial/warehouse units and offices) and ensure that steps are taken to provide and market high quality business space

#### Activity/Project:

- Establish a dialogue with local property agents with a view to improving the promotion and marketing of employment land
- Work with developers to ensure the provision of suitable premises to meet the demand
- Actively support planning applications for high quality business premises



## Outcome:

- Regular monitoring reports
- Supply of appropriate premises
- Planning approvals for suitable business premises

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## Action/Intervention:

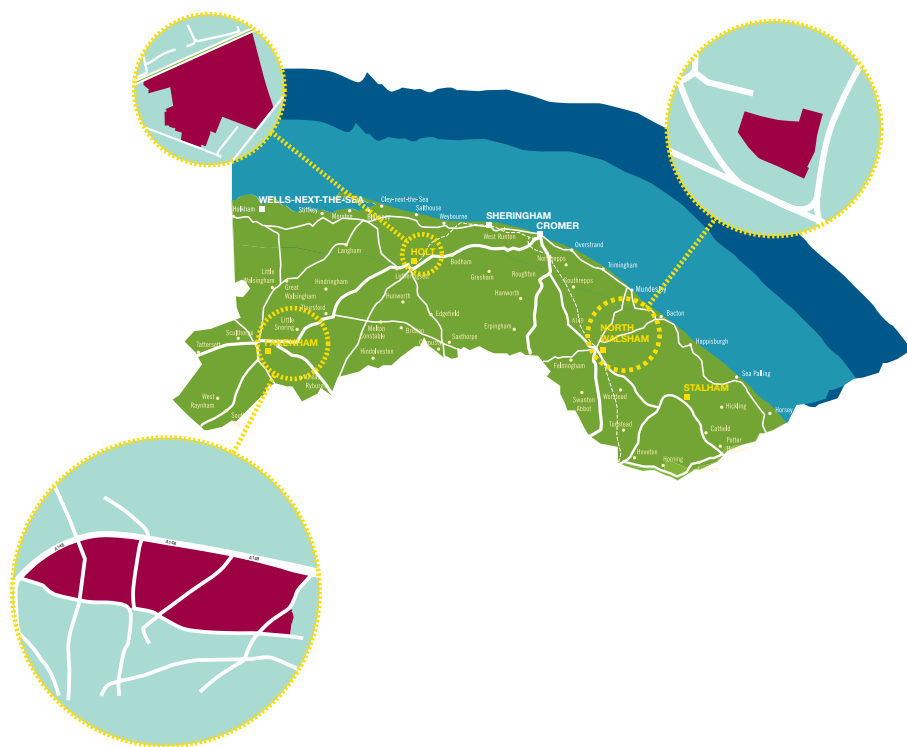
Develop a dedicated enterprise centre (linked to the STEM sectors) at a key location in north Norfolk, to support existing and new business needs

## Activity/Project:

- Commission a third party to undertake a detailed business case (including site analysis, design, planning, funding etc)
- Produce a Project Implementation Plan, including funding applications
- Develop the facility

## Outcome:

- STEM Enterprise Centre





# ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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