

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY – NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMENTS ON DRAFT STRATEGY DOCUMENT

Summary:

In response to a request from the Government, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership has co-ordinated the development of a draft Local Industrial Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk which it is intended to present to Government during October of this year.

Stakeholders, including North Norfolk District Council, are now asked to comment upon and indicate their support for the Norfolk and Suffolk Local Industrial Strategy document.

Conclusions:

The draft Norfolk and Suffolk Local Industrial Strategy document lays out an ambitious vision for the future development of the Norfolk and Suffolk economy which is intended to complement and contribute towards the objectives of the national Industrial Strategy.

In order to demonstrate to Government collective commitment and support for the Local Industrial Strategy, local authority partners, business groups, universities and colleges across the two counties are being invited to endorse the draft strategy document.

North Norfolk District Council is therefore invited to comment upon and indicate its support for the draft Local Industrial Strategy which is being developed for Norfolk and Suffolk.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet indicate its support for the draft Local Industrial Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk as detailed in Section 3 of the report.

Reasons for Recommendations:

To ensure that North Norfolk is well-positioned and seen as a supportive and committed partner in the context of the emerging Local Industrial Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk.

Cabinet member(s):
Cllr Richard Kershaw

All wards

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1. Summary:

- 1.1 In November 2017, the Government published a national Industrial Strategy – <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/the-uks-industrial-strategy> https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664563/industrial-strategy-white-paper-web-ready-version.pdf and has subsequently asked all parts of England to develop local industrial strategies, based upon the areas covered by Local Enterprise Partnerships or mayoral combined authority areas.
- 1.2 The development of Local Industrial Strategies is to be led by Local Enterprise Partnership or combined authority structures and demonstrate the collaborative commitment and endorsement of local authorities, business and education organisations.
- 1.3 Work has been undertaken to develop a Local Industrial Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk since March of this year, building upon the work to develop a new Economic Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk carried out during 2017, and seeks to set out clearly to Government those sectors of the economy where Norfolk and Suffolk have particular strengths and opportunities and points of difference from other regions of the country.
- 1.4 To date the Government has agreed four Local Industrial Strategies with regional partners – these being in Greater Manchester, the west Midlands, the West of England and the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.
- 1.5 The Government has advised that Norfolk and Suffolk are in a second wave of Local Industrial Strategies, which it expects to agree by the end of this year, and local partners are therefore asked to indicate their support for the emerging Norfolk and Suffolk Local Industrial Strategy document which is intended for submission to Government in early October.

2. Development of the draft Local Industrial Strategy document for Norfolk and Suffolk:

- 2.1 The New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) has led the local discussions on the development of a Local Industrial Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk since March of this year, adopting an approach of building upon the goals and priorities agreed as part of the new Economic Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk developed in 2017. The approach has been to develop a document which will drive the implementation and support delivery of previously agreed priorities, rather than create “another” strategy.
- 2.2 The process of drafting the Local Industrial Strategy document has seen a number of workshop events delivered involving leaders of local authorities, business and education across the two counties. These events have focussed on the discussion of global and national economic trends and how these will impact on our economy in Norfolk and Suffolk as well as considering what actions we might take to support local businesses and promote inclusive growth so as to realise the economic opportunities available to the region in the years ahead.
- 2.3 The draft document, which can be viewed at the following link – <https://newanglia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/DRAFT-Norfolk-and-Suffolk-LIS-consultation-190813-1.pdf>
- 2.4 The draft Local Industrial Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk has as its headline ambition:-

“Transform the Norfolk and Suffolk economy into one of the best places in the world to live, learn, work and succeed in business – the UK’s clean growth region” and then identifies three large-scale opportunities for the Norfolk and Suffolk economy, building upon key sectors agreed in the Economic Strategy, these being:-

- Agri-food / Agri-tech
- Clean Energy
- ICT and Digital.

2.5 These sectors are seen as being able to deliver the biggest opportunities for growth and increased productivity of the Norfolk and Suffolk economy over the next fifteen to twenty years; supported by five underpinning sectors – financials services, culture and the visitor economy, ports and logistics, advanced manufacturing and construction.

2.6 The document then seeks to present a case for continued support and investment in these sectors by the Government and local partners so that these opportunities might be realised delivering sustainable long-term benefits and outcomes for the region in terms of future business investment, numbers of high skilled jobs and supply chain opportunities, alongside wider actions aimed at promoting overall business growth and productivity and inclusive growth through improving in-work progression and skills within our workforce and local communities.

2.7 At the present time there is no specific Government funding identified or set aside for the implementation of local industrial strategies. However, by securing the Government’s endorsement of local industrial strategy documents, it would be hoped that the Government will be supporting the aims and ambitions of local strategies and that this will allow discussions on the availability of new funding opportunities to support local investment in the future as part of any Comprehensive Spending Review or other emerging Government funding programmes.

3. The District Council’s views on the draft Norfolk and Suffolk Local Industrial Strategy document:

3.1 In commenting on the draft Economic Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk in 2017, the District Council shared with colleagues at the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership that, whilst it recognised the challenges of preparing an economic strategy document across a large geographic area such as Norfolk and Suffolk, given its large geography, diverse communities and number of distinct sub-regional (local) economies; it was concerned that there was too much emphasis on priority areas and corridors of the region, with little consideration of the issues impacting on the rural economy which existed in large parts of the two counties, potentially placing areas such as North Norfolk at a disadvantage in terms of emerging policy intervention and funding programmes. Discussion of these concerns through the finalisation of the Economic Strategy served to address many of the District Council’s issues at that time – particularly as they related to the Agri-food and Agri-Tech sector, investment in critical infrastructure such as broadband and mobile communications and inclusive growth through local people being able to access post-16 learning opportunities. The District Council is therefore pleased that many of these issues have been given further consideration within the draft Local Industrial Strategy document.

3.2 The drafting of the Local Industrial Strategy document contains a clear and dynamic aim and statement of intent to transform the Norfolk and Suffolk economy to be amongst the best places in the world for business, capitalising on

the region's significant strengths, potential and capacity to support economic growth to a post-carbon economy, which reflects growing environmental awareness particularly in the renewable energy and agricultural / food production sectors. This very much aligns with North Norfolk District Council's recent declaration of a Climate Emergency alongside its objectives of wanting to support a strong local economy where businesses are confident in investing and there are increasing opportunities for local people to access a wider range of more highly skilled and better paid jobs. It is therefore recommended that the District Council should indicate its support for the headline ambition of the Strategy.

- 3.3 The draft strategy document then identifies three priority sectors which seek to set the region apart from other regional economies in the UK, supported by five underpinning sectors present more generally across the wider economy of the UK.
- 3.4 North Norfolk has particular strengths and opportunities in two of the identified priority sectors – Clean Energy and Agri-food / Agri-tech, hopefully allowing businesses and individuals across the District to participate in and benefit from the further development and growth of these sectors as key elements of the regional economy in the future. The Council's profile within the third sector area – ICT / Digital, is less well developed, but the Council supports the identification of this sector as a regional priority and would hope to share in the further growth and development of this sector in the future – particularly by new businesses and the SME sector, where the rural and coastal character of the District and high quality of life is attractive to increasing numbers of entrepreneurs and home workers.
- 3.5 It is therefore suggested that the District Council indicates its support for these three priority sectors forming the focus of actions within the Local Industrial strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk, supported by the five underpinning sectors where again with the District's economy has a significant profile in the Culture and Visitor Economy sector and a good number of businesses and levels of employment in the Advanced Manufacturing and Construction sectors.
- 3.6 The District Council is pleased to see that the draft Local Industrial Strategy document recognises and highlights a number of critical key infrastructure and resource constraint issues across the two counties, including North Norfolk, which it will be critical to address if the region is to realise its full economic potential. This includes the challenge of the region having huge potential to be the supplier of renewable energy to large parts of the UK, whilst many parts of the two counties have very real local network capacity issues; and the challenge of climate change – particularly water resource availability, and the impact this will have on businesses in the farming and food processing sectors in terms of future investment and resilience in responding to more extreme weather such as drier summers and flooding from intense rainfall events. Both of these issues are already impacting on economic opportunity in North Norfolk and are the subject of discussion by the District Council with a wide range of partners and it is therefore pleasing to see recognition of these issues within the strategy document.
- 3.7 The District Council should also welcome and indicate its support for the proposed future actions identified under the five Foundations of Productivity – Ideas (Innovation); People (Skills and Workforce development); Infrastructure (Transport, Digital Connectivity and Utilities); Business Environment and Places, all of which are well-aligned with the local priorities of the District Council which are in the process of being refined and strengthened through the Council's new Corporate Plan.

4. Financial Implications and Risks

4.1 There are no direct financial issues raised by this report.

5. Sustainability

5.1 The recommendations made in this report do not in themselves raise issues of sustainability. However, a principle theme and priority of the draft Local Industrial Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk is supporting the transition and development of the regional economy to a post-carbon state where the region has particular strengths in the renewable energy and agri-tech and food production sectors.

6. Equality and Diversity

6.1 There are no direct equality or diversity issues raised by this report. However, the draft strategy does seek to promote inclusive growth through seeking to raise aspirations, promoting investment in higher skilled jobs and in skills and workforce development which will serve to address issues of economic opportunity for the district's residents and communities.

7. Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations

7.1 This report does not raise any issues directly relating to Crime and Disorder.