

Norfolk and Suffolk Local Industrial Strategy

Recommendation

This paper asks for endorsement of the draft Norfolk and Suffolk Local Industrial Strategy.

Background

In November 2017, the Government published a national industrial strategy and has now asked all parts of England to develop local industrial strategies.

The strategies are led by LEPs and where they exist, mayoral combined authorities, and are being developed with and signed off by Government.

So far local industrial strategies have been agreed for Greater Manchester, the West Midlands, the West of England, and the four LEPs along the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

The Norfolk and Suffolk Local Industrial Strategy is in the second wave of strategies and is expected to be signed off by Government and published in October.

In order to show the collective commitment and buy in of the local industrial strategy, all local authorities and partners such as business groups and colleges and universities are being invited to endorse the local industrial strategy.

Development of the strategy

The Norfolk and Suffolk Local Industrial Strategy has been developed in partnership with local authorities and leaders from business and education.

The process began in March with a session involving leaders from local authorities, business and education where the overall approach and aims for the strategy were agreed.

These were:

- a) The Industrial Strategy is an opportunity to drive implementation what has already been agreed in terms of goals and priorities agreed in 2017 - not start again - we don't need "another strategy."
- b) We should focus on the global and national trends that will shape the future of our businesses and communities and focus on the actions we need to take to continue to support businesses to take the opportunities ahead as the post-Brexit economy evolves.
- c) The Local Industrial Strategy will set out the case for continued investment in the Norfolk and Suffolk economy and go into more detail about how we are going to deliver the biggest opportunities for growth and productivity that we identified in our strategy.
- d) The Industrial Strategy should be built around the three large scale economic opportunities that are identified in the Economic Strategy as being where we have strongest competitive advantage. These are:
 - Agri-food / Agri-tech
 - Clean energy
 - ICT and Digital

- e) Each strategic opportunity provides significant scope for high skilled jobs, supply chain firms and improving in-work progression and skills for our communities. We are also proposing to reinforce the actions set out in the Economic Strategy to drive overall business growth and productivity.

Following the leaders session in March more than 20 consultation events were held with stakeholders involving around 400 individuals, examining the economic evidence, developing ideas and testing proposed interventions.

A second leaders event took place in June where emerging ideas and interventions from the business engagement events were tested and the golden thread of Clean Growth agreed.

In addition, an Independent Economic Expert Panel was established to act as a critical friend, offering independent expert advice. This panel reviewed the evidence and proposed interventions and made a number of recommendations.

Members of this panel were Professor Tim Besley from the LSE, Rebecca Riley from University of Birmingham, Alex Plant from Anglian Water and David Campbell from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

An initial draft of the strategy has now been produced taking on board the recommendations from the leaders group, the consultation events, the independent expert panel and input from central government.

Structure of the strategy

The document has been developed to align with the Government's framework for Local Industrial Strategies and link with the national industrial strategy.

It also builds on the Economic Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk which was endorsed by all local authorities in autumn 2017 and focuses on productivity and inclusive growth.

The Economic Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk remains the blueprint for growth to 2036 and the local industrial strategy forms part of the delivery mechanism for this strategy.

As agreed with leaders in March the local industrial strategy focuses on three opportunity areas - clean energy, agri-food and ICT/digital creative.

The strategy does also recognise a number of underpinning sectors such as ports and logistics and culture and the visitor economy which underpin the economy.

The golden thread which runs through the local industrial strategy is clean growth – with Norfolk and Suffolk positioned as the UK's clean growth region.

Each of the three opportunity areas has a number of proposed interventions aimed at capitalising on these opportunities.

The strategy is then structured around the five foundations of growth identified in the national industrial strategy and our response to these foundations.

The foundations are: Ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment and places. The strategy outlines our assets in these areas and proposed interventions to boost productivity, support inclusive growth and capitalise on our three opportunity areas.

Purpose of the strategy

The development of the strategy has helped focus attention on the key building blocks of our economy, understand the areas with greatest potential and identify interventions to unlock this potential.

Whilst there is no funding specifically set aside by Government for the implementation of local industrial strategies, by signing up to the document Government is endorsing its aims and ambitions.

It means that existing Government policy and future plans will need to take into account the local industrial strategy.

Plans are in place in a number of areas with a number of Government departments to see how key elements of the strategy can be taken forward. The process has also significantly raised the profile of our economy and its key components within Whitehall.

The strategy also provides an agreed plan for local partners to utilise, in tandem with the Economic Strategy.

Next steps

Feedback on this draft of the strategy is being sought until August 27th.

The third of the Leaders' Sessions will take place on 18th September.

A draft of the strategy is due to be considered by the LEP board at its meeting on September 25th.

The strategy will then enter the sign off process with Government, with a view to publication during October.

The draft attached is therefore a working draft which is subject to amendment before publication by Government.

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