



IPSWICH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes

Meeting	Ipswich Vision Board
Date	Friday 13 th December 2024
Time	09:00 hrs
Location	Orwell Room, Grafton House
Present	David Ralph, Chair of Ipswich Vision Board (Chair) Helen Pluck, CEO, Ipswich Borough Council [IBC] (HP) Jack Abbott, MP for Ipswich (JA) Paul West, Councillor, Suffolk County Council [SCC] (PW) Naomi Smith, Deputy Area Lead for Suffolk Cities and Local Growth Unit MHCLG (NS) Becca Jackaman, Progression Sessions (BJ) Neil McDonald, Leader of IBC (NMCD) Alan Pease, Principal, Suffolk New College (AP) Lee Walker, CEO of Ipswich Central (LW) Jenny Higham, Vice Chancellor, University of Suffolk (JH) James Fairclough, Director of Operations and Place, IBC (JF) Nina Cunningham, Head of Economic Development, IBC (NC) Sharon Earp, Representative for Patrick Spencer (SE) James Davey, Director, Ipswich Small Business Association (JDa) Toby Warren, Chamber of Commerce (TW) Julia Rusek, IBC (Minutes)
Apologies	John Dugmore, Chamber of Commerce (JD) Andrew Cook - Executive Director for Growth, Highways & Infrastructure, SCC (AC) Patrick Spencer, MP for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich (PS)

Items:

		Action
1.	Declarations of interest: No new declarations were provided by members present. Chair referenced an action from last meeting, requesting for everyone to update their declarations of interest.	

2.	<p>Previous Minutes & matters arising</p> <p>The minutes have been accepted as an accurate record.</p> <p>The Board is awaiting an update on devolution, which will be informed pending White Paper due for release w/c 16/12/24.</p> <p>The code of conduct has been submitted to NC.</p>	
3.	<p>Vision Project Updates:</p> <p><u>Waterfront Project, update provided by JH:</u></p> <p>JH confirmed that a meeting took place at the beginning of December to discuss this project with representatives from Suffolk CC (AC), Colchester Museum service and development and fundraising professionals.</p> <p>Discussions focused on fundraising to raise money to produce a robust business case.</p> <p>The next meeting is due to take place in January.</p> <p><u>Brand Ipswich, update provided by HP:</u></p> <p>Ipswich as a destination has been postponed while Brand Ipswich is prioritised.</p> <p>This project was created to support Ipswich's application to secure City status by raising the town's profile and attracting new investment.</p> <p>The working group includes HP, Nicola Beach (SCC), Jacob Bailey (a local place branding company), Gina Long (a fundraising specialist), Brighten the Corners), and comms specialists.</p> <p>To date, the working group identified that Ipswich needs a stronger brand. Once established, this should be capitalised on social and other media by all relevant stakeholders, including those organisations represented on the VB.</p> <p>HP stated that the first step is to create a cohesive place-brand strategy that outlines why audiences should choose Ipswich as a destination to live, study, and visit. HP confirmed that the place-based brand strategy will be aligned with the Regeneration strategy.</p> <p>Jacob Bailey has already identified the core audiences to support this work. Once brought in, the benefits of the branding exercise will allow local institutions and communities to grow, while local businesses secure investments.</p> <p>In conjunction with identifying key audiences, Ipswich specific data sets have been studied, and in-depth interviews have been undertaken with sector leaders across 5 different specialties, including; education, construction, logistics, arts, culture and heritage, and advanced manufacture.</p>	

	<p>From this, insights into the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities within these sectors can be identified.</p> <p>HP stated the importance of identifying why Ipswich is unique, resonating with Ipswich residents and producing a compelling narrative, prompting a brand identity that best reflects the town.</p> <p>HP stated that she would like to express her gratitude to Jacob Bailey for their pro bono work. They have conducted several interviews and undertaken considerable work to allow Ipswich to inform its new brand.</p> <p>Workshops are being planned for the Board members, hosted by Jacob Bailey. Attendance is recommended by senior level officers to ensure the branding is embedded in leadership culture in each of the respective organisations. HP stated she will be attending.</p> <p>The workshops will be split into two phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 1 – focused on what Ipswich does, why things are done a certain way, and how things are done. This will prompt discussions surrounding difference mapping to differentiate Ipswich in a substantial way from other locations. Phase 2 – focused on developing the vision, values, brand personality, and how we position Ipswich as a place. <p>HP informed the Board that the outcome is for a collective partnership between organisations, allowing for common insight and knowledge to impact future work and create a foundation to raise Ipswich’s profile.</p> <p>JH confirmed her attendance at one of the workshops and informed that the student voice is also important to hear at this stage.</p> <p>A presentation will be made at the March TVB meeting, illustrating the full brand proposal, creating all assets involved, and prompting the ability to utilise and implement the brand in organisations following the County Council elections.</p> <p>SE suggested identifying something that brings the rural areas surrounding Ipswich with the urban parts to utilise the inward economic impact for the benefit of everyone.</p> <p>It was also suggested that town centre ambassador volunteers, who undertake a training programme to create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere for visitors, should be considered going forward.</p> <p>BJ questioned how community groups could benefit from this workstream.</p> <p>HP informed the Board that although that there is currently no opportunity to bid for City status (as these usually occur during royal events) a draft proposal that supports the case for City status will be produced in readiness for the next opportunity.</p>	
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	<p>It was highlighted that changing the hearts and minds of residents is an ongoing process.</p> <p>JA commented that the government is evaluating what to do with the City of culture work programme.</p> <p>Chair mentioned that the 825th anniversary of the Ipswich Charter will take place next year. This could be an opportunity for MPs to write to central government to recognise Ipswich as a city.</p> <p>JA confirmed that he would be happy to support this.</p> <p>HP informed the Board that Reverend Tom Mumford will be leading the celebration of King John issuing the Ipswich Charter at St Mary le Tower, where the Charter was originally endowed.</p> <p>St Mary le Tower church will be re-designated as Ipswich Minster. The status of Minster is an honorific title bestowed on major churches of regional significance in the Church of England, to reflect their importance and contribution to the local communities they serve. There are currently only 32 Minsters in England, and the granting of the title recognises both Ipswich's status and St Mary le Tower's importance in the town, having acted as the Civic Church for centuries.</p> <p><u>Investment Updates:</u></p> <p>HP and JF recently met with Historic England in Ipswich regarding a potential bid to secure a Heritage Action Zone. A follow-up meeting is planned in early 2025 to further discuss support for heritage-led regeneration in Ipswich.</p> <p>LW provided an update on the BID team confirming a renewed focus on delivery and output at Ipswich Central.</p> <p>The all about Ipswich website has been redesigned with a journey planner feature, with the Regent Theatre, the Corn Exchange, 50 different business, and universities, being placed on the events listing. This is a good portrayal of Ipswich and conveys a consistent positive message.</p> <p>Ipswich Town Football Club is being used to profile Ipswich businesses to a wider audience, for example, Tom Mumford participated in COPA90, showcasing the town with a more positive perspective.</p> <p>Other initiatives mentioned include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant units are receiving window dressing to raise standards in the town centre. • An information sharing agreement with the Police is underway to further improve street safety. • A <i>Very Suffolk Christmas</i> event will be undertaken, creating a unique image with tractors and on-stage entertainment. 	<p>JA</p>
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	<p>LW would like to thank Terry Baxter (TB) for his work. LW would also like to thank the Board for being so welcoming to him.</p> <p>Chair thanked TB for his time on the Board.</p> <p><u>PW Updates:</u></p> <p>A few items from the investment fund have been agreed since the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lights on the Waterfront to Dance East have been erected and will be operational by the end of the year • The third phase of lighting down to Aurora is scheduled for completion early in the new year. Once this is completed, good quality lighting will be present along a large stretch of the Waterfront. • Funds have been given to Fusion, for the redevelopment of Broomhill Pool <p>Several community groups have been funded for social works. BME multicultural services in the town and those who have been disenfranchised will be supported in the new year.</p> <p>The Greener Ipswich project will enhance several areas within the town centre, for example Tower Street.</p> <p>PW praised the Holywells Park Illumination experience and would recommend that everyone should attend the beautiful event.</p>	
4.	<p>Towns Fund - Governance</p> <p><u>JF updates:</u></p> <p>As requested, all town fund requirements and guidance have been investigated and updated. Minimal information is still outstanding.</p> <p>All information is currently being updated, and draft minutes will be updated once agreed as a true record.</p> <p>IBC has recently undergone an internal audit and has not identified any major points of concern.</p> <p>No updates have been received regarding changes from Central Government.</p>	
5.	<p>Town Fund Update – Highlight Report (JF Updates)</p> <p><u>Shopping Parades:</u></p> <p>Hawthorn Drive shopping parade improvements, which will include either step free access or individual ramps to shops, will receive final costings and designs submissions soon.</p>	

	<p>Parade works at Henley Rise have been completed in November.</p> <p><u>Shopfront Improvements:</u> 9 applications have been approved. Proposals will be shared with the project board on how to make best use of the remaining project funds. Transformative solutions are being investigated for the proposal.</p> <p><u>Public Realm and Greening:</u> Public consultations occurred in November, with 68% of those who took part supporting the proposal. Taxi drivers' concerns have been noted.</p> <p>Public Realm full planning application is being submitted for Lloyds Avenue in December 2024.</p> <p>JA expressed concern surrounding the proposed timelines as there was an expectation to complete these works in the summer to allow consumers to sit outside.</p> <p>JF reassured that the application will be submitted as planned and planning conversations can occur with the contractor during the same period. Works will hopefully commence early summer and will continue over the summer period, which was the established target this time last year.</p> <p>Numerous challenges have been identified with planting trees in pre-determined areas due to unknown underground services.</p> <p>Currently, lead contamination has been identified in Queen St, and additional expenses have been incurred due to trial pits occurring. If the contamination is small, it can be removed, and some trees can still be planted.</p> <p>An update will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p><u>Digital Ipswich:</u> The digital installation is expected to be operational early summer and trials are currently occurring.</p> <p>JF confirmed that the contractual negotiations are currently ongoing that include getting certainty about licensing and software costs. This stage will be complete soon.</p> <p><u>Pedestrian Bridge:</u> PW informed that the works are ongoing and according to plan.</p> <p>LW commented that there are currently numerous risks with the various projects and ongoing works and questioned whether assistance could be given to anyone.</p> <p>HP stated that there will always be a risk for Greener Ipswich and the Shopping Parades. However, we should focus on the items that are successfully delivering, for example the Net Zero Centre and the Digital Ipswich work.</p>	
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	<p>It was highlighted that a balance must be struck between the resources of comms and marketing teams, with the focus being primarily on Brand Ipswich.</p> <p>AP suggested a joint marketing and PR group for the respective organisations forming part of the TVB.</p> <p>Chair agreed that this would be a good idea in conjunction with Brand Ipswich.</p> <p>LW volunteered to organise the next meeting, allowing each institution to communicate the successes of Ipswich using their own specific language.</p>	LW
6.	<p>Towns Fund Projects updates / Key decision (HP Updates)</p> <p><u>Regeneration Fund:</u> 21 EoI were received for stage 1, of which 5 bids have been accepted to move to Stage 2. Only 3 proposals have come forward and 1 has not responded.</p> <p>The next Stage requires the Independent Panel, together with NMCD, DR, HP, and the in-house property team to come together so that the 3 bids can present their proposals. The assessment stage is expected to conclude by the end of January.</p> <p>By February, HP will inform the Board, then based on IBC's decision delegation, Board member feedback, and Section 151 Officer comments, the bids can be approved and taken to the delivery phase.</p> <p>The viability gap is currently uncertain; however, all 3 bids appear viable, subject to final assessment. An update should be announced before March.</p> <p><u>Strand 2:</u> Strand 2 of the regeneration fund will focus on IBC functioning as the developer to bring longstanding empty buildings back into use.</p>	
7.	<p>Towns Fund -M&E update JDa informed the Board that the Monitoring and Evaluation Board is meeting on a regular basis.</p> <p>DR updated that a third individual is currently being sought.</p> <p>No program evaluation will be undertaken until March 27 and monitoring information is being collected as the Board progresses.</p>	
8.	<p>Vision Board Chair:</p> <p>With Helen Langton's departure from the Board, JH was recommended as the new Vice Chair.</p> <p>Unanimous approval was received.</p>	

	<p>DR has not utilised all his contracted hours for the Board and would be happy to continue in the role of Chair.</p> <p>Unanimous support was shown for this.</p>	
9.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>AP informed the Board that Suffolk New College has received prestigious PR by receiving an award of excellence in further education.</p> <p>JA informed that the devolution White Paper will be published on Monday.</p>	
10.	<p>Date of Future Meetings:</p> <p>March date to be agreed to be held in the Orwell Room, Grafton House.</p>	