

Minutes

Meeting	Ipswich Vision Board
Date	Friday 21 st March 2025
Time	09:00 hrs
Location	Orwell Room, Grafton House

Items:

1.0	<p>Present:</p> <p>Helen Pluck, CEO, Ipswich Borough Council [IBC] (HP)</p> <p>Jack Abbott, MP for Ipswich (JA)</p> <p>Paul West, Councillor, Suffolk County Council [SCC] (PW)</p> <p>Becca Jackaman, Progression Sessions (BJ)</p> <p>Neil McDonald, Leader of IBC (NMCD)</p> <p>Lee Walker, CEO of Ipswich Central (LW)</p> <p>Jenny Higham, Vice Chancellor, University of Suffolk (JH)</p> <p>James Fairclough, Director of Operations and Place, IBC (JF)</p> <p>Nina Cunningham, Head of Economic Development, IBC (NC)</p> <p>Sharon Earp, Representative for Patrick Spencer (SE)</p> <p>James Davey, Director, Ipswich Small Business Association (JDa)</p> <p>Andrew Cook, Executive Director for Growth, Highways & Infrastructure, SCC (AC)</p> <p>Caroline Kennedy-Jones, Head of Strategy and External Affairs Marketing, IBC (CKJ)</p> <p>Shaun Bailey, Chief Executive of the Jacob Bailey (SB)</p> <p>Julia Rusek, IBC (Minutes)</p>
2.0	<p>Apologies:</p> <p>Alan Pease, Principal, Suffolk New College (AP)</p> <p>David Ralph, Chair of Ipswich Vision Board (Chair)</p> <p>Patrick Spencer, MP for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich (PS)</p> <p>John Dugmore, Chamber of Commerce (JD)</p> <p>Naomi Smith, Deputy Area Lead for Suffolk Cities and Local Growth Unit MHCLG (NS)</p>

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3.0	Declarations of Interest:	

	No new declarations provided by present members.	
4.0	<p>Minutes of the last Meeting: The minutes have been accepted as an accurate record.</p> <p>LW requested a change to made relating to Brand Ipswich agenda item, stating that his comment should reflect that the partners proposing this work should be credited for being brave and approach a subject that has proven difficult to get correct in the vast majority of places. LW mentioned that the two cities he felt have done this very well were Amsterdam and Austin.</p>	
5.0	<p>Vision Project Updates:</p> <p><u>Brand Ipswich</u> HP introduced 'Brand Ipswich' as a non-Town Deal project.</p> <p>HP thanked SB, the Chief Executive of Jacob Bailey, for his expertise, research and local brand consultations associated with this project to date.</p> <p>SB presents:</p> <p>The aim of this presentation was to gain approval for one of the directions and to bring this design to life.</p> <p>The current goal to bring a strategy into existence. Jacob Bailey has been working in the background over the past several months to identify the direction and options available for Ipswich.</p> <p>A cohesive brand must be developed through fact-based research to create communication with audiences, dictating what it is and its purpose by differentiating and resonating with the populace. This will be realised through customer journey mapping and a long-term implementation plan over several years accomplished by selecting a distinct tone of voice and brand narrative linked to Ipswich's assets. Once agreed, the ongoing objective would be to retain strong brand awareness.</p> <p>SB stated that as numerous audiences exist for this branding combined with various factors that need to be taken into account, the focus will be on efficiency to ensure that any potential budgets will not be exhausted.</p> <p>The key proposed areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attract and retain human capital by making Ipswich a good place to live and work. - Attract and retain visitors to boost the economy. LW is working on this every day. - Attract and retain young people, regionally and from abroad. - Attract and retain businesses and investments. <p>SB confirmed that competitor analysis had been undertaken from a sector perspective to identify Ipswich's strengths and weaknesses. This was complimented by workshops to gauge the currently held views of Ipswich.</p>	

	<p>17 interviews with businesses were undertaken, 2 stakeholder workshops, a youth group, and desk-based research.</p> <p>Proposed sectors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education – the 16+ education is very strong in Ipswich and cohesive compared to other regions and nationally. - Arts and Culture – this is very strong and can mark our position. - Finance – Ipswich is currently in the top 15 places for finance in the UK. - Advanced Manufacturing – this offers Ipswich an opportunity to increase its profile, however, shouldn't be the focus. - Construction – several successful companies were created in Ipswich, including Morgan Sindall and RG Carters - Shipping, Logistics, and Warehousing – Ipswich has a unique geographical advantage, resulting in a strong sector. <p>Brand Ipswich should focus on the strongest areas, however, maintaining the others as part of the context.</p> <p>Stakeholder workshops revealed that people view Ipswich on a scale from negative to hopeful and optimistic. A bold and dynamic strategy needs to be put in place to address the issues.</p> <p>Every decision made should aim to get Ipswich closer to its Brand, and if it doesn't, the choices should be questioned.</p> <p>There are two potential Brand directions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ipswich. From a bold place in history to a future with ambition. 2) Ipswich. From a bold place in history to a city with status. <p>The first option is much more flexible and allows for diversions, whilst the second has less latitude.</p> <p>Boldness and ambition should be at the core of this brand to assist with achieving the goals.</p> <p>Ipswich has been reported as a welcoming area with a diverse and vibrant community which operates collaboratively in harmony.</p> <p>There are several options for Brand personality, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energised and positive to combat the negative views and discussing positive messages. - Welcoming and helpful through the numerous employment opportunities in Ipswich. - Confident and assured by talking about Ipswich more. <p>All 'personalities' should implement a collaborative and forward-looking approach with the aim to provide an optimal environment for business growth making Ipswich the Gateway to Suffolk.</p>	
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	<p>Education and Arts and Culture are key drivers as to why people choose to live somewhere, both areas Ipswich is strong in.</p> <p>Ipswich should be seen as a welcoming and diverse place. The proposed branding was discussed</p> <p>JH thanked SB for his presentation.</p> <p>JA also thanked for this presentation,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agreeing with the proposed Brand Ipswich concept. - the need to differentiate the branding as the Art and Culture in Ipswich is already phenomenal and should simply be communicated better. - during the last City bid, there was a perception issue, and it wasn't broadened beyond the business community. - naming matters. If a Greater Ipswich Council doesn't exist, it could cause an issue as no one beyond local areas would understand the reference. This would create a communication complication and - It is also important to begin delivering on projects to prevent cynicism from the populace. Investment must occur in the town. <p>SB commented that the strategic framework ensures the Brand aligns with the regeneration strategy, which will be highlighted once physical projects begin occurring.</p> <p>LW said that we need to be clear that the brand has the support of the other major brands within the town, and that if it is going to succeed, we need to be clear that people such as Ed Sheeran and ITFC do not have a problem with it, if they are not then the brand will struggle to land and will appear inauthentic.</p> <p>SB emphasised that all elements if the brand need to work harmoniously with the regeneration projects going forward.</p> <p>HP stated that she would like to receive a steer from this group to identify whether this Brand direction is appropriate.</p> <p>This would involve implementing the Brand around home, assets, and campaigns by bringing communication and marketing teams from all institutions to ensure this is a collaboratively owned vision partnership.</p> <p>JH stressed that we should be honest about the findings, even if the truth is uncomfortable.</p> <p>LW highlighted that there is a difference between the creation of a strategy and utilising it.</p> <p>JH requested that additional time was allowed to ensure that absent members of the TVB and other key stakeholders are given an opportunity to comment on the proposal.</p> <p>HP agreed that this could be done outside of the TVB meeting and reported</p>	
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	<p>back via email to ensure a decision can be reached before the meeting.</p> <p><u>Waterfront Project, update provided by AC:</u></p> <p>The project (currently unnamed) will focus on capitalising on the energy coast and net zero. AC stated that there is a synergy between the proposed brand and the proposed waterfront project.</p> <p>AC provided an overview of the site at the end of the Waterfront to house a high quality regional or nationally significant project.</p> <p>Work is currently being undertaken to develop a project proposal supported by a number of construction experts including Morgan Sindall, that have offered pro bono advice to be able procure a suitable consultant to deliver the next stage of development.</p> <p>AC made two requests to the Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) For the direction of travel to be endorsed. 2) A commitment of £42,000 to enable SCC progress to the next stage. <p>JA commented that UKREiif could be a good opportunity to promote this opportunity and suggested that regional funding is also looked at. AC informed the board that there is currently no funding to secure a viable proposal.</p>	
6.0	<p>Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Update:</p> <p><u>Devolution, update provided by AC:</u></p> <p>Public consultations on the proposals for a MCCA are open until mid-April. An in-person consultation should occur at the end of the month.</p> <p>All stakeholders are consultees in this project and SCC will take their response to Cabinet for sign-off.</p> <p>Devolution legislation will be implemented if this is successful. This will occur at the same time as the spending review and propositions will be released regarding devolved powers and responsibilities.</p> <p>The Board will include certain members of County Councils as they are statutory bodies, the Mayor, and non-constituted members. The White Paper and consultation provide more details.</p> <p>A mayoral election would take place in 2026. The Mayor will have their own manifesto and strategic focus.</p> <p>Certain changes will occur immediately and others over time.</p> <p><u>Local Government Reform, updated by HP:</u></p> <p>With devolution moving fast, local government reorganisation is also proceeding to remove a layer of governance.</p>	

	<p>There are currently 5 Districts and Boroughs in the area, who will become one or more unitary Council who will provide all services.</p> <p>Today marks the date for each area to submit their proposals and identify the perspectives of each area.</p> <p>SCC has submitted a proposal for a single unitary council to provide all services.</p> <p>IBC have proposed a single focus on Ipswich no matter the result.</p> <p>The current boundary of Ipswich was created in 1835, when the population was 15,000. This will require an amendment.</p> <p>All submitted papers by every council can be accessed through the Cabinet Executive papers and proposals website.</p> <p>Detailed proposals will be submitted by the 26th of September.</p> <p>AC reports that the new mayor will be selected in May 2026 and the local authority reorganisation will be undertaken in May 2028.</p> <p>JA informs that these timeframes are certain.</p> <p>SE informs that a mayor could improve economic drive and identity in Ipswich, similarly to what was experienced in Leicester.</p>	
7.0	<p>Towns Fund, update provided by JF:</p> <p>JF stated that the highlight report can be found in the pack and that there was nothing more to report at this stage.</p> <p>The Local shopping parades project is reported to be underspent. It was proposed that St Matthews Street, which spans from Barrack Corner and Hyde Park Corner to the Old Crown Court roundabout, should be added as an extension of Norwich Road Local parade.</p> <p>JA suggested allocating these funds to the Regeneration project instead.</p> <p>It was agreed that the focus of the Local Shopping Parades project would be on allocation of Shop-Front improvement grants and delivery of the proposed works on St Matthews St and Hawthorn Drive.</p> <p>It was agreed to raise a Project Access Request to MHCLG for £1m to be transferred to the Regeneration fund from the Shopping Parades project.</p> <p>SE commented that the St Matthews area is important as an important entrance into the town centre</p>	
8.0	Towns Fund – M&E Update	

	<p>On the 12th of March a meeting took place. Every project was analysed individually.</p> <p>JDa commented that a third person was supposed to join the committee.</p> <p>HP will remind JD regarding securing an addition member to this group.</p>	HP
9.	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <p>It was unanimously agreed that thanks should be given to for the pro bono work done on Brand Ipswich to date.</p>	
10.	<p>Dates of Next Meeting:</p> <p>June date TBC.</p>	