

Minutes

Meeting	Ipswich Vision Board
Date	Friday 20 th June 2025
Time	13:00 hrs
Location	Teams

Items:

1.0	<p>Present:</p> <p>David Ralph, Chair of Ipswich Vision Board (Chair)</p> <p>Helen Pluck, CEO, Ipswich Borough Council [IBC] (HP)</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>Amanda Ankin, Operations Director, Chamber of Commerce (AA)</p> <p>Julia Rusek, IBC (Minutes)</p>
2.0	<p>Apologies:</p> <p>Jack Abbott, MP for Ipswich (JA)</p> <p>Patrick Spencer, MP for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich (PS)</p> <p>Alan Pease, Principal, Suffolk New College (AP)</p> <p>John Dugmore, Chamber of Commerce (JD)</p>

		Action
3.0	<p>Declarations of Interest:</p> <p>Nothing to declare.</p>	

4.0	<p>Minutes of the last Meeting:</p> <p>Amendments have been made by LW and the minutes have been updated following approval from JH.</p> <p>Chair questioned whether Board members have commented on the Branding and would like to understand the next proposed steps.</p> <p>HP will be in contact with partners outside of the Board meetings.</p> <p>The minutes have been agreed as a true record.</p>	
5.0	<p>Devolution Update:</p> <p>AC reported that the Norfolk and Suffolk Mayor election process is expected to begin in May 2026.</p> <p>The Suffolk Business Board are leading on this agenda. The board includes NMCD as the Suffolk District Councils representative.</p> <p>Outstanding actions are being completed by Central Government, including the publication of consultations that occurred in March and April which will confirm approval to proceed with devolution; the publication of statutory instruments demonstrating the powers and responsibilities granted to the mayor; how finances will be organised and the process of operating the investment fund.</p> <p>The draft English Devolution Bill is assumed to contain elements of what powers will be granted to the mayor, which is currently not located in legislation. Publication is expected prior to summer recess.</p> <p>Mayoral day 1 is expected to occur in January or February of 2026. Statutory roles will be in place with discharge functions and responsibilities.</p> <p>Chair questioned when the legislation from Central Government is expected to be published.</p> <p>AC confirmed that this is currently uncertain, however, the May 2026 deadline for mayor elections is expected to be maintained. The principal concern is delivery at pace to ensure sufficient progress is made once legislation has been published.</p> <p>Chair questioned what might happen with the office of the Police Crime Commissioner. AC confirmed that this will become clearer as Government guidance is published and the plans develop.</p> <p>Chair questioned whether there have been any updates on Local Government Reorganisation. HP informed that there is nothing to currently update the Board with.</p>	

<p>6.0</p>	<p>Waterfront Project:</p> <p>AC updated that external consultants have been commissioned on how to proceed along with potential stakeholders. Documentation is being finalised so the next steps can be identified, including potential partners, constraints, and further opportunities.</p> <p>Investigations are being made to identify how to collaborate to ensure how any proposal with integrate with other projects in the area and the aspirations of the university.</p> <p>It is intended that an update will be circulated by the next Board meeting, at which stage the next steps will be identified.</p> <p>The next Waterfront Project Board meeting will take place on 27th June.</p>	
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Town Deal:</p> <p>JF confirmed that the overall programme is currently proceeding according to plan. Contracts for Lloyds Avenue, Greener Ipswich and Local Parades are moving forward. Planning permission for the portal has been granted.</p> <p>JF advised that there will be more updates on the Regeneration project at the next meeting as further bids have been received.</p> <p>HP informed that once the first application filter has been passed by the bidders, the Independent Expert Panel will be asked to assess the applications and to provide an opinion on them.</p> <p>Chair questioned the outstanding Project Adjustment Request to transfer money to the Regeneration fund agreed at the last Board Meeting. JF informed the Board that this is still awaiting confirmation.</p> <p>Chair confirmed that at the next meeting there may be decisions needed for some of the projects in the lead-up to the March 2026 funding commitment deadline.</p> <p>PW questioned what the deadline is for when projects must be delivered.</p> <p>JF stated that the funding commitment date is 31 March 2026, with a delivery date requirement of March 2027. With the agreement of MHCLG the only exception to this timeline is expected to be the Regeneration project due in part to longer lead-in times and the revolving element of the fund.</p> <p>AC commented that he and JF will discuss the bridge project in the early summer in order to get the agreement in place.</p> <p>HP added that last year there had been informal discussions regarding changing timeframes for funding to 2028, however, nothing has been announced to date.</p>	

8.0	<p>Towns Fund – M&E Update</p> <p>JDa reported that at the meeting of the Monitoring & Evaluation Group on 13th June every project was examined in detail. He commented that delivery is taking an exceptionally long time and is anxious that the public is unaware of what the Town Fund is or how it will benefit the local area.</p> <p>He referenced the Lottery Fund which provides plaques when funding is provided and questioned whether something similar can be produced for the Town Fund.</p> <p>Chair stated that there was no appetite for this measure when the board was initiated and that funding guidelines supplied by the Government should be checked that no new requirements needed to be adhered to.</p> <p>JDa confirmed that a third member has not yet been selected for the Monitoring and Evaluation Group.</p> <p>AA will confirm JD whether a new individual has been identified.</p> <p>JDa commented that officers are working diligently to progress projects and is unsatisfied with some comments on social media regarding the Portal and binoculars. However, he hopes that people will see the value of these projects.</p> <p>Chair added that it is important to procure local contractors and gain the best value for money.</p>	
9.	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <p>LW stated that he sits on two sub-groups of the Board, the Greening and digital initiatives. He questioned whether these are still active.</p> <p>JF confirmed that these project board are active, however, meetings will only occur as and when a discussion topic presents itself. For example, because the Greening project is currently proceeding to delivery phase and in the Digital Ipswich project, as the portal is now in delivery phase and digital trails are ongoing- there are currently no topics for discussion.</p> <p>NC added that without issues to discuss, meetings will not be held.</p> <p>HP confirmed that further updates would be provided on the new Ipswich branding in due course and confirmed that all members of the TVB would be invited to the upcoming brand launch.</p>	
10.	<p>Dates of Next Meeting:</p> <p>12 September 2025 at 9am at Grafton House</p>	