

# Minutes

<b>Meeting</b>	Ipswich Vision Board
<b>Date</b>	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
<b>Time</b>	09:00 hrs
<b>Location</b>	Ipswich Borough Council, Orwell Room, Grafton House

## Items:

<b>1.0</b>	<p><b>Present:</b>  David Ralph, Chair of Ipswich Vision Board (Chair)  Helen Pluck, CEO, Ipswich Borough Council [IBC] (HP)  James Fairclough, Director of Operations and Place, IBC (JF)  Sharon Earp, Representative for Patrick Spencer (SE)  Alan Pease, Principal, Suffolk New College (AP)  Hussain Farah, Representative for Jack Abbot (HF)  Jenny Higham, Vice Chancellor, University of Suffolk (JH)  James Davey, Director, Ipswich Small Business Association (JDa)  Jack Abbott, MP for Ipswich (JA)  Paul West, Councillor, Suffolk County Council [SCC] (PW)  Becca Jackaman, Progression Sessions (BJ)  Julia Rusek, IBC (Minutes)</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<p><b>Apologies:</b>  Neil McDonald, Leader of IBC (NMCD)  Lee Walker, CEO of Ipswich Central (LW)  John Dugmore, Chamber of Commerce (JD)  Patrick Spencer, MP for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich (PS)  Amanda Ankin, Operations Director, Chamber of Commerce (AA)  Andrew Cook, Executive Director for Growth, Highways &amp; Infrastructure, SCC (AC)</p>

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

	If new changes arise, this will be communicated.	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Minutes of the last Meeting:</b> The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Devolution Update:</b> HP updated that following the Minister announcement, the mayoral elections have been postponed to 2028.  Potential implications and impacts are being discussed by Central Government and at a local level.  AC will be able to provide further updates at the next meeting.  A question was raised regarding the areas without a mayor and how this will be engaged with regarding LGR.  The announcement with the Government decision on LGR is expected by the end of March 2026.	
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Vision Project Updates (HP Updates)</b>  <u>Waterfront</u> A useful session has taken place with consultants and many partners. Actions have been distributed amongst the attendees, one of which included identifying an architect to attain drawings and information on what can be constructed on site within scales and designs.  The goal is to produce a mix-use development that focuses and enhances the interaction of water and meets various needs of the university and the town center.  Good progress has been attained, with more updates to come in March.  JH commented that this is a good project and the consultants have been extremely helpful.  <u>Brand Ipswich</u> Works continue with Jacob Bailey in identifying individuals and attaining permissions with third party stakeholders.  This process is a long one due to all the factors that must be considered.  The launch is scheduled for early spring.  <u>Ipswich Bid for City of Culture 2029</u> Bids have now opened. The original deadline was the 11 <sup>th</sup> of January but this has now been moved to February. This will result in more competition, however, there is more time to gather all necessary information.	

	<p>AP (Suffolk New College), Birketts, Ipswich Town Football Club and Church Manor are sponsoring this application.</p> <p>If the application is successful, a development grant will be attained to assist in creating a full proposal.</p> <p>However, currently, an impactful expression of interest is the focal point to ensure Ipswich is one of the 8 towns shortlisted for this endeavour.</p> <p>Chair commented that it would be useful for everyone to give support for this.</p> <p>JH added that the University is supportive and is working alongside this.</p>	
<p><b>7.0</b></p>	<p><b>Town Fund Update (JF Updates):</b></p> <p><u>Pride in Place Impact Fund</u>  £1.5m has been allocated to Ipswich under three areas. Engagement with local MPs and a group of stakeholders is required to take place to identify the best ways to utilise this money.</p> <p>IBC are recommending applications for community spaces in two timeframes to ensure individuals have an opportunity to apply. The indicative timeline is for it to open in January for 6 weeks then if funding remains reopen again in early March and close in May.</p> <p>All the money must be spent or committed by March 2027.</p> <p>SE commented that the two-tier approach is a good idea as it alerts individuals early and allows for seed thinking in wider groups. However, there is a worry on how engagement will be undertaken if limited applications are received.</p> <p>JF stated that this will be successful as community groups collaborate with IBC so when this is launched, the community engagement team will be communicating with these groups.</p> <p>Funding will only focus on those who would like to take ownership or improve an asset. It will not include activity or equipment investments.</p> <p>Decisions for funding will be decided by IBC, as the accountable body for this funding. However, recommendations will be provided by the Board.</p> <p>JA commented that he is currently undertaking survey work to gain public opinion. He will update once more information is received.</p> <p>HP requested that if anyone has any suggestions, they should direct them to JF.</p> <p><u>Pedestrian Bridge</u>  £1.3m funding has been granted to SCC for early design and feasibility work. The paperwork has now been agreed, terms have been discussed and are</p>	

	<p>now with the SCC legal team to be signed and completed before Christmas, or just after.</p> <p>This is majorly a claw back agreement if the project does not go ahead.</p> <p><u>Digital Town Centre</u> The portal was launched during the October half term and produced better results than anticipated. A few individuals claim it was a waste of money; however, most people think it was a good idea.</p> <p>Many people stop to interact with the portal as it changes countries every few minutes. JF will produce a poster which depicts which flag corresponds with which country.</p> <p>The binoculars have been installed and should have been launched already. However, due to a breakdown in communications, the company who was responsible for loading the software will be completing the task in January. A launch event will occur at Christchurch Mansion.</p> <p>Once it is ascertained whether the time travel imagery is successful, further funding opportunities for Digital Ipswich will be discussed. Those who have witnessed the photographs have praised them.</p> <p><u>Local Shopping Parades</u> All the designs for St Matthews have now been completed, and agreements have been finalised. Works are expected to start in late March/ early April.</p> <p>An SCC contractor will be delivering this project, and the length of work is expected to take two weeks.</p> <p>Lane closures will occur due to daytime works.</p> <p>PW questioned whether it would be beneficial to complete this during the night to reduce impact on people during the day. This is a sensitive area and could have political backlash.</p> <p>JF will discuss this with SCC to ascertain whether this alteration would impact budgets drastically.</p> <p>The Hawthorn Drive project is more complicated. This will include creating level access to all shops, more greenery, additional parking spaces, and pothole repairs.</p> <p>The project team is currently redesigning the designs following asbestos being identified in the subbase under the concrete. The decision was made to leave this encapsulated to reduce the need to remove and dispose of the contamination.</p> <p>Drainage improvements will still be undertaken, however, the works must be completed more carefully.</p>	<p>JF</p> <p>JF</p>
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<p>This project is slightly delayed with RIBA 3 occurring in the new year. Once this is completed, a cost estimate will be attained.</p> <p>The project will go over the £800k budget and will therefore require more funding. JF is requesting £950k and is unsure whether full planning permission will be required or whether this can be completed under permitted development.</p> <p>Chair questioned whether the money is available in the shopping parades budget.</p> <p>JF confirmed this and believes the project is worth doing.</p> <p>SE agreed as it's important as it will have large impacts on the local community.</p> <p>It was agreed to increase the budget if required</p> <p><u>Greening</u> Works will begin on site on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January; however, this will require confirmation. The works are expected to take place over 26 weeks.</p> <p><u>Lloyds Avenue</u> Section 278, which is a detailed technical agreement which allows IBC to undertake works on the highways, is taking a lot of time. As part of the process, further investigation works were undertaken on the two footpaths, and the subbase has been classified as substandard. This means that the project will now include the removal of the subbase, replacement of it, and then the installation of a new pavement.</p> <p>This is a regulative requirement as a new pavement cannot be placed on an inadequate subbase.</p> <p>New technical drawings have now been completed and are awaiting SCC approval. Once approved, the project will receive a new price.</p> <p>More money will be required due to this, however, there are still funds available from the St Peters Dock.</p> <p>The current budget is £1.5m, however, the official increase in price is not known as a QS will need to be involved.</p> <p>JA questioned whether there is a possibility to receive more specific timeframes.</p> <p>JF informed that this is not possible as the technical drawings must be agreed first, then a QS must be consulted. This work will then have to be signed off, hopefully in January.</p>	
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<p>There is a 12-week lead time to book road space, and a temporary taxi rank must be organised.</p> <p>The latest construction start time is June, with 26 weeks required for completion. The latest completion date is next Christmas or early 2027.</p> <p>PW has emailed AC regarding the technical aspects.</p> <p>JF is thankful for this.</p> <p><u>Regeneration Fund:</u> JF suggested not making any money movements into the regeneration fund at the moment.</p> <p>Chair agreed to leave the money in their existing budgets to complete the projects, with agreement that funding can be allocated into this fund once funding requirements are finalised for the other projects.</p> <p>Brighten the Corners grant agreement has been completed and works on the first floor will begin in the new year.</p> <p>Clay 1A agreement will be completed shortly.</p> <p>HP informed that there were technical difficulties as the property has multiple titles, not all of which have been transferred to the current owner. The Land Registry has to update their records before funding can be officially provided.</p> <p>HP will deliberate whether the MPs can assist with this as the property is within JA's constituency. This will be discussed in the new year, if necessary.</p> <p>JF informed that works will still be undertaken by the individual, who will utilise their own money, for interior improvements.</p> <p>New applications can be assessed in early 2026, however, no firm decision will be made until budgetary certainty is achieved. Recommendations will be brought to the Board for the next meeting in the new year for money reallocation.</p> <p><u>Suffolk New College Application</u> Suffolk New College has applied for funding to convert the first floor of the Grimwades building into an Adult Learning Centre.</p> <p>They are expecting 200 students immediately as they will be reallocated from the main building.</p> <p>This would bring Grimwades back into use, with positive benefits for employment, sustainability, town centre footfall, the local economy, land value uplift, and transport.</p> <p>Landlord works will include £240k for stairs, lift, windows, doors, and sanitary facilities. The tenant works will equal £560k and will include glazing,</p>	
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	<p>internal partitioning, ceiling works, lighting, floor coverings, bathroom fit out, heating and cooling.</p> <p>The agreement will ensure that all tenanted works will be returnable to IBC if the facility halts operation.</p> <p>PW questioned whether there are any other venues that would achieve the same objectives and cost less.</p> <p>JF explained this decision was reached following a tour with AP to numerous sites as this is the most cost-effective site.</p> <p>JH commented that she supports this project.</p> <p>SE stated that she supports this and will discuss it with PS. It will benefit educational needs and economic development.</p> <p>JA is also supportive as the town center needs to evolve beyond just retail use.</p> <p>JDa is supportive and pleased to see that people will be coming to the centre.</p> <p>PW is supportive but questions whether the site is fully accessible.</p> <p>JF informed that it is. The existing shop frontage will be redesigned to enable automatic double doors that will go to the reception and a platform lift will be installed to provide access to the first floor.</p> <p>BJ commented that this is an exciting venture and questioned whether there have been any consultations with disabled individuals.</p> <p>JF informed that there is only a technical design in place, but he will arrange for one of the team members to ensure that all necessary aspects are considered.</p> <p>HP reminded everyone that IBCs Executive will be required to make a formal decision on the funding for this project. This will take place in February and there is an expectation that conversion of the facility will take place in April or May.</p> <p>Chair summarised that the Board views this as a good idea.</p>	
<p><b>8.0</b></p>	<p><b>Towns Fund – M&amp;E Update</b></p> <p>JDa informed that a meeting occurred on Tuesday where all the projects were discussed in detail. The next meeting will take place on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, and a new individual will be welcomed onto the Board.</p> <p>JDa added that he is disappointed with how long some projects are taking.</p>	

	<p>Chair agreed and stated that the officers in charge of the projects are feeling the same.</p> <p>Chair added that he would be happy to discuss with the new member of the Board, if necessary.</p>	
9.	<p><b>Any Other Business:</b></p> <p>JH reports that the integrated care academy has come to its 5-year end. Some of the Town Deal money paid for this and has a range of successful outcomes. All the positive aspects are being taken into account, and a formal closure will occur next week. This was agreed in 2020 and an impact report will be shared.</p> <p>JA informed that the school on Carr Street was under review and set out the current position.</p> <p>HP stated that this is a complicated site and partly listed due to the mural. The lease was a matter for the Council and the Department for Education to resolve once a final announcement is made.</p> <p><b>Chair of Ipswich Vision Board</b></p> <p>HP questioned the Chair arrangements as DR's contract is expiring. DE confirmed he is happy to continue chairing until the end of the financial year with no additional costs.</p> <p>The Board unanimously agreed that DR will continue as Chair.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Dates of Next Meeting:</b></p> <p>13<sup>th</sup> March 2026</p>	