

New Chair Press Release: Issued 9th December 2022

The group helping to shape a successful county town in Ipswich has named its new chair.

David Ralph chaired his first meeting of the newly merged Ipswich Vision / Town Deal Board on Friday and takes over from acting chair, Professor Helen Langton, Vice-Chancellor at the University of Suffolk.

David is currently the Chief Executive of Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partnership which has overseen the development of the Local Industrial Strategy and the delivery of 3 Growth Deal programmes delivering almost £1 billion of private and public sector investment.

His responsibilities in his new role will include leading and developing the Ipswich Vision Board and playing a leading role in ensuring that the board is able to progress the Ipswich Town Deal and Connected Town concept which aims to link the Waterfront to Ipswich town centre as well as ensuring the support of wider connected communities across the whole of the town.

David's brings significant leadership experience of places throughout England. Other roles have included CEO of the Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire (D2N2) LEP where he oversaw the development of the D2N2 Strategic Economic Plan and sector strategies, 3 Growth Deals with HM Government to deliver a £1 billion capital investment programme, securing and implementing £200m ESIF programme, the Derby and Nottingham Enterprise Zone, the D2N2 Skills Deal and Time for Innovation programme, community fund and led the executive team to develop the HS2 East Midlands hub.

He was also closely involved in the proposed North Midlands Devolution Deal and one of the key architects in establishing the Midlands Engine, chairing the officer steering group. Whilst in this role David was a NED of the Nottingham Enterprise Zone, and Marketing Nottingham, the Outer Estates Foundation and a Governor of Nottingham College and on the advisory Board of Nottingham Business School.

Before working in the East Midlands, David was CEO of the Haven Gateway Partnership working closely with local stakeholders including the ports of Felixstowe, Harwich and Ipswich and BT Adastral Park at Martlesham.

David, who lives with his family in Debenham, Suffolk, said of his new challenge:

"It is really good to be working in my local community to develop Ipswich as a destination of choice and working with partners to make that happen.

"I'm delighted to be back and am bringing a lot of experience with me. I'm pretty comfortable with this new challenge and am looking forward to the role very much."

The Board is a partnership of civic, business and education leaders with anchor partners including Ipswich Borough Council, Ipswich Central, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Suffolk County Council and the University of Suffolk. Working together with Tom Hunt MP and Dan Poulter MP the aim is to deliver transformative projects in Suffolk's county town.

Handing over the reins to David, acting chair of the Ipswich Vision Board, Professor Helen Langton said: "The Board is delighted to welcome David as our new Chair. Rooted in Ipswich and Suffolk, and bringing broader experiences from his work across the UK, David will help us focus on Ipswich, our county town, as we work together to create our future as a destination of choice for growth and success."