

# Lowestoft Place Board

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 10:00-12:00 | Virtual

**THINK  
LOWESTOFT**

| Attendees (Board)   | Apologies (Board)   |
|---|---|
| <p>Stephen Javes – Chair</p> <p>Andrew Brown – Anglian Water (&amp; BiTC)</p> <p>Cllr Keith Patience – Lowestoft Town Council</p> <p>Cllr Paul Ashdown – Lowestoft and Northern Parishes Community Partnership</p> <p>Cllr Richard Smith – Suffolk County Council</p> <p>Cllr Toby Hammond – East Suffolk Council</p> <p>Danny Steel – Lowestoft Vision</p> <p>Phil Aves/Emma Ratzer – Lowestoft Rising</p> <p>Javier Escandon Ramirez – Associated British Ports (<i>attending on behalf of Tom Duit</i>)</p> <p>Keith Moore – Environment Agency</p> <p>Marjorie Barnes – Sizewell C</p> <p>Peter Aldous – MP for Waveney</p> <p>Steve Hodger – Scottish Power Renewables</p> | <p>Genevieve Christie – First Light Festival</p> <p>George Wall – Department of Work and Pensions</p> <p>Tim Green – CEFAS</p> <p>Tom Duit – Associated British Ports</p> |
| Attendees (Officers)  | Apologies (Officers)  |
| <p>Andrew Jarvis – East Suffolk Council</p> <p>Ben Porter – East Suffolk Council</p> <p>Darren Newman – East Suffolk Council</p> <p>Emily Cashen – Cities &amp; Local Growth Unit</p> <p>Gary Bellward – East Suffolk Council</p> <p>Kerry Blair – East Suffolk Council</p> <p>Matt Jones – Suffolk County Council (<i>attending on behalf of Jai Raithatha</i>)</p> <p>Nicole Rickard – East Suffolk Council</p> <p>Paul Wood – East Suffolk Council</p> <p>Sarah Foote – Lowestoft Town Council</p>   | <p>Jai Raithatha – Suffolk County Council</p> <p>Philip Ridley – East Suffolk Council</p>   |

|   | Description  | Lead          |
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| 1 | Welcome and declarations of interest   | Stephen Javes |
| 2 | <p>Actions and approval of minutes from previous meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board to return Declarations of Interest to Kate Ellis following the meeting – <i>most declarations returned and now published on ESC's website:</i> <a href="https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/business/regeneration-projects/lowestoft-towns-deal-and-levelling-up/">https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/business/regeneration-projects/lowestoft-towns-deal-and-levelling-up/</a> However the Chair asked any outstanding Dol's to be returned as soon as possible.</li> </ul>  | Stephen Javes |
| 3 | <p>Performance Indicators</p> <p>Occupancy and Vacancy rates - Vacancy rates are recorded annually, and currently show that 26.4% of premises in Lowestoft Town centre are vacant, which is double the national rate, and 2.5x higher than the rest of East Suffolk. However, it is important to note that these are not all in the main retail areas and includes the fringes/industrial areas of the town centre such as Commercial Road. For perspective the vacancy rate within the core retail area is 7%, but some of these units, such as the former Palmers building, are under development.</p> <p>Footfall – Darren presented footfall data to the Board, with the following figures highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total unique visitors for May 22 to April 23 – 3,626,518</li> <li>Total unique visitors for May 23 to Jan 24 – 2,335,011</li> </ul> | Darren Newman |

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|   | However, we require more data over the coming years to truly understand wider footfall trends.   |                |
| 4 | <p>Partner update</p> <p>Lowestoft Vision BID – Danny Steel: Lowestoft Vision were opposed to the application to turn the former Burtons into an adult gaming shop, but the owner has now decided against this. Work on the former Palmers appears to have stalled and it is unclear what is happening with regards to progression and occupation – if the Board have any information about the plans for the unit, please could they inform Danny. The plans for Beales have also stalled. Danny noted the Kittiwakes have returned – Kerry advised that there is an advert for a Kittiwake Officer, but progress will be slow in moving the colony to other sites, but East Suffolk Services Ltd will be monitoring the situation over the summer.</p> <p>-</p> <p>Lowestoft &amp; Northern Parishes Community Partnership – Cllr Paul Ashdown: Junior Park Run will take place for young people in the summer at Normanston Park. Four Welcome Rooms will operate over the summer. BoxUp will encourage people to get moving by offering an equipment loan system which is free to use.</p> <p>-</p> <p>Lowestoft Town Council – Sarah Foote: LTC will be procuring for the main build of the Town Hall imminently, with the post of Project Manager now live. With regards to the Marina Theatre, LTC are reviewing tenders for RIBA 4-7. Perspex ledges have been added to the front of the theatre, with Kittiwakes now nesting at the rear of the building. It was noted that over time, the repeated nesting and cleaning is causing damage to the façade of the building.</p> <p>-</p> <p>ESC Update - Paul Wood Nicole Rickard: The Nexus has seen a breaking ground ceremony take place, and this is now progressing with completion expected Autumn 2024. 16 units will be made available with 3 parties already interested. The ground at the former Sanyo site, which is to become Kirkley Waterfront, a mixed-use development, is significantly contaminated, however funding has been secured to remediate the site – it is planned outline planning permission will be submitted end of 2024.</p> <p>-</p> <p>ESC Update - Nicole Rickard: Ease the Squeeze will continue for another year. Referral rates have been up over the winter. The communities’ team are trying to secure funding to continue the Warm Welcomes over the summer as they are well attended and are keen to retain momentum.</p> <p>Following the success of ESC’s Field to Fork programme which distributes growing kits to primary schools across the district, will return for 2024. 1,900 kits will be made available, each containing compost pellets, seeds and free access to Groundwork East’s online GROW Programme. Those interested in a kit can apply online and kits can then be collected from locations across East Suffolk, including libraries, community hubs and churches over the next four weeks. Priority will be given to those on the existing Field to Fork distribution list and then the kits will be made available to all from Monday 18 March.</p> <p>-</p> <p>MP Update – Peter Aldous: Peter, Karen Thomas, and Philip Ridley have met to discuss the coastal emergency of the corrosion of Pakefield Cliffs following Storm Henk, and the halting of progression of the tidal barrier due to £124m funding gap.</p> <p>Peter has been lobbying support for hospitality businesses and is also supporting smaller businesses with employer National Insurance contributions and VAT relief to assist with increased operating costs.</p> <p><b>Action: Darren to provide further information to Peter regarding Enterprise Zones.</b></p> | As stated      |
| 5 | 10 years of Lowestoft Rising   | Nicole Rickard |

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|   | <p>Nicole presented the successes of Lowestoft Rising over the past 10 years, and to acknowledge the work of Phil Aves.</p> <p>Emma Ratzer raised concerns that when Phil leaves, who will monitor the community risks within Lowestoft, and further discussion will be held regarding this.</p> <p>The Board all thanked Phil for his work, with many highlighting the support he has provided to initiatives across the town</p> <p><b>Action: Stephen and Nicole to discuss with Chris Bally about how we can monitor this and maintain coordination.</b></p>   |               |
| 6 | <p>Towns Deal update<br/>Lowestoft Eastern Energy Facility (LEEF) – Javier Escandon Ramirez, ABP</p> <p>Javier provided a project update regarding the new LEEF facility, which is progressing well. A large concrete base has been demolished, with pilings and earthworks now underway to form LEEF. Dredging and tie rods to the main quay wall has also started, however dredging will need to be undertaken again.</p> <p>-</p> <p>Town overview – Darren Newman, ESC<br/>A Meet the Buyer event took place at East Point Pavilion yesterday (5 March), to inform potential contractors about the projects, and procurement timeframes and process including social value. We are following Suffolk County Council’s social value process. All businesses will receive an information sheet with each tender. Over 54 businesses were in attendance, with positive interest.</p> <p>Cultural Quarter – planning application will be submitted imminently.<br/>Station Building – all objections have now been withdrawn.<br/>Seafront Vision – main contract went out to tender in January, however only 3 tenders came back which all exceeded timeframes and costs, so we now need to retender this.<br/>Jubilee Parade – planning consent granted in January 2024.</p> <p>Emma Ratzer noted that she was keen to see initiatives to bring contractors and VCSEs together through social value. <b>Action: Darren and Emma to discuss how to link ESC contractors with VCSE organisations.</b></p> <p>A query was raised with regards to whether another retail operator will go into the former Wilkos which forms part of the Cultural Quarter. Darren advised that before the administration, ESC were looking to relocate Wilko to progress the Cultural Quarter, and that the unit will not made available for lease going forward for retail purposes. Peter has also received concerns from The Players and Bingo Hall about parking with the removal of parking at Battery Green. Darren and Kerry noted there is an abundance of parking in the town centre, but there are opportunities to look into how this is better promoted.</p> | As stated     |
| 7 | <p>AOB<br/>No further business raised, and meeting brought to a close by the Chair.</p>  | Stephen Javes |
|   | <p>Place Board meetings 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuesday 21 May – 10:30-12:30</li> <li>• Thursday 5 September – 10:00-12:00</li> <li>• Wednesday 4 December – 10:00-12:00</li> </ul>   |               |