

101453369

Revision 01

ECONOMIC REVIEW GROUP

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Meeting:	29 th January 2025, 10:00-12:00
Location:	MS Teams
Chair:	Richard Bull (SZC)
Attendees:	SZC – Richard Bull (RB), Rebecca Calder (RC) – Obs, Mike Humphrey (MH) – Obs, Marjorie Barnes (MB) – Obs, Johnathan Reynolds (JR) – Obs, Paul Warmington (PW) – Obs ESC – Alexis Corless (AC), Simon Charlesworth (SC) – Obs, SCC – Jai Raithatha (JR), James Chandler (JC) – Obs, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce – Ashley Shorey-Mills (ASM) – Obs
Apologies:	Paul Wood (ESC)

Meeting Notes:

Project Update:

- Momentum and drive increasing with good progress being made over last 12 months. Focus is on achieving Financial Investment Decision this year.
- Associated development is underway, including the initiation of archaeological and site clearance activities.
- The primary focus on the main site is to start work on the SSSI crossing and establish a connection between the main construction site and the temporary construction area.
- Interactions with the coastal path and beach work will require careful management to ensure minimal disruption.
- Local stakeholder engagement is vital, led by MB. SZC has held 14 forums this year, receiving positive feedback that the process is effective and community members feel informed. This is part of a broader communication strategy, including outreach to parishes and bespoke meetings with affected groups, to address specific issues on a case-by-case basis and support communities with change.
- The community fund is successfully distributing the latest tranche of grants
- The local work schemes around Leiston are vital for connecting local suppliers with project contracts. It's important to establish national contracts to fulfil commitments at local, regional, and national levels. Sharing evidence of funds being reinvested in the communities would also be beneficial.
- The workforce currently stands at around 1,000, with plans to increase to 2,000 by year-end.

Actions raised during the meeting:

Date Raised	Ref.	Description	Lead	Date Due
25/09/2024	1	Keep the issue of data sharing on the radar and meeting to be scheduled with Steven Carroll, James Chandler, Ian Pease and Paul Warmington to resolve outstanding questions.	SZC, SCC, ESC	Closed

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25/09/2024	2	Compile a risk register.	SZC	Closed
25/09/2024	3	Ensure collaboration between different working groups and organisations (with reporting back into working groups and the ERG).	SZC	Closed
25/09/2024	4	The Chamber, ESC, SCC, and SZC to develop thinking for the Supply Chain Skills Programme before next meeting	ESC, SCC, SZC, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce	Next meeting
25/09/2024	5	Review the decisions that will need to be made in 2025 and schedule ERG meetings accordingly. Ensure the next ESEWG meeting is scheduled in advance of the next ERG one.	SZC	Closed

- Action 1: closed. The Supply Chain Working Group determined that a data sharing agreement is unnecessary. They plan to revisit the discussion once they establish a routine for sharing data.
- Action 2: closed. Individual working groups are tasked with maintaining a risk register and including it in their regular reports to this forum. The group agrees to this.

Action – Individual working groups to maintain a risk register and include it in their regular reports to the Economic Review Group.

- Action 3: closed. Emphasis that collaboration is crucial and needs to be key focus for this group. SZC is taking a strategic approach to assess the groups' performances and ensure communication of any issues across groups.
- Action 4: ongoing. A timeline for the development of the Supply Chain Skills Programme needs to be established, with an update to be provided before the next ERG session to clarify the next steps for advancing the programme.

Action – SCWG to provide a timeline for the Supply Chain Skills Programme, and provide an update at the next ERG session regarding how the programme will be advanced.

- Action 5: closed. covered in this meeting

Updates from Working Groups

Employment, Skills and Education Working Group

- The latest ESEWG meeting was held on January 15th
- The ASEC fund was soft-launched in January, covering phases 1 and 2. Stage 1 project proposals are being welcomed, with high interest expected. The soft launch aims to manage expectations and demand for funding.

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- The first thematic group, the Employment Outreach Group, has been launched to identify employment outreach needs and inform the associated fund.
- A comprehensive ASEC process is being developed, with the goal of having applications ready for review by the next ERG meeting.
- A key activity starting in January is to establish a quarterly monitoring process for ASEC, including defining KPIs and expected outcomes.
- Discussions are ongoing regarding the metrics for monitoring skills funds and their socio-economic impacts, with the decisions to be made before March. Clearer insights expected by the next ERG meeting.
- RB inquired about the development of these metrics. JC stated that some metrics are specified in the DOO, while others will be embedded into the monitoring process. JC also emphasised the importance of distinguishing between monitoring related to assessing the ASIP and what is specified, and a broader socio-economic monitoring discussion, which while potentially linked, requires separate consideration.
- JR noted that the ASIP includes an annex outlining early outputs for each skills fund, which can be shared with the group.
- MB emphasised the need for visibility on various funds for the March Community Forum and requested that this serve as a milestone for the group to share data
- JC highlighted that the priority as of January is mobilising thematic groups and skills funds, with ongoing discussions about their structure and purpose, as well as the second stage launch for the ASEC which is planned for February
- ESEWG is working on college proposals and conducting curriculum planning sessions with Suffolk colleges to align with regional needs, which will lead into the full application
- Employment Outreach Fund: Procurement arrangements are being finalised for launch this quarter, linked to the thematic group, which will identify needs and challenges in the employment outreach environment.
- Bursary Fund: Ongoing collaboration with colleges aims to finalise program plans. SCC will retain a portion of the bursary, focusing on ensuring progress toward fund distribution this quarter.
- The ESEWG adopted a principles and protocols document for the Regional Skills Coordination Function (RSCF), clarifying its purpose and roles to enhance operational confidence. This document serves as a reference for organisations to address any issues.
- A Skills Charter collaboration document was signed with CITB, ECITB, SCC, and ESC. While not part of formal DCO governance, it aligns with ESEWG objectives and provides access to additional capital and revenue support for outreach efforts.

Supply Chain Working Group

- In the latest meeting, the Supply Chain Working Group (SCWG) agreed on the information that SZC will provide as the project matures, including the establishment of reporting processes and refining their role with the Chamber of Commerce. Currently in the procurement stage, the focus is on ensuring regional and local businesses have access to the project's supply chain by equipping them with the necessary skills and accreditations for upcoming procurement opportunities. The group had discussed timelines, data outputs, and the data being collected by councils, as well as other related projects.

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- The meeting served as a direction-setting session, aiming to establish KPIs to measure effectiveness and ensure alignment in collaborative efforts over the coming months.
- Jacksons, a local Suffolk firm, was highlighted as a success story for being awarded a major roads contract, marking one of the first significant offsite projects awarded to a local provider. This announcement coincided with SZC's commitment to invest in local and regional initiatives, emphasising their intent to continue this investment moving forward.
- By late February and March, the group anticipates increased activity and the ability to leverage information to drive their initiatives.
- SC highlighted the priority for the SCWG to establish effective information flows, focusing on identifying the necessary data, measurement methods, and actions. He emphasised the importance of how the councils can implement their policies and resources to support local businesses effectively.
- It was highlighted that SZC has been reviewing the end-to-end procurement process, aiming to define criteria for "ready," "almost ready," and "not ready" statuses. They have been collaborating with the Chamber of Commerce for assessment and assurance. Feedback from the supply chain has led to a reduction in the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) to 90 questions, with 20 essential questions that companies must meet to enter SZC's supply chain. In their latest meeting, the SCWG had discussed how these questions will inform readiness definitions and how the Chamber will assist with post-assessment support for businesses.
- JR asked if there was increased interest from outside the region in engaging with the supply chain. It was confirmed that there is significant interest, and SZC is focused on ensuring that spending aligns with MOU areas through the procurement process.
- ASM confirmed that UK companies are establishing themselves in East Suffolk, maintaining positive local engagement. He also highlighted that the Chamber seeks improved reporting data, expressing satisfaction with the current level of local business involvement but emphasising the need for more comprehensive reporting.
- PW noted that they have been enhancing the collection of tier 1 supply chain data. A sustainability tool is being developed to track spending and data collection from tier 1 suppliers, set to launch in phase 2 for all contractors on site, which will provide richer data insights.
- MB reiterated the commitment to awarding a significant portion of contracts to UK suppliers, with a strong focus on Suffolk and the East of England. SZC aims to share more data on their activities in Suffolk.
- SC highlighted that, the ongoing and scheduled improvements to the CompeteFor website, and increased supply chain engagement activities by the Suffolk Chamber should be recognised and welcomed; particularly as businesses have demonstrated a strong demand for information flows through their participation on the Supply Chain Webinar Programme (approximately 400 regular participants).
- PW emphasised that the sustainability tool will facilitate quarterly reporting, supported by an assurance process, enabling the effective use of collected data moving forward.

Tourism Working Group

- The implementation plan for the Tourism Fund was approved in July 2024, with agreement on eight foundational project areas focused on establishing new data sources and monitoring systems as outlined in the DOO.

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- A new sentiment tracker is being populated with data to gauge public perceptions of the area.
- New photography and video assets have been commissioned for long-term sharing with the industry. A digital asset management system has been procured to facilitate easy access to these assets, which will be promoted to the industry.
- A seasonal extension campaign has been launched, concluding at the end of January. Final figures will be available shortly, marking the first report on the project's impact, helping inform future investments and marketing strategies.
- The procurement of long-term perception studies is underway, and an online survey is being developed to measure feedback over time.
- Successful engagement workshops with industry stakeholders have been conducted, providing valuable insights that will help shape the direction for 2025.
- Working groups are advancing the proposed approach for 2025 spending, including addressing any underspend from 2024.
- Recruitment is underway for a position identified in the DOO, which will focus on engagement and promoting the program. This role will incorporate more visual projects.
- The funding landscape is complex and must be carefully navigated to avoid duplication.
- Monitoring KPIs and establishing effective tracking mechanisms is crucial, as benchmarking and performance evaluation need to be agreed upon.
- Progress on the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) with Visit Britain and Visit England includes formal accreditation and the development of a destination management plan. They will be attending upcoming events, providing an opportunity to contribute to the national approach and identify further opportunities.

Business Support Fund Applications

- SC reported that a business support and impact study has been commissioned to inform development of business support services and grant funding, set for implementation in the second half of 2025
- A Manchester-based consultancy has been engaged to assist with this initiative, starting in November 2024, and expected to complete by May 2025. They are currently developing business engagement tools following an initial scoping exercise with various organisations in East Suffolk and beyond.
- Engagement activities are planned for February and March, aiming to identify local impacts, challenges, and opportunities for businesses. Recommendations for the business support framework will be formulated, ensuring alignment with the supply chain skills program to avoid duplication and address gaps.
- The engagement exercise will focus on supply chain sector groups while also addressing businesses outside the direct supply chain that may be impacted by displacement issues. Anecdotal evidence indicates that displacement is a common concern, and its implications will be clarified in the upcoming months, along with a comprehensive update on the business support service and fund usage.
- At the next ERG meeting, SC will provide an update to clarify the scope of business support funding application requests. The ERG should establish clear expectations for the applications they will receive.

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Action - Group to collaborate with SC before the next ERG meeting to ensure alignment on the scope of business support funding requests and the expectations for the applications. SC to propose a plan for moving these applications forward during this meeting.

- MB emphasised the importance of understanding the support available for businesses impacted by the project, particularly those facing displacement. She requested a briefing before the next community forum in March to address these concerns, highlighting that SZC has established structures and processes to support these businesses.

Key Risks, Issues and Opportunities

- The group agreed to maintain a key risk log within the working groups.
- The group discussed the need for SZC to promote what they are doing more clearly to enhance engagement and minimise impacts on the local area. This could involve creating briefs from working group sessions that summarise discussions and report what DCO funding is being spent on. This information could then be shared with the broader project and beyond.

Action – RB to investigate how SZC can enhance and promote more regular information flows from working groups, including key updates and news, to be shared with the broader project (i.e. briefs from working group sessions summarising their discussions).

- AC raised the delay in the workforce survey being shared. RC explained that the report was delayed due to needing to refine some questions for better alignment with the DOO, however, in the meantime verbal briefings can be provided to the working groups.
- RC mentioned that discussions are underway to reschedule the surveys for a more suitable time of year. SZC is currently in talks with councils to combine two workforce surveys in April.

Action – MB to share a one-page infographic on the workforce survey with the group.

Learning / issues to pass to the Social Review Group

- The group emphasised the importance of conducting workforce surveys and the need for SZC to clearly disseminate information flows from working groups to the community.

Key dates, deliverables and 2025 planning

- The revised ASIP will need to be approved later this year. It is essential to ensure that ERG meetings are scheduled appropriately to facilitate this approval.
- SC suggested including the business support service and grants as agenda items for the ERG. He will circulate a proposal before the next meeting outlining how to advance the business support fund.

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- MH emphasised the importance of keeping all members informed about their responsibilities over the next 12 months. It is crucial to provide sufficient lead time for members to prepare the information ahead of meetings
- JC noted that the ASIP operates on a September-to-September timeframe, with a key focus on evaluating the effectiveness of education, employment, and skills measures as funds are mobilised. This assessment will inform the next ASIP and may become a standing agenda item in ESEWG updates. RC added that a similar approach should be taken for tourism, emphasising the need for updates on current progress to guide funding decisions effectively.
- JC stated that the ESEWG should produce a quarterly review report to ensure that dates and timeframes are aligned. This report can be shared in advance of ERG meetings and discussed as an agenda item in the ESWG.
- SC added that the SCWG will also need to submit reports and updates in good time, prior to each ERG meeting.
- It was agreed that reports and updates will be submitted in advance of the next meeting and on an ongoing basis. These will include status updates on progress against agreed KPIs and monitoring requirements. The group agreed to share information at least two weeks before meetings, with a minimum of one week's notice.

Decision – Working groups are to submit updates on their progress against KPIs and monitoring requirements prior to each ERG meeting. This information should be shared at least two weeks in advance of these meetings.

- Regarding the format, SZC will circulate a template that pre-populates the standard reporting format for the groups. RC will look into this.

Action – SZC to design and circulate a template to assist working groups in preparing their monitoring and reporting updates ahead of ERG meetings.

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Actions raised during the meeting:

Date Raised	Ref.	Description	Lead	Date Due
29/01/2025	1	Individual working groups to maintain a risk register and include it in their regular reports to the Economic Review Group.	Working Groups	30/04/2025
29/01/2025	2	SCWG to provide a timeline for the Supply Chain Skills Programme, and provide an update at the next ERG session regarding how the programme will be advanced.	SCWG	30/04/2025
29/01/2025	3	Group to collaborate with SC before the next ERG meeting to ensure alignment on the scope of business support funding requests and the expectations for the applications. SC to propose a plan for moving these applications forward during this meeting.	ERG	30/04/2025
29/01/2025	4	RB to investigate how SZC can enhance and promote more regular information flows from working groups, including key updates and news, to be shared with the broader project (i.e. briefs from working group sessions summarising their discussions).	SZC	30/04/2025
29/01/2025	5	MB to share a one-page infographic on the workforce survey with the group.	SZC	30/04/2025
29/01/2025	6	SZC to design and circulate a template to assist working groups in preparing their monitoring and reporting updates ahead of ERG meetings.	SZC	30/04/2025

Author: Caitlin Murphy (SZC)