

101527146

Revision 01

ECONOMIC REVIEW GROUP

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Meeting:	30 April 2025, 10:00-12:00
Location:	MS Teams
Chair:	Richard Bull (SZC)
Attendees:	SZC – Richard Bull (RB), Jen Mills (JM) – Obs, Mike Humphrey (MH) – Obs, Audrey Lerigo (AL) – Obs, Paul Warmington (PW) – Obs, Guy Hazlehurst (GH) – Obs ESC – Alexis Corless (AC), Simon Charlesworth (SC) – Obs, Joss Mullett (JM) – Obs SCC – Jai Raithatha (JR), Michael Gray (MG) – Obs Suffolk Chamber of Commerce – Ashley Shorey-Mills (ASM) – Obs
Apologies:	

Actions raised during the previous 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	Closed
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	Ongoing
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	Ongoing
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	Closed
29/01/2025	5	MB to share a one-page infographic on the workforce survey with the group.	SZC	Closed

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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	Closed
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Actions from previous meeting:

- Action 1: to be standing item in reports going forward. Closed.
- Action 2: ongoing.
- Action 3: ongoing.
- Action 4: closed.
- Action 5: closed.
- Action 6: closed.

SZC Project Update:

- Main construction site is progressing well.
- The short-term focus is advancing the SSSI crossing, with site clearance and archaeology completed in the Temporary Construction Area.
- Significant piling work has been done and preparations for Temporary Sea Defence are underway.
- Key focus is rapid advancement of offline infrastructure, including Park and Ride sites and major road schemes.
- Site preparation for major roads is ongoing, with compounds established and ecological clearance completed; archaeological work is in progress.
- Ready to start Yoxford roundabout construction pending technical approval from SCC and finalising the legal agreement.

ESC Update:

- Philip Ridley's replacement is set to begin on May 7th.
- A new Energy Projects Manager has been appointed.
- Recruitment for the PMO position is currently in progress.
- Efforts are underway to recruit a new Programme Officer.

Update from Working Groups:

Tourism Working Group

- The 2025 implementation plan was approved by the working group in March.

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- 2024 projects:
 - Two projects are completed, with end-of-contract reports and a sentiment tracker in place. Remaining projects will continue into 2025 as needed.
 - A photography commissioning system will launch at the Suffolk Coast DMO conference on May 13th to enhance program visibility.
 - A perception study has been contracted and will start in the first week of May
- 2025 programme:
 - The programme includes five initiatives with 19 project areas identified through industry engagement, covering marketing PR, destination development, grant schemes, sector development, and industry coordination.
 - The scope ranges from individual projects to national marketing campaigns and collective efforts, including a grant scheme. The first tranche is expected to launch in the coming weeks, focusing on enhancing existing events in East Suffolk and targeting new visitors.
 - Projects will collaborate with other workstreams across SZC, including pilot and feasibility projects, with initial budgets allocated to gather evidence to support future activities.
- Data:
 - A budget has been approved to develop an essentialised platform for consolidating tourism data, enabling effective reporting and monitoring. This contract will include quarterly updates and a detailed annual report.
 - Discussions are underway for a regional approach across Suffolk and Norfolk. Partners are being engaged to determine the best strategy, and a tender document is being finalised.
 - By the next ERG meeting, detailed benchmarking data for monitoring and reporting requirements is anticipated.
- What's going well:
 - The working group has established strong relationships and is collaborating effectively.
- Concerns:
 - None raised
- What happens next:
 - Focus is on increasing program visibility and ensuring strong communication about upcoming activities and grant applications. A free membership initiative through the DMO will enhance industry representation and information dissemination. Collaboration with LVEP is also underway to align the two organisations.
- Questions from group:
- Key issues at the forums include ongoing concerns about tourism. RB stated that benchmarking data will help address these issues by identifying problems and enabling more informed discussions. Understanding the national versus regional impacts on tourism is crucial. Data will reveal trends, audience motivations, and demographics, informing future strategies and

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countering anecdotal concerns. A strong regional approach will aid effectively addressing forum questions.

- Regarding 2025 projects, AC clarified that the intention is that funding for businesses to do studies will be done through standard ESC procurement processes, but that there are still conversations to be had around how to develop and promote this on a local basis.
- RB raised a point regarding public rights of way, noting that the SZC Public Rights of Way Fund will create significant additional pathways along key tourism routes. RB emphasised that these enhancements are linked to tourism, presenting an opportunity to collaborate with the Rights of Way Working Group to help establish a meaningful legacy in the area.

Employment, Skills and Education Working Group:

- What's going well:
 - ASEC fund:
 - The fund has been successfully launched, attracting significant interest and positive engagement. Productive discussions have centred on the potential to catalyse collaboration across emerging ideas.
 - ASEC investments:
 - In-depth discussions are required within ESEWG to clarify the allocation process for ASEC investments.
 - Regional skills coordination function:
 - There is substantial coordination to be done, but clarity has been established at the ESEWG level regarding what is being coordinated.
 - Employment outreach:
 - This thematic group is already established and operational. Discussions have highlighted the goal of helping individuals facing barriers to enter the labour market and benefit from project opportunities.
 - This group will facilitate the allocation of funding to enhance work readiness, with discussions paving the way for drafting a specification, which will be through a grant allocation route.
 - Linking work from employment outreach group to wider contextual work.
 - To ensure ESEWG's measures are integrated, connecting with the broader skills system is important. Progress is being made with the "Get Suffolk Working" initiative, and potential government funding for boot camps will extend existing contracts and explore new offerings. This competitive procurement process encourages high-quality bids that align with the ASIP.
 - Bursary:

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- Bursaries are being allocated to young people and other age groups interested in employment outreach and ASEC projects, aligned with existing bursary funds. MOUs with colleges ensure that funding will start flowing to beneficiaries by the next academic year.
 - Provider/college engagement:
 - Engagement with providers and colleges has improved significantly. The curriculum planning group has involved key individuals to advance discussions on the local skills system's contributions, successfully introducing various perspectives for future consideration.
 - Annual cycle of work:
 - The annual cycle of work was confirmed at the last ESEWG meeting, establishing a clearer momentum for conducting quarterly reviews of the ASIP.
- Concerns:
 - Despite positive engagement with the ASEC fund, there have not been firm expressions of interest from providers. They continue to face risks due to changes in the skills landscape and the broader context.
- Outreach:
 - It is essential to balance input from thematic groups while also understanding funding allocation, identifying gaps, and enhancing the system.
 - There is a need for greater awareness of the various SZC funding streams. Clarifying the role of this group and all stakeholders is crucial to ensure clarity across all funding pots (for communities, businesses, and individuals) and to promote effective collaboration.
- Devolution:
 - There is a need for clarity regarding long-term responsibilities.
- Data position:
 - Greater clarity is required on the various data requirements, how they will integrate, and how this data will be utilised at the ESEWG level.
- Keeping public information updated:
 - The group needs to determine how to incorporate details from quarterly reviews and explain the rationale for any deviations from the initial ASIP.
- What happens next:
 - Annual cycle:
 - The annual process of reviewing and refining the ASIP for the upcoming year along with the Regional Skills Needs Assessment is set to commence. Both will be presented at the next ERG meeting. Additionally, opportunities for enhancement have been identified.
 - ASEC Fund:

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- There is a need to clarify how EoIs should be triggered and to adopt a more disciplined approach in soliciting EoI submissions. This will provide a clearer pipeline of potential ideas going forward.
- Employment Outreach:
 - Fund specification details will be drafted and released by the end of June, with allocations reviewed by ESEWG prior to approval at the next ERG meeting. Ideas for the outreach fund allocation are expected to be presented for approval.
- Bursary:
 - Finalisation of the bursary allocations is underway and will soon be made available.
- Workshop on data:
 - Has been agreed upon at both the skills and ESEWG levels, but further coordination is needed with broader discussions surrounding data.
- Wider understanding of other infrastructure projects:
 - It has been frequently noted at ESEWG that there is limited understanding of various infrastructure projects and developments. Efforts will be made to enhance this understanding and coordinate with different parties involved in this area.
- Risk register:
 - The risk register will be finalised and agreed upon prior to the next ERG meeting.
- Comments from group:
- RB inquired about accessing detailed information on all available funds, including what has been paid and spent, the strategy for the next 12 months, and key challenges anticipated. MG noted that future quarterly review cycle information could be shared with the group. MG will also consider what the ASIP provides for the group and identify any gaps that the ERG needs to understand. Additionally, MG mentioned that with the launch of ASEC, there is now a website with public-facing information outlining the purpose of the funds.

Action – MG to consider what the ASIP provides for the ERG and identify any gaps that they need to understand

- GH highlighted the need to encourage participation in EoIs and ensure comprehensive coverage across all geographic areas and subjects. ASM emphasised the importance of supply chain input in skills initiatives and noted that ASEC has not been adequately publicised. He suggested that more conversations with businesses about available opportunities could help identify priorities and facilitate EoIs from relevant sectors.

Supply Chain Working Group

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- Supply Chain Work Plan:
 - To maximise outputs, SZC has been redefining and simplifying the procurement process. This effort aims to enhance the overall output that will feed into the Work Plan.
 - The minimum standards have been redefined by condensing the PQQ. This information is being used to establish appropriate minimum standards for SZC, helping to clarify definitions of "almost ready," "ready," and "not ready" as outlined in the DoO.
 - Inputs for the Work Plan are being created, with completion expected soon, allowing for collaborative efforts with ESEWG where overlaps occur.
 - The quarterly supply chain opportunity pipeline is continuously updated on Compete For, awarding contracts and outlining forthcoming opportunities. There are plans to extend this beyond the current quarter as the information and master contract list become more settled.
 - Supporting this, the first Social Value Delivery Plan has been initiated, requesting alliances to provide a 24-month procurement forecast along with an engagement plan.
 - Supply chain monitoring: SZC has launched a digital reporting tool for supply chain monitoring, developed with Action Sustainability. This tool will allow contractors to report necessary data, with a phased rollout planned for all onsite contractors.
 - The first quarterly report is undergoing the SZC assurance process and will be shared once finalised, using data to inform minimum standards and readiness definitions while leveraging the Chamber's database for accurate information.
- What's going well:
 - The working group is meeting frequently, improving collaboration and information sharing for future planning.
 - The Suffolk Economic Strategy has been launched, providing valuable insights for their own planning efforts. A business support study is also scheduled for publication in May.
 - SC noted that as information continues to flow, the SCWG are well-positioned to begin planning upcoming activities.

Business Support Fund update:

- SC indicated that the fund will be informed by the findings of the upcoming Business Support Study, which will provide clear direction on the business support services likely to be commissioned. It will also clarify whether the Business Support Fund will be integrated into these services or if grant funding will operate independently to address other issues.
- Key developments are expected soon, including the study's publication and the formation of a working group to define the procurement process and business support services. A clear application process for the fund is anticipated within the next three months.
- At the next ERG meeting, they will report on grant funding, the businesses they plan to engage, how the funding will be distributed, and the benefits it will provide.

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ERG reporting requirements

- The ERG has been tasked to report on the number of apprenticeships and work starts for local residents.

Action – SZC to determine how the number of apprenticeships and work starts for local residents are reported, and whether this should be included in the ERG ToR.

Learning or issues to pass to the Social Review Group

- None

Escalating matters to pass to the Delivery Steering Group

- None

AOB

- GH suggested that the data workshop on forecasting and reporting should include a broader audience from across the ERG, not just ESEWG
- GH mentions data workshop (which is about forecasting and reporting). Do they need broader audience for that particular data workshop across ERG rather than just ESEWG? MG agrees
- PW proposed a wider meeting to review all data sources from the working groups, particularly regarding apprenticeship reporting, to identify relevant information for publication.
- RB emphasised the importance of gathering information from project forums on key impacts and job benefits. He noted that consolidating this information in one accessible space and reporting it to the public would be beneficial.

Action – SZC to clarify how information from project forums (i.e. regarding key impacts and job benefits) should be consolidated and reported to the public

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29/01/2025	2	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	30/07/2025
30/04/2025	3	MG to consider what the ASIP provides for the ERG and identify any gaps that they need to understand	ESEWG	30/07/2025
30/04/2025	4	SZC to determine how the number of apprenticeships and work starts for local residents are reported, and whether this should be included in the ERG ToR.	SZC	30/07/2025
30/04/2025	5	SZC to clarify how information from project forums (i.e. regarding key impacts and job benefits) should be consolidated and reported to the public	SZC	30/07/2025

Author: Caitlin Murphy (SZC)