

Lowestoft Place Board

Friday 5 December 2025, 10:00- 12:00

East Suffolk Council, Riverside Offices, G02 | In person

**THINK
LOWESTOFT**

Attendees	Apologies
<p>Stephen Javes – Chair</p> <p>Clare Varela – CEFAS</p> <p>Cllr Caroline Topping – East Suffolk Council</p> <p>Jess Asato – MP for Lowestoft</p> <p>Cllr Nasima Begum - Lowestoft Town Council</p> <p>Cllr Peter Byatt – East Suffolk Council</p> <p>Danny Steel – Lowestoft Vision</p> <p>Genevieve Christie – First Light Festival</p> <p>Jess Asato – MP for Lowestoft</p>	<p>Emma Ratzer – Access Community Trust (Deputy Chair)</p> <p>Cllr Richard Smith – Suffolk County Council</p> <p>Matthew Waters - Lowestoft & Waveney Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Paul Ager – Associated British Ports</p> <p>Paul Padda – East Coast College</p> <p>Rachel Hunt - Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board</p>
Attendees (Officers)	Apologies (Officers)
<p>Andrew Cook – Suffolk County Council</p> <p>Kate Ellis – East Suffolk Council</p> <p>Paul Wood – East Suffolk Council</p> <p>Sarah Foote – Lowestoft Town Council</p>	<p>Michelle Burdett - East Suffolk Council</p> <p>Mike Todman - Cities and Local Growth Unit, HM Government</p> <p>Naomi Smith - Cities & Local Growth Unit</p>

	Description
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome & Introductions - Chair Declarations of interest – none declared Approval of notes from previous meeting – approved <p>Actions from last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place Board members to return their profiles to Kate to ensure we meet MHCLG’s funding and audit terms – still waiting for these from some members who have been emailed separately. ESC are already actively seeking to change the hoardings and will report back on the changes to be made at the November board meeting – existing hoardings have been addressed and going forward will no longer feature timeframes. Paul W advised he would investigate the procurement route regarding bringing forward the Station Quarter as a private enterprise and report back to the Place Board. ESC are happy to share the work we have undertaken to date, but still need to arrange meeting with Network Rail. Retain on actions list. ESC to ask for the contractor to address the weeds at the Post Office - completed Paul W to speak to Kerry regarding the maintenance and vehicle issues and prioritise street cleaning. Pressure washer is now back in action. The cleansing team is addressing kittiwake faeces daily, and a street cleaner is present on London Road South five days per week. A site visit is planned, with the deputy operations manager attending to identify priority areas and consider increasing cleaning if required. <p>Jess raised concerns about deep cleaning, which currently only happens once a year. Issues such as weeds and moss are not being addressed. Street furniture and buildings have graffiti, which is also not covered by current street cleansing. Stephen, Jess, LTC, ESC, and Lowestoft Vision may arrange a round table with East Suffolk Council to discuss these matters.</p> <p>Danny noted that stickers are a problem, classified as fly posting. Additionally, shopfronts</p>

	<p>look tired, and empty shops are an issue. There is a company in Kirkley that could support shop dressing, and this is to be arranged for the new year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul W to include social value requests in future presentations to the Place Board . Completed Kate and Paul W to develop a draft action plan based on the workshop results and identify who will lead on the actions. This will also include existing activity that is ongoing against the agreed priorities – completed Updates on Lowestoft Place Board Delivery Plan – follow up on actions at future Place Boards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ness Point being transferred back to ESC – LTC will repair the Euroscope 1&3 Lowestoft Vision will take ownership New Ambassador Programme Working Group to be established <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kate to arrange a subgroup meeting – completed and update to be provided during meeting Pledge – make it a little more brief Place Board agreed to be lead ambassadors. Ambassador programme to be a standing item on the agenda – this should include Comms Mayoral update – elections delayed until 2028. The Government has confirmed that inaugural mayoral elections for new combined authorities, including Norfolk & Suffolk, will now take place in May 2028, rather than 2026. The delay is intended to ensure that robust unitary local government structures are in place before mayors assume office, as required by MHCLG assessments. Ministers argue that rushing this process would undermine the effectiveness of devolution and local governance. <p>This postponement affects Norfolk & Suffolk, Greater Essex, Sussex & Brighton, and Hampshire & the Solent. In the meantime, combined authorities will continue planning and investment strategies, supported by significant devolved funding announced in the Budget—including a £200 million annual regeneration fund. Access to these funds depends on completing reorganisation and establishing strategic authorities. There is no update on county elections at this stage.</p>
2	<p>Lowestoft Regeneration Programme update</p> <p>East Suffolk Council led projects – Paul Wood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul presented the Towns Fund project progress to the board and will provide the presentation regarding social value and project updates to the Board. Seafront Vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fountains at Royal Plain now completed (and switched off for the winter), Royal Green also completed and open to the public. Social Value: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One full-time local trainee engaged on site for three months. Former Millennium Oak Beacon donated to PJ Spillings for reuse in joinery workshop. 489 paving slabs donated to 2nd Carlton Colville Scout Group for reuse. 121 m³ of clean brick rubble from Royal Green repurposed at South Quay Wharf to raise ground levels. Jess advised that we need to do a press statement about the trees as there are a lot of negative comments about the trees that have died. This was echoed by a number of Board members. The Board asked for information boards to be installed regarding Royal Green and Royal Plain explaining the revamp – this needs to be led by Comms Cultural Quarter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking to be back on site second half of 2026

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Site Progress Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closing in of roof to Gault Building is in progress. ▪ Steel beam installation to Gault Building is in progress. ○ Completed Works <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Steel frame completed and flooring slab laid. ▪ Test room decorated for discussion with wider project team. ○ Paul to ask where the £638 donation from the steel signing will be allocated – post meeting update: this was allocated to the Lowestoft Men’s Shed ● Jubilee Parade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Glazing installation completed. ○ External brickwork and glazed brickwork in progress. ○ First-floor restaurant space interior works underway. ○ Lift shaft progressing ahead of zinc cladding. ● Port Gateway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ South Quay Wharf Pocket Park with new planters and benches ○ Turning head area created on Pier Terrace, with experimental traffic regulation order in place <p>Lowestoft Town Council led projects – Sarah Foote</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Town Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Slight delay on build, but LTC anticipate moving winter 2026/27 ○ 1 apprentice, recruited a town hall manager (starting March 2026) ○ Construction contract nearly £3m in Suffolk and £1m spent in Lowestoft. ○ Public works loan now drawn down ○ Barnes have been awarded 100% as a considerate constructor – no complaints from neighbours to date ● Marina Theatre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marina Theatre reopened in October ○ Project completion not finalised yet due to snagging issues. <p>The Board advised that the social value needs to be part of the comms plan and needs to be shared wider than socials. It was suggested that this is included on boards where projects are taking place, and particularly project information on Royal Plaina and Royal Green.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure social value messaging is integrated into the communications plan and displayed beyond social media. Include social value information on physical boards at project sites, particularly at Royal Green and Royal Plain. ● Updates/newsletter to be shared with board regularly. Quarterly update in the Lowestoft Journal or newsletters through doors
3	<p>Pride in Place update – Paul Wood</p> <p>Lowestoft has secured £20 million over 10 years through the Government’s Pride in Place (PiP) programme. This funding will focus on revitalising the most deprived community/ area of the town with interventions which could include enhancement of the town centre and surrounding areas by tackling empty shops, enhancing public spaces, and supporting community facilities. Decisions will be community-led through a dedicated Neighbourhood Board, ensuring projects reflect what matters most to residents. It is a requirement that the Neighbourhood Board includes the local MP and at least one ward councillor. To note, East Suffolk Council will be the accountable body for the fund.</p> <p>Key points discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jess Asato advised that several MPs have attempted to bring forward the start dates for delivering against the fund. ● Significant community engagement will be required, delivered in innovative ways. ● Councils will have the opportunity to borrow against the funding.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Neighbourhood Board cannot serve as the Place Board; a robust Chair will be essential. • The Board will transition into a Community Interest Company (CIC). • Caroline noted that Marmot Place should be a standing agenda item, as it links to PiP. • Genevieve highlighted that the UK Town of Culture initiative could also connect to PiP. • Jess is meeting with Nick Khan to plan next steps, with the Place Board providing interim support. <p>Timeline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter 25/26: Data pack issued (metrics across objectives). • Spring 26: Capacity & capital funding issued. • Summer 26: Boards confirm membership & boundary proposals. • Autumn 26: MHCLG review proposals. • Winter 26/27: Boards submit Regeneration Plans. • Spring 27: MHCLG approval; first delivery funding released; delivery phase begins. <p>As the timeline suggests the Pride in Place programme is still at a very early stage of development and further updates will be provided to the Place Board as it develops. A link to the prospectus is available here: Pride in Place Programme prospectus - GOV.UK</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PiP updates to be provided between board meetings • Presentation to be circulated with Board outlining details
4	<p>Culture Workshop – Genevieve Christie / All</p> <p>1. Definition of Culture & Perception of Lowestoft</p> <p>The Board requested that the Lowestoft Cultural Strategy, originally created by the Lowestoft Cultural Leadership Group, be refreshed as the current strategy ends in 2025. In doing so, the Board acknowledged the importance of aligning with wider cultural frameworks, such as Arts Council England’s strategy “<i>Let’s Create</i>”, which sets out a 10-year vision (2020–2030) for transforming creativity and culture across England. Its core aim is that by 2030, England will be a country where everyone’s creativity is valued and given the chance to flourish, and every person has access to a wide range of high-quality cultural experiences.</p> <p>The Board noted that culture plays a vital role in Lowestoft’s regeneration, driving cultural tourism and supporting sustainability. Festivals, heritage events, and creative spaces attract visitors, boost the local economy, and strengthen Lowestoft’s identity as a destination. However, the Board also discussed perceptions of Lowestoft, noting that the town is often viewed as a cultural desert, which is not the case. There is a need to explore ways of showcasing existing cultural assets and improving visibility.</p> <p>2. Cultural Spaces</p> <p>Cultural projects can embed environmental responsibility through sustainable materials, outdoor spaces, and alignment with green initiatives. This approach reflects Lowestoft’s position on the Energy Coast, where creative industries complement clean energy and climate goals, creating benefits for people, place, and planet.</p> <p>Event spaces were highlighted as an important consideration. The Board agreed that improving the visibility of available venues for cultural activities is essential to support event planning and encourage community engagement.</p> <p>The Board also discussed momentum being lost around Heritage Open Days, an annual festival in which Lowestoft was, for several years, named as having the most events of any town or city in the UK. Lowestoft Town Council suggested that they would be happy to take this on, especially with their offices relocating to the Town Hall when it reopens, placing them in the heart of the historic High</p>

	<p>Street. The Board agreed to this suggestion and noted the need for volunteer recruitment and a dedicated coordinator.</p> <p>3. Partnerships and Innovation</p> <p>Business involvement was raised as a key opportunity. Birds Eye, which has recently been taken over, is keen to engage in community initiatives as part of its social value commitments and has already funded Pride. The Board also noted that there is currently no energy representative on the Board and requested a review of representation to address this gap.</p> <p>The Board highlighted the importance of considering culture as part of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), particularly given Lowestoft's position on the Energy Coast. This approach can strengthen skills pipelines and demonstrate how creative industries complement technology and energy sectors, supporting innovation and future workforce development.</p> <p>4. UK Town of Culture</p> <p>The Board discussed the UK Town of Culture competition, which is designed for small and medium-sized towns to celebrate and highlight their unique contribution to the national narrative. The winning town will receive £3.5 million to deliver a cultural programme in 2028, while shortlisted towns will receive £60,000 to develop full bids. The competition aims to celebrate local identity, drive regeneration, and create cultural opportunities that benefit the whole community. Applications will be judged on three main criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your Story – How well the town tells its unique story and identity. 2. Culture for Everyone – How the proposed cultural programme will be inclusive and accessible to all residents and communities. 3. Making It Happen – The strength of the delivery plan, including partnerships, resources, and ability to successfully implement the programme. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the reestablishment of the Cultural Leadership Group - led by East Suffolk Council and First Light Festival, with the intention that a new cultural delivery partner will assume responsibility for ongoing coordination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Re-establish the Cultural Leadership Group and ensure representation from key sectors, including energy. ○ Create a new Lowestoft Cultural Strategy (the existing strategy concluded 2025) to reflect a broader definition of culture, align with Arts Council England's <i>Let's Create</i> vision, and integrate STEAM principles. • Prepare for UK Town of Culture Bid – First Light Festival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Position Lowestoft as a strong contender for the 2028 programme by developing a compelling narrative, ensuring inclusivity, and creating a robust delivery plan ○ Use this opportunity to showcase cultural assets, drive regeneration, and attract investment. • Revitalise Local Cultural Engagement – Cultural Leadership Group and partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reinvigorate Heritage Open Days with Lowestoft Town Council taking the lead, supported by volunteer recruitment and a dedicated coordinator. ○ Improve visibility of cultural spaces and events ○ Engage businesses like Birds Eye and energy organisations in cultural initiatives to strengthen community and economic links.
5	<p>Forward Plan - Paul Wood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health workshop– 16 March 2026, Cefas • Pride in Place workshop – 26 May 2026, venue TBC
6	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caroline, as nominee for Combined Authority Mayor, is campaigning for culture to be a core Mayoral priority, ensuring it is embedded in future governance and investment strategies for Norfolk & Suffolk.

Decisions

- Lowestoft Heritage Open Days to be led by Lowestoft Town Council.
- Place Board agreed to act as lead ambassadors.
- Ambassador Programme to be a standing agenda item.
- Pride in Place to be a standing agenda item.
- Cultural Strategy to be refreshed and linked to civic and business engagement.
- First Light Festival to UK Town of Culture bid for 2028.

Actions:

- Profiles: Place Board members to return profiles to Kate (still outstanding).
- Station Quarter: Paul W to arrange meeting with Network Rail and Danny Steel, and report back.
- Street Cleaning: Paul W to liaise with Kerry Blair; site visit planned by ESSL.
- Round Table: Stephen, Jess, LTC, ESC, and Lowestoft Vision to discuss deep cleaning and graffiti with ESSL.
- Shop Dressing: Lowestoft Vision to explore funding options.
- Comms: Press statement on planting at Royal Green; explore info boards at Royal Green and Royal Plain – ESC.
- Donation: Paul W to confirm allocation of £638 steel signing donation (confirmed to Lowestoft Men's Shed).
- Social Value: Include in comms plan; share updates via newsletters and Lowestoft Journal – ESC/LTC.
- PiP Updates: Add as standing agenda item, provide between meetings; circulate presentation – ESC.
- Leadership Group: Re-establish Cultural Leadership Group; involve energy sector and businesses; explore long-term delivery partner – ESC/FLF.
- UK Town of Culture: Begin bid preparation – ESC/FLF; Cultural Leadership Group to take responsibility.
- Heritage Open Days: LTC to recruit volunteers and appoint coordinator.
- Cultural Spaces: ESC/FLF/Cultural Leadership Group to map venues and improve visibility.
- Business & Energy Engagement: ESC/FLF/Cultural Leadership Group to involve Birds Eye and energy organisations.
- Forward Plan: Confirm venues for upcoming meetings – Kate.