



Supporting Economic Growth in Norfolk in 2022

Introduction

Norfolk County Council is committed to making Norfolk a county where businesses, organisations and communities continue to thrive together.

Our [Better Together, For Norfolk](#) strategy sets out the Council's five, interlinked, priorities: a vibrant and sustainable economy; better opportunities for children and young people; healthy, fulfilling and independent lives; strong, engaged and inclusive communities; and a greener, more resilient future.

Over the past year, we have been helping businesses across Norfolk grow, develop and thrive. We have done this by allowing better access to services such as rolling out better broadband across Norfolk and building major infrastructure projects to deliver vital growth to the whole of Norfolk.

The report is split into three sections: Business, which talks about various investment and growth schemes across the county. Place, which deals with our investment in various infrastructure projects, and People which explains how we've invested in people getting the skills they need.

If you would like to find out more about any the initiatives in this briefing document or ask any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us on haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk.

Business

Norfolk Investment Framework

The County Council commissioned an 'investment framework' for the county in response to a number of factors:

- The Government's Levelling Up White Paper, which aims to:
 - boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector
 - spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest
- The desire create a step-change in the economic profile of the county, a direction set by the [Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy](#)

- The move away from EU funding to a new national financial framework, with more competition for funding, highlighting the need to clearly evidence our challenges, but also our scope to contribute to the national economy

Underpinning the Framework is a comprehensive evidence base about the county - its places, people and sectors.

Based on this detailed data and analysis, the Framework itself is a set of high-level investment priorities designed to tackle four 'grand challenges' that Norfolk faces:

- To create new opportunities for Norfolk's residents by increasing skills and labour market dynamism
- To provide effective and efficient public services to a spatially-dispersed population
- To strengthen and future-proof business clusters, to grow the economy
- To protect Norfolk's economic and natural assets from climate change

These four challenges are then broken down into 'thematic objectives' covering the period 2022-26, with specific 'example interventions' - so it's clear how delivery against each objective could be achieved, and what success might look like. Both the evidence base and the Framework have been consulted on widely with public, private and voluntary sector bodies and community groups

Following endorsement for the framework by Norfolk County Council's Cabinet this Summer, a number of workshops took place this Autumn, to introduce the Norfolk Investment Framework, to discuss the grand challenges and thematic objectives and to start to work with partners to design interventions to address grand challenges.

Further workshops will be held in 2023 to continue stakeholder engagement and to work together to develop medium-long term interventions to shift the dial in terms of Norfolk's pay, productivity, business growth and skills attainment; in addition to improvements in public services and to address barriers to work towards Net Zero.

The Interreg France (Channel) England programme, managed by Norfolk County Council, has funded 51 high quality projects aimed at delivering economic, environmental and social growth across the UK and France. The Programme has committed €218 million European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) to a wide range of projects, with several bringing specific benefits to people and businesses in Norfolk. This includes:

Flagship project **EXPERIENCE**, a €24m project led by Norfolk County Council, is developing unique experiences to extend the tourist season and bring new visitors and economic opportunities to Norfolk.

Multi-award winning **CobBauge** project, involving Norfolk firm Hudson Architects, has developed an innovative cob material and house prototype to promote a low carbon solution to housebuilding.

Go Trade, involving Great Yarmouth Town Centre Partnership, has helped to revive local markets, drawing on new technology such as Click and Collect to help boost the local economy and attract new visitors.

Intelligent Community Energy, which involves University of East Anglia, has designed and introduced smart energy solutions for isolated and vulnerable communities.

ReCon Soil, which involves University of East Anglia, has developed a new reconstructed soil sourced from construction waste and agricultural by-products, that brings new opportunities both commercially and for use in climate change mitigation schemes.

Innovation Grant Mentoring Project:

We have developed [The Innovation Grant Mentoring Project](#) to support Norfolk and Suffolk SME's to address the low take up in innovation funding which will increase awareness of innovation funding streams, and support businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk to develop their innovation proposals ready for innovation funding , coach business how to write innovation funding bids and inspire them to apply for innovation grants, for delivering innovative research and development ideas.

Support will be delivered through mentoring as well as coaching in bid writing and through a focused programme of workshops.

We have received 260 project registrations and 47 project applications and over 140 businesses have engaged in our innovation webinars

For more information or to register your interest please see the [website](#).

Go Digital:

The pandemic pushed many businesses to rethink their marketing strategies, use digital tools and do more online.

The Go Digital project offers bespoke digital advice for small to medium sized businesses and access to £500 in funding to increase digital capabilities.

The project has captured a lot of useful information about business needs, including:

Digital marketing – this has been the most popular area for advice (66%), followed by search engine optimisation, company websites and website analytics.

Female entrepreneurs have slightly outnumbered male applicants. Micro businesses have been the greatest beneficiaries (90.4%).

In terms of grant voucher spend, the greatest spend has been in professional services around website design/build/hosting - this accounts for a quarter of the spend to date - followed by computer hardware and accessories as the second most popular area

The project has been a huge success and is currently oversubscribed. Go Digital has supported nearly 1000 Norfolk business to date. The project has received funding support from Norfolk district councils and also FCE Channel England funding. The project hopes to continue with district council partnership in 2023/24.

For more information or to apply please visit the [website](#).

Experience:

[EXPERIENCE](#) is a €24m project led by Norfolk County Council, which has 14 partners across England and France and is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

The aim of the EXPERIENCE project is to boost sustainable, off-season (October to March) tourism in 6 regions across France and UK, with Norfolk as a pilot region. The project is working on supporting organisations to develop unique autumn and winter visitor 'experiences' authentic to the area to welcome people back when it is safe to do so and boost the year-round tourist economy. This will include free training and tools, such as support with adaptation and diversification, developing new experiences, and becoming more sustainable and accessible.

In Norfolk, to date we have delivered 4 workshops: 2 '*Tap into what visitors really want: an introduction to experiential tourism*' and 2 '*How to develop a visitor experience*' with 137 people/organisation attending. The training have been recorded and are available here: [Experience Norfolk – YouTube](#). We have also offered 34 one to one discussions to businesses supporting them developing their experience, and signpost them towards different organisations when required.

By 2023, the scheme aims to have:

- Attracted 20 million new visitors to the project area which covers the south and east coasts of England (from Cornwall to Norfolk) and the north coast of France.
- Generated €1 billion of extra spending
- Increased visitor spending by five percent in the off-season alone.

For more information about EXPERIENCE – please visit their website [here](#).

Low Carbon Innovation Fund 2:

Work continues on [The Low Carbon Innovation Fund 2](#) programme, developed with UEA, seeks to invest £11m in ventures in Norfolk, Suffolk Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire that make measurable reductions in greenhouse gases, with the creation of financial return and sustainability as the fund's primary objective.

Low Carbon Innovation Fund 1 (LCIF1) invested over £20m and helped close funding rounds worth £75m.

Business & IP Centre Norfolk

The Business & IP Centre Norfolk (BIPC Norfolk), managed by Norfolk Library & Information Service, has continued to support business start-up and recovery in the county.

BIPC Norfolk is part of the British Library Business & IP Centre National Network and supports people from the first spark of inspiration to successfully starting and developing a business. The centre offers free access to business information databases, business publications, events including one-to-ones, workshops and networking, plus guidance for protecting intellectual property.

From April 2021 to March 2022, over 700 attendees received free business support from the centre. 36% of these attendees were aspiring entrepreneurs seeking to start their own business and 27% were looking to grow an existing business. During the same period, BIPC Norfolk was successful at helping under-represented groups in business: 73% of start-ups assisted by the BIPC were led by female entrepreneurs; 20% by BAME entrepreneurs; and 23% of those helped had a disability.

Find out more about how BIPC Norfolk can support start-ups and existing businesses at www.norfolk.gov.uk/bipcnorfolk

The **Business Development team**, in partnership with the NCC Procurement team, North Norfolk District Council and the Norfolk Chambers of Commerce, **held a free public sector procurement** webinar in September, to prepare SMEs to access NCC and wider public sector supply chain opportunities. Presentations provided guidance on our tendering process, tips to write a tender, the importance of social value and our net zero target, and options for bidding. Local SMEs that have successfully won contracts also spoke and will hopefully inspire more Norfolk SMEs to explore public sector contract opportunities. Feedback from attendees was very positive, with the majority of attendees more confident to bid for public sector contract opportunities in the future.

Norfolk Trusted Trader

The Norfolk Trusted Trader scheme was set up in 2009 as part of Norfolk Trading Standards' campaign to support Norfolk businesses and safeguard consumers from pressure selling, especially by doorstep rogue traders.

Funding was granted by the Norfolk Strategic Fund in 2020 (for a 2 year project) in recognition of the support the Norfolk Trusted Trader scheme could provide the County's economic recovery during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. The funding has enabled us to promote the recruitment of new members and widen Norfolk Trusted Traders' reach across the county, especially in areas with lower member numbers and under-represented trade sectors, and trade sectors causing Norfolk residents the most detriment. Trusted Trader member businesses are supported by the Trusted Trader Team to develop their business through access to advice, training, and skills development. As they have undergone rigorous checks to be accredited their customers have confidence in them. Members are included in the

Norfolk Trusted Trader Directory – where Norfolk residents go to find trustworthy companies and can provide feedback which brings word of mouth recommendations to a wider audience, and they further benefit from promotion through the Trusted Trader website and social media platforms.

There are no restrictions on the types of businesses who can join the scheme. Services currently offered by our over 200 Trusted Traders include the full range of home improvement services, car sales and servicing, removals, estate agency, will writing and computing. You can apply to become a Trusted Trader or view the directory on our webpage <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/trustedtrader>

Fraud and Scam Prevention for Businesses

A scam is a dishonest scheme that aims to get money, or something else of value, such as personal data, from its victims. Many well-known scams are targeted at private individuals or consumers, but there is also a range of scams that target businesses. All sizes and types of businesses can be vulnerable to scams. The losses to individual traders range from a tens of pounds up to millions. Scams can destroy small businesses.

If a business understands its own vulnerabilities and can recognise a scam for what it is, it can reduce its risk of being caught out. Therefore, one of the initiatives set up by Norfolk Trading Standards to help protect Norfolk businesses is our “Business Scam Alerts”. Businesses who sign up to receive our weekly alerts are warned of the latest scams doing the rounds, and are given advice on the tell-tale signs to look out for to avoid being a victim, and what to do if you are caught by a scam.

About 2000 businesses are signed up to receive the Trading Standards Scam Alerts – you can sign up on our webpages [Business scam alerts - Norfolk County Council](#). In addition, in 2018 we formed the Norfolk Against Scams Partnership (NASP). NASP is a partnership of organisations committed to taking a stand against scams. The partnership’s ambition is to make Norfolk a scam free county. Membership is open to any organisation, service, business, charity or community group who can play a role in protecting the public, businesses or customers from scams and fraud. Norfolk County Council and partners including the Police, the Library Service, district councils, cyber security businesses, and New Anglia Growth Hub, work together on a subgroup specifically working to protect businesses from fraud and scams. The NASP has produced materials to warn and advise business and delivered events to raise awareness. Businesses interested in joining the partnership can apply via our website [Norfolk Against Scams Partnership \(NASP\) - Norfolk County Council](#)

Norfolk Knowledge Hub:

The Norfolk Knowledge Hub was one of the great outcomes of our Norfolk Strategic Fund, Norfolk County Council worked with the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce to develop a new free-to-view online business support and learning space to support local businesses recover and thrive. Link to the website: [Knowledge Hub - Norfolk Chamber of Commerce](#)

Place

Great Yarmouth Operation and Maintenance Campus:

Commissioned by Norfolk County Council, the £21.4 million Operations and Maintenance Campus is a partnership project, is a collaboration with Great Yarmouth Borough Council and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). It seeks to capitalise on the now well-established offshore renewables sector off the east coast and the Enterprise Zone that covers sites in Great Yarmouth.

The offshore energy sector provides Great Yarmouth and Norfolk with arguably the single most important economic opportunity for a generation. Oil and Gas have been a mainstay of the economy for over 50 years and the recent emergence of offshore renewables has presented Great Yarmouth's port, its supply chain, and its skills base with the chance of enjoying hugely significant growth and investment.

This project will help create a viable, highly attractive location for offshore energy businesses to operate in an optimum location, close to flexible port facilities, and with direct access to the sea.

Feasibility work has determined that 650 new jobs will be created by the new Operations & Maintenance campus. The project has been in development for a few years and is part funded by the Government's 'Getting Building Fund', following successful bid from Norfolk County Council.

Link to an explanatory video can be found [here](#):

Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing:

The Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing will link the A47 at Harfrey's roundabout to the port and the enterprise zone via South Denes Road on the other side of the River Yare. The bridge will ease traffic congestion on the town's roads, shortening journey times and improving journey reliability, as well as support wider plans and work to maximise investment, regeneration and economic growth opportunities in the town and wider borough.

Construction started in January 2021 and we're aiming to have the bridge operational and open to traffic by early 2023. More information about the Third River Crossing can be found [here](#).

Long Stratton Bypass:

Delivery of a bypass at Long Stratton is linked to the aims and objectives stated within the already adopted Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and the Long Stratton Area Action Plan (LSAAP). It is also a priority infrastructure project for Norfolk County Council and is considered key to supporting the delivery of much needed housing and employment growth within the area.

Approval of the council's Outline Business Case was approved by the Department for Transport in July 2021, along with a funding commitment of £26.2 million towards the cost of the building the new road, which will cut congestion and support the local economy for years to come.

The council is working in collaboration with developer Norfolk Homes Ltd/Norfolk Land Ltd to bring forward the long-awaited bypass. Revised planning applications from the developers have been submitted to South Norfolk District Council. Once validated, all plans will be made publicly available via the council's planning portal as part of a 12 week statutory planning consultation.

The target date for work to start on construction is late-2023, with the road open to traffic before mid-2025 subject to planning approval, procurement and completion of other necessary statutory approval processes.

Norwich Western Link

One of our top infrastructure priorities is the development of a Norwich Western Link, to connect the Broadland Northway, formerly known as the Northern Distributor Road (NDR), from the A1067 to the A47 west of Norwich. Since construction began on Broadland Northway there have been sustained calls to fill in the 'missing link'.

Norfolk County Council awarded the contract to design and build the Norwich Western Link to Ferrovial Construction, a leading construction and engineering company. Ferrovial Construction are working alongside the council's existing project team to further develop the design of the Norwich Western Link, including the new 3.8 mile dual carriageway road between the A47 and Broadland Northway and many of its associated measures.

An Outline Business Case was submitted to government in June 2021. A decision on this is awaited. Pre-planning application public consultation recently took place, which will inform the planning application due to be submitted in early 2023. Start of construction is currently programmed for late 2024 with the road open for use in late 2025.

More information on the Norwich Western Link can be found [here](#).

West Winch Housing Access Road

The West Winch Housing Access Road will serve the South East King's Lynn Growth Area (known locally as the West Winch Growth area) which will see up to 4,000 new homes built over the next 20 years.

The route connects the A10 to the A47 along a new 1.5-mile road. It will connect to the A47 via a new signalised roundabout and dedicated free-flow slip road. The scheme would see the dualling of the A47 between Hardwick and the new road. Changes will need to be made to the Hardwick Interchange to take into account the housing traffic and the rerouted A10.

The West Winch Housing Access Road will provide an alternative route around village of West Winch. This would result in a reduction in traffic through the village. This will allow the introduction of measures through the village to improve safety and living conditions for local residents.

Pre-planning application consultation is running from Monday 14 November 2022 to Sunday 8 January 2023. The views collected during this consultation will help to inform the details included in the planning application which will be submitted in 2023. We are also working on the Outline Business Case (OBC) which will be submitted to the Department for Transport next year.

More information on the West Winch Housing Access Road can be found [here](#)

Better Broadband for Norfolk

Historically Norfolk has been digitally disadvantaged due to its rural nature. In 2011 only 42% of properties had access to "superfast" broadband (above the government targets of 24Mbps). This coverage was heavily biased towards Norwich, Kings Lynn and Yarmouth.

Norfolk County Council signed its first BBfN (Better Broadband for Norfolk) contract in December 2012, based upon a competitive bid to central government. The County Council was successful, and its offer of £15m was matched by central government, and through this, superfast broadband coverage (24Mbps+) was increased to reach 84% of Norfolk properties. An extension project raised that figure to 95% of premises. A third contract, now underway, and which runs to December 2023, will potentially support almost 8500 additional premises to access superfast broadband. This will bring the total superfast broadband coverage to approximately 97% of Norfolk premises.

The project is now halfway to being completed. For more information on this project, including access to a postcode check to see if you are eligible for fast broadband, visit the NCC website: [Improving broadband for Norfolk - Norfolk County Council](#)

LFFN – Local Full Fibre Network

LFFN is government sponsored funding to install ultrafast (Gigabit) broadband across rural parts of the UK, by installing fibre into public buildings. This programme was successfully completed in March of 2022.

In November 2019 Norfolk County Council successfully bid and obtained £7m from the Department of Culture, Media and Sports, (DCMS) as it was then. Matched with Norfolk County Council's own funding, the funds delivered Gigabit capable broadband to 314 public buildings in rural Norfolk – including council offices, libraries, schools and fire stations.

As often happens, successful funding opens opportunities for further investment – and Norfolk County Council subsequently bid for and won a further £2m to extend the project to benefit further rural sites – 394 in total.

A primary aim of the project was to install gigabit capable infrastructure into rural Norfolk, into locations that are otherwise not commercially viable. To date we are aware that Openreach has exploited our investment into infrastructure to deliver full fibre broadband to an additional circa 4,000 premises.

If you'd like to view the LFFN coverage map, or ask us a question, please visit the project website: [Local Full Fibre Network - Norfolk County Council](#)

Project Gigabit

Project Gigabit is a government sponsored project to enable ultrafast broadband across England, aiming to focus on the 20% hardest to reach premises (effectively the most rural, least likely to be attractive to commercial operators).

Norfolk will be included in the first wave of counties to benefit from the scheme. We are planning that 86,200 premises are to benefit from the scheme, with an indicative budget of £114m

This project will rely heavily on local authorities to support delivery. The public review ended in September 2021, we are currently in the procurement phase and evaluating bids, with a contract expected to be awarded in March 2023. A complex and large project, this project to provide broadband to some of our hardest to reach properties should provide a digital lifeline to rural communities and businesses and increase Norfolk's interest to commercial operators, who, again, may be able to piggy back off publicly funded infrastructure to offer services to communities sitting alongside the fibre infrastructure.

For more information visit the County Council's webpage: [Project Gigabit - Norfolk County Council](#)

Gigabit Voucher Scheme

Central government launched a new scheme in April 2021. Grants of up to £3,500 are available to businesses, to support them to upgrade their broadband service to gigabit level. Grants of up to £1,500 are available to residential properties.

The scheme is supplier led. You can check our website to see if there are registered suppliers in your area. Businesses can boost their voucher value by joining together and pooling vouchers to encourage a supplier to provide a link to their business park or street, for example. To date over 1,000 vouchers have been applied for or issued, for a total voucher value of over £1.9m

For more information on the Norfolk situation review our website, which also provide links to the national voucher scheme. [Gigabit voucher scheme - Norfolk County Council](#)

Norfolk and Suffolk Innovation Network

Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils got together and successfully bid to the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership to jointly fund the Norfolk and Suffolk Innovation Network. This is the largest free to access, public sector owned LoRaWAN network in the UK. The two county councils are currently rolling out a network of Internet of Things (IoT) gateways, which will cover Norfolk and Suffolk.

This **Long Range Wide Area Network**, will allow small sensors to transmit tiny packets of data from the sensor location, via the network's gateways to a company or home address. There the data can be opened, displayed, and used. The data packets are tiny (you can't hold a conversation or send a graphical image) but these tiny packets of information are excellent for monitoring changes in status – such as the opening of a gate – tracking movement of vehicles – rising levels of water – falling levels of diesel – a person moving past. You could imagine their use in countering rural crime, or monitoring flood levels etc.

Norfolk County Council has invested in the network for a number of reasons.

- Local ICT companies have the potential to diversify, and write software or create new hardware products for the Innovation Network.
- Rural businesses might consider how they can use sensors to improve their business operations (whether to create new products; gaining new or additional data – for example on crop growth; better understanding customer movements through exhibitions; overcoming rural crime; offer a new service; improve efficiency in processes or buildings, etc).
- Norfolk County Council can itself make use of the network to improve efficiency and save costs.

The County Council's first use case, was to install temperature sensors on roads around Yarmouth. The County Council have historically used five temperature sensors based around Norfolk to gauge air temperatures during winter, and made the decision around when to grit the roads. The local sensor demonstrations in Yarmouth proved the sensors could accurately determine local variations in temperatures. If 8 gritting runs along one urban route could be saved during a year, this could amount to a £4k saving, not to mention environmental benefits.

More information can be found on the Norfolk and Suffolk Innovation Network via the website: [Norfolk & Suffolk Innovation Network Website](#) or via Norfolk County Council's webpage: [Internet of Things \(IoT\) in Norfolk - Norfolk County Council](#)

People

Apprenticeships:

Norfolk has had a full year where apprenticeship starts have increased – for the first time, following five years of decline.

Norfolk has seen a very pleasing 17.74% overall growth, with 5118 new apprenticeship starts throughout the year. This growth is compared to the same period in 2020/21, however 5118 is also more than in the same period in 2019/20 too!

Norfolk has seen over double the growth seen in the national England data (8.63%).

Starts for those aged 16-18 has seen 31.3% growth (over 10% higher than national figure of 19%).

Apprenticeships Norfolk have been delivering a number of initiatives, having secured £1.9m of external funding (since August 2020) to support the take-up of apprenticeships, particularly for SMEs and those aged 16-24 years of age. These include:

Recruit Retain Reward – a £1000 incentive for SMEs to recruit a new apprentice aged 16-24 - all 437 grants are now committed, final payments being made in December this year and January 2023.

Progression to Apprenticeships successfully supported 42 small to medium enterprises to progress Kickstarters onto a full apprenticeship. The pilot concludes in December 2022.

Access to Apprenticeships - £500 bursary grants for apprentices aged 16-24, to access financial support for travel expenses, tools/equipment and digital kit. Some 311 grants have been committed so far and the project concludes in March 2023.

Insight Apprenticeship – offers small to medium enterprises in growth sectors e.g. clean energy, digital, agritech, advanced engineering, the opportunity to access intensive wraparound support to grow apprenticeship schemes in their organisations.

Skills bootcamps

Working jointly with the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and Suffolk County Council a proposal for wave 3 of DfE Skills Bootcamps was developed earlier this year. The bid was successful and to date 119 learners are enrolled on the programme in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Skills Bootcamps aim to secure benefits for adults by giving them access to in-demand skills training and a guaranteed interview for a more sustainable, higher-skilled job and higher wages over time. The benefits for employers include helping them fill specific skills shortage vacancies, enabling them to become more productive, more quickly.

- deliver flexible training programmes lasting up to 16 weeks, based on employer / sector 'in-demand' skills needs which may be either adults to do training around work and other commitments, looking to gain work, additional responsibilities, or access new opportunities and will offer a guaranteed job interview (in the case of a new job) to individual participants on completion of the course.
- to address the needs of adults (19+) who are full-time and part-time employed, unemployed, returning to work after a break or self-employed, and provide individuals with wider access to opportunities to retrain, update or formalise their skills or acquire specialist skills
- to address the needs of employers and the wider economy, to deliver targeted interventions to meet short-medium term demand to fill vacancies and drive productivity. They will help fill medium-higher level vacancies and bring individuals closer to better jobs, by linking them with line of sight to a job/ different role, additional responsibilities, or new opportunities/contracts
- to help fill vacancies and bring individuals closer to better jobs (including those currently in employment), by linking them with line of sight to a job / different role, additional responsibilities, or new opportunities / contracts
- Skills Bootcamps in Norfolk & Suffolk are currently offering opportunities in a range of sectors/industries including, Digital Marketing, Software Engineering, Web Design, Construction Management Skills, CAD for Construction and Domestic Retrofit

The Pathways Training Fund (part-funded by the European Social Fund) delivered by Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils is supporting SMEs upskill their staff by helping to cover some of the costs of training, open to all sectors.

Up to 75% of staff training costs for multiple employees, with maximum grants of £500 per employee / £3,000 per employer. Businesses can choose from our network of Suffolk and Norfolk Training providers or a provider of their choice.

All learning must be completed by September 2023 in order to receive funding.

Training topics covered can be:

- Leadership, Management, Project Management and Mentoring
- Innovation training for new ways of working, products, services & Net Zero
- Customer Service and Client Relationship management
- Digital Skills and Industry 4.0
- Health, Wellbeing and Safety

SMEs can contact the Norfolk SPARC coordinator Lisa Cook at lisa.cook3@norfolk.gov.uk or the SPARC team in Suffolk sparc@suffolk.gov.uk

The Supply Chain Skills Development Fund (part-funded by the European Social Fund) delivered by Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, is offering eligible businesses grants of up to 50% to support with upskilling their 18+ workforce. Eligible businesses must be from Norfolk and Suffolk in the following sectors:

- Energy
- Construction
- IT & Digital
- Science
- Engineering
- Manufacturing
- Ports Logistics
- Food Production and Processing

Companies need to be prepared to 50% match fund staff training, to a max of £1000 per employee/£5000 per business (although this can be increased on a case by case basis).

Course types covered are accredited training, non-accredited training, face to face training, and online/digital training.

Any interested companies they should email supplychainskills@suffolk.gov.uk with details about their business and employee training needs.

Sector Skills Plans

Sector skills plans have been created by the New Anglia LEP and Norfolk County Council, in partnership with industry, to address labour market shortages.

Energy

- Carrying out Workforce analysis of the low-carbon industries (Off-Shore wind, Solar, Decarbonisation/Housing), assessing Norfolk's labour market requirements to meet Net-Zero objectives.
- Developing Net-Zero Training network through 2030 to support local skills supply.
- Co-ordinating off-shore wind developer Skills & Employment plans to maximise employment opportunities for Norfolk residents.

AgriFood/Tech

- Established key skills objectives with the representative (Employer-led) Skills group. This includes proposals to develop curriculum and training opportunities in sustainable land management/water management and digital skills specific to AgriFood industries.
- Developing methods to address challenging tutor shortages in this sector.

Digital

- Developing the Digital Inclusion Strategy. Aim to promote the available services and training available and to increase digital access/raise the digital skills of residents and Norfolk based SME's.
- Piloting a Digital marketing training programme, developing methods to increase access for employees to upskill and increase business revenue through multi-media marketing.

DfE Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) – led by Norfolk Chamber of Commerce. NCC supporting the design and implementation of the LSIP.

- Includes a comprehensive assessment of the labour market/workforce skills demands across a range of sectors.
- Objective to develop pathways for the workforce to access learning (progress), upskill and increase opportunities for employment in higher earning sectors (Net-zero, Digital included).
- Develop employer/provider collaboration in developing curriculum and provision (to meet identified workforce skills needs).

Looking Forward

A county deal for Norfolk

Norfolk County Council and the Government have agreed, in principle, a new County Deal, to transfer funding and powers to this area – a process known as devolution.

Subject to reaching final agreement, it will enable us to invest in areas such as better transport, skills, job opportunities, housing and regeneration, tailored to the specific needs of local people.

Agreeing a Deal would mean that, from 2024 onwards, we can:

- Have a Council Leader who is directly elected by the public, with the first election in May 2024
- Target funding and resources to Norfolk's own priorities
- Attract and retain new and key businesses and sectors

- Invest in the skills we know we need
- Unlock housing and employment sites
- Raise our profile nationally, enabling our voice to be heard by Government and help shape future policies

The Deal makes it clear that the County Council and Government are "minded" to agree a deal and that further steps will be taken before a final decision.

Under a Deal, Norfolk would receive a £20 million investment fund, every year for 30 years. There would also be specific funding for integrated transport, brownfield development (£7 million), adult education, and infrastructure (£5.9 million for housing, regeneration and development, during this Spending Review period).

Experience from other areas such as Greater Manchester, that secured devolution deals a few years ago, show that initial deals can open the door to receiving further powers and money and influence.

You can find out more about the deal and next steps at www.norfolk.gov.uk/norfolkcountydeal

If you have any comments or questions about anything mentioned in this report, please contact haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk