



RESILIENT RECOVERY

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM
THE SOUTH SUFFOLK TASKFORCE

RESILIENT RECOVERY

INTRODUCTION TO THE SOUTH SUFFOLK TASKFORCE

The South Suffolk Taskforce (SSTF) was established in July 2017 following the news that the Delphi Technologies factory, situated off Newton Road in Sudbury, would be closed. As one of the biggest employers in the area, and as a stalwart of the economic environment in the constituency's largest town, the closure of this plant represented a significant challenge.

Initially focussed on the Delphi closure, the group provided an otherwise unavailable forum through which to engage with the outgoing business, Government departments, local and national stakeholders, prospective buyers, the local media, and the workforce on site. By combining and coordinating the work of the individual organisations, SSTF was able to focus on the difficult matters at hand whilst speaking with one voice. The group invited organisations to appear in front of the panel for evidence sessions, and provided clarity in the local community through periodic updates and coordinated media activity.

Once SSTF was operational, it was agreed that it should widen its scope to explore how different industries were functioning, including the industrial, retail and tourism sectors. As a result, SSTF undertook a site visit to consider the future of the Brantham industrial site and held evidence sessions on skills in Hadleigh and tourism in Shotley.



Furthermore, SSTF's collaborative working has demonstrably led to successful outcomes for the local economy that may not otherwise have occurred. One such example is the sale of the Philips Avent factory in Glemsford to the Malaysian company, GCB Cocoa. Stakeholders on SSTF were instrumental in ensuring that potential inward investment was translated into the purchase of the site by a business committed to significant new job creation.

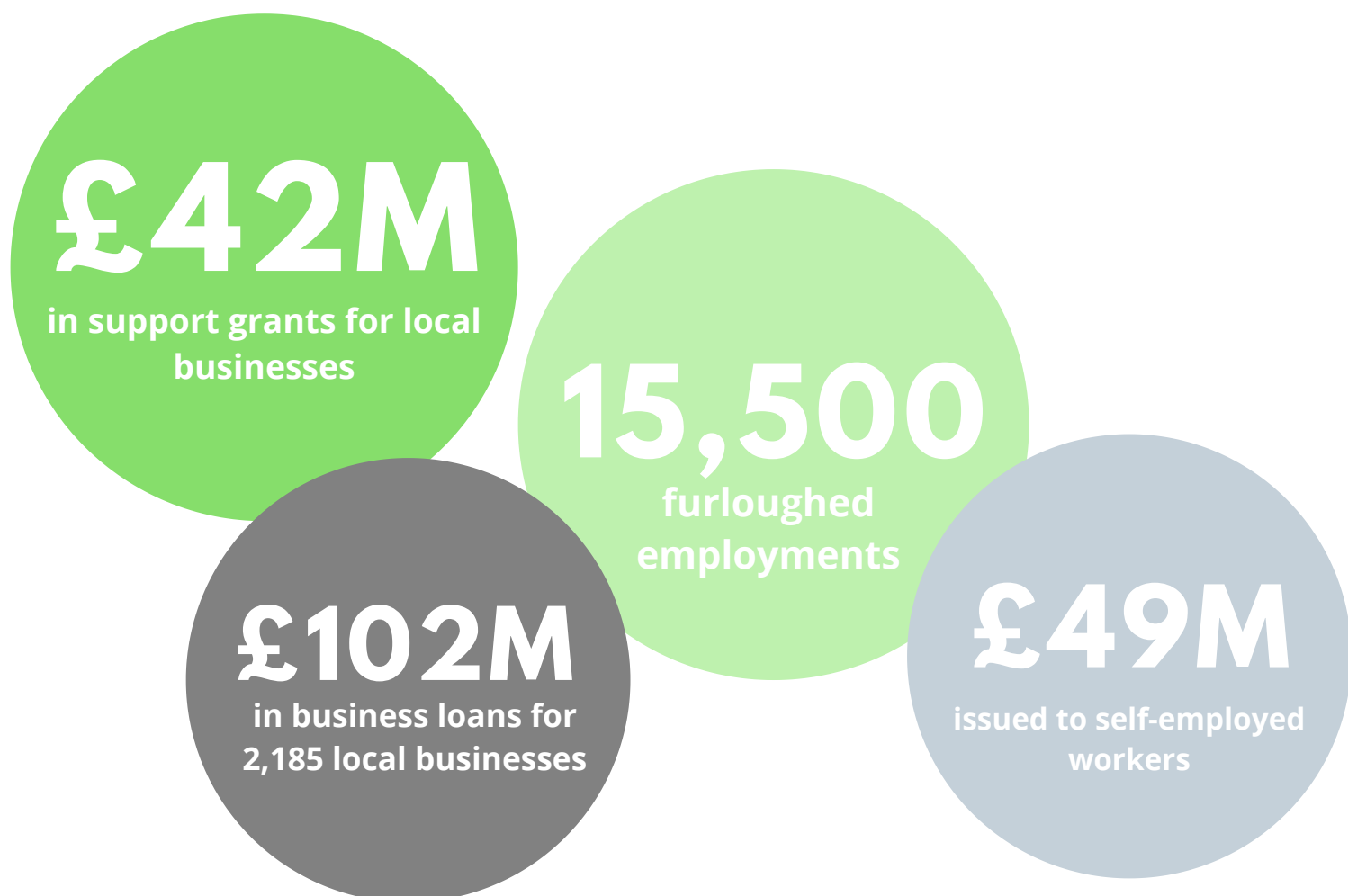
THE COVID CONTEXT

Whilst SSTF was originally established in response to a local factory closure, it has also examined wider issues across the local economy that became even more prevalent during the Covid-19 pandemic, e.g., the future of the high street.

SSTF notes the huge contribution made by central and local governments to keep businesses afloat. 2,477 businesses based in South Suffolk received support grants exceeding £42,706,359; as of 31st May 2021, 2,185 local businesses have received over £102m in business loans; the cumulative number of employments furloughed is 15,500; and as of 15th September 2021, over £49m has been issued to self-employed workers.

With formal lockdown lifting, our priority in this report has been to make recommendations both about specific issues that we have considered, e.g., individual factory sites, but also how we could achieve a resilient recovery out of the pandemic. For example, we have looked at how South Suffolk might make greater use of its unique artistic heritage to boost visitor numbers and therefore support the local services sector.

Despite the impact of the pandemic, SSTF is confident that, by harnessing its continuing strengths and exciting opportunities, South Suffolk has a bright economic future.



TASKFORCE MEMBERS

The South Suffolk Taskforce (SSTF) comprises a group of representatives from the main political and economic stakeholders operating in the constituency of South Suffolk, located in the East of England. The Taskforce is chaired by the local Member of Parliament, James Cartlidge MP, and includes representatives from Babergh District Council (BDC), the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP), Suffolk County Council (SCC), and Sudbury Town Council (STC).

Membership of SSTF has varied since its creation in 2017, but the current standing members include: **James Cartlidge MP**, **Cllr John Ward** (Leader, BDC), **Arthur Charvonia** (Chief Executive, BDC), **Cllr Michael Holt** (Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, BDC), **Fiona Duhamel** (Assistant Director Economic Development and Regeneration, BDC), **Cllr Adrian Osborne** (Sudbury Town Council & BDC), **Chris Starkie** (Chief Executive, NALEP), **Chris Dashper** (Head of Programmes, NALEP), and **Harriet Granstrom-Steer** (Senior Researcher to James Cartlidge MP).



Since its inception, SSTF has worked with many government departments and local bodies, including the Department for International Trade, the Department for Work & Pensions (specifically, the local Job Centre team), the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, the Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, Gainsborough's House, the National Trust, and numerous other organisations and businesses, depending on the matter at hand.

The Chair would like to thank all those who have sat as a Member of SSTF, provided information during evidence sessions, or attended business forums, for their time and dedication to the success of South Suffolk's economy and workforce.

INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY

THE DELPHI TECHNOLOGIES SITE

As noted, SSTF was originally set up due to the announcement in the summer of 2017 that Delphi Technologies would be closing its Sudbury factory. Members of SSTF came together to assess the potential impact of the closure, liaise directly with the company, and work with the union and managers to support the workforce. As part of this work, SSTF engaged with Ministers and officials in the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, and the Department for International Trade, to market the site in the UK's embassies overseas. Since its creation, SSTF has held regular meetings with Delphi's management team to assess how their phased closure has been progressing and what interest there has been in the site. Additionally, SSTF members were particularly keen to receive reports on whether members of their workforce had found employment elsewhere, entered retirement or started their own businesses.

The central aim of SSTF's involvement in this matter has been the preservation of the site for employment purposes. One of the main advantages of the site was the highly skilled workforce, and it was anticipated that this factor could be a contributor for potential investment.

At SSTF's request, BDC commissioned an options appraisal study into the future options for the Delphi site. This study was completed by Carter Jonas, a property consultancy firm. The report appraised a range of potential options for the site. SSTF's shared priority, supported by the report's findings, was to see the Delphi site re-used for industrial purposes, with the aim of preserving the economic benefit for Sudbury and the surrounding area. However, SSTF also recognised that the viability of delivering a single industrial use site may be a significant challenge. As such, SSTF considered the market for multiple smaller-sized units on the existing site, with the potential addition of some housing to offset the cost of reconfiguring the site and providing services to the new occupiers. Additionally, it was assessed that there was a healthy market for smaller units in the Sudbury area at the time when this was being considered.



As a direct result of SSTF engaging with Department for International Trade, significant interest in the site was generated, including a UK start-up intending to use the factory to manufacture low-emission electric vehicles. Unfortunately, this offer was rejected by Delphi who instead accepted an offer from Charterhouse Property Group in July 2019, suggesting the possibility of the site being used for residential development. As a result, SSTF members came together to write several letters to the company restating their commitment to the site remaining as an employment hub in the town.

In addition to letters from the following SSTF members, James Cartlidge MP; Cllr John Ward; and Chris Starkie, SSTF also welcomed letters from Cllr Jack Owen (former County Councillor for Sudbury); Cllr Robert Spivey (former Mayor, STC); and the Sudbury Chamber of Commerce. James Cartlidge MP also raised the matter in a parliamentary debate in the House of Commons on 25th July 2019. Following the letters and debate, Charterhouse Property Group withdrew their offer.

"When we have an employment site with brilliant staff, which is the asset in this case and the reason why people have been interested in it, we should be looking to maximise the potential for the local economy, rather than selling to the highest bidder and leaving the site vacant for years as we go through the courts with applications for commercial and residential development."

James Cartlidge MP - House of Commons - 25th July 2019

In June 2020, Delphi sold the site to the commercial development firm Future Properties Industrial Ltd. Initially, SSTF cautiously welcomed the news, given that Future Properties Industrial Ltd appears to have a history of commercial development, i.e., implying that any new occupants would continue employment use on the site, in line with SSTF's consensus.

Beyond the site's commercial future, the importance of the Delphi Centre to the local community has been emphasised consistently by STC representative, Cllr Adrian Osborne. Under Delphi's ownership of the site, the Delphi Centre had been run as a not-for-profit enterprise by a user group who paid a token rent to Delphi. Running many social clubs and featuring a large ballroom dancefloor and football pitch, the Delphi Centre has become a hugely valuable community centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The options appraisal study that SSTF commissioned underlines the viability of the former Delphi site as a commercially valuable employment site. SSTF recommends that any future plans for the site prioritise employment use for the benefit of Sudbury's economy.
- SSTF notes the concerns of Sudbury Town Council about the future of the Delphi Centre and recommends that this vital community asset is not overlooked when activity on the site resumes.



THE PHILIPS AVENT SITE

Ahead of the announcement that Philips would be restructuring their global configuration, SSTF had established a positive working relationship with the Senior UK leadership team at Philips UK through evidence sessions. As such, when the news broke that they would be selling their Glemsford factory and moving the production onto the continent, SSTF invited Philips UK to attend a session specifically about the closure.

Neil Mesher, CEO of Philips UK attended the meeting in Sudbury alongside other members of their leadership team. During this meeting they outlined the timeline for the closure, the reasons for the closure, their plan for the staff on site, and their intentions around the sale of the site. Through questioning from SSTF members, Neil Mesher stated Philips UK's commitment to ensure the future employment status of the site. SSTF agreed to work with Philips UK to market the site as far and wide as possible, and to aid the current employees in finding alternative employment.

Following the meeting, James Cartlidge MP worked with the Department for International Trade to ensure that the Glemsford site was advertised around the world in British Embassies and that the Department's officials were aware of the site when international parties were considering investment in the UK.

BDC's Economic Development Officers and the New Anglia LEP, led by SSTF member Chris Starkie, worked with the estate agent Savills to link up potentially interested parties both in the UK and further afield. This work ensured that several firms considered the site for their investment. GCB Cocoa, who were looking for a site to build their first UK chocolate processing factory, were first identified by the Department for International Trade. The team at BDC and the New Anglia LEP worked with GCB Cocoa UK Ltd to understand their intentions for the site and to promote the value of the Glemsford site for their purposes. The New Anglia LEP and Philips UK also encouraged James Cartlidge MP to contact the Malaysian company to answer some outstanding questions, and to encourage their investment in South Suffolk. These relationships were incredibly fruitful and ultimately helped to secure the sale of the site.

The members of SSTF were invited to attend the official handover of the factory from Philips UK to GCB Cocoa, and met the directors of the Malaysian team virtually to discuss their exciting plans. SSTF members representing BDC are now working with the company on their submitted planning application. James Cartlidge MP hosted a meeting between the firm and the Minister of State for Trade Policy, the Rt Hon Greg Hands MP, to explore how the Government and Department for International Trade might assist with new opportunities going forward, e.g., exporting from the plant to new markets.

GCB Cocoa's £62.2m investment represents a very significant commitment to the local economy and will generate up to 220 jobs in the coming years. Over time it is hoped that it will also become a hub for the company's R&D due to the factory's proximity to Cambridge and the agricultural-research businesses based around the city.



£62.2M

investment in South
Suffolk's economy

**UP TO
220 JOBS**

for local people

RECOMMENDATION

On the Glemsford GCB Cocoa project, SSTF recommend that all stakeholders continue to engage, particularly at a national Government level through James Cartlidge MP in relation to potential exporting opportunities. Babergh District Council will continue to support the company through their planning application process.

THE BRANTHAM INDUSTRIAL SITE

The Brantham Industrial Estate in the east of the constituency has been undergoing major regeneration to transform it from a derelict site, with limited employment opportunities, to serviced business plots. SSTF met the developer, St Francis Group, on site in early 2020 to see the progress that had been made, and to discuss the opportunities presented by the development. Due to the proximity of the site to the A12 and A14, and sitting between Ipswich and Colchester, this location is an attractive offer for many businesses. Additionally, the site is well-situated for workers to access Manningtree Railway Station, which sits on the mainline to London. As we consider ways for the local economy to recover after the pandemic, the Brantham Industrial Estate offers an exciting opportunity for new business activity in the constituency.

For example, BDC are working with partners at Suffolk County Council, Screen Suffolk, and the developers, to consider whether the site might be suitable for the creation of a film anchored creative cluster. Located only 50 minutes from central London by train, the site is well situated to make the most of a growing local film-making sector, and the existing interest in Suffolk as a film location. A report on a creative cluster at Brantham has now been commissioned and consultants are working on the proposal.

However, to maximise opportunities such as these, the transport system around the Manningtree crossing must be addressed. In peak times, the crossing becomes a bottleneck causing delays and congestion around the entrance to the train station. It is also potentially dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists passing under the bridge, particularly when it is dark.





SSTF met with Cllr Carlo Guglielmi (Essex County Council Member for Tendring Rural West, Deputy Leader of Tendring District Council), who is chairing a cross-border steering committee on potential solutions for the crossing. One option being considered is a car park for the station to the north of the crossing (on the Suffolk side of the bridge) to reduce the number of cars that need to cross under the bridge at peak times. SSTF would consider supporting such a scheme in the short-term but believes that a more substantial solution involving the complete closure of the rail-crossing will be required in the long-term. However, it is recognised that such solutions could involve cost on a significant scale.

Although the crossing sits over the Suffolk border in Essex, it is utilised by both Essex and Suffolk residents and would be an important improvement for the new business activity on the Brantham Industrial Estate. As such, following confirmation of its next funding settlement, SSTF recommends that the New Anglia LEP should consider funding a feasibility study for long-term solutions to issues around the Manningtree crossing which, if successfully developed, could significantly alleviate the transport challenge facing the site.

RECOMMENDATION

SSTF remain of the view that the Brantham Industrial Site has exciting potential but faces a significant constraint around local transport access issues. Following confirmation of its next funding settlement, we recommend that the New Anglia LEP should consider funding a feasibility study for long-term solutions to issues around the Manningtree crossing which, if successfully developed, could significantly alleviate the transport challenge facing the site.

FREEPORT EAST & THE COPDOCK INTERCHANGE



BRITAIN'S PREMIER TRADE ROUTE

The region received excellent news in the Budget Statement in March 2021 as the Chancellor announced that Felixstowe Port had been awarded Freeport status through the Freeport East project. Covering the UK's busiest container port, two major ferry ports and located close to the East Coast green energy cluster, Freeport East will offer a unique combination of advantages to benefit traders, manufacturers, and clean energy suppliers. As one of eight new freeports in the UK, it will be a hub for global trade and innovation, and create up to 13,500 new jobs. It is anticipated that Freeport East could generate a Gross Value Added (GVA) of £5.5 billion over 10 years.

This is an important opportunity for South Suffolk's businesses. However, to maximise the potential gain for suppliers and jobseekers, there is an essential piece of infrastructure improvement required. The Copdock Interchange (located within the South Suffolk Parliamentary constituency, on the edge of Ipswich) has long stood as Suffolk's most problematic junction. As such, SSTF welcomed the inclusion of the interchange for development work in Highways England's Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2) in March 2020. As the crucial link between the A12 and A14, the interchange causes significant daily disruption and delay under heavy traffic. The A14 is the main artery for container lorries travelling from Felixstowe Port, and most of the traffic that is headed towards London and Essex uses the Copdock Interchange to access the A12. Without major improvements and a complete redesign of this junction, the Freeport status opportunity for local businesses cannot be maximised.

"The Copdock Interchange sits at the centre of the Freeport area, almost equidistant from the three tax sites at Felixstowe, Harwich and Gateway 14, which will be the focus for new investment in the Freeport. The efficient operation of the junction will aid the successful delivery of the ambitions for the Freeport."

Chris Lewis - CEO, Hutchinson Ports

£5.5BN

Gross Value Added (GVA)

**UP TO
13,500
NEW JOBS**

As such, SSTF welcomed the intervention from James Cartlidge MP, who liaised with Hutchinson Ports (who operate Felixstowe Port) to jointly lobby the Secretary of State for Transport, the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP. Their correspondence emphasised the renewed importance of the Copdock Interchange upgrades given the freeport status. SSTF add their support to this action and SSTF members are committed to campaigning for this scheme to be included for construction in Highways England's Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3).



RECOMMENDATION

SSTF welcome the creation of Freeport East as an important opportunity for South Suffolk's businesses. It recognises the importance of major infrastructure improvements to Copdock Interchange and members will work to see the scheme's inclusion for construction in RIS3.

BUILDING THE VISITOR ECONOMY

As far as the services sector is concerned, SSTF has undertaken significant work around the economic opportunities surrounding South Suffolk's cultural heritage. This has stemmed from an appreciation of the crucial role played by a strong visitor offer to support the viability of local retail, leisure, and hospitality businesses. In this context, SSTF met with various tourism and cultural organisations and also held a specific tourism forum on the Shotley Peninsula.



THE ARTISTS

Across the constituency there are several high-profile cultural heritage links, with particular emphasis on the birthplace of the artist Thomas Gainsborough in Sudbury, and the landscape of John Constable's most famous works located in the Dedham Vale. These two famous landscape artists are celebrated at Gainsborough's House in the centre of Sudbury, and the site of Constable's 1821 painting 'The Hay Wain' in Flatford, near East Bergholt, respectively. These centres are a powerful draw for local, national, and international visitors, but rarely result in visitors remaining in the area for extended stays, despite the rich cultural heritage in other parts of South Suffolk. There is little signposting to indicate that these two centres are within 20 miles of one another and limited reference to other attractions in the area.

In a major boost to Sudbury and the surrounding areas, Gainsborough's House, under the leadership of Director Mark Bills, is undergoing a full redevelopment to become a national centre. The ambitious £9m project includes plans for four new galleries, including a Gainsborough gallery, a community gallery displaying the work of local artists, a landscape studio with views over Sudbury, and a temporary exhibition gallery and performance space. BDC were proud to provide a major funding boost to the project with a £235k grant and a further £200k of Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

"I commend all those who have been involved in the [Heritage Lottery Fund] bid at Gainsborough's House. Many people will enjoy visiting Gainsborough's House in the future as a result of the work that will be able to be done."

Former Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Theresa May MP - House of Commons - 12th October 2016

One of the many welcome elements of this development is the inclusion of the long-term loan of the Constable family's collection. As such, the museum will provide the only gallery space in which visitors will be able to see the landscapes of Constable within the vicinity of 'Constable Country'.



Sitting geographically between the Gainsborough and Constable centres is Benton End in Hadleigh. The house, on Benton Street in the second largest town in the constituency, was home to the highly-celebrated artist and plantsman Cedric Morris, and became the East Anglian School for Painting and Drawing in the 1940s. The house has recently been purchased by the Pinchbeck Charitable Trust who have placed the revival of Benton End for public use in the hands of the Garden Museum. SSTF were pleased to meet the Trust and hear about their plans for the property where modern artists such as Maggi Hambling received tuition.

In July 2021, James Cartlidge MP visited Benton End and met representatives of the Garden Museum to hear about their plans at first hand. This project enriches the offer of South Suffolk's artistic and cultural heritage for visitors and should be a welcome addition to the tourism industry locally.



JAMES CARTLIDGE MP MET WITH THE GARDEN MUSEUM AT BENTON END

CULTURAL HERITAGE ON THE SHOTLEY PENINSULA

In recent years, the Shotley Peninsula Tourism Action Group (SPTAG) have been producing attractive visitor guides for what might be regarded as a 'hidden gem' within Suffolk. Largely sitting in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, the Shotley Peninsula has a rich cultural heritage to explore, and boasts an increasingly impressive offer for tourists and visitors. Several excellent hospitality venues are supported not only by the beauty of the coastline, but also by those looking to explore the River Orwell of Arthur Ransome's books. In the 1930s, Ransome wrote two notable books about the Shotley Peninsula and Pin Mill in particular: *Swallows and Amazons* and *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea*. It was very encouraging to see the work that the SPTAG had done to promote the Shotley Peninsula on the year of the 80th Anniversary of the publication of the latter.

In addition to the cultural draw of Ransome, the Shotley Peninsula also features the Ganges Museum which details the history of the naval activity at Shotley, and an ambitious community project to restore the Victorian pier at Shotley Gate (of which James Cartlidge MP is patron).



PROPOSAL FOR A STOUR VALLEY CULTURAL GROUP

SSTF is committed to bolstering the tourism and visitor economy across South Suffolk and believes that one of the main ways of achieving this is by linking the components through their cultural heritage. It has developed a proposal to harness the best of our visitor economy appeal through the creation of a *Stour Valley Cultural Group*. This work would seek to highlight the potential benefits to the local visitor economy by bringing the individual organisations, such as Gainsborough's House in Sudbury, Benton End in Hadleigh, and the National Trust at Flatford Mill, together to build a cohesive offer and retain visitors for a longer time period. It would also be used to signpost visitors to other local attractions such as the Shotley Peninsula, the Munnings Museum in Dedham, and South Suffolk's medieval wool towns, including, Clare, Kersey, Lavenham and Long Melford.

SSTF has approached Mark Bills, Director at Gainsborough's House, to Chair a working group to develop this proposal further and assess how best to take this concept forward. Mr Bills has already met with the team at BDC, Suffolk County Council's Cultural Lead, and other cultural partners in South Suffolk to develop this cultural group. It is hoped that this group will lead on key events for Sudbury such as the development and growth of the Silk Festival, and will also engage in wider initiatives such as themed walking and cycling trails which would link to the wider Stour Valley area and beyond.

Additionally, BDC have been working with Sudbury Town Council and the vision partnership to develop a new creative wayfinding route in Sudbury, which will link to the wider walking and cycling development work now being led by their new Sustainable Transport officer.

As we move away from the current crisis, and the hospitality and tourism sectors can once again thrive in the area, this proposal would unlock greater potential for the local visitor economy.



RECOMMENDATION

SSTF recommends that far more is made of the combined cultural draw of our Gainsborough and Constable heritage. Specifically, under the auspices of Babergh District Council's Economic Development team, a working group Chaired by Marks Bills (Gainsborough's House) should be mobilised to build a better link between the individual tourism offers across the constituency to establish a Stour Valley Cultural Group.

REGENERATING SUDBURY



A TOWN WITH A BRIGHT FUTURE

Given that SSTF was formed to consider the potential impact of Delphi's decision to close its factory, SSTF has inevitably devoted considerable attention to Sudbury's wider economy. As Sudbury is the largest town in the constituency of South Suffolk and the District of Babergh, it is an important hub for industrial, retail, leisure, and hospitality activity. The town serves a considerable catchment population and the surrounding rural area that extends into neighbouring Essex.

When creating SSTF, the stakeholders were conscious that communicating the business viewpoint in public discourse about Sudbury's future, has periodically seemed challenging. Thus, it is particularly important to stress the unanimity of SSTF membership in supporting attempts to regenerate Sudbury to maximise its overall attractiveness as a place to live and work, and of course, to start up and run a business. A welcome development for the town was the new rolling stock introduced on the trainline running out of Sudbury station in January 2020, and its vital link via Marks Tey to London. This was an important improvement for commuters and visitors alike, and emphasises that Sudbury has strengths that many other market towns have long since lost.

SSTF believe that this ambition to regenerate and improve the town as a destination has been brought into focus by the stress and strain on traditional high street retailers, a nationwide phenomenon amplified by lockdown's necessary shift to online purchasing - but which was underway well before the pandemic began, and which Sudbury has not escaped. This was exemplified by the announcement in August 2020 that Winch & Blatch, the town's long-standing department store, would be closing its doors.

Despite this difficult context, SSTF is positive that Sudbury has a bright future if it can build on the exciting investment and development already underway at the heart of its visitor offer. This includes the £9m project to redesign Gainsborough's House which will draw visitors from around the world, and the regeneration project, overseen by the Churches Conservation Trust, of St Peter's in the centre of Market Hill. Both projects have been awarded considerable funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and BDC. The Council's contribution to St Peter's has already included £100k of grant funding and a further £70k of Community Infrastructure Levy funding. The consistent support that the project has received from SSTF stakeholders recognises the important opportunity that these developments represent for Sudbury. These plans will transform the Market Hill area of the town into a new cultural space and public realm, bolstering the shops and services available in that area.

The high street has been further strengthened by the work of BDC and partners in creating a Virtual High Street (VHS), and by providing a new programme for digital skills development for high street businesses. This has allowed businesses that may have been struggling to harness technology to support their operations during a difficult period, but also to diversify and build resilience in their offer for the future.

The VHS platform design initially came from Sudbury Town Council and BDC developed the project, increasing the functionality and extending it to other towns in Babergh and Mid Suffolk. Funding for this project was granted from the Suffolk Inclusive Growth Investment Fund. The VHS, which now features over 150 Sudbury businesses, has seen BDC receive a Gold Award at the 2021 iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards.



LEVELLING-UP

To maximise Sudbury's regeneration opportunity, SSTF firmly supports Babergh District Council's application to the Department for Transport for over £6m of Levelling-Up funding. The bid is formed of two areas: transport investment, and regeneration and town centre investment as outlined below:

Transport Investment - A 'smaller transport scheme' of localised junction improvements to facilitate the relocation of the current bus station to an on-street facility. The transport element includes pedestrian and cycling facilities at the junction improvements and footways/crossings at key locations. Enabling further active travel locally demonstrably links to wider schemes and ambitions, such as those proposed under the Active Travel Fund. Improved walking and cycling connectivity between the Borehamgate/Belle Vue area of the town and the wider town centre are also part of the plan. This includes supporting a pedestrian crossing from Cornard Road to the new park entrance, blue badge parking bays and a new coach stop serving the town centre market square and cultural venues/attractions.



Regeneration and Town Centre Investment - A town centre regeneration scheme, centred around the Borehamgate/Hamilton Road site which will be facilitated by the relocation of the bus station in the Transport Improvement package above. BDC has already invested over £3.5m in site assembly and master planning costs, but crucially needs to buy-in remaining land for the development of a c.£40m brownfield regeneration site into a mixed-use (housing and leisure-led) scheme. This mixed-use scheme has already been through early master planning development work and will incorporate retail units, a cinema, new hotel, residential and community uses, as well as open piazza spaces. The residential element is a mix of flats and townhouses, with 35% designated as affordable housing.

Essentially, by proceeding with these complementary projects, local bus services would be reconfigured not only to boost connectivity and support public transport, but also to allow the wider regeneration of the town. Without this improvement, the necessary and ambitious plans for Sudbury's future cannot be achieved.

SSTF believes that the business case for such changes is strong, given their impact on the potential to regenerate Sudbury. In June 2021, James Cartlidge MP wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport, the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, outlining his support for the application both as the local MP and as the Chair of SSTF. Whilst recognising the challenge in securing central Government funding for such a project, the Chair has stressed to the Government the wider benefits such funding would bring, and the strength of the opportunity to deliver joined-up regeneration and connectivity improvements.

RECOMMENDATION

In focussing from the outset on the need to strengthen Sudbury's economic offer in the wake of Delphi's closure, SSTF strongly supports efforts to regenerate the town so that it can maximise its attraction to visitors, but also as a place to invest. SSTF therefore supports the Sudbury Levelling-Up Bid and its stakeholders should continue to bring forward and support funding bids to central Government, the Lottery and others which offer the opportunity to enhance the town's attraction as a place to live, work and run a business.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SECURING A RESILIENT RECOVERY

- The options appraisal study that SSTF commissioned underlines the viability of the former Delphi site as a commercially valuable employment site. SSTF recommends that any future plans for the site prioritise employment use for the benefit of Sudbury's economy.
- SSTF notes the concerns of Sudbury Town Council about the future of the Delphi Centre and recommends that this vital community asset is not overlooked when activity on the site resumes.
- On the Glemsford GCB Cocoa project, SSTF recommend that all stakeholders continue to engage, particularly at a national Government level through James Cartlidge MP in relation to potential exporting opportunities. Babergh District Council will continue to support the company through their planning application process.
- SSTF remain of the view that the Brantham Industrial Site has exciting potential but faces a significant constraint around local transport access issues. Following confirmation of its next funding settlement, we recommend that the New Anglia LEP should consider funding a feasibility study for long-term solutions to issues around the Manningtree crossing which, if successfully developed, could significantly alleviate the transport challenge facing the site.
- SSTF welcome the creation of Freeport East as an important opportunity for South Suffolk's businesses. It recognises the importance of major infrastructure improvements to Copdock Interchange and members will work to see the scheme's inclusion for construction in RIS3.
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Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
The Voice of Business

"Suffolk Chamber of Commerce commends the South Suffolk Taskforce for its achievements, both in terms of attracting new businesses to existing employment sites in the South Suffolk constituency and through brokering effective and focussed relationships across the private, public and voluntary sectors. We are pleased to have played a role and would like to thank James Cartlidge MP for setting up and driving the Taskforce forward."



Press Enquiries & Further Information

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