Introduction from the Vice-Chancellor

It is a great privilege to develop and introduce the vision and purpose of a new university. The University of Suffolk is entirely a product of the 21st century and must build on the strengths and successes of University Campus Suffolk to be a distinctive, thriving academic community which makes a clear and immediate impact. Our purpose is to change lives – of individuals and communities – for the better.

The University of Suffolk is strongly embedded in its local region. Our unique, integrated partnership with four Colleges is central to our identity and our vision for the future. We embrace our role as independent stewards of community life and values; an anchor institution proud of its central ambition of working collaboratively to transform our local communities. We will consciously apply our long-term, locally-based economic and cultural influence, together with our human and intellectual resources, to improve their long-term prospects.

That mission does not, and must not, entail an exclusively local institution or one in any way limited in its ambition or its pursuit of excellence. Universities must have national and international dimensions across their teaching, scholarship and research. Our staff and students must be diverse - geographically, socially and in gender, orientation and outlook - to reflect the globally connected world in which we live and work.

The University will nurture these attributes and utilise them to drive the economic, cultural and educational improvement needed within the region. One of the key measures of how we will judge our performance will be our influence on the communities we serve.

The student experience will continue to be at the heart of our activity. We are a beacon of aspiration which will fundamentally change ambition and achievement in the region. We are committed to admitting and successfully graduating students with a wide range of backgrounds and qualifications, and we will be judged by our record in delivering the best outcomes, whatever the starting point. We intend to improve overall student satisfaction continuously, and we see the strong partnership that exists between students and staff at the University as central to realising this ambition.

We will focus on preparing graduates with the skills, critical knowledge and confidence to succeed in the contemporary employment market. To support this, scholarship and high-impact research must be pervasive within the institution, with emerging areas of national and international excellence. We should emphasise and promote the intrinsic value of higher education; all universities should offer a transformative experience based on a spirit of enquiry, debate and discovery, a place of open free discussion within the law.

We will actively work to ensure gender equality and cultural diversity right across the institution but particularly at the most senior levels, believing this to be the most effective way of ensuring a successful institution.

This new University of Suffolk has the opportunity to be unique, relevant to local needs and responsive to rapidly changing circumstances. Its future lies in active, responsive, mutually beneficial partnerships across higher education, health, business and beyond. It will be distinctive in its local mission, compete effectively with the rest of the higher education sector, have national and international impact through research and innovation, and bring credit, prestige and opportunity to the region.

Richard Lister
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive
Our Vision

The University of Suffolk is a cohesive, self-critical and student-centred academic community. Over the next five years it will develop a broader base, be of higher academic standing and remain financially sustainable. It will have a significantly larger student population with growth drawn from the region, nationally and internationally.

We will have a very high level of applications for some niche-based academic disciplines, and sufficient student demand for sustainability in all other academic areas. This will be accompanied by a strong pattern of student retention, student satisfaction and external quality ratings. The University will increasingly be underpinned by an embedded scholarly base, with nationally and internationally recognised research and scholarships in targeted areas.

The University of Suffolk will be a key contributor to its local communities. We will focus on curriculum areas that are applied, transformational and closely aligned to regional economic priorities, with demonstrable market and employer demand. We will sustain, extend and embed our responsibility to widen access and raise aspiration across the region. Teaching will be innovative and high quality, with flexible modes of delivery. The learning experience will give a high priority to problem solving and real life solutions.

The focus on continuing our high rates of graduate employability will build on, support and benefit from the configuration of leading industries in Suffolk and the wider region. Partnerships with business lie at the heart of delivering our ambitions. This will include, amongst others, higher apprenticeships and internships, and germinator and incubation facilitates for spin-out companies. The University will see its role as a driver of economic development in Suffolk as a key performance indicator of its success.

Decision-making in the institution as a whole will be based on streamlined and inclusive processes, recognising the importance of open, democratic systems which involve the whole community in a shared culture and values.

The main Ipswich Waterfront Campus will be further modernised and developed, in partnership where appropriate. Development of the physical infrastructure across the Learning Network will be encouraged. In addition, the focus on equivalence of the student experience should be seen as a unique selling point of the University, an inclusive Learning Network in which an expanded number of students will be studying on a broader range of courses, within distinctive locations, under the academic oversight of the Faculties.

The overwhelming majority of provision will be at undergraduate level, but with a measured growth of postgraduate students, including in postgraduate research. This will be centred on the development of the scholarly base of academic staff, through a gradual increase in numbers of the professionate through new appointments and internal promotions, and with the development of clear career routes within the institution for all staff.

The University of Suffolk will have increasingly diverse income streams, based on a wider, high-quality range of collaborative academic and other partnerships. We expect to build on and strengthen links with local and regional stakeholders, not least in relation to training, research and consultancy, facilitating the prospect of enhanced investment.

Over the next five years the University of Suffolk must have established a reputation and brand as an innovative and flexible, market-centred provider with high-quality teaching, underpinned by widespread scholarly activity and research in focused areas. We will have high levels of student satisfaction and graduate employability, and will be progressively moving up university league tables. There will be growing and tangible benefits for our partners and a sustainable balanced budget with appropriate surpluses for investment. Our role as a community-impact university will be having a clear, measurable and positive impact on the economic, cultural and educational lives of the communities we serve.
We believe it is important to have a clear view of the values which underpin our activity. The following principles should be a clear and constant guide to the way we operate:

- To be a beacon for aspiration and achievement.
- To actively serve and be accountable to our communities.
- To excel in meeting the expectations of our students.
- To provide a great environment to work and study.
- To drive a spirit of exploration, innovation and creativity.
- To be enterprising and entrepreneurial.
- To consistently maintain the highest ethical standards and uphold academic freedom.
- To be inclusive; valuing the contribution of every member of the institution.
- To relish challenge and enjoy success.
- To work with strategic partners for long-term mutual benefit.
Our Students

Students are at the centre of the University of Suffolk’s mission and ethos. We are proud of our tradition of attracting a diverse student body and producing high-quality graduates, attractive to employers. Our focus is on learning and teaching, and a student experience that produces high levels of student satisfaction. We will be known for our responsiveness to students and for the absence of barriers between the student and staff communities. We will grow our student numbers locally, nationally and internationally at all levels though predominantly undergraduate provision. Our commitment to widening participation is unwavering.

Underpinning our central themes is the shared understanding that students should be encouraged to be questioning, creative and engaged, and that the university experience should be challenging, enjoyable and transformational.

Our record of ‘added value’ is admirable and we will continue to build upon this. Allied to this, our commitment to a more intimate and individualistic experience than is possible at many universities is a key, continuing strength.

“Having a university in the county changes the lives of real people. I have seen it raise aspirations in my own students and help them achieve ambitions they would have never thought possible.”

Howard Lay
Executive Principal, Samuel Ward Academy
Chief Executive, Samuel Ward Trust

Strategic Objectives

- To secure high levels of student satisfaction.
- To maintain continuing commitment to widening participation.
- To increase the pool of applicants across all disciplines.
- To further develop close partnership working with the Students’ Union.
- To drive integration with local partners to deliver best employment outcomes.
- To nurture and deliver work-ready graduates.
- To continuously improve student experience and student retention.
- To provide improved social, cultural and sporting facilities.
Our Staff

The commitment our staff demonstrate to our students, and to each other, in delivering the mission of the University of Suffolk is a source of enormous pride. In return we, as an employer, seek to provide a safe, healthy and inspiring work environment. We will appoint and nurture a diverse, high-performing, confident and motivated workforce, who feel valued, supported and proud to be part of this community.

We will introduce more streamlined and inclusive decision making processes; utilising democratic systems to engage the whole university community with the mission, values and culture of the institution and maintain their commitment and contribution in further shaping and realising these.

We are proud of our existing culture where there are close working relationships between different groups of staff and between staff and students, and we will ensure this ethos prevails.

“...The University of Suffolk is at the heart of all our ambitions for the region: higher skills; improved career opportunities; a hub for world class innovation; attracting the brightest and best to our growing economy. It shows that a centre of excellence in education, working at the heart of the local community, can transform lives and opportunities well beyond the Waterfront campus.”

Mark Pendlington
Chairman
New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership

Strategic Objectives

• To modernise recruitment and selection processes, ensuring a strong focus on cultural fit and the appointment of the best possible staff.

• To ensure a dynamic, supportive relationship between the organisation and our staff, based on an inclusive culture and building on our core principles of partnership, stewardship and community.

• To maintain a healthy work environment that provides opportunities for staff to improve their mental and physical wellbeing.

• To create the conditions that allow colleagues to develop their careers and fulfil their potential.

• To enhance further the processes for the effective management, development and reward of performance.
Our Community Impact

All universities must have national and international reach. The University of Suffolk has, in addition, at the heart of its mission a responsibility to be a model for a new type of civic university – embedded, influential and a focus of societal and economic change in all of the communities it serves. Our network will continue to reach out to communities locally, nationally and across the globe, connecting with people and organisations to create relationships, collaborations and partnerships that can make a real difference. We summarise this as a ‘Community Impact’ higher education institution.

Our community engagement involves communicating and sharing knowledge, consulting and collaborating with the local community, enriching cultural life and providing a service to our communities. All of this activity will be mutually beneficial, both to the public and to the University, and complement our primary contribution to society of providing education. It is important to us that we create a place that is built for the community, as well as for our students and staff to use.

The period of this strategic plan offers great opportunities for economic growth in our region. We should be instrumental in driving the economic agenda and playing a key role with our partners in ensuring the skills needed are fully met.

Strategic Objectives

• To lead widening participation, aspiration and achievement.
• To work with partners to improve economic activity and prosperity in our region.
• To play a leading part in the cultural life of our communities.
• To be influential in the stewardship of our community.
• To be a regional partner of choice for a range of major organisations.
• To provide the skills needed to deliver an economic step change locally.

“As a fellow organisation in the heart of Suffolk, we value the engagement that the University has with its local community. The University of Suffolk is extremely supportive of us as a cultural organisation and actively encourage their staff and students to engage with us. This is a relationship that we look forward to developing further.”

Sarah Holmes
Chief Executive
New Wolsey Theatre
Learning and Teaching

The University of Suffolk’s courses will be characterised by their innovative and leading-edge approaches to learning and teaching, informed by research and scholarly activity and in the context of evolving technology. We will enable students to achieve their full potential in employment and in life.

Over the next five years the University will further develop flexible modes of supporting learning that enable students to flourish as independent learners with the capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking. Through the development of dynamic and responsive learning environments, active participation will be a central aspect of all students learning.

Strategic Objectives

- In partnership with students, to foster enthusiasm for learning and curiosity through pedagogical experiences that engage and inspire.
- To provide learning opportunities that develop critical thinking and analytical skills.
- To encourage our students to become independent lifelong learners, confident to challenge and influence in learning and professional environments.
- To support our students in becoming global citizens.
- To encourage the adoption of flexible, inclusive and innovative approaches to learning and assessment.
- To recognise, value and reward excellence in learning and teaching.
- To foster an evolving culture of innovation and research.
- To recruit and develop engaging, inclusive and student-centred academic staff.

“The University of Suffolk is a vital partner in our ambition to provide high quality, safe and compassionate care to our patients. The relationship is really important to us and the quality of students we work with is extremely high.”

Nick Hulme
Chief Executive
The Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust
Learning and teaching at the University of Suffolk will be underpinned by applied and pure, professional and practice-based research and scholarship that has national and international recognition and demonstrable impact. Our research, advanced scholarship and knowledge exchange will make a major contribution to society and the local economy.

The opening of our Ipswich Waterfront Innovation Centre early in the life of this plan will be a key starting point for establishing the University of Suffolk as a distinctive, flexible partner in driving economic development within the region.

We will be receiving Research Council grants, have substantially increased our postgraduate research student numbers, and established a number of Research Institutes, Centres and Units with a view to a HEFCE Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission in niche areas for REF 2020. We expect to be in a position to apply for Research Degree Awarding Powers at the end of this planning period.

The University of Suffolk will be nationally recognised as an enterprising and business-facing higher education institution, playing a key role in the growth of our regional economy, with knowledge exchange and enterprise activities underpinning learning and teaching and generating new income.

"There is no doubt of the importance that the University will play in the future economic success of Suffolk. As a leading academic centre, the University of Suffolk is seen as a valued partner to the business community and is part of the foundation of business that makes Suffolk the successful place it is today."

John Dugmore
CEO
Suffolk Chamber of Commerce

Strategic Objectives

- To promote research and scholarship across the institution, informing our learning and teaching and enterprise initiatives.
- To promote and disseminate the impact of our research externally through effective public engagement with business, public bodies and local communities.
- To attract, support and retain academics highly skilled in research at professorial level.
- To increase the number of research leaders in priority academic areas, and effectively support the career development of early career researchers.
- To increase the volume of research activity that is recognised to be of national and international standing.
- To make a submission to REF 2020 in niche areas.
- To grow the number of postgraduate research students.
- To increase and diversify sources of revenue generated from educational, consultancy, sponsorship and research activities.
Internationalisation

The international dimension is essential to the growth and relevance of the University of Suffolk, and the elements that will make it a success internationally are also those that will make the University a success both regionally and nationally. In order to achieve the international student numbers set out in the Strategic Plan, we must be innovative and sector-leading in working in the most cost-effective and efficient way. This includes ensuring that our facilities are sufficiently attractive to continue to achieve recruitment success.

We are firmly committed to enhancing opportunities for students and being an attractive destination for incoming students.

The international arena provides a major opportunity for a step change in our growth and has the potential to help place the institution on very strong foundations. The key to future success continues to be partnership, a strength that will be deployed in our major areas of internationalisation. In addition to the strengths of the university experience, which apply to all students, we will emphasise the importance of our location and the pervasive opportunities for work and study overseas, through an internationally relevant curriculum.

Strategic Objectives

• To implement coherent and targeted Faculty international marketing plans.
• To expand the distribution network overseas.
• To be proactive in seeking out partners with a shared approach in terms of mission, offer and student experience.
• To continue to grow partners in key strategic markets, particularly North America and South East Asia.
• To develop partnerships with third parties to support the internationalisation agenda.
• To value and foster our links with European universities, including exploring opportunities for staff and student exchange.

“The University of Suffolk plays a pivotal role in the growth and development of Suffolk and the reputation of our county both nationally and internationally. The institution has challenged and developed perceptions of higher education locally and continues to contribute substantial value and credibility to Suffolk as a whole.”

Sue Roper
Assistant Director
Economy, Skills and Environment Directorate
Suffolk County Council

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Sue Roper
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Curriculum and Growth

Academic teaching is centred around the two Faculties which work inclusively within the Learning Network. The two Faculties are split into seven Departments, each with its own personality and ethos which is reflected in its portfolio of courses. New courses with demonstrable student and employer demand are required in all areas in the lifetime of this plan.

The Faculty of Arts, Business and Applied Social Science will embed a multi-disciplinary philosophy into its curriculum. It will encourage students to become rounded individuals, curious, informed and educated about the wider world and their place within it. The Faculty will develop students who will graduate ‘business ready’ and who are ready to contribute positively as active citizens in a rapidly changing world. To accomplish this the Faculty will further encourage interdisciplinary study, inter-professional practice and inter-department curricula.

Within the Faculty of Health and Science, there will be opportunities for innovation and growth in many key areas of provision. Shortfalls in the nursing and medical workforce are likely to continue and will create opportunities for innovation and responsive course-design, as well as higher apprenticeships and foundation degrees to supply the local and regional workforce. There will be increased demand for local delivery, flexible programmes and non-traditional entry routes. Changes to the funding of health professional education may be challenging in the short term but will require new, more responsive and direct relationships with health service employers and we will continue to build strong, sustainable and productive partnerships through which to grow our academic portfolio. Rising demand for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects and increased focus on innovative digital and smart systems as a driver for economic growth are stimulating opportunities in key areas of development in Science and Technology. Our current successful partnerships with industry will be consolidated and developed and will provide the impetus for new programme design and research. Plans for technological solutions to problems within the health and social care sectors, and their focus on wellbeing and prevention of ill health, will create opportunities for the intersection of health with digital technology and with sports science.

Strategic Objectives

- To drive and deliver significant student number growth in all areas.
- To provide a portfolio of high-quality, state-of-the-art, innovative courses.
- To offer creative and efficient teaching and assessment practices.
- To achieve enhanced student employability through a focus on applied skills and knowledge.
- To validate programmes that are attractive to students in a competitive marketplace and that recruit well.
- To deliver a high-quality student experience through innovation in learning and teaching.
- To ensure our curriculum prepares our students for life in a global world.
- To work with key stakeholders in the development of our curriculum portfolio.
The University of Suffolk is committed to the highest standards of governance, which is vital to achieving the organisation’s vision and strategic objectives. Throughout its governance and management, the institution subscribes to the Nolan principles which are the basis for the ethical standards expected in public life.

We are committed to an ongoing review of our management structures and processes to ensure that they remain fit for purpose within a constantly changing, external environment. We will ensure that all governance and management committees operate in a flexible, responsive and innovative manner.

Long-term sustainability will be reinforced through the careful monitoring of the institution’s performance and systems of internal control, and the active engagement of Board members in its committees and sub-groups. Business plans for continued growth will incorporate broader aspects of the sustainability agenda such as social and environmental impacts.

The Finance strategy aims to deliver long-term financial sustainability for the institution, whilst supporting the delivery of its overarching strategy. We plan to significantly grow our annual income over the next five years, largely driven by student number growth, but opportunities to grow income from diverse sources, including from partnership working, will also play an important part.

Building on its strong track record of controlling costs, the University will continue to secure value for money from all of its activities and will actively explore opportunities for sharing costs with partners where appropriate. We will continue to generate operational cash surpluses to support investment in the delivery of the institution’s strategic objectives.

Strategic Objectives

• To reaffirm our commitment to academic freedom.
• To achieve excellence through an ongoing review of management structures and processes.
• To ensure that the composition of our governance and management committees is representative.
• To ensure the long term sustainability of the institution through careful scrutiny of reports on performance and internal control, and the active engagement of Board members, who bring a wide range of skills to its committees and sub-groups.
• To increase annual income through student growth.
• To increase income from research, enterprise and philanthropic sources.
• To ensure sufficient cash is in place to deliver the investment strategy.
• To ensure budgets, forecasts and financial results meet the requirements of the University’s financing covenants.
Infrastructure

Our Estates and IT systems are fundamental to the University’s capacity to deliver a high-quality student experience, as well as supporting the delivery of first-class teaching and research services.

We will proactively deliver and maintain a cost-effective, fit-for-purpose and inspirational higher education campus that will attract students to study at the University of Suffolk, as well as contributing significantly to their experience, through the provision of high quality student facilities.

To achieve this, significant changes will be required in the next five years which will involve the construction of new buildings, the upgrading of outdated buildings, and the decommissioning of buildings that are no longer fit-for-purpose. Close collaboration with partners and innovative financial models will be explored to help deliver the required campus development.

We will enhance the utilisation of all our buildings, and deliver continual improvements in energy consumption and carbon emissions. In delivering facilities services to staff and students, high service-standards will be maintained, including an appropriate balance of in-house and contracted-out provision.

IT Services will ensure that the services and infrastructure enhance the student experience, drive up satisfaction levels and equip students with the skills they need to enter the contemporary employment market. The IT infrastructure will be flexible and responsive in supporting innovative approaches to learning and teaching, and will provide a high-quality service for distance learners.

Developments in information technology can drive both cultural and business process change. We will provide students with an experience which prepares them for the future workplace. Our strategy is therefore outward-looking and future investments will be informed by an assessment of those developments which will have the greatest positive impact on the student experience and on delivering cost-effective business services.

**Strategic Objectives**

- To increase the proportion of buildings which are in a high-quality condition.
- To reduce the gross internal floor area per staff and student FTE.
- To improve the utilisation rate of timetabled teaching space.
- To reduce carbon emissions per square metre per student.
- To exceed the satisfaction levels of our benchmark institutions measured by the National Student Survey.
- To exceed the cost effectiveness of our benchmark institutions.
In Summary

The University of Suffolk, over the next five years, will:

- Have a larger, more diverse student and staff body.
- Be student-focused with inspirational learning and teaching.
- Have high levels of graduate employment and student satisfaction.
- Be established as a distinctive ‘Community Impact’ university.
- Have widened access to higher education in the region.
- Create a more international community.
- Be embedded in and drive the local economy.
- Have significant research strengths.
- Demonstrate shared values across a collaborative network.
- Further develop our Waterfront Campus, with distinctive inspirational architecture.
- Be acknowledged as a model for equality and diversity.