

# **EAST OF ENGLAND RECOVERY, RENEWAL AND GROWTH**



# Contents

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Foreward

- 1 Background
- 2 Purpose of This Report
- 3 How We Approached Regional Analysis for the Recovery Phase
- 4 Wider Regional Recovery Work Plan
- 5 Next Steps

## Foreward

Cllr Linda Haysey  
Chair of the East of England Local Government  
Association, Leader of East Herts District Council.



Against a global backdrop of the greatest public health crisis in a century, we as a nation, and the East of England as a region, have had to respond to a range of new challenges. These challenges have impacted our economy, fundamentally changing many of the financial conditions that we previously took for granted in shaping our future plans for the region.

The pandemic has impacted our citizens in countless ways, affecting education, jobs, industries, and livelihoods, our health and wellbeing, our ability to access the services and support we need to go about our lives, and has touched upon everything from how we socialise or gather in public, to how we interact with our families. The legacy this will have on everyone who has lived through this period will be profound.

Despite this, it has not all been negative. Covid-19 has, in many ways, liberated us from some of the things we have traditionally accepted, or have been too slow to transform. These are changes that in 'normal' times would have taken years to deliver, but we have done this in a matter of months, or weeks, or days in some cases.

We have seen some major changes to the way that we work during this time, too, that have impacted on the way we collaborate as professionals and organisations, or the way we connect with communities and work with the region's most vulnerable people. I personally have experienced a step-change in how my local authority makes political decisions, with technology and digital solutions taking a leading role, in ways where they simply did not exist before.

As a sector and a region we now have the opportunity to set a course for our "new normal"; to reshape our economy, to think again about what we mean by wellbeing, to walk away from the "always-on" culture of the office, to work in new, collaborative, and more innovative ways, and embed some of the rapid transformations we have achieved for the longer term.

Our citizens will have a new perspective and different and evolving needs following this seismic shock to our way of life. This means a fundamental change in how we, and all our partners in the public and private sector, engage and support them in the next phase of our development as a society.

We are likely to have to manage the complex twin-track of Covid response and Covid recovery for many months to come. This means a further period of exceptionally hard decisions about priorities (finances, services, policies) and our strategies for the medium term, nationally and locally.

As Chair of EELGA, I have worked with our officers and members to bring the whole sector and its strategic partners together to discuss and tackle these issues, through a really superb virtual collaboration programme over the summer of 2020.

As a result, we have been able to capture in real-time, experiences and insights and evidence from across many of the East of England's stakeholders, to inform next steps, and take our recovery approach and regional collaboration forward.

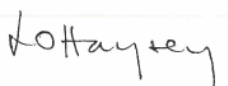
This paper sets out the proposed shape of our recovery from Covid-19 as the East of England, at this early stage. It outlines:

- Our asks of government
- Our offer to government as a region
- What we as the local government sector can deliver and lead on for ourselves
- How we will support other strategic partners, as they in turn support our sector objectives.

We want the East of England region to articulate a really clear and cohesive strategy, one which is designed and delivered in partnership, and to focus our efforts on those actions that have maximum impact and benefit - so our communities can be the best they can be.

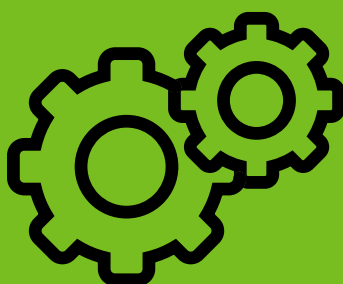
Our asks of government do not shy away from the difficulties we face in terms of attracting and delivering critical infrastructure, sustaining our finances in order to keep our services open, running, and transforming, or the additional flexibilities and policy changes we aim to influence to give our sector more ability to effect lasting change at a local level.

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in this process; for bringing an open mind, a willingness to collaborate and share lessons learned/what's working, your energy and fresh, and new ideas, and for joining us on our journey towards a new normal for the East of England.



Cllr Linda Haysey

Chair of the East of England Local Government Association,  
Leader of East Herts District Council.



# 1. Background

## 1.1 The East of England - An Engine of Prosperity

In 2019 the East of England was one of the fastest-growing regions in the UK, in terms of both population size and economy. Investment in research and development within the region's business sector was at the second-highest level of any region in the UK, greater even than London, meaning that in 2019 the East of England was one of only three UK regions to contribute more to the Exchequer than it was receiving in public money.

These strengths, taken together with the fact that the region has a rich tapestry of 50 local authorities and their diverse communities, with eight leading universities, and thirteen major international transport hubs, demonstrate that the East of England is already an engine for prosperity. We must not lose sight of this as we embark on a period of national, regional and local renewal.

## 1.2 The Impact of Covid-19

Despite our strong foundations and track record, of innovation, resilience and growth, and as partners with a good history of collaborative working, responding to the immediate and longer-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has presented enormous challenges, across all aspects of our society, for both the public and private sectors. The pandemic has abruptly halted and reset aspects of the progress we were making prior to March 2020, and many things will never be as they were before.



## 2. Purpose of this Report

This report focuses on the period of recovery and renewal ahead, from the perspective of the local government sector and its work in partnerships across the East of England region.

During the summer of 2020, we have been examining what the opportunities and constraints will be for the sector during the next 12 to 24 months and where we should focus our collective resources to achieve the best outcomes for the citizens we serve.

It is by no means certain that during this period the risk posed by Covid-19 will be reduced or eliminated (e.g. even with population-wide vaccination), and there will be many other factors (many currently unknown) that will impact the recovery phase for councils and society as a whole.

Our approach and work plan, therefore, needs to be clear and credible, with a sound direction and vision at its core, providing a call to action across the sector. It will also need to be agile and resilient in case of a resurgence of Covid-19 specific risks if we encounter any other major emergency planning scenarios, and be adaptable to emerging government policy and other political developments in the medium term, including devolution and funding models for local government.

Our overall aim of this report is to:

- Build on the assets and track record of the East of England as an engine of prosperity.
- Capitalise on the learning we have experienced during this difficult time.
- Influence national policy and central government for the benefit of the East of England region.
- Develop, share and implement new approaches and best practice.
- Stop/change ways of working that were previous barriers or detrimental to our progress before the Covid-19 pandemic, and/or those that have been highlighted by, and proven to be so, during the pandemic.
- Have a co-produced, consolidated work plan for the local government sector and its partners, that everyone can support and progress.

### 3. How We Approached Regional Analysis for the Recovery Phase

To explore all of this, we have undertaken a systemic analysis, collaboratively, in partnership with key stakeholders across the region as a whole.

#### 3.1 The RSA Model

We set out to discover the learning and opportunities from the pandemic using a model of thinking developed by the RSA, (The Path from Crisis - <https://www.thersa.org/>) structuring our methodology under 3 key themes:

- Economic Recovery
- People and Communities
- New Ways of Working

We developed and applied a consistent set of lines of enquiry across all 3 themes and conducted a series of multiagency workshops, along with individual discussion, research and evidence gathering.

A detailed explanation of how we used the RSA model can be found at Appendix A.

The asks and actions arising from all these sessions have been reviewed and prioritised jointly, with the resulting output providing:

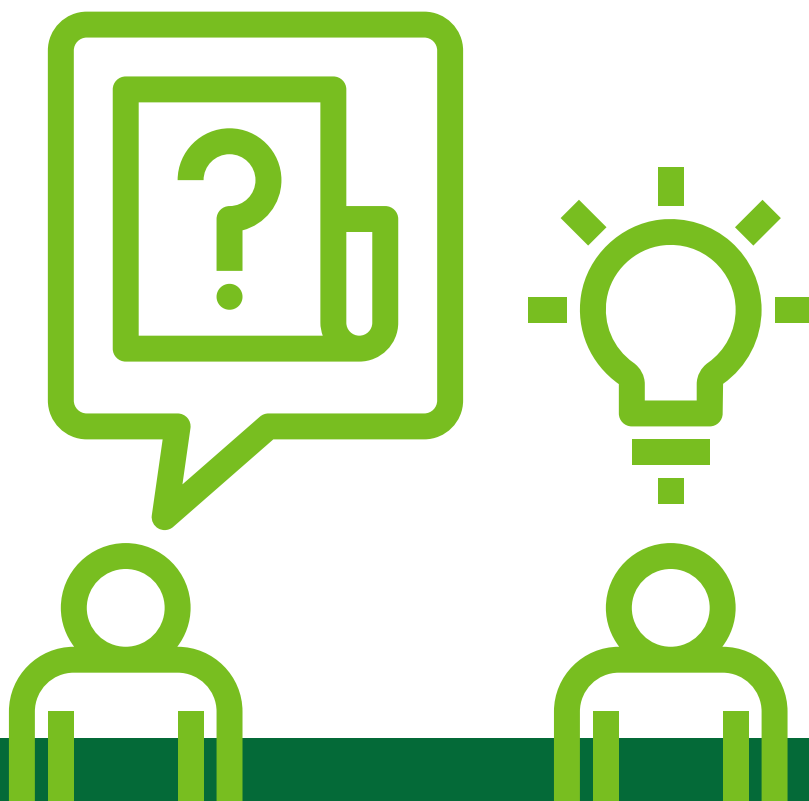
- **A set of specific outcomes for the region**  
for the recovery period, coproduced by the local government sector and its partners;
- **A regional workplan for the recovery period**  
coproduced by the local government sector and its partners. This comprises targeted activity for delivery by respective organisations, including councils and EELGA, other partners or other regional partnership routes;
- **A set of central government asks**  
for lobbying activity, to be coordinated regionally by EELGA, through mechanisms such as via the APPG and/or into government departments, and/or to influence national policy development.

Asks of government are outlined at Appendix B. These provide a proposed set of regional priorities for the local government sector and its regional partners in the East of England, and will act as the mandate for regional lobbying and influencing activities.

EELGA will prioritise the coordination of this effort, through its core offer to our members, its political panels, and its partnership working across the region over the next 12 to 24 months.

A range of other helpful actions was identified through the workshops, some are enablers to the asks of government that we can progress locally, others are further ideas to explore, and some are simple management tasks. These will be included in a broader workplan of activities, which EELGA will discharge in conjunction with member councils and regional partners.

Quarterly updates on our progress with the regional asks of government and the other more routine actions will be provided - via the EELGA management committee, EELGA member bulletins, via our website and regional partnership channels.





## 3.2 What Are the Key Themes Coming Through in Our Recovery Conversations?

Click on the individual boxes below to find more detail about the three themes.

### Economy and Infrastructure

- Infrastructure and Investment
- Support for Local Government
- Transport and Sustainability
- Support for Local Businesses
- Approaches to Regulation
- Climate Change
- Impact of EU Transition



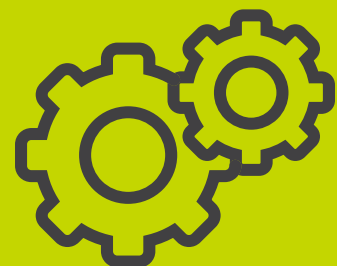
### People and Communities

- Community Capacity and Volunteering
- Homelessness and Housing Support
- Family Poverty and Vulnerability
- Mental Health Issues
- Collaborative Place Shaping
- Health and Social Care Collaboration
- Digital Innovation
- Stability of Care Markets



### Ways of Working

- Supporting Agile Ways of Working
- Managing and Supporting Portfolio Careers
- Enabling Collaboration Across the Region / Sector
- Compassionate and Courageous Leadership



### 3.3 Managing Asks of Government

Appendix B outlines what the asks of government from the East of England Recovery Forum are, alongside further developing a workplan for the region as a whole.

In order to ensure that the range of asks was representative of the views of all partners and that partners described in this paper are best placed to take ownership of the work, these asks have been reviewed by all stakeholders, via a series of webinars and wider discussion meetings in the late summer of 2020. Where possible, the views of all partners have been incorporated into the final report. Engagement with all key stakeholders provided the region with the assurance that any asks or actions either at a national, or regional level would not be duplicating key work that is already underway.

Click on the links in 3.2 to view a list of the asks of government under each theme. We will provide a quarterly update on progress against these asks on our website.

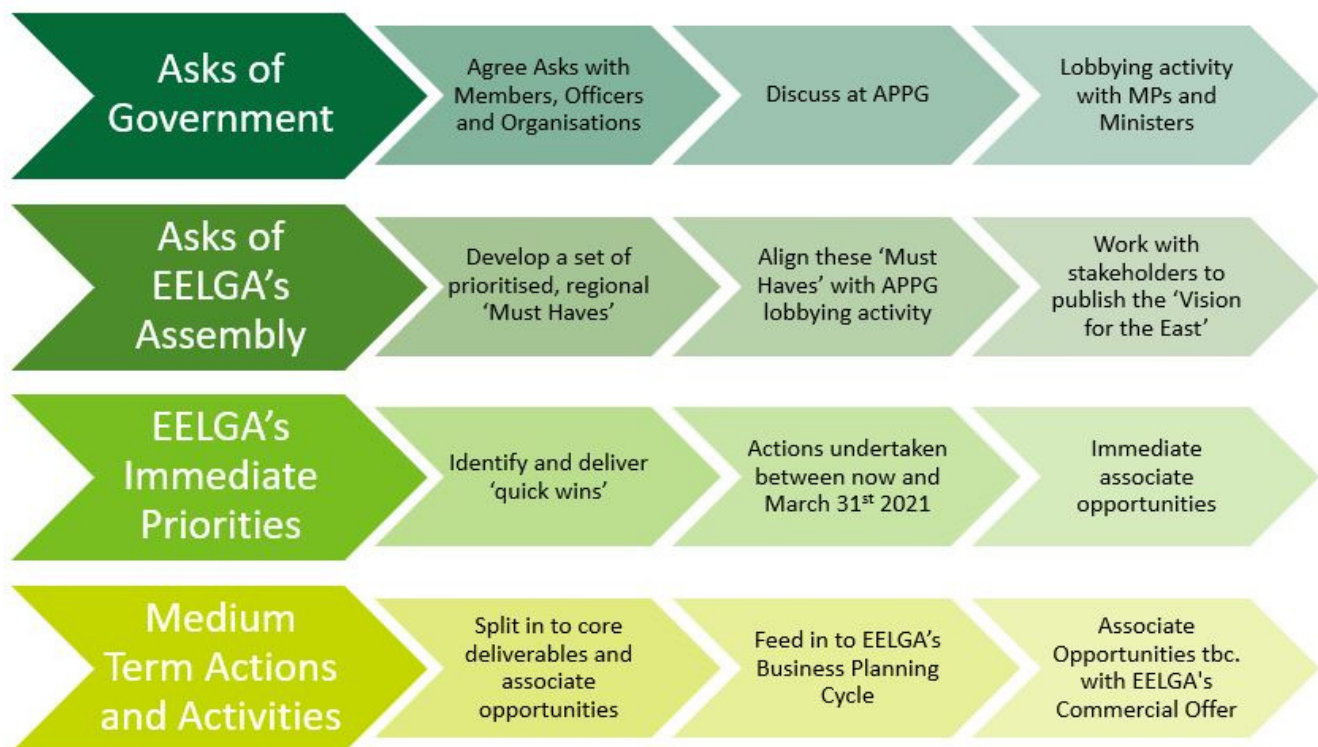
The notes of discussions held by the Recovery Forum, or the range of subgroups and thematic discussions, are available in the evidence pack supporting this paper.



## 4. Wider Regional Recovery Work Plan

Below are the actions to be taken in the short term.

Appendix D describes the programme plan over the next 12 to 24 months, where the diagram below sets out key milestones.



## 5. Next Steps

This report is not intended to be a final picture of the government asks and other workplan activities to be undertaken across the East of England. The actions in this report were signed off by EELGA's Management Committee in the autumn of 2020. There will be further follow up work to complete, with the next steps outlined below:

- The chairs of each EELGA panel will be briefed and supported by EELGA officers to adopt the actions arising into their existing and medium-term workplans;
- A plan of action in relation to the content and agenda planning for future APPG meetings will also be developed in conjunction with Devo Connect; the secretariat for the East of England All Party Parliamentary Group. This will also be shaped into the 'Vision for the East' document;
- The Managing Director of EELGA will direct the EELGA policy team in terms of ensuring the partnership related actions are communicated and adopted regionally;
- EELGA will maintain the overall workplan and action log and will put in place a process to receive regular updates at each EELGA Management Committee meeting as well as provide updates more broadly via the EELGA website and our regular suite of e-bulletins;
- EELGA will be looking to explore the further impacts of a prolonged pandemic period by revisiting this recovery plan in the spring.

## **Appendix**

[Appendix A - RSA Model](#)

[Appendix B - Detailed Asks of Government](#)

[Appendix C - Definitions of Key Themes](#)

[Appendix D - Next Steps Headline Programme Plan](#)

[Appendix E - Building on What We Do Well: Case Studies](#)

## Partners

**With thanks to all of those involved in the planning and development of the Recovery Plan for the East of England:**

Anglia Water	Hutchinson Ports UK
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils	Ipswich Borough Council
Basildon Borough Council	Luton Borough Council
Bedford Borough Council	Maldon District Council
Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk	New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership
Braintree District Council	NHS England
Breckland District Council	Norfolk County Council
Brentwood Borough Council	North Hertfordshire District Council
Broadland District Council	North Norfolk District Council
Broxbourne Borough Council	Norwich City Council
Cambridge City Council	Peterborough City Council
Cambridgeshire County Council	Public Health England
Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and South	Rochford District Council
Lincolnshire Mind	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Castle Point Borough Council	South East Local Enterprise Partnership
Central Bedfordshire Council	South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership
Chelmsford City Council	South Norfolk Council
Colchester Borough Council	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Community Action Suffolk	St Albans District Council
Dacorum Borough Council	Stevenage Borough Council
East Cambridgeshire District Council	Suffolk County Council
East Hertfordshire District Council	Suffolk Libraries
East of England Local Government Association	Tendring District Council
East Suffolk Council	Three Rivers District Council
England's Economic Heartland	Thurrock Council
Epping Forest District Council	Transport East
Essex County Council	Uttlesford District Council
Fenland District Council	Watford Borough Council
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Harlow District Council	West Suffolk Council
Hertfordshire County Council	
Hertsmere Borough Council	
Huntingdonshire District Council	

**With particular thanks to Lisa Faulkner, Ian Reekie and Mike Hammond from the EELGA Talent Bank who led on some of these key discussions, their profiles can be found using the following links:**

[Lisa Faulkner](#)

[Ian Reekie](#)

[Mike Hammond](#)

## The East of England Local Government Association

"Supporting our member councils to be the best that they can be for their communities"

The East of England LGA is a politically-led, cross party organisation which works on behalf of the 50 local councils in the East of England to harness their collective strength.

### General enquiries:

Email: [info@eelga.gov.uk](mailto:info@eelga.gov.uk)

### East of England Local Government Association

West Suffolk House

Western Way

Bury St Edmunds

Suffolk, IP33 3YU

