

The Independent Commission on the Future of Brandon - first meeting 7 April 2025

12.30-3.30pm, Brandon Country Park

Meeting notes

1. The Independent Commission on the Future of Brandon's first formal meeting took place in the historical Engine House in beautiful Brandon Country Park.
2. Mark Pragnell, Chair of the Brandon commission, opened the session by explaining the purpose and objectives. The commission, funded by but independent of West Suffolk Council, is a body of expert advisers and stakeholders exploring options to shape Brandon as a place where communities and businesses can thrive. It will provide evidence-based and locally grounded advice to guide the future development of Brandon. This initiative aims to balance options that will best grow the prosperity and enhance the wellbeing of current and future residents, while recognising and protecting the sensitive ecological and environmental characteristics of the town and wider area in which it is located. The commission's Terms of Reference, Memorandum of Understanding and outline nine-month schedule were endorsed. (See [Brandon commission](#) webpage.)
3. Mark introduced four further commissioners, Tim Cowan, David Harris, Professor Emma Lees and Dr Becky Thomas, who will provide a mix of local knowledge and technical expertise across business, ecology, economy and planning law; a sixth and final local resident commissioner is to be confirmed shortly. In addition, those attending the meeting included representatives from West Suffolk Council, Brandon Town Council, a neighbouring council, a housing provider, landowner and RAF Lakenheath.
4. The meeting received a detailed briefing from officers of West Suffolk Council that explained the context and rationale for the establishment of the commission. Presentations were delivered on: Brandon's economy; the ecological significance of Brandon and environs; planning applications, demand, constraints and future plans; and the interim results of an online survey of Brandon residents, workers and visitors.
5. **Next steps:** The commission is inviting stakeholders to contribute their views and evidence, including at the second Brandon commission meeting that will take place on Monday 19 May, 12.30 to 3.30pm, at Brandon Town Council offices.