

1st East URC



Date Established : Incorporated March 2005. Launched January 2006

Core Partners

East of England Development Agency, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Norfolk County Council, Suffolk County Council, Waveney District Council, and English Partnerships

Board members 16 + 1 observer

Chair Richard Wright

Chief Executive Officer Philip Watkins

Staff Numbers 5

Business Plan Period 2008-2011

URC Area 600ha

Population

Waveney District has a population of 114,400 and Great Yarmouth Borough 92,300 (ONS 2004). However, the URC Area is only a small part of each town, comprising mainly brownfield land along the river frontage and has a small fraction of the population of each town. Population estimates are 2,500 in the Lowestoft URC Area and 3,800 in the Great Yarmouth URC Area.



General Overview

2007/8 marked the year when the emphasis for 1st East switched towards delivery. New organisational structures were implemented to aid delivery. A cross-town director level group has been formed to look at strategic issues common to both Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth. This group will look at single tariff schemes; design panel; regional infrastructure priorities; EU funding etc. New town-specific working groups have been formed that will look at delivery priorities and provide an opportunity for wider officer participation. 2007/8 saw the Power Park implementation team formed – a public/private sector grouping interested in developing the cluster of energy related businesses in Lowestoft around Orbis Energy.

A major promotion was held in Westminster. 1st East held an event at the House of Commons hosted by Bob Blizzard and Tony Wright MP to showcase the development opportunities to be realised in Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth. More than 100 local, regional and national property developers, investors and architects attended to see the ambitious regeneration plans, meet with key partners and talk to 1st East staff and board members. Housing Minister Yvette Cooper MP and the Chair of EEDA both spoke at the event.

Following the second round of major public consultation, the analysis was completed on the 1100 responses and work began with partners on the allocation of tasks to make the AAP robust prior to submission to the Secretary of State.

In terms of 1st East's organisational development, a major success was the announcement that English Partnerships, the national regeneration agency, was supporting the URC by joining the Board and the provision of substantial core funding and enhanced access to regeneration project funding. This brought 1st East's funding levels up to national benchmarks.

Area of Operation

Strategic Framework Overview

1st East, the Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth Urban Regeneration Company was formed in March 2005 by a partnership comprising:

- East of England Development Agency; (EEDA)
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council; (GYBC)
- Norfolk County Council; (NCC)
- Suffolk County Council; (SCC) and
- Waveney District Council (WDC)

In September 2007, English Partnerships (EP), the national regeneration agency joined the partnership providing core funding and with Director representation on 1st East Board.

URC's are Special Purpose Vehicles set up by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now the Department for Communities and Local Government) bringing together national, regional and local regeneration bodies into a partnership, thus aligning the hierarchy of policies and focussing public assets and powers. 1st East aims to accelerate the pace of change, bringing forward development more rapidly through interventions in marginal markets.

1st East was formed to address the high levels of unemployment and social deprivation in Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth caused by the loss of traditional industries and a failure to replace them with a service-led economy. Low employment, low population growth and low-skilled jobs have brought predictable consequences, with low average wages, low skills base and low rates of entrepreneurship. As a result, the two towns have fallen behind the rest of the East of England (and Norfolk and Suffolk in particular) in terms of economic performance. The two towns account for 25% of all the unemployed people in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Unemployment also correlates with other measures of deprivation. Great Yarmouth has the second worst Super Output Area in the whole country (out of 32,482) ranked by unemployment; this SOA also ranks 64th worst by health measures, 158th by income, 374th by education, 2600th by crime and 3504th by living environment. This pattern of deprivation is broadly repeated across the worst inner wards of both towns and strongly suggests that if the unemployment was tackled successfully, these other measures of deprivation would also be influenced.

1st East aims up to regenerate the large areas of physical dereliction left behind by the contraction of the traditional employment base – especially fishing, manufacturing and food processing –and, in so doing, address the changing nature of existing sectors – such as oil and gas activity – and to attract new employment generating investment to the towns. This physical dereliction, concentrated in a small part of each town, is both the biggest challenge and the biggest opportunity for the two towns, covering around 600 hectares of land with approximately 26 km of waterfront. Maps of the assigned URC Area in each town are shown on the following pages.

The hierarchy of planning documents that will form the statutory Development Plan for the area are in production:

- the East of England Plan (draft Regional Spatial Strategy RSS14) sets the spatial Framework for the region as a whole up to 2021. Until it is adopted in 2007 it must be considered alongside the Norfolk and Suffolk Structure Plans. The Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth areas are identified as priority areas for regeneration. The vision for the sub region is to:
 - “promote” the comprehensive regeneration of the sub-region by building on its unique qualities and its links with the rest of Europe through an urban renaissance and other initiatives to harness established strengths and realise leading edge technologies, protect and enhance the natural environment and encourage the environmental economy
 - both towns are in the process of adopting the Government's new planning regime in the form of a Local Development Framework to replace the existing Local Plan. The LDF comprises a Core Strategy and a number of supplementary planning documents. The Council's Core Strategy must precede all supplementary planning documents in the document adoption process, and at the time of writing, both Waveney District Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council have approved their Core Strategy in Draft, completed the second stage Public Consultation and are preparing the documents for submission to the Secretary of State for approval.
 - Area Action Plans (one of the new types of supplementary planning documents) have been prepared for the Lowestoft URC Area and for the Great Yarmouth URC Area. These documents have been adopted by the Councils in draft on 19 October and 2 November 2006 respectively, completed the second stage Public Consultation and are being prepared for submission to the Secretary of State for approval. When adopted by the local council, the AAP will form part of the LDF and will therefore have the legal status of a “development plan”.
 - the AAPs seek to provide a coherent strategy and concept for the whole of each URC Area, to demonstrate how the significant areas of vacant and underutilised land can be revived and regenerated within a concentrated timeframe. It will focus on priority areas for implementation and will seek to:
 - address barriers to delivery e.g. land ownership or infrastructure constraints;

- act as a catalyst for development and a mechanism for co-ordinating public/private sector co-operation;
- specify and co-ordinate requirements for new infrastructure and services;
- provide a mechanism for controlling development, to ensure it is of an appropriate scale, mix and quality;
- provide a delivery framework for co-ordinating public sector investment and programmes for the area; and
- provide a spatial dimension to other local authority initiatives – for example, the Community Strategy – thereby helping to deliver urban renaissance, realise leading edge technologies and end encourage the environmental economy, as set out in the RSS Vision above.

The vision for 1st East reflects the Vision contained in the Waveney District and Great Yarmouth Borough Council's respective Core Strategies:

“Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth will become great places to live, work and visit, building on the unique opportunities of their east coast locations. At the heart of our vision is a determination to provide a supportive culture for business, and to develop a particular expertise in the environmental economy, on and offshore. People who value their environment, place and quality of life will want to live here. The two towns will be confident of their role and function and free of the need for any special assistance status.”

The goals for 1st East are:

- employment led regeneration;
- broaden the base of economic activity;
- re-use of brownfield land;
- reconnect town and waterfronts; and
- identify catalyst projects & infrastructure needs.

There are a number of shared objectives for the two towns and the sub-region, which are derived from this overriding Vision and Goals. The shared objectives then lead to more specific objectives for each of the two towns, which are developed within this overriding framework. The shared objectives are as follows:

- to generate economic and social activity, leading to sustainable social and economic regeneration;
- to create attractive towns in which to live, work and invest;
- to manage the changing relationship between the Port and town in both locations;
- to realise the potential of the waterfront asset by re-connecting the towns with their waterways;
- to set high standards of urban and landscape design quality for the future by encouraging innovation; and
- to foster strong economic / community linkages within the sub-region, and externally with continental Europe.

A number of public sector projects at various stages of development have been ‘captured’ into the AAP with the intention that they provide the catalyst for wider regeneration. Examples are:

- Waveney Campus is creating a large office and laboratory complex on vacant brown field land to house Waveney District Council, Cefas (Centre for the Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Sciences), and part of Suffolk County Council;
- EEDA funded Orbis Energy Centre is an energy efficient landmark building to stimulate and showcase the development of the offshore renewable energy sector;
- EastPort, Great Yarmouth’s new outer harbour, will be capable of handling a three-times daily freight and passenger ferry service to and from Ijmuiden in The Netherlands and also accommodate much larger cargo vessels than currently; and
- EEDA’s Saul’s Wharf site in Great Yarmouth as a housing project demonstrating sustainable development.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Waveney District Council have been co-operating and sharing common elements of work during preparation of their new-style Local Development Frameworks. The two Core Strategy documents must precede all supplementary planning documents; both Waveney District Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council have approved their Core Strategy in Draft, completed the second stage Public Consultation and are preparing the documents for submission to the Secretary of State in November 2007.

- 1st East’s masterplan process has shadowed the Core Strategy process aiming to generate an Area Action Plan for each town with each stage following as close behind the Core Strategy as practicable.

The AAPs seek to provide a coherent strategy and concept for the whole of each URC Area, to demonstrate how the significant areas of vacant and underutilised land can be revived and regenerated within a concentrated timeframe. They focus on priority areas for implementation and will seek to:

- address barriers to delivery e.g. land ownership or infrastructure constraints;
- act as a catalyst for development and a mechanism for co-ordinating public/private sector co-operation;
- specify and co-ordinate requirements for new infrastructure and services;
- provide a mechanism for controlling development, to ensure it is of an appropriate scale, mix and quality;
- provide a delivery framework for co-ordinating public sector investment and programmes for the area; and
- reflect the spatial implications of the two Local Strategic Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategies.

The Area Action Plan identifies six challenges as common to both towns:

- to generate economic and social activity, leading to sustainable social and economic regeneration;
- to create attractive towns in which to live, work and invest;
- to manage the changing relationship between the Port and town in both locations;
- to realise the potential of the waterfront asset by re-connecting the towns with their waterways;
- to set high standards of urban and landscape design quality for the future by encouraging innovation; and
- to foster strong economic / community linkages within the sub-region, and externally with continental Europe.

It also identifies some specific challenges facing either town, which are spatial but non-site specific:

Lowestoft

- to re-connect the historic town to the sea;
- to revitalise the Outer Harbour;
- to re-connect the town centre and Lake Lothing;
- to improved north-south connectivity; and
- to transform the Inner Harbour.

Great Yarmouth

- to integrate EastPort;
- to develop attractive entrances to the town; and
- to improved accessibility.

It then identifies specific Key Intervention Areas, six in each town, together with a number of other interventions areas.

Intervention Areas - Lowestoft

Key Intervention Areas 2008/9 Developments

Immediate Priorities

Kirkley Waterfront

Good quality research orientated business park including Waveney Campus

Brooke Peninsula

High quality residential-led mixed use development

Peto Square (South)

On the south side of the lake, new homes, retail and public realm likely to incorporate Horn Hill and linking to the future development of Peto Square (North)

East of England Park

A high tech energy cluster linked to OrbisEnergy and a longer term development of a new tourist offer centred on Ness Point being the most easterly point of the UK

Oswald's Boatyard

Although not distinctly identified in the AAP as a priority intervention area is a private sector lead initiative which has been shaped by 1st East and is delivering in accordance with the AAP

Medium Term

Fishers' Wharf

New town destination with waterfront access, restaurants, new homes, retail, leisure and marine developments

Peto Square (North)

New town centre square with new homes, retail and public realm with scope for restoration of heritage buildings and new build against the waterfront location

Long Term

Lothing Crossing

Options for a proposed new crossing of Lake Lothing opening up former industrial areas and reducing town centre congestion

Outputs Forecast from Intervention Areas

	Residential Units	Commercial Space (sq m)	Brownfield Land
Lowestoft Intervention Areas			
East of England Park/ Power Park		10,000	
Fishers' Wharf	180	16,065	
Peto Square	380	25,666	
Kirkley Waterfront	350	10,000 plus Waveney Campus	
Brooke Peninsula	550	5,000	
Total	1,460	66,731	45 ha
Great Yarmouth Intervention Areas			
Runham Broad	80	17,661	
North Quay	440	30,000	
Bure Harbour Quay	210		
Ice House Quay	1,200	14,175	
South Denes		30,000 plus 40,000 EastPort	
Total	2,020	131,836	75 ha
Grand Total	3,480	198,567	120 ha

Good News Opportunities For The Year Ahead

- Construction of EastPort continues apace.
- Orbis Energy business incubator (£9m public sector project) topped out in April 2008 and due to open August 2008;
- English Partnerships now on the Board bringing specific skill set and resource capability to the two towns in addition to on-going funding commitment
- announcement of EEDA South Denes disposal with receipts rolled back into priority projects (September 2008);
- continued promotion of the development opportunities in Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth to landowners, developers and investors
- Waveney Campus. Land assembly complete. Start of site. £52m public sector investment.

Links to Other Programmes

Adoption of public realm design codes from InteGreat and Waveney Sunrise programmes.

Evaluation/ Succession Planning

To be undertaken in March 2010

Direct Output	Lifetime	Achieved up to 31/3/08	% of lifetime outputs
Public Sector investment (£m)	43.8	9.5	21.7
Private Sector investment (£m)	42.1	7.8	18.5
Commercial Floor Space (sq m)	218,000	0	0
Jobs Created	3,000	0	0
Housing Units	3,900	0	0
Land brought back into use (ha)	2,790	0	0
Brokered Output	Lifetime	Achieved up to 31/3/08	% of lifetime outputs
Public Sector investment (£m)	<i>No</i>	<i>information</i>	<i>provided</i>
Private Sector investment (£m)	0	0	0
Commercial Floor Space (sq m)	0	0	0
Jobs Created	0	0	0
Housing Units	0	0	0
Land brought back into use (ha)	0	0	0

Finance

Income and Expenditure account for 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008

	Budget Annual £000	Forecast Outturn £000
Income/Funding	<i>No</i>	815.0
Expenditure	<i>information</i>	560.7
Surplus/Deficit	<i>provided</i>	254.3