

ECONOMIC STATE OF THE REGION AND RESPONSE: EAST OF ENGLAND

ORGANISATION: SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL	DATE: 13th March 2009
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STATE OF THE REGION <i>(n.b. qualitative and quantitative, include feedback on impact of new initiatives etc.)</i>	RESPONSE
<p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>E.g. commercial, funding, repossessions</i> • A development on Ipswich waterfront is one of a number around the country suspected to be involved in a £40million fraud. Up to 70 new-build flats were thought to be involved in the Ipswich fraud. It is believed con artists bulk-purchased Orwell Quay apartments at massive discounts and made huge sums by taking out fake mortgages at over-inflated prices, leaving them to pocket the difference. Kevan Lim, Labour county councillor for St Helens in Ipswich, has now written to Andrea Hill and James Hehir, the respective chief executives of Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Borough Council, urging them help those renting the properties affected. EADT 12/3/09 • 	<p>Current activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>E.g. programmes, announcements, casestudies</i>

Employment

- *E.g. skills, training, redundancies, R2R, closures, recruitment freezes, short-time working etc.*
- Two major businesses have their sights set on the redevelopment of a former Ipswich factory which could create up to 1,000 jobs. The companies are in advanced talks with the owners of the Crane Fluid Systems site in Nacton Road and a full planning application could be submitted by the end of April. It has led to renewed speculation that an Ikea store may be coming to the town, but planning chiefs said they were not aware of any interest from the furniture company. EADT 12/3/09
- A £2.3m hotel was officially opened in Lowestoft in early March - eight months after endangered newts brought building work to a standstill. The 47 room Travelodge, off Leisure Way, was opened by Lowestoft mayor Frank Mortimer. It was due to open in time for Christmas, but the project was delayed last year when great crested newts - which are protected by law - were found living in a pond on the site and had to be moved. The new hotel - one of five from Travelodge as part of an £18m expansion scheme - has created 12 full-time jobs in the town. EDP 10/3/09
- Job Centre Plus has reported no new redundancies in Suffolk this week. As a result, the running total of redundancies since October 2008, recorded from local press, intelligence and JCP returns remains at **2,689**. JCP 6/3/09
- Telecommunications firm BT has announced a move to freeze all staff pay this year as a result of the economic downturn. Over 3,500 people are employed at BT's Martlesham headquarters alone. EADT 11/3/09

Reprioritisation

- *E.g. stopping, reshaping, new initiatives, including preparations for economic recovery*

Business (n.b. SMEs, larger businesses)

- E.g. support, funding, business-specific intelligence, exports, start-ups, growing/vulnerable sectors, investment plans/cancelled plans
- The Arc centre in Bury St Edmunds has surpassed trading targets in the first week of opening. Centre bosses at the Arc in Bury St Edmunds have described opening week sales figures as “remarkable” in the current economic climate and praised the reaction of shoppers and traders alike. The Arc opened last Thursday to great fanfare with thousands flocking to the historic town's latest shopping attraction during the opening weekend. And figures have showed that the initial optimism and enthusiasm has continued through the week with flagship store Debenhams reporting a 55% increase on predicted targets.



- National manufacturing output decreased by 6.4% in the three months to January 2009 compared with the three months to October 2008 and was 10.4% lower against the same three month period a year ago. Approximately 11% of jobs in Suffolk are related to the manufacturing sector. ONS 10/3/09

Additional requirements

- E.g. policies, flexibilities

Business (cont.)

- Regional media business Archant has announced a fall in operating profits for the year to December 31, 2008, against a background of continuing economic uncertainty and declining advertising revenues in all major categories. Archant, whose titles including the East Anglian Daily Times, saw turnover from ongoing operations fall by 9.2% to £174.0million, compared with £191.6million in 2007. Total operating profits fell by 27.1% to £22.2million, against £30.5million the previous year, despite a 6.4% reduction in operating costs. EADT 10/3/09

Other

- *E.g. other economic shocks, at risk/reprioritisation projects, social impacts*

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