

ECONOMIC STATE OF THE REGION AND RESPONSE: EAST OF ENGLAND

ORGANISATION: SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL	DATE: 27th February 2009
---------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------

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> • January 2009 housing data • Land Registry (Suffolk data) - Prices continue to fall (by £2,915) in Suffolk, this month at a slower rate than for December and November. (£4,166 and £5,099). Current average price is now £149,382, the last time prices were this low was October 2004. • Nationwide (national data) suggests that prices fell overall, with an average price decrease in January of £2,755, leaving the average price at £147,746. • Halifax reported an increase at a national level in January, but are yet to produce an update showing if this was a one-off or if a trend will emerge. • Mortgage repossessions in Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds have increased by 22% (to 589) and 17% (to 373) over the four quarters of 2008 compared to the same period in 2007. Over Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk as a whole, the figure was 10% (to a total of 4,639). Ministry of Justice Statistics Bulletin 20/2/09 	<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.*
- **Redundancy information from Job Centre Plus:**
- **Vindis Car Sales, of Woolpit, Bury St Edmunds**, has made 13 redundancies.
- **Howarth, Bury St Edmunds**, timber and construction, has made 25 redundancies this week.
- **HTK Ltd, of Ipswich**, next generation interactive media services, has made 3 redundancies. JCP 20/2/09
- **These job losses bring the Suffolk running total since October 2008 to c.2,595**

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*
- Ipswich Building Society has benefited from the turmoil in the banking sector by reporting a record inflow of savings for 2008, accompanied by buoyant lending activity and stable, low arrears. The society attracted £34 million of savings during the year, with savings balance increasing overall by 10%. It also continued to offer a range of mortgage products, with lending totalling £80 million across 813 mortgages, of which more than a third involved shared ownership. The society retained more than 68% of its existing borrowers and was recently highlighted as one of only 10 lenders still offering loans up to 90% of the property value. Its overall balance of mortgages has now grown by 23% in the last 3 years, and it says it continues to have a low level of arrears as a result of "prudent" lending. Paul Winter, chief executive, said: "Our natural caution, coupled with deft financial control, means we not only occupy a far healthier financial position than many other institutions today, but that we are also well placed to maintain our financial strength in the future." EADT 25/2/09
- University College London (UCL) has proposed relocating its BT Adastral Park postgraduate campus in Martlesham Heath, near Ipswich, back to the capital. Under the announcement, which is subject to a 30-day consultation starting last Tuesday, five staff could be made redundant, while nine academic staff would be moved out of the county to London from June. The UCL partnership at Adastral Park has seen cutting edge research take place in the fields of computer science and electronic engineering since the campus opened in 2001. Professor Ingemar Cox, director of UCL's Adastral Park campus, said the decision to look at pulling out had come as a result of BT expanding its research remit on the park. "The relationship with BT is changing. We have been on the park since 2001 but now BT wants engagement to be broader than the more narrow research we have there". EADT 23/2/09
-

Additional requirements

- *E.g. policies, flexibilities*
- Suffolk County Council has agreed to become a main sponsor of a Suffolk business exhibition in April. The Ipswich and Suffolk Small Business Association's (ISSBA) Suffolk Business Exhibition takes place on April 29 at Trinity Park in Ipswich. The annual event has been an important event in the business calendar for more than 10 years. For the first time, ISSBA is joining forces with Suffolk Chamber of Commerce to stage the event. Leader of SCC Jeremy Pembroke said: "We are delighted to be able to provide support for local businesses by sponsoring the biggest trade fair in the county. During these difficult economic times, every possible means of promoting local businesses is vital to both protecting and developing our economy. I have no doubt that this year's event will be the best yet and will provide a much needed focus on a whole range of local businesses. Other sponsors of the exhibition include: Archant, BBC Suffolk, Scrutton Bland, Jackaman Smith & Mulley, Business Bank, Ipswich Borough Council, CJV Digital, Dummett Copp, LloydsTSB and React Computer Partnership. For more information about the exhibition, see www.issba.co.uk or www.suffolkchamber.co.uk. EADT 24/2/09
- Suffolk Chamber has teamed up with the Haven Gateway Partnership to create a "Support and Funding Opportunities for Business" brief, which pulls together the key support and funding initiatives that are available to business during the economic downturn. David Ralph, chief executive of Haven Gateway Partnership, said: "There is a vast amount of support available to businesses at the moment from many different agencies and sources, but sometimes unless you know what you're looking for and where to look, it can be difficult to track down. Therefore the Support & Funding Opportunities brief looks to alleviate this problem by bringing all of this information together in one place. For a copy of the brief, email Suffolk Chamber on advice@suffolkchamber.co.uk, or for further business support information visit www.businesslink.gov.uk. EADT 24/2/09

Other

- *E.g. other economic shocks, at risk/reprioritisation projects, social impacts*
- Gordon Brown visited Suffolk on 26th February to launch the government's campaign to provide help to those who need it in the economic downturn. East of England minister Barbara Follett joined the Prime Minister to meet a group of business and civic leaders to discuss the economy at University Campus Suffolk. EADT 27/2/09