

Information for monthly Regional Intelligence Snapshot

Suffolk | 22 July 2010

Produced by Research and Intelligence Team | Suffolk County Council

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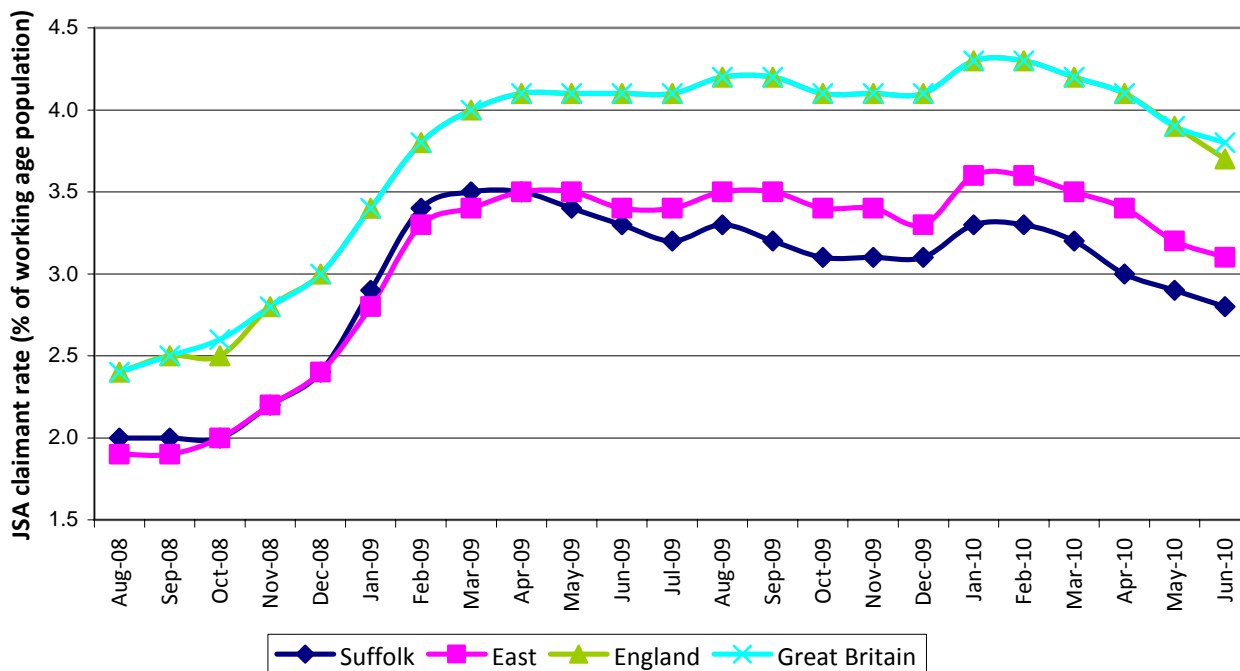
SUMMARY OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS (E.G. BUSINESS CONFIDENCE, BUSINESS CONDITIONS – OUTPUT, ORDERS, EXPORTS, ETC, LABOUR MARKET, HOUSING MARKET, ANY INDUSTRY SPECIFIC TRENDS)

SUMMARY

- The Job Seekers Allowance claimant count decreased by 4.96% from May to June 2010, falling for the sixth month in succession. The regional and national figures also saw a decrease in claimants in May. Proportionally, the largest reduction in claimants was in Forest Heath (-11.46%, 107 claimants). The smallest fall was in Waveney (-3.17) 81 claimants), with all other districts seeing moderate falls of between 3.6% and just over 8%. Data from Jobcentre Plus/NOMIS.
- The Job Seekers Allowance claimant rate in Suffolk remains below that of the East of England and the country as a whole.

Job Seekers Allowance claimant rate

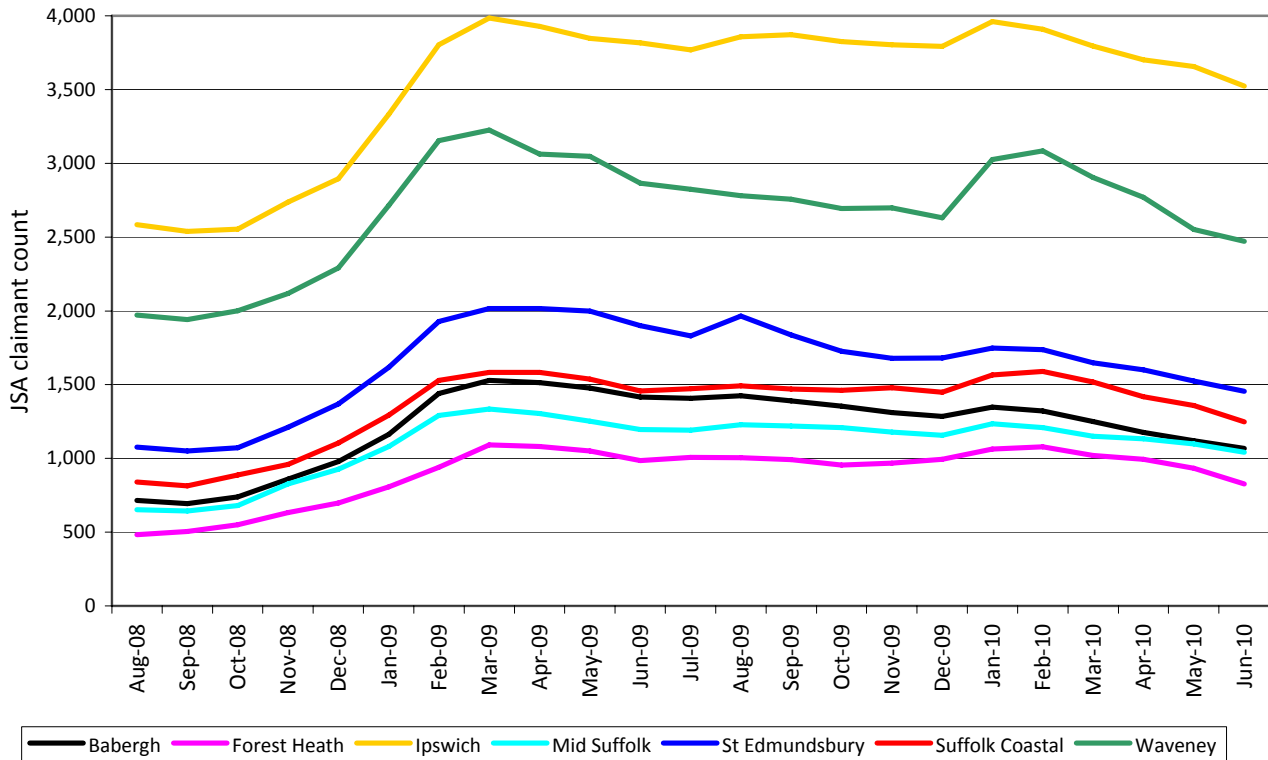
August 2008 to June 2010



- There were around 181 redundancies reported in June, with another 131 reported so far in July, though many of these will not actually take place until August or September (as reported by Jobcentre Plus and local press).
- The total number of reported redundancies in Suffolk now stands at **5,617** since October 2008 (as reported by Jobcentre Plus and local press – redundancies which have taken place or will do so in the near future).
- However, there have been at least **2,226** full and part-time jobs created in Suffolk since the beginning of 2009 (as reported by Jobcentre Plus and local press).
- Average house prices in Suffolk increased for the eleventh month in the past twelve, according to the latest available data from the Land Registry (May).

LABOUR MARKET

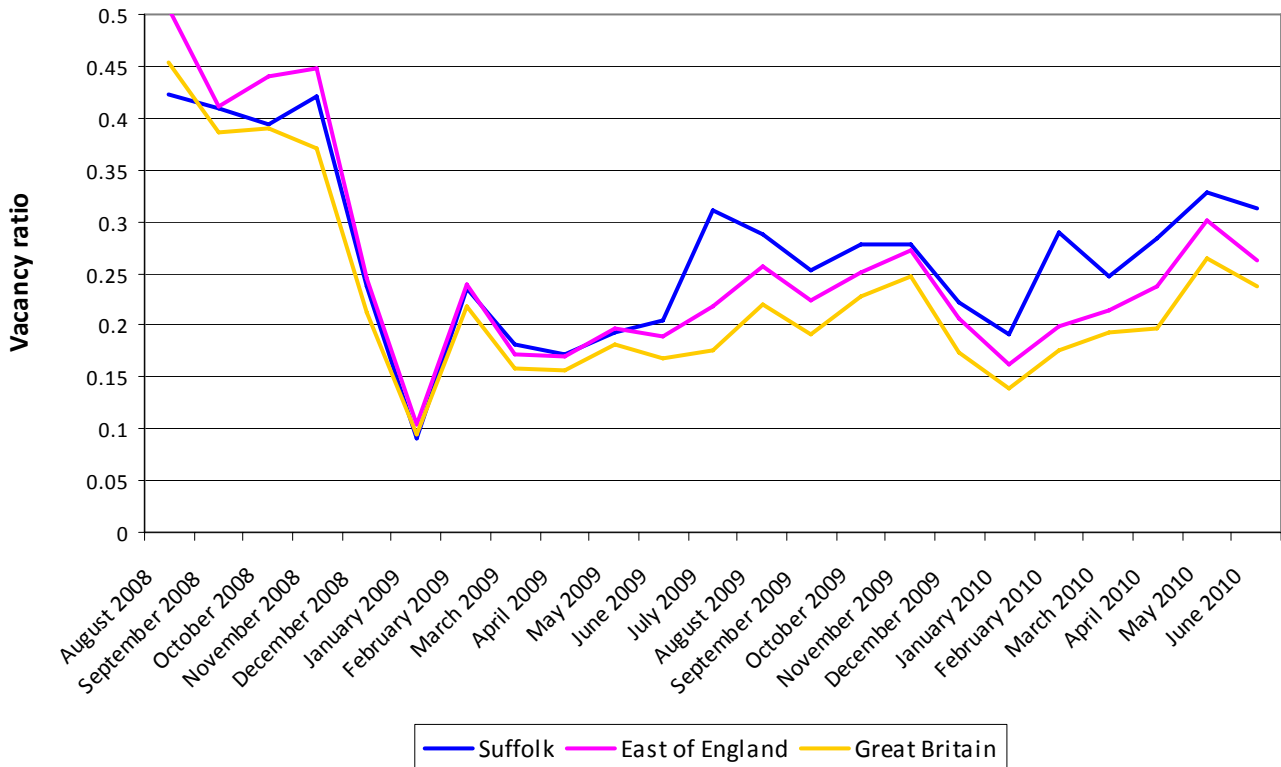
**Job Seekers Allowance claimant count by district
August 2008 to June 2010**



- The Suffolk Job Seekers Allowance claimant count saw a moderate decline from May to June, in line with the regional and national trend. Suffolk's figures decreased from 12,240 in May to 11,633 in June (a drop of 4.96%, 607 claimants). The claimant count levels are now similar to those last recorded in December 2008/January 2009, considerably lower than the highest level seen during this recession, 14,764 in March 2009. The percentage of the working age population in Suffolk claiming JSA now sits at 2.8%, compared to a high point of 3.5% in March 2009.
- The Suffolk figures mirror the overall trend of the East of England this month, which recorded a very similar proportional decrease in JSA claimants from May to June compared to Suffolk (-4.82%, 5,407 claimants). However, the percentage of the working age population claiming JSA in Suffolk is still lower than in the East of England as a whole (2.8% in Suffolk compared to 3.1% in the East of England). JSA claimants also decreased across the country as a whole, with the claimant rate in England and Great Britain standing at 3.7% and 3.8% respectively. The regional claimant count is now at its lowest point since December 2008, and the national figure is at its lowest level since January 2009.
- All seven districts in Suffolk recorded a reduction in claimants from May to June. Forest Heath saw the largest decrease (-11.46%), followed by Suffolk Coastal (-8.11%), Mid Suffolk (-5.19%), Babergh (-4.56%), St Edmundsbury (-4.52%), Ipswich (-3.61%) and finally Waveney (-3.17%).
- The trend in the claimant count from May to June 2010 is similar to that of one year ago, which saw a 4.05% decline.
- Data from NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

VACANCIES

Vacancy ratio - number of vacancies per Job Seekers Allowance claimants

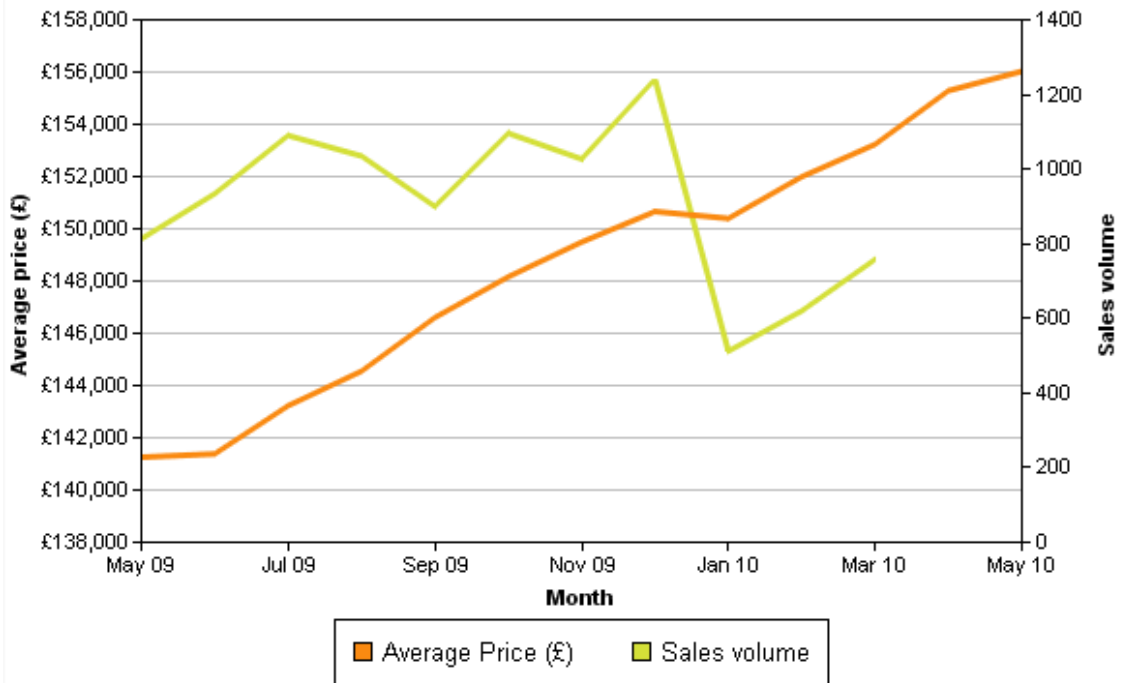


- The number of Jobcentre Plus vacancies per Job Seekers Allowance claimant in Suffolk continues to be higher than the East of England and national figure.
- The number of vacancies remains higher than this time in 2009. Data from NOMIS <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

	Babergh	Forest Heath	Ipswich	Mid Suffolk	St Edmundsbury	Suffolk Coastal	Waveney	Suffolk
January 2009	99	82	235	81	282	160	149	1,088
February 2009	238	278	759	202	699	486	647	3,309
March 2009	224	303	540	227	503	242	627	2,666
April 2009	246	208	609	212	544	295	362	2,476
May 2009	203	219	563	246	523	470	511	2,735
June 2009	198	313	580	264	527	473	426	2,781
July 2009	277	353	1,729	180	528	623	499	4,189
August 2009	235	470	782	303	972	701	499	3,962
September 2009	289	275	873	283	761	456	475	3,412
October 2009	379	272	1,048	267	729	487	490	3,672
November 2009	270	491	1,004	347	696	380	461	3,649
December 2009	247	259	837	274	491	432	334	2,874
January 2010	248	316	651	174	495	368	422	2,674
February 2010	341	327	965	425	689	697	583	4,027
March 2010	242	331	1,038	313	593	328	427	3,272
April 2010	269	384	1,001	372	617	475	506	3,624
May 2010	297	531	980	375	609	559	673	4,024
June 2010	299	411	833	314	609	599	576	3,641

HOUSING MARKET

House price and sales volume - Suffolk



Month	Index	Average Price (£)	Monthly Change (%)	Annual Change (%)	Sales Volume
May 2009	252	141,256	-0.3	-17.2	813
June 2009	252.2	141,382	0.1	-16.6	934
July 2009	255.5	143,226	1.3	-15.1	1,090
August 2009	257.8	144,549	0.9	-13.2	1,035
September 2009	261.5	146,602	1.4	-10.2	900
October 2009	264.3	148,161	1.1	-6.9	1,096
November 2009	266.7	149,491	0.9	-3.9	1,027
December 2009	268.7	150,660	0.8	-0.3	1,241
January 2010	268.3	150,396	-0.2	0.6	512
February 2010	271.1	151,991	1.1	3.8	620
March 2010	273.3	153,233	0.8	6.7	758
April 2010	277	155,287	1.3	9.6	-
May 2010	278.3	156,029	0.5	10.5	-

- Average prices in Suffolk increased for the eleventh month out of the last twelve according to the latest available data from the Land Registry (May 2010).
- The rise for the month of May was £742.
- Average price now sits at £156,029, back to levels experienced over 18 months ago in October/November 2008.
- Sales volumes fell dramatically in January following a rise in December, reflecting seasonal trend and the end of the stamp duty holiday on 31st December. This is likely to have caused transactions that may normally have been completed in January to be rushed through during December. Sales volumes have been picking up again since January, with small rises in February and March. No data is provided for the two most recent months. Data from the Land Registry <http://www.landregistry.gov.uk/>

BUSINESS CONDITIONS

- According to the June Purchasing Manager's Index, the East of England experienced the fastest rise in output for six-and-a-half years, employment increased for the fourth month running, and there were signs of further steep input cost inflation.

The East of England PMI report for June pointed to another marked improvement in operating conditions in the region's economy. Business activity, new orders and employment all increased at steeper rates over the month, and in each case more quickly than the UK economy average.

At 58.5 in June, up from 58.0 in May, the headline seasonally adjusted Business Activity Index – which measures the combined output of the region's manufacturing and service sectors – indicated that business activity increased for the fourteenth consecutive month. Moreover, the rate of expansion was the second-fastest in the series history, and the steepest since December 2003. The rise in the region was also sharper than the average for the UK economy as a whole. Panellists indicated that activity growth mainly reflected a steep increase in new business.

New orders rose at the joint-second fastest pace in the history of the survey, slower only than the series record posted in March 2004. According to respondents, new orders had expanded from both domestic and external markets. New business rose strongly across both manufacturing and services.

A combination of rising new business and delays from suppliers resulted in a second successive monthly accumulation of backlogs of work. The slight increase in the East of England was in contrast to the UK as a whole, which posted a reduction in outstanding business.

Higher workloads led companies to take on more staff in June, extending the current sequence of job creation to four months. The increase in employment was driven by the manufacturing sector, while staffing levels in the service sector were broadly unchanged.

Although the slowest in the year-to-date, the rate of input cost inflation signalled in June was still substantial. According to respondents, higher raw material costs were the main factor behind the rise, with steel and timber mentioned in particular.

Companies were often able to pass on increased input costs to their clients by way of higher output prices. The rate of inflation was sharper than seen across the UK overall and faster than the long-run average for the series. Charges at manufacturing firms were increased much more quickly than at services companies.

Commenting on the East of England PMI survey, Glenn Athey, Director, Insight East, said: "The latest PMI results provide evidence of a further recovery in demand, with output, orders and employment increasing. Businesses are experiencing steep increases in raw material costs, which they are passing on to customers through higher prices."

Insight East. Download the full report below: <http://insighteast.org.uk/viewArticle.aspx?id=18077>

- The **British Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Economic survey** for Quarter 2 (April – June) 2010 received responses from over 5,600 businesses nationally of which 85 were from Suffolk. Nationally, the survey results provide hope that the UK recovery is consolidating. Nearly all the key national balances were in positive territory, and most balances improved, for both manufacturing and services. But, while most manufacturing results were good, the service sector's results were largely weak and disappointing. Most manufacturing Q2 balances show relatively strong increases; in some cases, they were back to, or near, their pre-recession levels. However, manufacturing cashflow and investment balances remain weak, confidence balances are still below pre-recession levels, and pressures on manufacturers to raise prices are much stronger. In services, cashflow remains negative, and the weakening in the confidence balances is a disappointing setback at this early stage of the recovery. Business confidence in Suffolk is currently slightly below the national results although it is noticeable that changes in Suffolk can lag by a couple of quarters.

http://www.suffolkchamber.co.uk/news/chamber_news/bcc_economic_survey_points_to_continued_uk_growth

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC TRENDS | IMPORTS & EXPORTS | INWARD INVESTMENT

- Businesses in the East of England should look to China, Russia and Eastern Europe for new export opportunities, and be prepared to compete more aggressively in traditional markets, according to a new report. The Trade Insight study, from the East of England Development Agency's Insight East unit, charts the progress of sectors and markets over the past 10 years and assesses future international trade opportunities and challenges.
For more information and to download the report: <http://insighteast.org.uk/viewArticle.aspx?id=18070>
- Investment by overseas companies has created or safeguarded 14,566 jobs in the East of England over the last year, according to new data from UK Trade & Investment. The jobs were created or safeguarded by 92 projects, involving investors such as Nestor Pharmaceuticals, an Indian-owned manufacturer and exporter of prescription drugs, based in Mildenhall, which plans to increase its Suffolk workforce from 30 to 100 over the next three years.
EADT 17/7/10

KEY CHALLENGES AND HOTSPOTS (E.G. BUSINESS FEEDBACK ON GOVERNMENT POLICY, INVESTMENTS UNDER THREAT, SKILLS SHORTAGES, IMPACT OF BUSINESS CLOSURES, AREA-BASED CHALLENGES...)

- Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Chamber of Commerce representatives met under the banner of "Backing Young Suffolk" to host the 2010 14-19 Strategic Conference in Trinity Park, Ipswich. The conference aimed to bring employers, educationalists and young people together to discuss the future of jobs in Suffolk and the skills young people need to make them employable.
EADT 22/6/10
- The NHS White Paper, Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS has been released, outlining the Government's long-term vision for the future of the NHS. Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts will be phased out, raising fears over job losses among health workers.
Department of Health 12/7/10 and EADT |
- The Student Food and Farming day took place in late June, showing young people aged 13 to 16 the rich and varied career paths available to them within the sector, which faces a predicted shortage of 10,000 recruits, as well as opening their eyes to what farmers actually do. Hosted by Hollow Trees Farm at Semer, near Hadleigh, for the second year running, the day was run jointly by the farm, the Suffolk Agricultural Association, Otley College and the Suffolk Education Business Partnership Ltd.
EADT 26/6/10
- Insight East has published its Skills Insight report for June 2010. For more information and to download the report, visit: <http://insighteast.org.uk/viewArticle.aspx?id=18032>
- EEDA's regional budget is being cut by £24 million this financial year. This must impact on Suffolk but the exact geographic disposition of the impact of the cuts is difficult to determine. Mike Dowdall, SCC 9/7/2010

BUSINESS SPECIFIC INTELLIGENCE (E.G. REDUNDANCIES, NEW JOBS OR BUSINESSES AT RISK) / INFORMATION ON KEY QUESTIONS*

REDUNDANCY TOTAL

- According to information from Jobcentre Plus and local press, the total number of redundancies to have taken place in Suffolk since October 2008 now stands at **5,617**.

NEW JOBS, EXPANSIONS | REDUNDANCIES, BUSINESSES AT RISK

COUNTY-WIDE | CROSS-DISTRICT

- Police and county council services in East Suffolk are to be concentrated in two centres as part of a

£23.7million cost-cutting move to bring the public sector together. The Civic Drive police station in Ipswich will close in 2013 as part of the county-sponsored "single public estate" initiative. Many of the functions of the police station will transfer to St Edmund House which the police will share with some county council departments. Other police departments will move to Landmark House.

Several other premises will also be closed:

Ipswich police station

Woodbridge police station, Suffolk Coastal

Needham Market police offices, Mid Suffolk

Belstead House, Babergh

Kerrison, near Eye, Mid Suffolk

Tower Street, Ipswich

Whitehouse Social Services Centre, Ipswich

EADT 18/6/10

- The Home Office requires Suffolk Constabulary to make a saving of £1.16million in this financial year's budget. During the latest three years the force has made £12m in savings. The budget for 2010/11 is £113.5m but the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review is expected to make further cuts. Suffolk's deputy chief constable Jacqui Cheer has warned that there are significant risks to the delivery of service presented by such reductions.

EADT 25/6/10

- A number of arts organisations in Suffolk have had their 2010/11 budgets cut. Seven organisations will receive a total of £16,739 in cuts. Aldeburgh Music will receive the biggest cut, losing £7,385 from its budget. Other organisations receiving cuts include the New Wolsey Theatre (£3,818) and DanceEast (£3,006).

EADT 21/6/10

- European funding has been made available to help struggling fisherman along the East Anglian coast. A sum of €4.6million is being made available to small communities across England which rely on fishing to provide employment. Fishermen have blamed fishing quotas for a lack of business.

EADT 2/7/10

BABERGH

- A new fire station has been opened in Hadleigh as part of Suffolk County Council's Fire and Rescue Service PFI project, which aims to build and refurbish 11 of the county's 35 fire stations. The new station cost £1.37million to build and replaces the old Hadleigh fire station by the Market Place/Health Centre.

EADT 8/7/10

- Strike action has been called at Delphi Engineering in Sudbury. Union leaders are urging the 700-strong workforce to support a ban on overtime plus a one-day-a-week strike until an acceptable pay deal is offered. However, bosses at the plant have refuted union claims of widespread support for the action, suggesting only a narrow majority of hourly paid employees supported the strike while salaried staff had accepted the company's latest pay package.

- Plant manager Steve Coppock said: "The company remains ready and willing to negotiate, but we all have to recognise that following the recession there is still much uncertainty ahead."

EADT 24/6/10

- The magistrates' court in Sudbury has been earmarked for closure by the new Government in order to cut costs. According to the Government, the proposals to cut the number of courts would save £15.3million a year and a further £21.5m in maintenance bills.

EADT 25/6/10

- A loyalty card scheme has been introduced in Sudbury. More than 30 shops and businesses have joined the scheme, which will offer discounts and other incentives for shoppers who use the town's range of independent outlets. Traders offering discounts include Winch and Blatch, the jewellers Angelo Smith, men's

fashion shop Peddars, Fatal Attraction Hair Design, The Persian Carpet Studio in Long Melford, Newton Green Golf Club, greengrocer Watson and Sons and Netta's Dry Cleaning. Waitrose has provided some financial backing for the card's launch. EADT 12/7/10

- Suffolk engineering firm Castlebroom Engineering Ltd, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year after surviving an "horrendous" period during the economic downturn. Two companies with whom Castlebroom had been trading went into administration within three weeks of each other with the net result being a loss of over £160,000 to the company. Castlebroom obtained an overdraft secured against the buildings which they had almost purchased and terms with creditors were extended for a short time, enabling the company to continue trading on a very tight budget. Unfortunately the company had to make two people redundant in Spring 2010 as the volume of work had declined.
EADT 29/6/10

FOREST HEATH

- Holiday village operator Center Parcs, whose locations include the Elveden Forest site in Suffolk, has announced a record year for occupancy levels. The company's four centres achieved a 97% occupancy rate in the year to April, the highest since the brand arrived in the UK in 1987 and representing a total of 1.6million guests.
EADT 17/6/10

IPSWICH

- The former Co-op department store on Carr Street in Ipswich closed in early July after trading in the town since 1908. The store employed about 300 staff before it started winding down, with only a few dozen remaining at the time of closure.
Advertiser 8/7/10
- Ipswich-based radio station Heart is to close, with local radio programming in future coming from a merged regional station, Heart East Anglia, based in Norwich, with some additional national content. The Ipswich-based station began its life at Radio Orwell in 1975.
EADT 24/6/10
- Landmark House, at Bramford on the edge of Ipswich, has been sold to the Suffolk Police and Suffolk County Council in a joint freehold purchase.
EADT 29/6/10
- A Modelzone store is moving into the Buttermarket shopping centre in Ipswich.
EADT 13/7/10
- Archant, publisher of the East Anglian Daily Times and Evening Star, has announced the acquisition of KOS Media Publishing Limited, in which it has had a minority interest since 2005, for an undisclosed sum, following a restructuring of KOS Media's holding company. The company employs around 70 full-time staff and is based at Smeeth near Ashford in Kent.
EADT 22/6/10

MID SUFFOLK

- The new £5million abattoir being developed by the C&K Group in Suffolk will be opening for business on August 2. Following the closure of eight abattoirs in the region over the past 10 years, the investment is welcome news for the future of the East Anglian livestock and meat production sector. The new 40,000 sq ft facility is to be opened alongside the current C&K Meats plant in Eye and will create around 35 new jobs.
EADT 26/6/10
- Biffa, specialists in waste management, including collection, recycling and energy generation services, has

moved into new regional headquarters in Needham Market's Lion Barn Estate. The new premises are at Unit 4, Williamsport Way, a 700 sq.m. (7500 sq.ft.) detached warehouse/industrial unit set in one acre of hard-standing.

EADT 22/6/10

- The Beaconsfield Arms in the village of Occold, near Eye, has been sold to a local buyer. The pub has been closed for 16 months and is set to reopen on Saturday following a complete refurbishment since the sale was completed at the end of April.

EADT 15/6/10

ST EDMUNDSBURY

- A large industrial building at Saxham Business Park, Bury St Edmunds, has been let to Dorel UK and Maxi Miliaan for 15 years. G-Space 140, 141,000 sq ft of newly constructed distribution warehouse accommodation, was let by Wrenbridge and Palmer capital.

EADT 6/7/10

- Pubs and brewing group Greene King has set out a new strategy for growth following increased annual sales and pre-tax profits, despite "an uncertain and challenging" trading environment. The Bury St Edmunds-based company generated record turnover of £984million during the year to May 2, up 3.1% on the previous years' total of £954.6m, and pre-tax profits, excluding exceptional items, grew by 3.8%, from £118.5m to £123m. Greene King said it planned to build on this success, with a strategy to add around 200 more food-led outlets to its retail estate over the next three to five years while improving the quality and reducing the size of its tenanted estate and increasing investment in beer brands.

Its own-brewed brands again strongly out-performed the UK ale market, with volume growth of 3.6% against an overall market decline of 6.3%. As a result, Greene King's share of the ale market grew by 0.9 of a percentage point to more than 9%.

EADT 2/7/10

- BT is planning to launch an investigation into the idea of generating its own electricity from a site in Clare. The firm says its plans are part of its wider ambition to generate a quarter of its own power needs from wind power by 2016. BT has lodged a planning application with St Edmundsbury Borough Council to put up a 60m anemometer mast which will help determine the feasibility of its wind farm plan. Residents have expressed concern over the scheme, due to the impact on the landscape and question marks over whether the turbines really worked, though the plans are at a very early stage and details are not yet available.

EADT 19/6/10

SUFFOLK COASTAL

- More than 200 firms attended the first Sizewell C nuclear power station supply chain event in the region, organised by EDF Energy, which aims to build four new EPR nuclear reactors in the UK by 2025, including Sizewell C. It is hoped that the building programme in Suffolk will begin in 2015, taking six years to become operational and costing around £6.64billion. The station should have a working life-span of about 60 years. The project is likely to create huge opportunities for local businesses, with Suffolk and Norfolk chambers of commerce already involved in providing an accurate picture of the skills and services available locally. EADT 10/7/10

- The Elephant and Castle pub, in the east Suffolk village of Eyke, has been sold. The pub had been closed for several months and the owner had planned to turn the building into apartments, but planning application was refused. The sale to John Leach was brokered by specialist agents UK Pub Sales of Bury St Edmunds. With a high number of pubs closing across the region, this represents a positive development in the local area and hopefully signs of recovery in the industry.

EADT 13/7/10

- A new boutique has opened in the Thoroughfare, Woodbridge. Laura Jane Boutique, owned by Laura Milldown, is now open for business in this prominent position in the centre of the town.

EADT 26/6/10

WAVENEY

- Food production in the Broads is worth £150million to the region's economy, according to a new National Farmers' Union report; *Why Farming Matters to the Broads*.
EADT 25/6/10
- Construction work has been completed on a ground-breaking "green" energy plant at brewing and leisure retail company Adnams' distribution site outside Southwold. The anaerobic digestion (AD) unit will be the first of its kind in the UK to use by-products from the brewing process and local food waste as a renewable source of gas for injection into the national gas grid as well as providing gas for use as a vehicle fuel. Adnams Bio Energy Ltd, a subsidiary of the Cambridge-based Bio Group, to which the Adnams has licensed its name, will start supplying gas to the grid once commissioning work is completed later this summer, in a partnership with British Gas and the National Grid. The plant will generate up to 4.8million kilowatt-hours of energy a year, enough to heat 235 family homes for a year or run an average family car for four million miles. In practice, around 60% of the output will be supplied to the National Grid, with the remainder being used to power the Adnams brewery and run the company's fleet of lorries. The £2.75million project has been supported by funding from Royal Bank of Scotland and grants from the European Regional Development Fund, the East of England Development Agency and the Department of Energy and Climate Change.
EADT 15/7/10
- A £10million skills centre to support thousands of new jobs in the offshore energy industry has been proposed for the east coast. A feasibility study funded by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) has highlighted Lowestoft's PowerPark as a strong contender for the centre, which would provide specialist craft and technician training.
EADT 22/6/10
- The Jeld Wen timber factory on the banks of Lake Lothing in Lowestoft has now completely closed. The factory once employed 350 people, but the economic downturn forced the company to close the Lowestoft site, with the loss of 190 jobs. Many of the workers have secured jobs at the company's other factories in Sheffield and Melton Mowbray.
EDP 25/6/10
- The Canadian Gymnastics Federation has announced that its gymnasts will be training at the Waveney Gymnastics Club in the build up to the games in London. As well as welcoming Canadian gymnasts to Suffolk, Azerbaijan's team will in Ipswich and Rwanda will be based in Bury St Edmunds.
Lowestoft Journal 29/6/10
- Pleasurewood is investing £180,000 in its facilities for the summer season. The money is being spent upgrading soundproofing and the park's layout, and on new computer systems and conferencing facilities, along with a number of cosmetic improvements. The Palladium Theatre will be transformed into a new conference centre and be stripped to allow for improvements including a new suspended ceiling, a drop-down screen and the addition of brand new furniture. A marquee and barbecue area will also be developed at the rear of the park for special events such as birthday parties or large corporate team-building 'away-days'.
Lowestoft Journal 30/6/10
- A £2m deal has been signed to bring a run-down caravan park in Lowestoft back into use. Waveney District Council has announced that it has agreed a contract with Tingdene Parks to operate the North Denes caravan and camping site in Lowestoft. The site has been empty for several years after the council started looking for a company to take on a 99-year lease because the authority could no longer to run the park itself. It is hoped that the new site will be up and running by the start of the 2011 season and will include 50 static caravans at the northern end and an area for touring caravans to the south.
Lowestoft Journal 30/6/10

FURTHER INTELLIGENCE GATHERED CONCERNING THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC SECTOR CUTS

- SCC is pressing ahead with the Schools Organisation Review (SOR) with the reorganisation in Haverhill, Lowestoft, Forest Heath, Beccles, Bungay, Leiston, Sudbury and Great Cornard as this programme is essential in the efforts to raise the level of achievement in schools. Prudent capital planning based on pessimistic assumptions means the council can provide the accommodation needed. Including the LSC funded Sixth Form College in Lowestoft, this amounts to around £130m of investment across about 130 schools. Consultation on options for reorganisation in the Stowmarket, Stowupland and Thurston areas has been postponed until after the comprehensive spending review to ensure we only consult on affordable options. SOR did assume the BSF programme would replace or refurbish all the secondary schools in the next few years so only interim measures were planned at those schools.
Phil Whiffing, SOR Project Lead, Suffolk County Council

- A number of housing projects in Mid Suffolk have been delayed, including at Snoasis (385 units), the Unilever site in Needham Market owned by Taylor Wimpey (75 units) and the Harris Bacon site in Elmswell (198 units). All of these have been delayed due to viability issues and the housing market downturn. The first site will not come forward if £5.4million Kickstart 2 funding is provided for 83 affordable and 40 private homes. The other two schemes are both S106 sites where some element of Homes and Communities (HCA) funding would have likely to have been required in order to secure some of the affordable housing and in particular to assist with the delivery of a supported housing scheme that we were looking at on both these sites. If these sites proceed in the next 12 months the amount of affordable housing delivered is likely to be substantially reduced as developers will try to prove that without a grant of 35% affordable housing provision will not be viable.

There are other rural exception schemes and some schemes the district council is trying to develop on its own land sites that may not get the required level of funding due to a squeeze on grant rates and reduced overall levels of funding for the remainder of 2010/11. There may be up to 6/7 schemes of less than 12 units of this nature that would come under this category.

Julie Abbey-Taylor and Dawn Easter, Mid Suffolk District Council

- In Waveney, it is considered that without intervention, delivery of residential and employment related development is very doubtful.

The Waveney Economic development team are currently looking into producing an analysis of employment by sector and its geographical distribution within Waveney. With potential cuts across the public sector forecast, this could create a database of public sector and publicly-funded organisations in Waveney and help to identify the likely impact of the cuts on the District.

Local radio has reported that Kirkley High School has been listed as one of the schools now on the list not to receive funding as part of the scrapping of Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. However the building of a new high school in Pakefield, Lowestoft as part of the schools reorganisation programme is not affected and works will still continue on the £26.5 project.

Homes and Communities Agency 'Single Conversation': Waveney District Council (WDC) is working with Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) on the 'Single Conversation' project which will see the creation of a Local Investment Plan (LIP). The LIP will set out the contribution, both investment and other support, the HCA will make with other partners to help deliver improvements for the 2 areas. The LIP identifies and prioritises the key themes, interventions and projects that relate to housing and regeneration in the East Suffolk area and where support is sought.

In order to meet the challenges the areas are currently facing as well as achieve the vision and objectives taken from a number of related strategies such the Waveney and Suffolk Coastal Community Strategy's and both Councils Local Development Framework, a number of priorities have been identified as to where investment is required.

However the HCA's budget has been affected as part of the £1.5 billion in cuts announced by the Treasury to

four Government departments and this has seen them lose £390m from their budget for this financial year. Further cuts are expected so the challenge for both Councils will be how to ensure the identified challenges, vision and objectives are all met in the present and future economic climates.

Cuts in national and local transport provisions will also have a combined adverse effect on the projects above. A number of them require a joint HCA/Transport support package to provide upfront provision of infrastructure as a pre-requisite for delivering housing and or job related development. Two examples are Brooke Park and Peto Square where a balance of physical infrastructure provisions and sustainable transport measures are needed. These two key sites are proposed on brownfield sites as per government policy and in the present economic climate development costs are already at a point where they cannot support provision of affordable housing and or site related infrastructure levies.

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See the Research and Intelligence Team web pages at:

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/AboutSCC/SpecialistSupportFunctions/TransformationAndPerformance/ResearchAndIntelligence.htm> for more data, including Suffolk Trends 2009, which highlights key social, economic and environmental changes for the county in the past year. It highlights where and how change is happening and provides essential contextual data for everyone involved in service development or service redesign.