

## Great Yarmouth and Waveney JANUARY 2010



## Summary

Business confidence ↑

Unemployment ↑

Notified vacancies to Job Centre Plus ↓

House Prices ↑

*The UK economy has come out of recession, after figures showed it had grown by a weaker-than-expected 0.1% in the last three months of 2009.*

*The economy had previously contracted for six consecutive quarters - the longest period since quarterly figures were first recorded in 1955.*

The fragile nature of the recovery in the Great Yarmouth and Waveney sub-region is evident from both business intelligence and official data covering January.

Business news was light in January, but there were some signs of positive developments, with expansion plans for Bernard Matthews in the Waveney Valley – albeit caused by contraction at its Norfolk head office. IT business Proper online has moved to Gt Yarmouth to accommodate its expansion needs – a good sign the borough can attract knowledge-based businesses. Meanwhile sport equipment manufacturer Harrod continues to invest in its processes and facilities in Lowestoft. More positive developments have followed into February, with the acquisition of Seajacks by a New York energy investor, the expansion of 3Sun in Gorleston and the expansion of the Alchemy Centre in Gy Yarmouth.

While SLP in Lowestoft remains in administration – there are hopes the business can be sold as a going concern and jobs preserved.

However – overshadowing this raft of positive news is the continued increase in the number of people out of work and claiming benefits in Gt Yarmouth and a return to an upward trend in Waveney.

Gt Yarmouth was 217 up in January compared with December – giving a total figure of 3,880. Waveney was up 395 in January compared with December – giving a total figure of 3,026.

Many of the job losses are in smaller clusters, as the official redundancy figures continue to reduce.

The rise in unemployment is compounded by a drop in vacancies in January compared with December.  
However this can largely be attributed to seasonal vacancies in the pre-Christmas period.

Year on year the picture is better, with a big increase in vacancies compared with Jan last year.

Total vacancies in Gt Yarmouth were 257, a rise of 122pc since last year, but a decrease of 29pc since December.

Total vacancies in Lowestoft were 229, an increase of 108pc since last year and a decrease of 12.3pc from December.

Our analysis also reveals that just two of the former 15 Woolworths stores in the region remain closed a year on (Norwich and King's Lynn). The others have reopened – although only employing 244 staff – less than half the staff who were employed by Woolworths.

House prices in Norfolk and Suffolk have continued to rise month on month, continuing the positive trend of last year.

## **Conclusion**

The mix of positive and negative business intelligence means it is hard to be definitive whether the Great Yarmouth and Waveney sub-region has come out of recession.

What is clear is that businesses are performing better than a year ago and are on the whole more positive – but a return to sustained growth is some way off. Redundancies already announced in February as well as the continued rise in unemployment continue to give cause for concern.

## Trading Climate & Confidence Levels

### **Key Facts**

Turkey producer Bernard Matthews to consolidate operations in Suffolk. Windfarms give hope for finding a buyer for SLP Energy. ICT business Prosper Online relocates to Gt Yarmouth. Figures show Lowestoft airshow boosted local economy by £11.5m and created 180 jobs.

### **Agriculture & Food Processing**

Bernard Matthews, Waveney – turkey farmer – is looking to expand two of its buildings to improve efficiency by creating some additional processing capacity and consolidating packing operations.

A meeting was held at the OrbisEnergy Centre in Lowestoft this month to discuss marine conservation in the North Sea. Netgain, which was the project set up to identify marine conservation zones off the East Anglian coast during an 18-month public consultation held the meeting.

### **Energy**

The government announced this month that the world's second largest (£15bn) offshore windfarm is to be built 14km from the shore, off the north Suffolk and Norfolk coast – known as the East Anglia Array. Construction could start in five years to create at least 1,000 turbines with the potential to provide energy to power the equivalent of five million homes a year.

### **Engineering**

SLP Engineering, Lowestoft – gas and oil rigs, wind energy – plans to build nine new windfarms off the British coast should buoy hopes of finding a buyer for the company after it went into administration last month. One of the new windfarms will be the “East Anglian Array”, a windfarm of about 1,000 turbines about 15 miles offshore from Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

Businesses across Norfolk and Suffolk are being encouraged to make the most of the supply chain opportunities being presented by the expanding renewable and sustainable energy industries through a series of events by the East of England Energy Group and Choose Suffolk.

### **Financial**

Lovewell Blake – chartered accountants with branches across Norfolk – has acquired Lowestoft firm Hartley & Co. All 10 Hartley's staff have moved into Lovewell Blake's Oulton Broad premises.

### **ICT**

Prosper Online, Great Yarmouth – group of nine internet stores selling products ranging from energy saving devices and pet accessories to fencing, employs three people – is moving out of the Hethel Engineering Centre after coming to the

end of a year's free rent it won through the South Norfolk Council-sponsored Launchpad competition. The company is moving to premises in Great Yarmouth which are about four times the size to cope with increasing demand in its Premier Barriers arm, which supplies temporary fencing, barriers and safety equipment. Overall turnover has increased from £60,000 a year in 2008/09 to about £200,000 in the current financial year.

### **Manufacturing**

Harrod, Lowestoft - sports equipment manufacturing, employs about 120 people - has erected the new rugby posts at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium with just three men in half an hour - thanks to a new assembly system designed by the company – a new “hinged post assembly roller”. Harrods has a turnover in excess of £10m a year.

### **Tourism**

Recent figures show that last year's Lowestoft Seafront Air Festival boosted the local economy by an additional £11.5m and created 180 jobs. This figure includes money spent on accommodation, transport, in shops, on food and drinks and at other attractions. 420,000 visited and £120,000 was donated, of which £28,000 was given to local voluntary groups. A further £2m was contributed to the regional economy. Research showed that the 2006 festival gave a local boost of £9.8m.

### **Other**

Four of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) offices will be closed as part of a rationalisation and cost cutting programme including one in Great Yarmouth. The closures are part of a nationwide review of HMRC branches which will see 130 offices close in 2010 with union bosses saying that up to 1,700 jobs may be at risk. In Norfolk about 200 posts from the closed offices will be relocated to other tax sites in the county.

### **Other Information**

Great Yarmouth's outer harbour is getting set to welcome its first container ship. The port has budgeted for 31,000 containers in 2010 and has slowed down its expansion plan in favour of a phased approach.

Waveney District Council – has announced it is proposing a 2.95 percent increase in council tax for the coming year, but in order to save enough money to be able to keep council tax at that level, the authority is looking at saving nearly £1m in 2010/11 through staff redundancies – a figure which equates to about 30 full-time posts.

## **February Headlines**

Seajacks, Great Yarmouth - operates self propelled, dynamically positioned, jack up platforms in the core market of the North Sea – has been brought by

Riverstone Holdings, a New York based specialist investor in energy industry companies, for \$207m.

3Sun, Gorleston – specialist engineer in precision instrumentation and control systems – is set to treble its workforce by creating up to 40 jobs to cope with growing demand from the green energy industry – offshore wind farms.

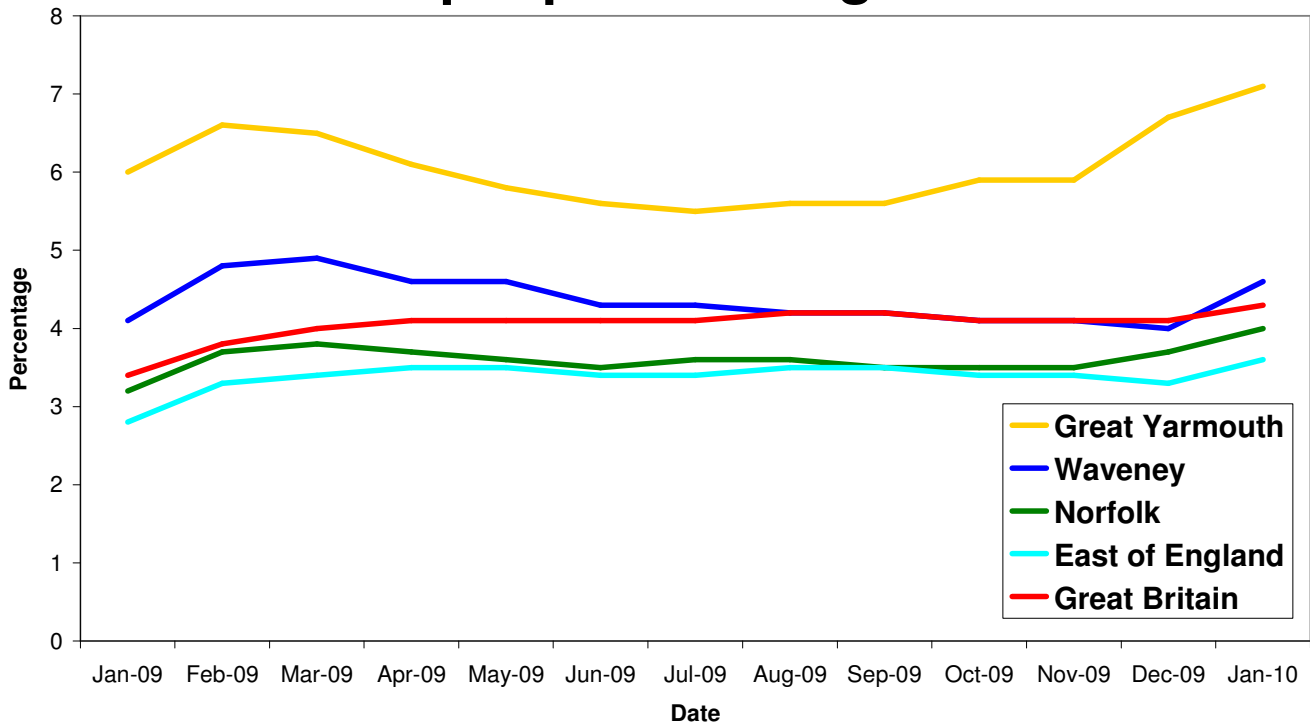
Alchemy Centre, Great Yarmouth College – launched two years ago to inspire young entrepreneurs – is to expand with a second centre.

## Unemployment

### Key Facts

- Norfolk JSA claimant count was 19,731 in January, up 1,350 or 7.3% since December 2009 but up by 3,749 on the year, a 23.5% increase since January 2009.
- Great Yarmouth JSA claimant count was 3,880 in January, up 217 or 5.9% since December 2009 but up by 600 on the year, an 18.3% increase since January 2009.
- Waveney JSA claimant count was 3,026 in January, up 395 or 15% since December 2009 but up by 311 on the year, an 11.5% increase since January 2009.

## All people claiming JSA



Source: Nomis, Official Labour Market Statistics

Great Yarmouth continues to see a rise in claimant counts. The district has seen it rise by 1.2 percent since November. Waveney had been seeing a gradual decline in claimants from March 2009, but has risen this month to April levels.

| Area           | Count | %age of working age population | Change in count year on year | %age change in count year on year |
|----------------|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Great Yarmouth | 3,880 | 7.1                            | 600                          | 18.3%                             |
| Waveney        | 3,026 | 4.6                            | 311                          | 0.5                               |

Source: Job Centre Plus

## Redundancies

### Key Facts

**There have been 270 redundancies notified to Norfolk Job Centre Plus between July 2008 and 31 January 2010 for Great Yarmouth. This accounts for only four percent of the total notified to Norfolk Job Centre Plus.**

## Job Adverts (EDP)

| Date                          | Pages | Public Sector Jobs (council, education, NHS, healthcare) | Private Sector Jobs            | Third Sector Jobs |
|-------------------------------|-------|--|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2010  | 12    | 125 (48.26%)   | 121 (46.72%)<br>(30 temporary) | 13 (5.02%)        |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2010 | 10    | 110 (46.22%)   | 115 (48.32%)<br>(35 temporary) | 13 (5.46%)        |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> January 2010 | 9     | 85 (48.57%)  | 66 (37.71%)                    | 24 (13.71%)       |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> January 2010 | 8     | 94 (59.12%)  | 47 (29.56%)                    | 18 (11.32%)       |

*Unless figure or positions stated each advert is counted as one position*

## Job Adverts (Yarmouth Mercury)

| Date                          | Pages       | Public Sector Jobs (council, education, NHS, healthcare) | Private Sector Jobs | Third Sector Jobs |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2010  | No Data     |  |                     |                   |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> January 2010  | No Data     |  |                     |                   |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2010 | 2           | 9 (45%)  | 7 (35%)             | 4 (20%)           |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2010 | 1 and a 1/2 | 0  | 9 (90%)             | 1 (10%)           |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2010 | No Data     |  |                     |                   |

## Job Adverts (Lowestoft Journal)

| <b>Date</b>                   | <b>Pages</b> | <b>Public Sector Jobs</b> (council, education, NHS, healthcare) | <b>Private Sector Jobs</b> | <b>Third Sector Jobs</b> |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2010  | No Data      |   |                            |                          |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> January 2010  | No Data      |   |                            |                          |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2010 | 2            | 17 (56.67%)   | 10 (33.33%)                | 3 (10%)                  |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2010 | 2            | 13 (44.83%)   | 14 (48.28%)                | 2 (6.9%)                 |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2010 | No data      |   |                            |                          |

2,800 jobs in Norfolk were notified to Job Centre Plus. Of these 63 percent were full time positions. Notified vacancies were down 26.2 percent from December's total.


- Great Yarmouth had 257, a rise of 122 percent since last year but a decrease of 29 percent from December.

2,692 jobs in Suffolk were notified to Job Centre Plus. Notified vacancies were down 14.1 percent from December's total.

- Lowestoft had 229 (of these 78.2 percent were full time positions), an increase of 108 percent since last year but a 12.3 percent decrease from December.

## Norfolk JCP Figures

| Industry   | Norfolk      |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|
|  | January 09   | January 10   |
| Agriculture, hunting and forestry                        | 9            | 111          |
| Manufacturing  | 31           | 95           |
| Electricity, gas and water supply                        | 12           | 7            |
| Construction   | 31           | 75           |
| Wholesale and retail trade                               | 92           | 353          |
| Hotels and restaurants                                   | 151          | 115          |
| Transport, storage and communication                     | 12           | 40           |
| Financial intermediation                                 | 91           | 31           |
| Real estate, renting and business activities             | 673          | 1,089        |
| Public administration/defence/compulsory social security | 53           | 299          |
| Education  | 15           | 85           |
| Health and social work                                   | 192          | 400          |
| Other community, social and personal service activities  | 49           | 100          |
| Column Total   | <b>1,411</b> | <b>2,800</b> |

 Industry sectors with falls in job vacancies

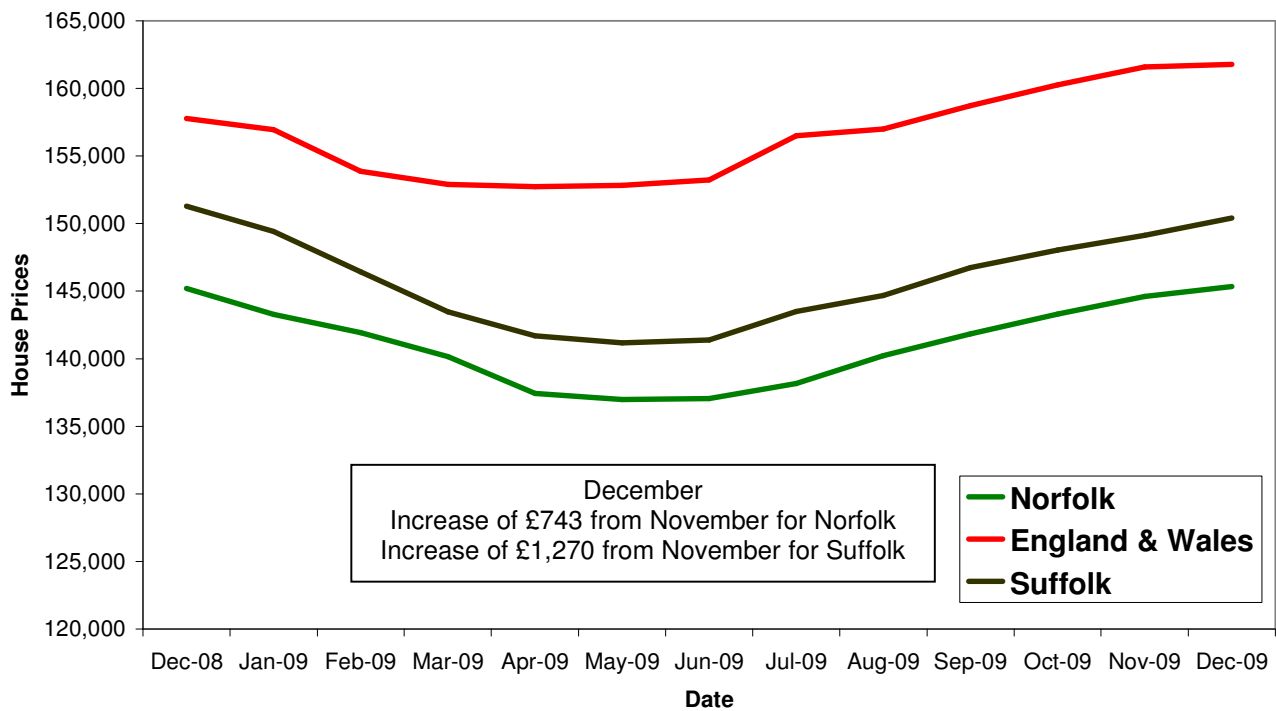
## Housing

### Key Facts

- **UK house prices increased by 0.6% in January.** This was the seventh successive monthly increase and takes the average price to 9.9% above its trough in April 2009. January's rise, nonetheless, was more modest than in any of the previous six months.
- **Average House price £167, 777**

Source: Halifax House Price Index

## House Price Trends



Source: Land Registry