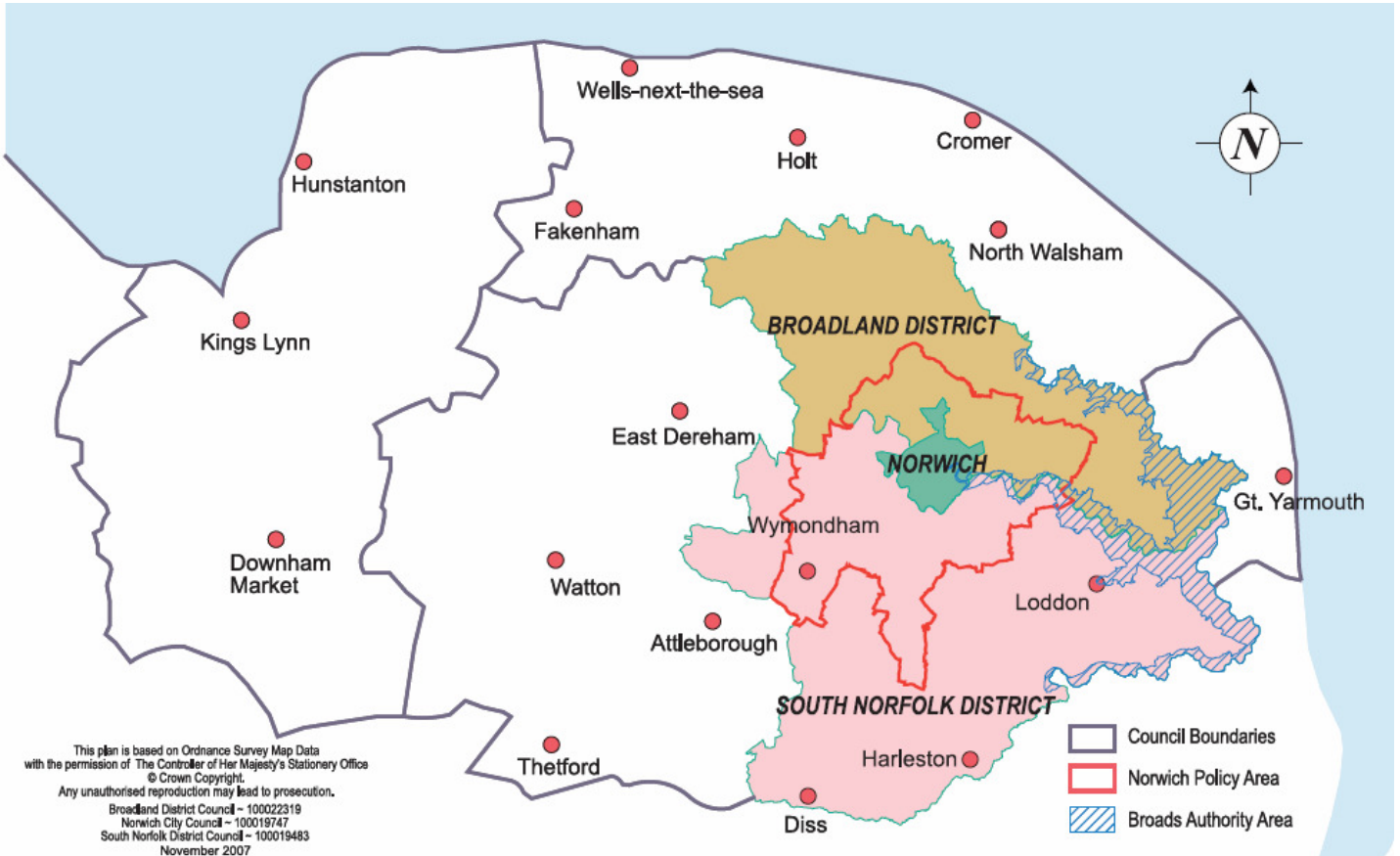


Greater Norwich JANUARY 2010



Please note that this report concentrates on Greater Norwich but includes information relevant to all of the districts of Norfolk

Summary

Business confidence ↑

Unemployment ↑

Redundancies ↓

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 is pretty evident from the business intelligence gathered over the past month.

Whilst a number of businesses in the Greater Norwich area and in Norfolk as a whole have secured new contracts – a second wave of redundancies and business closures also appears to be looming.

On the positive side, there were strong sales figures from drinks business Britvic in Norwich, in energy the creation of 20 jobs in Norwich with Bond Offshore Helicopters setting up a new base and in financial services Central Trust secured a £90m credit facility, enabling the business to grow again after a challenging 2009.

Also smaller technology businesses had a good month – Real Projects the Norwich based e-learning business secured a contract with Yorkshire Ambulance service and sustainable technology design firm Maglev in Norwich has been recruiting staff. It designs streetlights powered by solar power and wind.

And looking further ahead, Marks & Spencer is applying to revamp and expand its store in Norwich, whilst the Centenary Ashcroft remains positive about its Anglia Square redevelopment.

However there has been another rise in the numbers out of work and claiming Jobseekers Allowance, both in Greater Norwich and in every other part of Norfolk.

This is a continuing trend and does show the continuing fragility of the labour market.

Many of the job losses are in smaller clusters, as the official redundancy figures show redundancy notifications have continued to decline – down to just 49 in January.

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 Jan 10 were 2,800 up from 1,411 a year ago. Real estate, public administration and healthcare are all showing significant increases.

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 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 Greater Norwich economy 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 somewhat 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

Positive sales from Britvic and a big order for May Gurney. Jobs created by Bond Helicopters, while Virgin Money buys a regional bank as a prelude to entering the banking market. Central Trust secures a £90m credit facility and positive news from IT businesses Real Projects and Prosper Online. Sustainable design firm Maglev is expanding.

Agriculture & Food Processing

Greater Norwich

Kettle Foods, Norwich – produces crisps, employs 370 people – is to have potential bidders to buy the company carry out site visits in the next few weeks. The news follows months of speculation about Kettle's future and reports that Lion Capital was looking for a sale price in excess of £400m.

The King's Head, Bawburgh – gastro pub – is a national finalist in two categories of the 2010 Great British Pub Food Awards.

A supermarket ombudsman has been agreed to enforce the Groceries Supply Code of Practice (GSCOP) and will come into force in February. It is hoped this will reduce costs and risks to those who supply supermarkets.

A multimillion pound Norfolk food hub including a distribution centre, livestock market, shop and restaurant, is being proposed for a Greenfield site near Norwich – Honingham Thorpe. The scheme would help promote locally sourced food and could provide as many as 1,500 jobs. A 2006 feasibility study found that the food and drink industry contributed £2.5bn and more than 90,000 jobs to the East of England.

Britvic, Norwich – soft drinks, employs 300 people – the company posted an 11 percent hike in sales in the 12 weeks to December but the recent poor weather has lowered demand. The products produced at the Norwich factory will have helped the sales growth.

Other Areas

There are plans for North Norfolk district council to set up both a fishing sector roundtable and a manufacturing roundtable.

A local baker has closed up his shop in Dereham and will no longer be at the Norwich Market after 40 years of trading and keeping the 102 year old independent bakery which serves schools, businesses and thousands of people open. He is closing his store due to competition of cheap brands from supermarkets. Nine staff will lose their jobs and 30 wholesale clients will need to find another supplier. Turnover had dropped from £30,000 per month last year to £23,000 per month in January.

A meeting was held at the Town Hall in King's Lynn 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. Local fishermen boycotted the meeting claiming windfarms, sand extraction and cable routes are impacting on them already.

The former Oriental Express Frozen Foods plant in Fakenham, which closed after its owners went into administration in December 2005 with the loss of 90 jobs, is still empty. Fresh attempts are being made to sell or rent the redundant factory site.

Construction Greater Norwich

May Gurney, Norwich – integrated support and construction services, employs 700 people in Norfolk – has secured the renewal of a long term maintenance contract with South West Water which could be worth £170m if it runs for the full 10 years.

Other Areas

Fisher&Sons, Fakenham and H Bullen & Son, Cromer – both arms of the RG Carter building empire – have seen redundancy consultations start with up to 29 jobs at risk with little evidence of recovery in the construction industry. A year ago it was announced that the two firms were looking to shed about 50 posts. RG Carter recorded a turnover of £313m, down from £318m the year before, while pre-tax profits fell from £17.1m to £11m. The number of employees fell from 2,161 to 1,893 in the space of 12 months.

Creative Greater Norwich

Right Angle Events, Taverham - offers education and teambuilding exercises for schools and corporate clients in which participants use forensic techniques to solve mock crimes - are set to launch a new national partnership bringing together some of Norfolk's top events providers. The company has invited 10 firms to join a new enterprise aimed at offering a wide range of teambuilding events across the country. Six new positions will be created initially to expand the services nationally.

East of England Production and Innovation Centre (EPIC), Norwich – is set to get the backing of Norfolk County Council even though the centre is due to return a deficit of £136,000 in 2009/10. The centre has seen 10 start up businesses based on the site and over 100 students from Norwich University College of the Arts studying for film and video degrees. The centre is now about to produce a weekly regional football programme called Late Kick Off.

Maglev, Norwich – sustainable technology design firm, employs 10 full time and two part time staff – is looking to bring its devices to market. The company has

been designing a range of streetlights powered by solar panels and wind turbines, as well as hybrid models that use both. All the models contain batteries that can store enough energy to run the light for between five and seven days, and can be mounted on existing lamp-posts to keep upgrade costs to a minimum. The devices are manufactured in China and shipped directly to clients. The firm's staff grew from two to 12 in November and expects this figure to grow quickly as orders come in. The company's only commercial order so far has been for 68 hybrid streetlights to Nigeria. Maglev estimates that turnover this year will reach £14m, thanks to demand from businesses looking to reduce carbon emissions and slash rising energy costs.

Kall Kwik, Meridian Business Park – printing business – have invested £27,000 to buy one of the first digital printing machines of its kind in the UK – a Roland.XC-540MT printer. The firm moved from London to Norfolk in 2006 and turns over £372,000 a year. The new machine is the first digital printer to produce metallic colours and can make anything from window stickers, car and floor graphics to exhibition displays and large format posters. The business is looking to broaden its portfolio of clients in 2010 and has picked up five new customers in January.

Other Areas

Council-run theatres and leisure centres in King's Lynn, Hunstanton and Downham Market could soon be run by an independent trust. A review by the West Norfolk council has concluded that the option offers the best chance to secure their future in the current economic climate.

Energy

Norfolk

Businesses across Norfolk 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.

Greater Norwich

Acteon, Norwich – made up of 17 businesses providing specialist services in the offshore oil and gas sector, employs 130 in Norfolk – is creating a new operation called Pulse Structural Monitoring – spinning out existing research and technical expertise from its 2H Offshore subsidiary into a new company. The new division would target new contracts in the oil and gas industries and take on existing offshore monitoring work carried out by 2H for Chevron in the Gulf of Mexico. The company is also investigating wind turbine monitoring.

Bond Offshore Helicopters, Aberdeen is set to create 20 jobs in Norwich after securing a multi-million pound contract in the offshore energy sector. The company has won a five-year deal with global energy company Perenco, which will see Bond provide helicopter services to Southern North Sea rigs from Norwich International Airport. Operations will begin in June 2010, and the contract includes three one-year options, which could see the work extended to

2018, and marks a return to the Southern North Sea for the helicopter firm after an absence of more than a decade.

Engineering

Norfolk

RAF Coltishall – there are plans for a specialist decommissioning and storage facility for civil aircraft which could generate more than 300 jobs and provide a multi-million pound boost to the local economy. Getting the plan off the ground would hinge on whether the 600 acres that remain of the base are put up for sales as expected by the owners, the Ministry of Justice – and on whether international aviation business TAG Aviation (Stansted), which is behind the plans, can beat off other tenders and planning consent can be secured. However, plans for a windturbine may prevent the scheme from going ahead.

Able Engineering, King's Lynn – bespoke engineering solutions for business - won a contract with the British Antarctic Survey to design and build a hot water drilling system to use in Antarctica in sea level change research. The company saw turnover increase from £1m in 2008 to £1.5m last year.

Warren Services, Thetford - an engineering sub-contractor, whose speciality has been to build complex stage machinery for theatres and venues across the world, employs more than 50 staff – has reported its strongest order book to date, with £1.3m of work ordered in the first quarter. Turnover at the firm grew to £3.7m last year, compared with £3m the previous year, and it expects the outlook for 2010 to be good. Before Christmas the business took on three new staff.

Financial

Norfolk

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.

Greater Norwich

Virgin Money, Norwich - insurance and personal finance, employs about 200 people – has been tipped as the front runner to buy the savings and mortgage arm of Northern Rock.

The company is buying a small regional private bank, Church House Trust, in a £50m deal that would see its banking license fast tracked.

Central Trust, Norwich – loans company, employs 100 in Norwich – has secured a £90m credit facility which will enable to carry out its planned growth after two rounds of redundancies last year. The funding will allow them to invest further in the development of a wider product range and provides the financial platform to take advantage of the predicted improvements in the economy as they come through later in the year.

Aston Berry (Aston Shaw from February), Norwich – accountancy firm – is launching a new pay-as-you-go online book-keeping and accountancy service, believed to be the first of its kind in Norfolk. The service will allow clients to do their finances online for a monthly fee, without the need to purchase separate software and licences for each user.

Health & Life Sciences

Greater Norwich

Norwich Research Park – international centre for research on plants, micro-organisms, food, environment, health and ICT - has received a £5m expansion package. The first phase will see more than 30 new offices and laboratories built which will accommodate the growing community of world-class scientists and researchers being attracted to the city. Up to 300 new jobs will be created and the facilities are set to be the first of a number of new buildings to be built, which could eventually create up to 5,000 new jobs in science and scientific research by 2021.

Funding has come from the East of England Development Agency (EEDA), the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNPD), THE University of East Anglia and from other research park partners.

ICT

Greater Norwich

Real Projects, Norwich – design and develop e-learning and game-based learning resources - has been awarded a contract to develop a Game Based Learning Resource for the Yorkshire Ambulance Service. The project will see Real Projects develop a scalable game based emergency life support course. This will be used by over 1500 Volunteer Community First Responders (CFR's) who respond to life threatening emergencies in their local community.

Prosper Online, Norwich – 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.

Other Areas

Donttravelempy, near Cromer – travel website which matches empty vehicles to passenger journeys, employs four staff – has had travel firm Arriva, the first major operator, sign up to the service. The way it currently works with emergency rail replacement, is that a rail firm will send out a blanket text to coach operators in the hope that there are vehicles in the area. The service currently has about 10 percent of UK coach operators signed up which run about 27 percent of all the coaches in the UK. The company is targeting a turnover of £720,000 in 2010-11.

Blurtit, North Walsham – online question and answer website, headed up by two Norfolk people who employ seven people in the market town, plus a team of web moderators in China – saw more than 111 million web visits in 2009 and has more than two million questions in its database – behind only WikiAnswers and Yahoo!Answers. Money is generated through click through advertising and the company had an annual turnover of £2.7m to August 2009 and a £950,000 profit margin.

Manufacturing

Norfolk

Research by the British Chamber of Commerce demonstrate that the Norfolk manufacturing sector is one of the more robust in the UK with domestic, export and employment balances outstripping the national average. Overall there is improved confidence that turnover and profitability will improve and businesses are looking where they can invest.

Greater Norwich

The Florida Group, Norwich – shoe manufacturer, employs about 70 people – has agreed a deal to distribute the German-based MARC brand in the UK and Ireland.

Other Areas

KL Technologies, King's Lynn (formed from a management buyout of Porvair's King's Lynn arm) – Sealskinz- waterproof socks and gloves, employs 46 staff – has seen demand rocket in the cold weather. The company had a turnover of about £2m when the company was brought, sales increased slightly to £2.37m in the year to the end of June 2008 and more steeply to £4.15m the following year and this growth is set to continue in the company's current financial year. The December 2009 sales were up 50 percent on December 2008.

Porvair, King's Lynn – specialist filtration and environmental technology manufacturer – ended 2009 with a £1.7m profit after a revival fortunes in the second half of last year. This is a fall from the pre-tax profit of £4.2m in 2008 and is attributed to a slump in business in its operations in the United States.

The firm has shed 40 percent of its American workforce, with the remainder taking a 10 percent pay cut, Staff numbers in the UK have fallen from 300 to 270 in the past year. New jobs were created at the firm's head office in King's Lynn with the move to the town of the management team of a water quality company acquired by Porvair in 2008.

Tourism

Greater Norwich

Norwich International Airport – will be introducing flights to Tenerife and Alicante, Spanish Islands and Sharm el Sheike in Egypt for the winter months this year. The flights will operate every week for 26 weeks. The Tenerife and Alicante

routes have been reinstated after the airport received more than 500 requests for the two destinations within the last six months.

South Norfolk cultural programme will be reduced this year as a result of savings, which have seen the council cut £2m out of its budget and shed 40 jobs. A report reveals that the Festival of the Arts last summer cost the council £74,000, but only generated an income of £34,500. A second report calculated that the festival attracted £17,000 in sponsorship and funding and an estimated £97,000 was injected into the local economy by people attending the programme of events. The festival saw more than 5,800 residents and holidaymakers attending 21 council-funded concerts, theatre performances, exhibitions and family activities.

Other Areas

Pinewoods Holiday Park, Wells – holiday park with 564 static caravan pitches, 118 touring pitches – has won a national conservation accolade for the tenth successive year – a gold award in the David Bellamy Conservation Award Scheme. The scheme was founded by the popular naturalist to celebrate holiday sites which enhance Britain's natural environment. The holiday park sees as many as 7,000 visitors during the height of summer.

Visitor numbers in Lynn and Hunstanton have received a welcome boost, possibly caused by the soaring popularity of "staycations". New figures, within a report to West Norfolk Council, show Hunstanton may have been one of the traditional destinations to benefit from the trend, with the town's Tourist Information Centre (TIC) attracting just under 154,000 visitors – an increase of nearly 16 per cent on the previous year. The Lynn TIC also drew the crowds, with 91,414 visitors using the service, based in the Custom House, a 5.1 per cent increase on 2008. The total number of users for both towns, including people dropping in, email, telephone and written queries for 2009 was 285,162.

Other Norfolk

Not-for-profit groups such as charities, clubs and village halls will have to start paying a fee for playing music.

East Anglian charities warned it would take money away from vital services and would impact on particular groups including friendships groups set up for older people so they do not lose social contact.

Norfolk Association of Village Halls – fear some village halls may have to cancel events and lose bookings.

East of England Co-Op – supermarket – has revealed sales in the month to January 9 increased by 6.9 percent compared to the year before thanks to a surge in demand for staple goods during the snow and icy weather. The society has now recorded its 15th successive quarter of like-for-like growth.

Greater Norwich

Woolworths – fell into administration in November 2008, within two months all 807 Woolworths stores were closed with the loss of 27,000 jobs, 517 of which were based in our region's 15 branches.

One year on, all but two (Norwich riverside and King's Lynn) of the 15 vacated shops have been occupied by new businesses, but the number of jobs created falls woefully short of those lost. Only 244 new positions have been brought to those sites, less than half of those lost

John Lewis, Norwich – department store - sales at the store for the five weeks to January 2 were up by eight percent compared to the year before with shoppers' attempts to beat the VAT rise contributing to the increase.

Tops - estate agency – is returning to the high street a year after going into administration and will be re-branded Tops Moving House. The property entrepreneur who is bringing the residential estate agency back brought the Auction House and the Fine & Country franchises (part of the Tops property group) before they went into administration.

Jeyes, Thetford – household cleaning firm – saw sales in the financial year to August 2009 top £220m- an increase of 20 percent on 2008 which may lead to acquisitions this year. The company has also secured a new £20m lending facility from Royal Bank of Scotland to help fund its “future growth plans”.

VIP Bin Cleaning, Wymondham – franchise bin cleaning company – is set to double the number of its operations over the next two years and has signed a deal in Belgium. The company already has a presence in the US, Australasia and South Africa. The business currently cleans more than two million bins around the world every year.

Saxonair, Norwich – executive jet operator, employs eight full-time staff and five part-time staff – has invested £800,000 in the first of a new fleet of helicopters to offer VIP flights. It has taken delivery of a Eurocopter EC120 and has plans to purchase a second. The helicopter move comes just months after Saxonair increased its fleet of charter jets to four with the £1.84m purchase of a Cessna Citation Mustang. The private jet is there for trips further afield and outside the UK. Turnover is predicted to rise from £1.5m a year to close to £2.5m in the 2009-10 financial year.

Norwich City Football Club – is considering selling their Carrow Road ground to clear or reduce their debts of £23m.

Magic Movies, Wymondham, an independent video store has closed down.

Anglian Building Products, Norwich – windows firm, employs 120 at Norwich headquarters – enjoyed a bumper end to 2009 after securing three major contracts in a boost to job security. The three contracts are Glasgow Housing

Association, Mansell Construction Services and an extension to an existing contract with Sanctuary Housing Association in the last two months of 2009.

Aspirare Development, Norwich – leadership and training firm – is set on doubling turnover to £1m within 12 months by rebranding to Turning Factor and targeting 10 large corporate clients - £200m turnover plus businesses as well as working with SMEs. The business is also looking to increase staff numbers from 24 to 40 by the end of the year.

3 Carbon Elements, Norwich – consultancy offering businesses help in cutting their carbon emissions and saving money – has been set up by three University of East Anglia graduates who recently completed the world's first MBA course in carbon management. The consultancy was set up late last year and has already secured work with brewer Adnam's and print firm Anglia Print.

Ensearch, Norwich – offers environmentally friendly fibreglass and painted boat cleaning products, manufactured in Manchester – is hoping to benefit from the multi-million pound market in boat cleaning products created by the recession. The owner believes more people want to clean their leisure boats and launches themselves as the recession has tightened purse strings. There are hopes they will be able to sell in Florida and Canada as well as the UK and hoped turnover would be £1.5m to £2m in two to three years. Sales increased by 350 percent after launching four months ago at a chandler on the north Norfolk coast and on stands at the Southampton Boat Show in September.

Marks and Spencer, Norwich – department store, employs 347 people – is set for a major revamp, boosting its size by more than a third and creating dozens of jobs in the city – up to 500. Plans include the addition of a new café, a new “hotfood to go” area, and a new M&S Kitchen – a new café concept currently available at just four other M&S stores. It would also sell a new range of electrical items, including DVDs, cameras, camcorders and iPods, making it one of the top 20 largest M&S stores in the country. Plans for the redevelopment have been submitted to Norwich City Council, and if planning permission is granted, work is due to start in April with a completion date of October 2011.

Hadley & Ottoway, Norwich – removal's firms – is hoping that an end-of-year surge in business has fuelled hopes of rising sales and property market recovery. The economic downturn and property slump has dented the firm's turnover – with sales down by 41 percent in 2009 compared with 2008 and staff numbers cut by a third. The company saw turnover up 26 percent and 23 percent respectively in November and December compared to the same two months a year before. 70 percent of the firm's commercial/relocation moves in the last year had been linked to firms downsizing or moving to better locations to cut costs.

Mortgage Advice Bureau, Norwich – national chain of independent brokers – has opened up a branch on the outskirts of Norwich.

Other Areas

Godfrey, Thetford – independent DIY chain – is planning to close its Thetford store due to the recession while planning to extend its branch network further south where there are more opportunities. The nine staff employed at the Thetford store will be offered jobs elsewhere. Godfrey is forecasting a turnover of £6m for the financial year ending March 31, 2010 with an anticipated increase to £7.8m next year.

Musker McIntyre, Diss – estate agent – has taken over from an empty florist shop in the town's main street. The shop had been empty for more than a year. Over the last year the main street, Mere Street, has changed markedly with national names such as Costa Coffee, Carpetright and the YMCA charity shop taking up vacated retail premises and the Julian Graves food shop is also set to be transformed into a Holland& Barrett next month.

D2, King's Lynn – fashion store, employs nine people – will remain open for business despite the company going into administration last December. The store was one of 45 bought back by A&J Menswear (Retail) from administrator BDO. Lynn's d2 was also the top performing store in the company over the Christmas period.

Mothercare, King's Lynn – sells baby equipment and clothing – has closed its store in the town centre and transferred its operation to the Hardwick Retail Park on the former Focus site, next to Argos Extra.

BHS, King's Lynn – clothing store – is to close in August with budget fashion chain Primark replacing it.

Other Information

Norfolk

Four of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) offices will be closed as part of a rationalisation and cost cutting programme including those in King's Lynn, Norwich and Dereham. 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.

Greater Norwich

Developers behind two of Norwich's biggest regeneration projects have spoken of their ambition to start building in 2010. Centenary Ashcroft, which is behind the £100m plan to revamp Anglian Square, believes it can start if Norwich City Council agrees to a revised scheme it has put forward. The company wants to reduce the amount of housing, currently at 200 homes, because of the state of the market. Its original plans also included new shops and a supermarket. The Homes and Communities Agency signed an agreement with Norwich City Council which would see HCA invest £8m into Norwich and the city council will

invest in a number of sites for new homes. HCA is also offering developers the opportunity to bid for grant funding to kick start building projects across the country.

City Living Developments, which is behind the £100m St Anne's Wharf project for more than 400 homes between King Street and the River Wensum, has been short-listed for some of the cash and will find out in June if it has been successful which will help kick-start the scheme. If secured the funding will help them to begin work on 126 homes, a couple of retail units and as car park.

University of East Anglia is launching its part-time MBA in strategic carbon management programme in London this month and again in February. The UEA is inviting managers and leaders to consider a course that is designed to help them cut costs and carbon emissions.

The strategic carbon management MBA was launched at UEA's Norwich Business School in 2007. From March, it will also be available in a part-time format at the university's London study centre, near Liverpool Street station, as both a two year and three year course.

The recent controversy around leaked emails have not harmed student applications, which are up 30 percent year on year.

Other Areas

Victory Business Park, Breckland – a new business park which is being developed to boost the local economy and create new jobs - could welcome its first tenant in the spring after Besthorpe-based JR Rix and Sons submitted a plan to develop a new East Anglian depot on the six-acre site, next to the Haverscroft Industrial Estate. The fuel depot and office space would create six full and part-time jobs.

February Headlines

Birds Eye – frozen food provider – has left Norfolk and Suffolk farmers in shock after moving out of the region's pea industry, worth more than £5m a year to growers.

Bernard Matthews, Great Witchingham – turkey farmer – will see 160 jobs lost as part of an ongoing drive to improve efficiency. The company will be shifting its frozen whole bird operations from Great Witchingham to its plant in Holton, Suffolk.

Cranswick Country Foods, Watton – pig processor – has invested £3m in the meat plant since buying it from Bowes of Norfolk last summer with an increased throughput of about 30 percent. The company intends to put more investment into the facility and increase the volume of throughput over the course of the next months and year.

Norfolk's film industry is to enjoy a boost after a £3.5m fund was unveiled to help get movies made in the county onto the silver screen.

Validus, Norwich – specialises in managing credit hire arrangements for the insurance industry, employs 87 people – has doubled its workforce in the last 12 months with plans to expand to 150 in the next six months.

Brian Fisher & Sons, Harleston – specialises in hand-made and machine-sewn curtains and soft furnishings, employs 40 people – is to create up to 100 new jobs following major growth in demand from existing customers and recent contract wins.

Unemployment

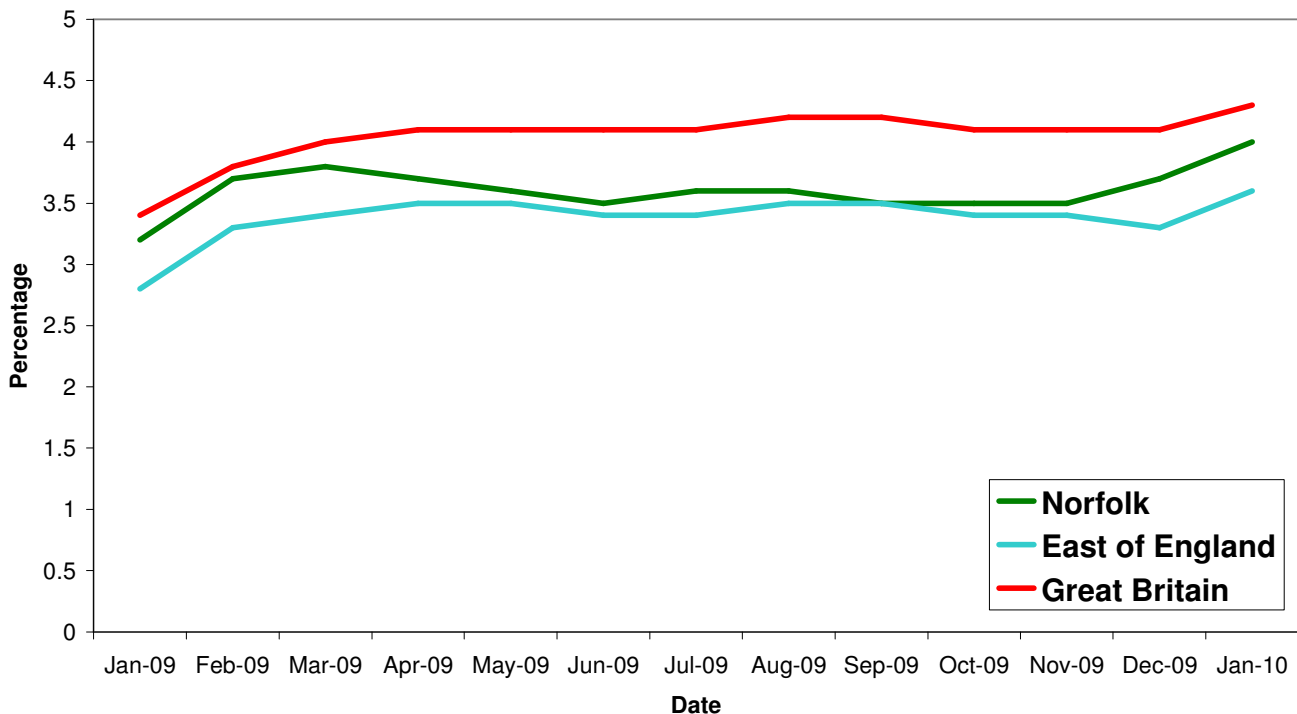
Key Facts

Norfolk JSA claimant count was 19,731 in January, up 1,350 or 7.3% since December 2009 and up by 3,749 on the year, a 23.5% increase since January 2009.

All of Norfolk's districts saw a rise in the claimant count this month.

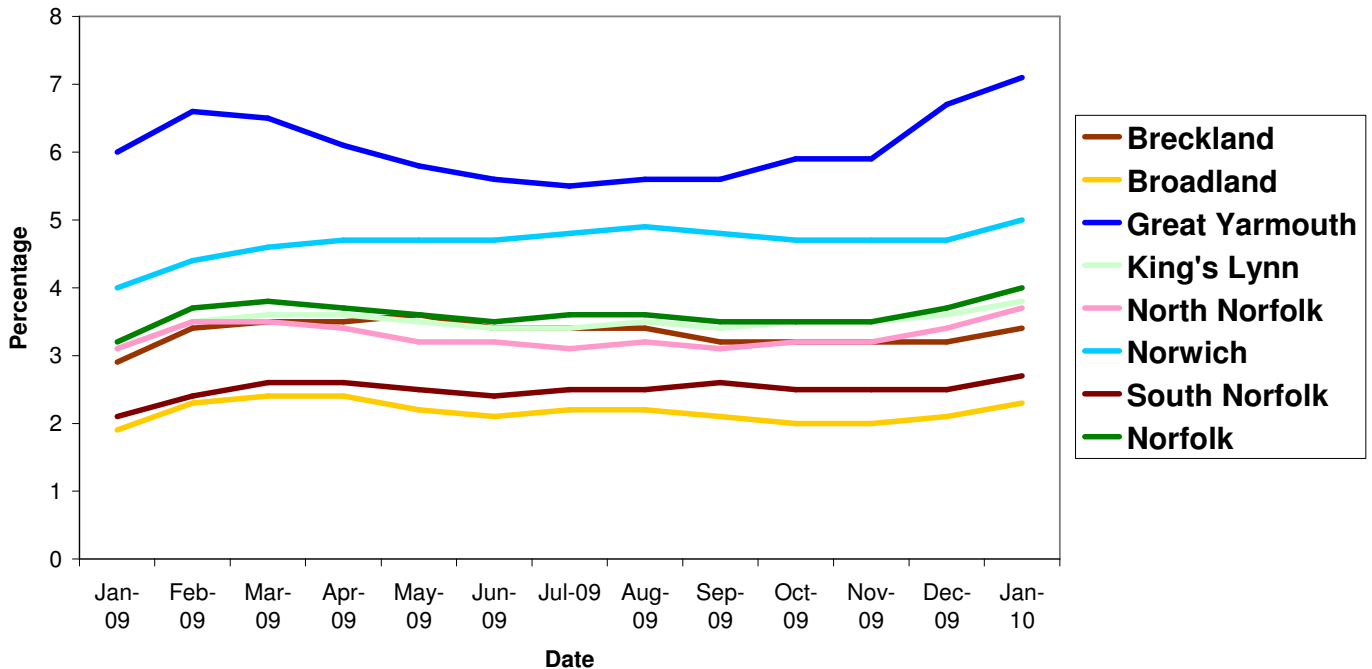
Source: Nomis, Official Labour Market Statistics

All people claiming JSA



After three months of claimant counts for Britain remaining steady at 4.1 percent, January saw a rise to 4.3 percent. The East of England and Norfolk also saw a rise in claimant's counts of 0.3 percent each. For the East of England there was a slight dip in December from the previous two months but January levels have risen past October and November's level.

All people claiming JSA



Source: Nomis, Official Labour Market Statistics

In terms of district claimant figures, all three areas of Greater Norwich saw an increase, Broadland by 0.2 percent, Norwich by 0.3 percent and South Norfolk by 0.2 percent. This is the first rise for both Norwich and South Norfolk since October 2009.

Area	Count	%age of working age population	Change in count year on year	%age change in count year on year
Norfolk	19,731	4.0	3,749	23.5%
Breckland	2,637	3.4	447	20.4%
Broadland	1,670	2.3	327	24.3%
Great Yarmouth	3,880	7.1	600	18.3%
King's Lynn & West Norfolk	3,109	3.8	570	22.4%
North Norfolk	1,964	3.7	310	18.7%
Norwich	4,639	5.0	1,073	30.1%
South Norfolk	1,832	2.7	422	29.9%

Source: Job Centre Plus

7,536 claimants in January 2010 were from the Norwich Job Centre Plus office, a 29 percent rise from 2009, an increase of 7.1 percent since December 2009. Of the claimants at Norwich Job Centre Plus, 710 were from people between 18 and 24 who had been claiming for over six months and 1,555 from the same age group but who had been claiming for six months and under.

Redundancies

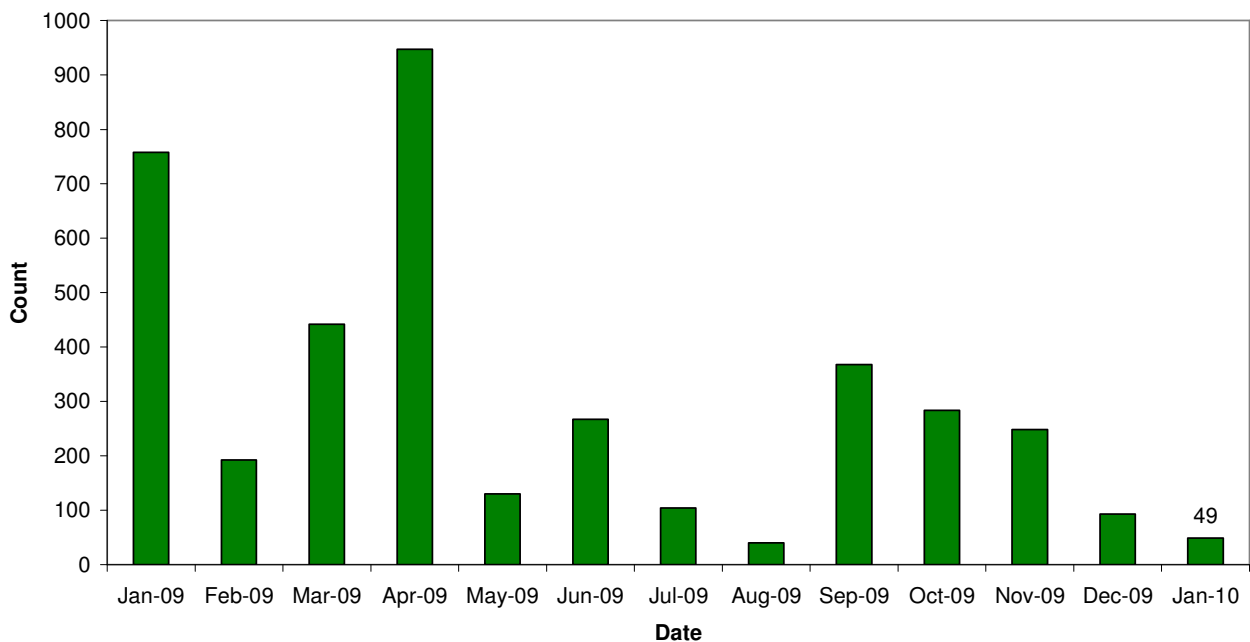
Key Facts

There have been 6,347 redundancies notified to Job Centre Plus between July 2008 and 31 January 2010, with an increase of 0.8% since December 2009. Of these 53% have been in Norwich, 1.5% in Broadland and 2% in South Norfolk.

The hardest hit sectors still continue to be manufacturing (1,122) and insurance and financial services (1,095).

Source: Job Centre Plus

Norfolk redundancy notifications



Job Adverts (EDP)

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


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

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.

In terms of district vacancy notifications:

- Broadland had 209, a drop of 54 percent since last year and a 54 percent decrease from December.
- Norwich had 1,039, a rise of 307 percent since last year but a 24 percent decrease from December.
- South Norfolk had 285, an increase of 105 percent since last year but a 7 percent decrease from December

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	1,411	2,800

 Industry sectors with falls in job vacancies

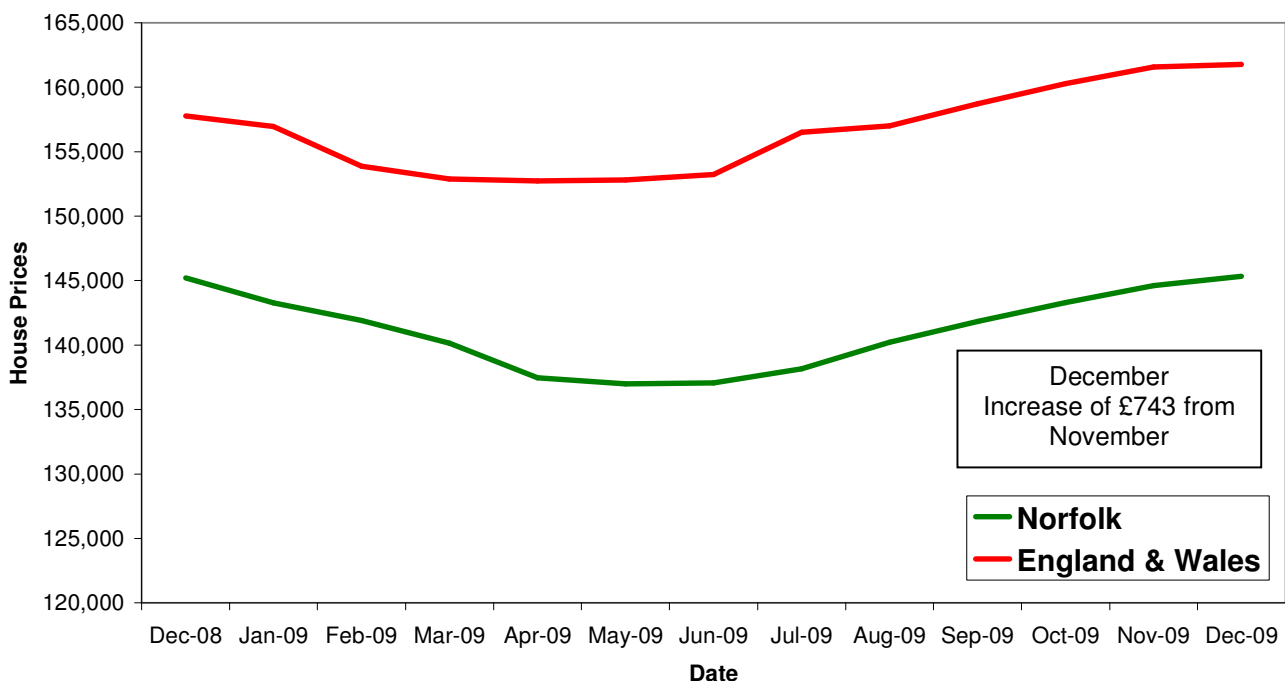
Housing

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

Norwich City Council will be building 11 council houses in the next two years, the first new council homes to be built in the city for two decades, after receiving more than £60,000 for the scheme from the government.

The chief executive of Broadland Housing spent three months last year working as a special advisor to the government in the Australian state of Victoria.