

Introduction

The Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership Board has commissioned a research study to develop, in light of the economic recession, a sound business analysis for the Suffolk Coastal District..

This project invited local organisations such as Otley College, Suffolk Acre, Learning & Skills Council, Job Centre Plus, the Suffolk Constabulary, Business Link, Choose Suffolk, Suffolk Coast and Heaths, Suffolk PCT, Haven Gateway and government departments with responsibility for areas such as training, technology, education, planning, communities and business development to contribute questions for the local businesses interviewed for this research.

The research enables these organisations to find out what current issues and challenges face businesses in the Suffolk Coastal district, enabling them to base future policy decisions on up-to-date, real information.

Charlie Damonsing was selected to carry out the research due to her position as a key member of the Suffolk Coastal Business Forum (SCBF). She lives in the area and has worked here for the past 10 years.

A similar research study was undertaken in the summer of 2007 by Westfield Solutions. This project builds on that research to obtain an up-to-date picture of businesses in 2009/10, particularly in light of the recent, severe recession in the UK and the challenges that has presented.

As part of this research, 100 businesses across a variety of industrial sectors and geographical locations within the district were interviewed. 25 of the interviews were carried out face-to-face and 75 interviews took place by telephone.

The interviews were conducted between November 2009 and mid February 2010. The economy had suffered the deepest recession for 80 years, the blame for this falling upon the banking crisis which erupted in October 2008. The final quarter of 2009 showed growth in the economy for the first time in 18 months and a General Election was called in May this year.

At the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership Annual Forum held on 17th November 2009 a workshop was run with two sets of participants being divided into four groups each to discuss skills, technology, community safety and the environment. The feedback from these sessions has been included in the research under the relevant headings – skills, technology, local environment and community safety.

Last summer was one of the wettest in years until late July and August when Suffolk entered a period of glorious summer weather with hardly any rain until October. Winter started with floods throughout the Suffolk Coastal area in November, caused by extremely heavy rainfall, and was followed by heavy snow in December and January.

The businesses taking part in the project have had the opportunity to express their main concerns aware that this information will be passed on to organisations and local authorities who may find the information useful when developing future policies.

The results have been collated and analysed according to sector, geographical location and themes.

The questions used in the interviews are in Appendix 1. Not all questions were put to all businesses.

This research has also been used for the Alde & Ore Futures Project, which focuses on communities around the Alde & Ore rivers - Aldeburgh, Snape, Orford and villages in between. Questions on the “value of tourism” and flooding were provided by the Business and Economy topic group from the Alde & Ore Futures Project. The findings of this research have been reported back to the topic group and they are planning further research.

Geographical Location

Comparison of IDBR Total Number of Businesses in Districts of Suffolk

| District | Businesses – total number | Businesses in Rural Locations |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Babergh | 4,490 | 3,380 (75.27%) |
| Ipswich | 4,885 | 5 (0.001%) |
| Mid Suffolk | 5,230 | 4,600 (87.95%) |
| Suffolk Coastal | 4,755 | 2,730 (57.41%) |
| Waveney | 4,345 | 1,610 (37.05%) |

Source: National Statistics Office – December 2008

Businesses Interviewed – by Geographical Location

| Geographical Location | Number of Businesses Interviewed |
|------------------------------|---|
| Aldeburgh | 10 |
| Bentwaters | 6 |
| Felixstowe | 18 |
| Framlingham | 8 |
| Leiston | 9 |
| Martlesham | 9 |
| Remote Rural Areas | 9 |
| Saxmundham | 10 |
| Wickham Market | 9 |
| Woodbridge | 12 |
| Total | 100 |

Source: Research Study Data – January 2010

Aldeburgh

The town benefited last year from tourists taking “staycations” – remaining in the UK for their holidays instead of going abroad. Last summer the hotels and restaurants all had a strong season. The cluster of ‘high-end’ clothes shops continues to attract shoppers to the High Street.

Some businesses, including retailers, the yacht club, hotels and restaurants, rely for their income on the high percentage of second home owners and day visitors to the town. A small study (see appendix 2) within this research shows the impact of tourism and second homes on businesses in the town.

Parking in the Town Centre and litter on the High Street during carnival week continue to be problems. Flooding is a major issue and is discussed later in this research under ‘Local Environment.’

Bentwaters

There are a wide variety of businesses on the Bentwaters Business Park. This location offers plenty of space and cheaper rents than in town centres.

Some businesses in similar industries, including film and creative companies, are based in clusters. There is no formal Bentwaters business group bringing all businesses together.

Felixstowe

Felixstowe remains dominated by the port activity. Logistics companies have had a hard time in the recession. The feeling from transport companies is that business is improving. There is a strong desire among town centre businesses to make the town centre an attractive place to shop and eat, and the 'Felixstowe Futures' shared space road scheme in Hamilton Road is working towards this. This will be one of the few shared space schemes in the county, and there will be a high profile launch to put Felixstowe on the map to attract visitors and businesses. A refurbishment project is underway at the Seafront Gardens and this is being funded by a Heritage Lottery Grant.

Framlingham

Framlingham has a strong town centre. The Framlingham Technology Centre houses many businesses. Several businesses, mainly technological and agricultural, are based in more remote areas outside the town centre.

Leiston

There are two industrial and business parks in Leiston and they host a variety of businesses, including food production, animal feeds, manufacturing, printing and construction.

During this research none of the businesses mentioned the plans for building Sizewell C and the potential impact this may have on the local area.

Martlesham

Businesses in Martlesham benefit from having good connections with the A12 and A14, proximity to Felixstowe and having a large residential area nearby. There is a diverse range of business sizes. These include BT, the largest employer in the Suffolk Coastal area, and many smaller businesses related to BT. 66% of businesses here have less than 5 employees.

The retail sector is growing, the Tesco store is a big attraction and shoppers have discovered other shops in the area.

Under the Local Development Framework there is a proposal for up to 2,000 new homes to be built in the Martlesham area. Some businesses interviewed in the research welcome the proposals whilst others oppose the plans

Remote Rural Areas

These include Orford, Easton, Badingham, Snape and Debach and have a variety of different businesses. Some were originally agricultural based and have now diversified into food production, manufacturing and tourism. (Others businesses are run by sole traders who work from home and moved to Suffolk Coastal to enjoy a better quality of life) ?.

Saxmundham

The arrival of Waitrose has made a big impact on the High Street and has provided an opportunity for other retailers. The feeling is that attracting more 'high-end' shops should be a priority and could make Saxmundham a worthwhile retail destination. One established farm shop reported the large negative effect Waitrose has had on their business. Lack of space for town centre parking continues to be a problem.

The local Business Association has become more proactive, and Saxmundham hosted a very successful Italian Market in December.

Wickham Market

The town centre has lost several businesses in the past couple of years. The existing retailers and estate agents are concerned that empty retail spaces and a derelict site that was previously a car show room gave an impression that the town was being run down. They would like 'high-end' retail businesses to come to the town so that a destination can be developed where people choose to come and shop. Some work on the regeneration of the town centre such as signposting in the market square and the change in parking has been done and this has been welcomed by local traders in the market square(what/by who..?). There is concern about what will happen when the Co-op Store closes on the market square. Local retailers want the space kept as retail, not turned into housing.

A very successful Italian Market was organised in November last year by a group of retailers. Similar events are being considered for 2010.

Wickham Market also has the Riverside View Business Park which includes manufacturers and engineers amongst its tenants.

Woodbridge

The Deben Mill Business Centre has provided new, modern office space and this has attracted IT/Web and creative businesses as well as financial and other service companies.

The High Street had an excellent summer last year with some businesses reporting "best ever" Augusts. There was a good pre- Christmas period but there is concern that so many empty shops give a "run-down" impression to shoppers and visitors alike. These empty shops need to be filled as soon as possible and independent retailers attracted back to the town. There is a perception that the local council encourages national chain retailers to the High Street rather than independent businesses.

Size and Types of Business

The table below shows government statistics representing businesses by industrial sector in the Suffolk Coastal District as a whole.

Businesses in the Suffolk Coastal District Analysed by Sector - Total 6150

| Business Sector | Number of Businesses | % of Total |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Agriculture | 625 | 10% |
| Production | 345 | 6% |
| Construction | 540 | 9% |
| Motor Trades | 205 | 3% |
| Wholesale | 225 | 4% |
| Retail | 560 | 9% |
| Hotel & Catering | 375 | 6% |
| Transport | 450 | 7% |
| Post & Telecommunications | 80 | 1% |
| Finance | 70 | 1% |
| Property & Business Services | 1,650 | 27% |
| Education | 140 | 2% |
| Health | 320 | 5% |
| Public Admin & Other Services | 565 | 9% |

Source: National Statistics Office – December 2008

This research does not include the public sector.

Businesses Interviewed - by Industrial Sector

| Industrial Sector | Number of Businesses Interviewed |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Agriculture | 7 |
| Biotech | 8 |
| Business and Financial Services | 11 |
| Construction | 7 |
| Creative | 7 |
| Food Production and Processing | 8 |
| Hospitality and Tourism | 9 |
| IT/Web | 8 |
| Logistics | 8 |
| Manufacturing | 10 |
| Retail | 14 |
| Other | 3 |

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Total | 100 |
|--------------|------------|

Source: Research Study Data – January 2010

(The “other” category includes a town centre co-ordinator, a local councillor and the Chair of a local business association. All contributed on behalf of businesses they worked within.)

Business Sectors within the Suffolk Coastal area

Agriculture - some farmers no longer just grow crops or rear animals. They have diversified into green energy, letting holiday cottages, building offices for rent, establishing caravan and camping sites, developing tourist attractions, farm shops and a physiotherapy clinic.

Biotech - in this research, biotech businesses include animal feed production companies and manufacturers of hi-tech components for communications and medical laboratories.

Business and Financial - these businesses include accountants, printers, solicitors, cleaning companies, insurance brokers and marketing consultants.

Construction - includes house-builders, a skip hire company and green energy suppliers.

Creative - the Suffolk Coastal area has a wealth of creative talent, including artists, manufacturers of educational toys, designers, film makers and musicians. The county, and particularly the Suffolk Coastal area, is known for its visual artists with many painters living here. It is significant in literary and musical worlds, with high profile festivals taking place throughout the year. A variety of businesses from these creative areas have been included in this research.

Food Production and Processing - this is a key industry in Suffolk. This research includes producers of poultry, jams, sauces, cakes, pies, ice cream, vegetables for supermarkets and producers of ready meals. Smaller businesses appreciate the county-wide initiatives that promote Suffolk food such as ‘Tastes of Anglia’ and the Aldeburgh Food and Drink Festival.

Hospitality and Tourism - tourism includes large hotels of 90 rooms, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, holiday cottages, golf courses, yacht clubs and farm parks. They all enjoyed a good summer. EU labour is used widely across this industry. There are skills shortages relating to employing chefs and general managers. Training in customer care and up-selling were identified as being needed to improve profits.

IT/Web - Suffolk Coastal has the largest IT business in the UK. Many sole traders provide web design and technical support and all sorts of services in between. This sector has been hit by recession as customers are buying less new hardware and not undertaking so many new projects. Spending on maintenance and support has grown.

Logistics - Felixstowe is the largest container port in the UK, and one of the largest in Europe. The businesses involved in port activities include transport, shipping, freight

forwarding and warehousing and they employ a large number of people from the area. Operation Stack, put into operation when the port is closed usually due to bad weather, has been a problem in the past, but now seems to be much improved.

Manufacturing - this research includes manufacturers of specialist lighting, car interiors, large plant, plastics, specialist hotel supplies and welding companies. These manufacturers have managed to weather the recession because of their niche markets. Exporters to Europe have benefited from the weak pound.

Retail - a variety of shops are found in every town centre. This research includes branches of national chains and independent retailers as well as remote village shops.

Retailers are concerned about the number of empty shops in town centres and believe that this gives the 'wrong feel' for the High Street. All retailers benefit from having busy, vibrant shops around them. Developing clusters of similar shops was mentioned and examples include clothes, antique and craft shops. Having 'high-end' shops in every High Street encourages customers and increases footfall and this can benefit everyone.

Woodbridge retailers had a "Keep Calm & Carry On" campaign last year, encouraging both businesses and customers to carry on through the worst of the recession. This campaign attracted a lot of publicity in national newspapers, television and local media.

Businesses in the Suffolk Coastal Area Analysed by Number of Employees

| No of Employees | Urban | Rural | Total |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 0 – 4 | 1,720 | 2,530 | 4,250 (70%) |
| 5 – 9 | 410 | 495 | 905 (15%) |
| 10 – 19 | 265 | 235 | 500 (8%) |
| 20 + | 235 | 175 | 410 (7%) |

Source: National Statistics Office – March 2008 – 2009

Businesses Interviewed - by Number of Employees

| Size of Business | Number of Businesses |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Sole traders | 11 |
| 1 – 5 employees | 26 |
| 6 – 10 employees | 11 |
| 11 – 20 employees | 20 |
| 21 – 49 employees | 15 |
| 50+ employees | 14 |
| Other | 3 |
| Total | 100 |

Source: Research Study Data – January 2010

Themes concerning businesses in the Suffolk Coastal area

Recruitment and skills development

6% of businesses asked were aware of the free services offered by JobCentre Plus to employers, such as Vacancy Advertising Services and Recruitment Advisory Services.

60% of businesses had used JobCentre Plus for their recruitment needs, with varying degrees of success. Four businesses in retail, hospitality and manufacturing have built a good relationship with their local office and use them often with great success, recruiting for lower paid and unskilled jobs within their businesses.

The remaining businesses were less impressed with the quality of candidates referred to them and believed that some candidates were more interested in applying for jobs and attending interviews so that they could continue to claim Job Seekers Allowance, rather than having any real interest in finding employment. This frustrated businesses that had wasted a lot of time on these candidates. In one example six people had been referred for interview. None turned up and only one had phoned to say they would not be attending their appointment. A care business, a lingerie retailer and a portable toilet hire company found the JobCentre Plus system unable to deal with special requirements of their job search.

JobCentre Plus does not have a good reputation and most businesses are reluctant to use them to fill vacancies for the reasons outlined above. Many businesses across the industries rely on word of mouth or specialist agencies to fill job vacancies.

Specifically trained staff and staff willing and able to undertake particular tasks are needed in many businesses. A few employers found it difficult to recruit within the Suffolk Coastal District area. The reasons for these difficulties are as follows:-

- A lack of interest from local people in jobs such as picking potatoes and other agricultural labour, cleaning, housekeeping in hotels and live-in care positions. Many of these jobs are consequently taken by non-UK nationals, mainly from Eastern Europe. Businesses find it difficult to recruit locally for this type of work.
- A difficulty in finding employees with specific skills. Examples given were chefs (chef de partie and upwards), window fitters, agronomists (agriculturally based), highly qualified accountants and stage technicians.
- Employers would like to see more school and college leavers having ICT (information and communication technology) qualifications, better communication skills in written English, the ability to talk to clients and customers with confidence and clarity. They also need more common sense and a “good” attitude to work and be reliable and willing to work hard in order to progress within the company.

- In several industry sectors it was difficult to find staff willing and able to develop and take on supervisory and management positions. This is the case in hotels, food production, retail and transport.
- In biotech, logistics and construction industries the recession has meant that businesses have folded so there is currently a good supply of qualified and experienced labour. Two businesses were aware of Local Employment Partnerships and the Backing Young Britain campaign. Three businesses asked for further details about these schemes.
- One major employer has spent much time and effort on developing several CBT (computer based training) courses on a wide variety of subjects such as compliance e.g. discrimination law. They are willing to share these courses with local businesses to save duplication of effort by others.

Training

Businesses rely on training providers, Business Link and trade organisations to keep them up-to-date with funding opportunities.

57% of businesses asked are receiving or have recently received government funding for training. This includes schemes such as Beyond 2010, Apprenticeships and Train to Gain.

79% of those asked had heard of Train to Gain and some already used it. Those that haven't used it were unsure as to what the scheme was about and how they could benefit.

14 businesses were asked if they had heard of Response to Redundancy. 43% were aware of it but didn't know the details of the initiative.

Apart from lack of funding, factors which prevented businesses from undertaking training included lack of time, the timing of the training being incompatible with business requirements e.g. hospitality and retail as seasonal businesses, "red tape" involved in applying and getting required certificates and approvals, the courses on offer not being relevant to particular businesses.

In-House Training

Businesses found it difficult to quantify how much training their employees had received in the past 12 months. Most businesses have informal, on-the-job continuous training and use skilled and experienced staff to pass on their knowledge to others on a daily basis.

Some businesses assess training needs on a formal basis, mostly with a regular, usually annual, appraisal system. Others see a need or gap informally and arrange training as a result. Many larger businesses and companies requiring regular training have built up good relationships with training providers who act in an advisory capacity as well as delivering the training. They help the businesses keep up to date with compliance training such as health and safety, and provide information on what is available.

Cost is the main factor taken into account when deciding on whether or not to organise training. Businesses want to make the training as convenient as possible. Another important factor is measuring the effectiveness of training. Businesses want to see results and see their business benefiting from training.

Specific training was required in particular areas such as customer service, selling skills for retail and hospitality, visual merchandising and general management.

Links with Schools

Many businesses do have links with local schools and offer work placements, attend careers fairs and sponsor awards. Most businesses would like to recruit locally and see building positive relationships with schools as a good way to achieve this. Businesses want school leavers to have good “work skills” that allow them to develop into useful employees. Work experience is seen as an important contribution to that end.

Most businesses are happy to provide work experience when asked. Many informal arrangements are made with the children of employees within the business.

Some industries are limited by “red tape” when taking work experience students, particularly in the construction, biotech, manufacturing, food processing and hospitality industries. Health and safety concerns in these environments make it very difficult for students to get any meaningful experience. Some businesses find pre-placement checks, visits and compliance paperwork a deterrent from entering into such an arrangement. One retail business said the first question from the assessor was “Where will the student sit down?” and “Where can the student go for a cigarette break?”

Confidentiality of client information is another reason why some businesses are unable to take students on work experience placements.

There have been successful work placements particularly with some retailers, an equestrian centre, an accountancy practice, an estate agent, a food producer, a printing business and a yacht club. This was because there had been a good match between the business environment and the attitude and interest of the student.

Some student placements do not work out well because the students are perceived to be attending the placement because they have to rather than want to. Businesses see this as a waste of their time and are less likely to agree to further placements. One retailer has a very rigorous interview process to assess the interest of students. Consequently, this business has had excellent results from their students.

Several businesses mentioned the low levels of basic skills demonstrated by the students such as not being able to “add up” and “write information down clearly”. They also noticed

a lack of work skills like time keeping and using mobile phones whilst at work, together with a lack of common sense, enthusiasm and initiative.

Some larger employers would be willing to get involved in more structured work experience programmes. These are in the information technology, retail and hospitality sectors. They would like to work closely with schools to develop mutually beneficial programmes.

Apart from work experience placements, other activities involving schools and businesses are taking place. One restaurant allows local students to use their kitchens regularly. Another in partnership with a local primary school is developing children's menus. Tours of business premises are taking place and one business has helped sponsor a bus which visits schools as part of an 'Agriculture in Education' project.

Local Strategic Partnership Workshop – 17th November 2009 The workshops were held at Snape Maltings and the Economy and Skills group ran two workshops of one hour long to deal with four questions in each. The workshops were attended by representatives of community groups such as the Women's Institute, business associations representing towns throughout the Coastal area and public funded organisations such as Suffolk Acre, the local Citizens Advice Bureaux and Felixstowe Futures. The majority of the delegates were not business people. The delegates were split into groups and asked to discuss one of four questions. The results of these discussions have been summarised below.

What are the requirements of businesses in relation to people and skills now and in the future?

- Ageing population in area – therefore succession planning required and a transfer of skills and knowledge within the workforce to younger people
- Older people blocking progression of young people because of higher retirement age
- Lack of basic skills for employment amongst school leavers – literacy, numeracy & social skills – lack of initiative and “get up and go”
- Need long term skills planning – Sizewell C is coming but jobs won't go to local people because they don't have the required skills – lack of engineers trained in past years
- Better promotion of practical skills/careers required – broader careers advice, not just focused on academic qualifications
- Promote relationships between schools/colleges and businesses – businesses fund degrees for example BT
- Provide workers with ability to change jobs/re-skill during career
- University College Suffolk – will help prevent talented youngsters leaving Suffolk
- Businesses are confused by qualifications
- Local colleges need to understand needs of local businesses
- Integrate education into other public services
- Opportunity to do survey on the aspirations of 6th formers?

Technology and Internet Connection

All but three businesses included in the research use the internet. A business which deals with 1200 farmers said that 800 of those businesses were not on-line.

The businesses in this report have websites and use the internet for e-mails and on-line research. Many other businesses bank, send and receive orders on-line.

Internet Speeds:-

- 24% of businesses rated their speed as slow or worse
- 40% of businesses said their speed was OK or average
- 36% of businesses rated their speed as good to “fabulous”

For those businesses who know their internet speed, the average is 2Mg.

Internet connection is a very hot topic in the Suffolk Coastal area. Many businesses have very strong views on the subject, but few people know the facts. Not many businesses know what speed their internet access is, or what they can do to make it quicker. There is a widespread acceptance of slow speeds which make users frustrated and businesses less efficient than they would like to be. 20% of businesses have a very clear idea of how they can improve their business with more reliable, faster speeds.

The effects of slow speeds are widely described as frustrating and inefficient. Some people simply avoid using the internet on “slow days”. A few businesses can lose a whole day at a time. This obviously affects customer service.

One supermarket was nearly late in opening because of a lack of internet facilities to support in-store systems.

If businesses had reliable, faster internet access they would be able to:-

- Provide faster internet speeds to guests staying in holiday cottages. In winter, letting businesses rely on rentals to Sizewell engineers who need a fast internet connection. If this cannot be guaranteed, business from Sizewell will be lost.
- Provide faster internet connections to office tenants. A farm which has built offices for rent has lost potential tenants due to inadequate internet access.
- Allow auditions on-line. A music business would like to hold auditions and rehearsals on-line to reduce time and travel costs.
- Allow management directly from Europe. A food supply company has a business with a European partner. Slow speeds in Suffolk prevent the seamless exchange of data between the businesses.

- Allow businesses to track produce from when it leaves their fields to when it arrives on supermarket shelves.
- Provide on-line shopping. Three retailers would develop on-line shops to complement their High Street businesses.
- Provide a central booking system. A hotel group would like to have a centralised on-line booking system.
- Develop websites. Five businesses would host their own websites and develop the e-commerce side of their business.
- Sell more houses. People moving into the area, particularly if they want to work from home, need fast, reliable internet connection. Slow speeds in remote communities have prevented sales of houses.
- Allow exchange of data between business units. A food producer would like to have one central database and tracking system. Slow, unreliable speeds do not allow for the real-time exchange of data and this leads to duplication between units.

Some businesses have invested in their own hardware to ensure they get the fastest speeds possible. The largest example of this is the Fram Broadband Project where fibre optic cables have been installed in the Technology Centre. Local households have been able to pay to benefit from increased speeds.

Just under half of businesses asked used BT as their provider. The rest used a variety including PlusNet, Orange, Eclipse, TalkTalk, Virgin, Pipex, Timico, Tiscali, Daisy-Eurotel.

Whilst many businesses are supplied by BT, they find BT difficult to deal with. The time taken to sort out problems is frustrating, and the slow speed is bewildering to many, especially as BT is based here in the district.

While some businesses are happy to shop around and change providers to get the best deal, others do not change because they believe they will be limited by phone line capacity and fear that changing supplier causes disruption such as having to alter e-mail addresses etc.

Local Strategic Partnership Workshop 17th November 2009

What are the issues facing businesses now and in the future regarding technology, including internet?

Broadband

- Variable speed and reliability – depends on distance from exchange & topography of immediate area

- Businesses don't know what they are missing – put up with what they have but are limited
- Business unaware that things could be better - “what can we do?” attitude
- Could use for transfer of medical data & completing college courses if connectivity is sufficient
- Need more technical support for websites – businesses could use web technology for their business
- Wireless options – what technology is available? What is coming to Suffolk?
- Perception that internet is difficult to use – more easy access training required – perhaps have young people teaching older people?
- Schools increasingly requiring internet access for study – if child does not have access at home, then has to come to school to do homework
- Digital inclusion – people who use internet may not be socially included in any other way – internet therefore a way to reach them – gamers
- On-line shopping – local retailers could use internet with better connectivity and training/support to expand and develop their businesses
- Encourage larger businesses to “share” bandwidth, wi-fi
- Schools and colleges – share infrastructure with local community
- Greater on-line security required – increase trust
- Mobile phone reception – depends on provider and where you are – some areas no reception
- Local TV and radio stations - use to cover local issues and share information

Energy

Most businesses are concerned about rising energy bills and will shop around to find good deals. In the past year, three companies have found a better deal and have reduced their costs by 50%. Three businesses cited lack of time or that it is too problematic to change supplier.

Some businesses have invested in alternative energy sources on a substantial scale, building an anaerobic digester and installing a biomass boiler and wind turbines. Smaller investments included ground source heat pumps, solar panels, restoring a wood burner and developing a waste oil heater. A small number of businesses have been successful in securing Carbon Trust grants to help towards the costs of these projects.

Thirteen businesses requested that Anna Martin, the SCDC energy business advisor, contact them about free advice on reducing energy bills and improving environmental performance.

Four businesses would like to investigate building wind turbines to supply them with electricity. Two businesses wanted to supply their local business park with electricity. All

these businesses anticipated local opposition to their plans and had taken the idea no further.

Environmental Issues

Nearly all businesses contacted were conscious of their environmental performance, with only six businesses stating this was not important at all.

Most businesses recycle as much as they can. Each industry has its own challenges and requirements. The actions businesses take and any further support they require has been broken down into the industry sectors below.

Agriculture & Food producers Food producers have very tough compliance requirements to meet in order to supply supermarkets. Their carbon footprints are very carefully monitored. One farmer said they are not allowed to burn things on the farm anymore and now store waste until they can pay for it to be removed. A review of these conditions by the District Council would be welcomed.

Biotech One business producing animal feed uses particular poly woven bags required by wholesalers. These can only be used once and are not recyclable.

Business & Financial Services Many businesses are aiming for a “paperless office”. They recycle printer cartridges and make their offices as energy efficient as possible.

Construction & Manufacturing Some materials used are difficult to recycle as they are composites or a licence is needed to recycle them. This adds to the cost of the business. Larger construction projects require a Waste and Recycling Plan as part of any proposal. New build houses have government requirements for energy efficient features. Clients who are refurbishing on a one-off basis demand more energy efficient features like solar panels, ground source heating, pumps etc.

Hospitality & Tourism Hotels have a wide variety of recyclable materials, including food, packaging, cardboard, tins, glass and chemicals. They need regular, efficient waste collection, particularly where they are short of storage space in a town centre location.

Retail Packaging is the biggest challenge for retailers. Clothes hangers are difficult to recycle as they are a mixture of materials. One business mentioned the threat of a disaster at Sizewell, and how this could affect the sales of houses in the area.

Local Strategic Partnership Workshop 17th November 2009

How do environmental issues influence businesses in the Suffolk Coastal Area - now and in the future?

- Environment includes natural, built, social and economic environments
- Natural environment is very important to businesses in the area – especially tourism
- Lack of public transport limits access to area
- Businesses need more information on environment to help plan and stay in tune with the environment
- Parish councils can use environmental information to develop biodiversity plans
- Natural environment offers much to attract visitors and businesses – castles, heritage coast – better information about Suffolk within Suffolk
- Dilemma of improving accessibility and attracting visitors but this could spoil or damage the environment
- Want visitors to spend more not have more visitors
- Businesses may outgrow their local infrastructure and have to move
- Do businesses grow at the expense of the environment?
- Transport to work an issue – damage to environment by cars – but no alternative?
- A12 at Blythburgh – very important for business use but ever increasing risk of flooding
- Felixstowe good at attracting business – good roads and rail
- More business infrastructure required – business parks
- Environmental problems – eg. flooding and coastal erosion – planning required, but we have little or no control
- Social environment very important – maintaining strong communities
- Businesses are interested in becoming greener, need support and information
- Balance required between attracting and sustaining businesses in the area and damage to the area

Location

The locations of the businesses questioned were 14% based in the High Street, 17% at home, 7% having offices in a town, 42% having a premises on a business park, 7% being farms and 14% being a one-off business or hotel.

There are many reasons why businesses are located where they are. These include:

- Local quality of life. This is an important aspect. Small business owners enjoy the quality of life and larger businesses find it easier to attract employees to the area.
- Being near suppliers. This is important in the agricultural sector. In the IT sector both Adastral Park and the Framlingham Technology centre have developed clusters of similar businesses which complement each other.
- Being near customers. This is a critical factor in retail, construction, business and financial services. These businesses do their homework on the demographics of their target markets and position themselves accordingly.

- Being near employees. A few businesses are positioned near to residential areas to encourage employees to work locally.
- Infrastructure. Not many businesses cited this as a reason for location. Logistics businesses need road links and port facilities, but their location is also tied up with the local supply chain.
- Space and suitability of business units. In construction and manufacturing especially, businesses need space for storing materials and products, good access for deliveries and specialised equipment.

Three businesses are in the Suffolk Coastal area because their owners had holiday homes here and decided to move here permanently.

The Local Environment

Agriculture, hospitality and retail organisations use the high quality natural environment heavily to promote their business. The hospitality sector uses images of the Suffolk Heritage Coast on websites, brochures and other marketing literature to attract potential visitors.

One business thought there was too much promotion of Aldeburgh and that the town was becoming too crowded, with day visitors preventing regular customers from even entering the town during the holiday season.

Manufacturing and IT businesses said that the quality of life in the local area attracted employees to work for them.

Of thirty three businesses asked, only three were unaware that the Suffolk Coast & Heaths is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Not many businesses were aware of the Connect Scheme run by Suffolk Coast & Heath. Eleven businesses were happy to be contacted to find out more about the scheme.

When asked what improvements could be made to their local environment to help or promote their business, a variety of themes were evident.

- Parking is a big issue in Aldeburgh, Saxmundham and Framlingham. Some businesses think there is a lack of parking for their customers and clients, while other businesses lament the lack of staff parking.
- Access to the area via A12 and/or A14 is important. These roads are vital and need to be maintained and the A14 improved to motorway standard.
- The rail link to London is too infrequent and the trains too small, leading to standing for most of the journey. Visitors from outside the area are not encouraged to use trains as an alternative to roads because of poor service. Business people are not

well served and continue to use cars. There are no direct rail links to Norwich or Stanstead Airports.

- Buses between towns in the district could be improved, not only to encourage people to visit, but also for employees to get to work. This would cut down on parking problems.
- Buses into the Felixstowe port area could be improved, with regular services and more drop-off/collection points.
- Waste collection in town centres should be quick, efficient and unobtrusive.
- Brown signs are needed to direct people from the A12 to Wickham Market town centre and shops.
- Deliveries to and from businesses in rural locations are often severely disrupted due to road works and when roads are closed. Businesses need to be advised about any future road works and closures that may affect them.

Reasons that businesses may relocate

- Flooding in the Aldeburgh and Snape area.
- For retailers – a more central High Street premises may be acquired at a more reasonable price elsewhere.
- Businesses services. Two town centre accountancy practices require larger, more modern offices to accommodate expanding businesses, but would like to remain in the town centre.
- The largest employer in the district is concerned that recruiting staff from outside the area leads to more house building and pressure on local space. They are very keen to recruit staff already living here rather than bringing in people from outside the area.
- Two-thirds of businesses see their current location as being their long term HQ, and none are looking to move out of the area.

Travel to work

In 45% of businesses the majority of employees travel less than 5 miles to work. In 27% of businesses the majority of employees travel between 5 – 10 miles to work and in 12% of businesses the majority of employees travel more than 20 miles to work. In 16% of businesses the employees work at home and do not need to travel.

13 businesses employ more than 50 staff. Most of their employees travel less than 10 miles to work.

Those employees travelling furthest to work are senior managers in a variety of businesses, and HGV drivers.

Planning

Twelve businesses said their dealings with their local planning department were very good, with comments such as “brilliant” and “easy” being used. These were from a variety of business sectors and geographical locations.

Fourteen businesses said they had reached an agreement with planners after slow and costly processes. A ‘give and take’ approach was mentioned. Sometimes businesses don’t get what they want and sometimes they do. Building a good relationship with planners seems to be recommended. This takes time on both sides but helps planners better understand the needs of a business.

Businesses based in Listed Buildings have found particular problems with making changes and developing their premises.

Six businesses said they had had real problems with getting planning permission for such things as building a commercial kitchen, a business park, an anaerobic digester, a studio in the back garden and refurbishing a restaurant and building. All these problems have had serious consequences for the organisations concerned, including delay in opening a business park by a year and delay in opening a restaurant in time for the summer season.

One business mentioned the planners not supporting environmentally friendly changes such as fitting solar panels onto holiday cottages.

Opportunities to expand

61% of businesses asked had available units and space in which they could expand their businesses.

39% of businesses were not able to expand where they were currently located. These were mostly business and financial services firms in the centre of towns who would like to move into larger, more modern offices with plenty of parking but still maintain their central location.

There were a number of retailers on the High Street who were unable to expand. Although empty units are available in some High Streets, the rents are still high and the costs of moving are prohibitive.

A couple of hotels were also prevented from expanding, one due to a central location and another because of planning restrictions in their rural location.

Networking

Most businesses are members of national trade organisations and this helped them keep up with news of what was happening in their industry. Four were members of the Federation of Small Businesses.

62% of businesses interviewed were members of local networking groups, including local business associations, the Port Users Group and the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce. Eleven of the thirty two businesses asked did not believe networking benefited their businesses in any way. They said that the networking groups available to them did not provide either the right type of contacts as potential clients for their business or did not represent the interests of their business.

Retailers in Wickham Market used networking effectively. Retailers in Aldeburgh networked informally, keeping up-to-date with one another. Last summer they caught some shoplifters who were operating on the High Street.

Two businesses benefited from support by IPCity and Business Link when they were starting up. This support included courses and advice.

Health Improvement

22% of businesses asked knew about the 'Fit for Work' initiative from Suffolk County Council. These were all business employing at least 45 people, except one which employed 25.

One business requested support to help make their workforce healthier. Larger businesses have occupational health providers who take care of this. Smaller companies did not see the health of their workforce as a priority or something they were expected to maintain.

One business requested help with encouraging a 'Stop Smoking' group and offered their premises to host this group.

The majority of businesses thought that whether staff smoked or not was their own affair. As smoking in the workplace is now banned, businesses were less affected by smokers than they used to be. The problem was the time taken for smoking breaks because staff had to go outside to smoke. Most companies said there were very few people smoking in work time now, so there was no real problem.

Where possible, businesses encouraged staff to walk or cycle to work. 75% of businesses interviewed provided bicycle racks for staff use. Martlesham particularly has a good network of safe, cycle paths.

None of the businesses interviewed were aware of the Mindful Employers Scheme, which looks at stress in the workplace. **Community Safety**

Crime

56% of businesses interviewed had not been affected by crime in the last 12 months. 5% had suffered minor vandalism such as broken windows. 5% had been victims of shoplifting and 17% had been burgled.

In all but two of these cases the businesses said the police had been prompt and dealt well with the incident. However, in only one case was property recovered and the perpetrator caught.

There were several comments stating that the police do a good job with the resources they have and the systems they have to operate within.

35% of businesses interviewed knew their Police Neighbourhood Team, in particular businesses in Aldeburgh, Saxmundham and Martlesham.

None of the businesses knew exactly what the team did and what their responsibilities were.

72% of businesses asked had a drug and alcohol policy.

Anti-social Behaviour

34% of businesses interviewed thought that the police dealt well with anti-social behaviour. 51% thought the police dealt effectively with anti-social behaviour. 15% thought the police dealt badly with anti-social behaviour.

There were two success stories relating to the police dealing effectively with anti-social behaviour. In Aldeburgh there has been a greater police presence in the past year during busy summer months, and less trouble as a result. One business stated that the police cover the period from midnight to 3am better during carnival week.

The other positive feedback was from Wickham Market. There used to be undesirable activities going on in the square. This has now been successfully dealt with.

There were incidents where groups of teenagers coming off schools buses or gathering at lunchtimes were noisy and perceived to be causing trouble. However, many businesses reported no anti-social behaviour in their area at all.

Last year there was a large CCTV project in Felixstowe, especially on the seafront. This is believed to have reduced anti-social behaviour in these areas.

Businesses believe overall that the Suffolk Coastal area is safe, especially compared to the rest of the country. Several businesses mentioned how lucky they were to work in such a place.

Local Strategic Partnership Workshop 17th November 2009

What effect does crime / anti social behaviour have in relation to businesses in the area?

- Suffolk Coastal is an area of low crime & anti-social behaviour issues – this fact could be used to attract businesses into the area
- Generally people feel safe in towns & villages
- Perception of teenage crime/anti-social behaviour created by the media is worse than is the real situation
- Fear of crime more prevalent than actual crime
- Example of a town centre car park being closed off at night because of “boy-racers” – then nowhere for people to park when attending evening activities in town
- Lack of places to go, things to do in town & village centres for young people – therefore they “hang-out” in public places and perception of crime and anti-social behaviour is increased
- Villages tend to be more self-policing with sense of community spirit not found so much in towns
- French “mayoral” style required where more decisions made at local (town/village) level, therefore dealing with local issues

Recession

There was a wide variety of reactions to the current recession. 29% of businesses reported no effect of the recession on their business and 9% reported record breaking good years. These were mainly the hospitality and tourism industries and they had a good year in 2009. Reports that UK residents were choosing to holiday in this country seemed to hold true for Suffolk. Camp sites, caravan parks, businesses letting cottages and lodges, hotels and restaurants all seemed to have had a strong summer season. Forward bookings for 2010 were looking good at this stage too.

One exporter had gained because of the weak pound.

Some businesses were “holding their breath” to see what would happen in the next few months. Some feared a “double dip” recession, believing that the economy might slip into recession again despite national economic figures showing a recovery in the last quarter.

13% of businesses focused on becoming more flexible in what they do and broadening what they offered. This meant that whilst some markets they served had contracted, they made up for it with new business in other areas.

9% of businesses had made redundancies in the past year, and one was not replacing staff who left.

Local issues that could be improved

- **Operation Stack.** This used to be a real problem for HGVs simply returning to Felixstowe, as opposed to wanting to board a ship. They got caught in the 'Operation Stack' system and took three days to get the last five miles home. This has now been largely resolved. Local HGVs can now get to base without being "stacked".
- **Waste collection.** Two hotels would like more help with waste and recycling collections. Tin cans can be separated out but need to be collected more often, otherwise there is nowhere to store them.
- **Market Day in Aldeburgh.** A shop owner on the High Street would like a weekly/monthly market on the High Street. This business owner runs a green-grocers and would be in direct competition with the market stalls but believes a market would bring more people into the town and benefit all businesses.
- **Develop empty business sites in towns.** There is a large, derelict site in Melton. This could be developed for new businesses so that local businesses can benefit too - i.e. construction companies, fixtures and fittings providers, IT and business service companies and a hotel for meetings, etc.
- **Train services to and from London.** A more regular service would benefit local leisure tourism and business stays.
- **Building a bridge or tunnel between Felixstowe and Harwich.** This could help develop the Tendring and Suffolk Coastal districts and would bring the Harwich leisure tourists closer to Suffolk.

What would improve my business?

Internet speeds - better information on options available to improve internet speeds and limitations involved when deciding to improve internet speeds.

Attitudes towards artists – the visual artists interviewed did not feel appreciated or supported as business people. One had problems with obtaining planning permission to build a studio.

Banks and credit - many businesses spoke of banks tightening lending requirements or taking longer to consider lending. For farmers timing is a particular issue as seeds are needed at a specific time. If four months later the money comes through then the farmer has missed the chance to sow the crops.

- One law company said that banks were treating the legal profession as being all the same. Some conveyancing businesses had gone out of businesses in the recession and banks were tightening lending to all solicitors as a result, even though some firms do no conveyancing at all.
- Some businesses haven't been paid because their customers have gone into bankruptcy. Most businesses reported that they were tightening their own credit terms.

Planning – local planning departments need to be more sympathetic towards new development and diversification, such as farmers moving into areas other than arable and livestock production.

Tackling Skills shortages - there are skills shortages relating to employing chefs and general managers, window fitters, agronomists (agriculturally based), highly qualified accountants and stage technicians. Training is needed especially in customer care and up-selling.

Need to encourage local people into employment within agricultural labour and picking crops and also into areas such as cleaning, housekeeping in hotels and live-in care positions. Many of these jobs are taken by non-UK nationals, mainly from Eastern Europe.

Exchange of expertise - sharing knowledge with other local businesses in a training environment. This will save duplication of effort by others.

Improving Recycling facilities and options - agricultural and food producers believe a review is needed of District Council rules regarding burning things on farms.

Information is required on how best to re-use non-recyclable poly woven bags.

Hotels and restaurants have a wide variety of recyclable materials, including food, packaging, cardboard, tins, glass and chemicals. They need regular, efficient waste collection, particularly where they are short of storage space in a town centre location. One hotel, in the Ufford area, would like more help in recycling cans.

Recycling packaging is the biggest challenge for retailers. The collection of cardboard has improved and is very helpful.

Businesses with specific recycling challenges need extra specialised support. They need to know where to get more information from, and who exactly to phone at District Council.

Public Transport – better bus services between towns and residential areas to help employees get to and from work. More regular buses into the Felixstowe Port area with more drop off/pick-up points.

Continued Regeneration of the Market Town centres – including Wickham Market and Saxmundham. Initiative to attract “high-end” retailers to the area.

Better communication regarding road closures – especially to local businesses in rural areas where lorries find it hard to turn round if the road has been closed for road works.

Support for businesses when there is local opposition to lorries – some rural businesses encounter local opposition to lorries and tractors using smaller roads. Agricultural based businesses have no option but to use these roads.

Better snow and ice clearance – especially in town centres. The recent bad weather hit retailers very hard as customers couldn’t safely get into and move around towns.

Parking times better enforced in town centres – where parking spaces are only for a limited time e.g. two hours, this should be better enforced to allow a constant turnover of shoppers in town centres, and prevent employees in the town centre parking all day in the same place effectively blocking out potential shoppers. This is a particular problem in Aldeburgh, and was mentioned by all the High Street businesses. It is also a problem in Woodbridge, particularly on Thursday, Friday and Saturdays. Two businesses, one in Felixstowe and one in Alderton have specific spaces outside their shops for customers, but because the short time allowed for parking is not enforced, people park there for longer and prevent customers using their shops.

Reasonable rateable value increases – the rateable value of a petrol station has almost doubled this year, threatening the survival of the business.

Conclusions

The Suffolk Coastal area is generally considered to be a good place to live and work. None of the businesses interviewed were looking to move out of the area in the future. Most businesses have a great awareness and pride in their location. They prefer to recruit locally, want to protect the local environment and appreciate feeling safe in this part of the world.

Flooding is a concern in the coastal areas of Aldeburgh, Snape and Orford. Businesses are getting together to discuss how to take action about this. The Alde & Ore Futures project is

an example of this collaboration. Some businesses, if in no danger of being directly affected by an exceptionally high tide, are not too worried.

The recent recession has been a testing time for many. However, those in the hospitality and tourism industry fared very well over the past 18 months. Hotels, restaurants and visitor attractions all reported good summer seasons with strong forward bookings for 2010.

Other businesses, including a biotech business, logistics companies, an estate agent office and a manufacturing company, have had to cut costs, including making redundancies. Others have been exploring new areas of business and have become more flexible, especially in IT and business services. Businesses have made tough decisions in the past 18 months although most have weathered the storm and are feeling confident about the future.

Unemployment was 4.5% in the Suffolk Coastal District between July 2008 – June 2009, compared to the national rate of 6.9% (source: Office for National Statistics). This research has indicated specific skills shortages in the district. EU labour continues to be used in agriculture, hospitality and the care sectors.

There is a campaign across Suffolk to highlight poor internet access and speeds throughout the county, particularly in remote, rural areas. This SCBF research has highlighted the potential for faster internet speeds to improve business development.

Developing renewable and cheaper energy sources is another emerging theme. Some businesses would like to have their own wind turbines, ground source heating and solar panels. This need is driven by wanting to have more control over supplies and costs.

Recommendations

Provide training programmes for the skills shortages identified, such as customer care and sales for hospitality and retail sectors, management and supervisor development courses and training to develop local chefs.

Provide information and support for businesses wanting to investigate the installation of wind turbines. Information needed on options available that will allow all types of business to be more environmentally friendly.

Improve recycling support for businesses with specialist needs, such as hotels and restaurants, farms and construction companies.

Simplify the assessment process given by schools to businesses wishing to offer work experience for students. Understanding the needs and requirements of businesses and developing long term work experience programmes to benefit students and employers.

Provide more information on the potential impact of Sizewell C to the local area.

Follow-up the offer of a major employer who has spent much time and effort on developing several CBT (computer based training) courses on a wide variety of subjects such as compliance e.g. discrimination law, and who is willing to share these courses with local businesses.

Continue to promote Train to Gain through Business Link, trade associations and local business associations. Emphasise the benefits Train to Gain can provide to particular industries in the Suffolk Coastal area.

Improve internet speeds and provide more information about the options available to businesses in simple, non-jargon language. Provide examples of how businesses and communities can get together and make changes which help everyone. One good example is the Framlingham Broadband initiative.

Provide more information about flooding, the potential risk and what plans are being discussed to tackle the situation. This information could be disseminated through local business associations, newsletters and forums with the emphasis on local issues.

Appendix One - Interview Questions

Business _____

Contact Name _____

Contact Number/e-mail _____

No of employees _____

Training

- Are you currently using government funding to support training in your business?
- Where do you currently get your information from regarding available government funding?
- Are you aware of Train to Gain? Response to Redundancy? Any other public funded training projects?
- Apart from lack of funding, what other factors prevent training taking place in your business?
- Are there skills or specific types of staff that you do not have locally, if so what would you like?

In-House Training

- How much in-house training did your employees receive in the last 12 months?
- How do you currently assess the training needs of your business?
- What factors are taken into account when deciding on whether to organise in-house training?
- What type of in-house training would make the biggest difference to the performance of your business
 - in the next 12 months?
 - in the next 2 years?

Broadband

- What does your business currently use broadband for?
- What broadband access does your business currently have (speed)? Do you know how to measure this?
- If none, would broadband connectivity improve your business performance? If so, in what way?
- Exactly what would you use it for? Sending documents/downloading information?

- Is your business efficiency ever compromised by slow broadband speed? Is the broadband bandwidth adequate for your short, medium and long term needs? Please explain how well it does/could perform.
- Can you provide information on your present Broadband provider?
- If you do want to change provider, what has stopped you doing so before now?

Links with Schools

- Does your business have any links with local schools?
- If so, what sort of activities does that include, and with which local schools?
- What would you like to do in the future? What is stopping you doing this?

Environment – energy and the impact your business has on the environment

- Are you concerned about your rising energy bills? Have you taken any action on this?
- Are you concerned about your environmental performance? If so, have you taken any action on this? If not, what is stopping you?
- Would you like our energy business advisor (SCDC) to contact you and tell you about our providing free tailored advice on reducing energy bills and improving your environmental performance?
- Do you think flooding could affect your business? If so, what plans have you made for this event? If none, what is stopping you?
- Do you think pandemic flu could affect your business? If so, what plans have you made for these events? If none, what is stopping you?
- Have you considered the potential impact of climate change on your business? What steps have you taken to minimise any negative effects? If none, what is stopping you?
- Do you have an environmental management system in place? If so please state what (ISO14001, BS 8555: 2003, internal)

Local Environment – impact on your business

- Suffolk Coastal has a very high quality natural environment - do you use this to promote our business, if so how?
- (*For businesses located within SCH AONB (roughly east of A12):*) Are you aware of the protected status of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty? Are you aware of the AONB CONNECT scheme which raises money from local businesses and links them with schools & community-based conservation projects in the area?
- What improvements could be made to your local environment that would help your business or its promotion?

Value of Tourism to the area (Alde & Ore area only)

- How much of your business comes from second home owners, day visitors and permanent residents?
- How much of your business is dependent on river activity? (ie regatta week in Aldeburgh)

Location

- Why did your business choose this particular location to start up? i.e. infrastructure, local quality of life issues, relevance of local supply chain, continuation of family business. What is the most important aspect keeping you based in this area?
- What issues may make your business re-locate? expansion, positive / negative impacts
- Do you see this area as being the long term HQ / base for your operations?
- Does the local planning system inhibit or support your business? Please provide brief details
- Are there any local issues that you have concerns about regarding running a business?

Local Business Support

- Where is your business based? eg home, business units (parks)
- Do you travel to work? If so, how far? 5 ,10, 15 miles etc
- Are there appropriate available units to enable your business to expand?
- Do you have adequate opportunities to network with other businesses? Do you see it as important? What is stopping you networking?
- Are you a member of any trade organisation, if so which ones e.g Suffolk Chamber, RHA (Road Haulage Association). Are you aware of what a trade association can do for you?
- Are you in contact with your local business association? If not, what is stopping you?
- What business support do you require? (what's currently good, what's missing)

Health Improvement

- Do you know about 'Fit for Work'?
- Do you need any type of help and support that can help you and your workforce to become healthier? If so what might this be?
- Would you be open to a Stop Smoking group being held on their premises (on whose premises?) for your staff? Would you be interested in joining up with other local businesses, allowing staff to attend a local group? Would you give staff time off to attend in working time or help promote a group that could take place before or after work?
- Are your staff encouraged to walk or cycle to work if possible or encouraged to take a walk during lunch time? If so, how are they encouraged?
- Are you aware of the Mindful Employer Scheme which looks at managing stress in the workplace, managing depression and anxiety in the workforce and dealing with more serious mental health problems that can cause a range of issues for businesses, large and small?

JobCentre Plus

- Are you aware of the free services offered by Jobcentre Plus to employers?
- Have you ever used Jobcentre Plus for your recruitment needs? If not, can we ask for details of why this is?
- Are you aware of local initiatives such as Local Employment Partnerships & The Backing Young Britain campaign?

- Would you like more details on how to participate in these schemes?
- If recruiting, would you like contact from your local Jobcentre Plus office to discuss these initiatives and how they can benefit you and your company?

Community Safety

- Has your business been affected by crime in the last 12 months? If so, what kind - criminal damage, theft etc.
- Do you regularly engage with your local Police Safer Neighbourhood Team? Do you know what the Team does?
- Does your organisation have a drugs/alcohol policy? Do you offer any assistance for employees regarding drugs/alcohol issues?
- It is the responsibility of the police and local council working in partnership to deal with anti-social behaviour and crime in your area.

Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statement:

The police and local council are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues in the area of your business:-

strongly agree, tend to agree, neither agree/nor disagree, tend to disagree, strongly disagree, don't know

Recession

- How has the recession affected your business? If at all?

Support for Business

- What support would make the biggest difference to your businesses in the next 12 months?

Appendix 2 – Value of Tourism in the Alde & Ore area

| Customer Profile of Alde & Ore Businesses | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| | | | | Business from Permanent residents | | Business from Second home owners | Business from visitors |
| | | | | % | | % | % |
| Retailer 1 | Independent | | | 35 | | 30 | 35 |
| Retailer 2 | Independent | | | 80 | | 10 | 10 |
| Retailer 3 | Independent | | | 65 | beyond Alde | 35 | |
| Retailer 4 | national chain | peak | | 30 | | 35 | 35 |
| | | off-peak | | 70 | | | 30 |
| Retailer 5 | national chain | | | 10 | | 60 | 30 |
| Food outlet | | | | 25 | | 25 | 50 |
| Restaurant | | | | 50 | wide area | 50 | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|--|----|--|----|--|----|
| | Yacht Club | | 25 | | 75 | | |
| | Estate Agent | | 20 | | 80 | | |
| | Hotel | | | | | | 99 |
| | Entertainment Venue | | 70 | | 15 | | 15 |