

Norfolk Rural Development Strategy 2013-2020

**Developed by the
Norfolk Rural Development Strategy Steering Group**

September 2013

supported by



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Foreword

This strategy will help focus how rural Norfolk needs to develop over the next decade and beyond.

Rural Norfolk is a very special place and this strategy examines how we best maintain those qualities whilst ensuring our communities continue to develop. This means change is inevitable, but our ambition is to deliver change *with* the community and deliver direct benefits to those who live and work in the county.

Our world is evolving and our County is on the cusp of major change. Resource pressures, the growth of the knowledge economy, climate change, an ageing but wealthier population, new industries and new ways to communicate and purchase goods and services are just some of the issues and opportunities we face. But unless rural Norfolk rises to these challenges, it is in danger of being left behind.

Norfolk has been at the forefront of innovation since the start of the agricultural revolution in the 1700s and continues to build on its historic track record of successes today - with globally significant research into some of the world's biggest challenges in food, health and environment in Norwich, advanced engineering at Hethel and through many other world class companies across the County. This 'go-ahead' spirit is essential to the future prosperity of our rural communities.

Norfolk is generally a good place to live, with a diverse economy, incredible landscapes, and some of the lowest crime rates in the country. However, it contains pockets of hidden deprivation and, in more sparsely populated and coastal areas, there is poor access to services and modern infrastructure such as broadband, mobile telephony and low qualification and wage levels.

How we respond to these challenges and opportunities will determine whether we can achieve the large ambitions we rightly hold for our County. To move forward, it is vital that we use scarce funding effectively and this strategy will be used to align UK, local and EU funding to support our priorities.

We are ambitious for the future and believe that by working together we can deliver positive change. But we must start now if we are to realise our aims, and we therefore urge everyone in our County to work together to deliver the strategy for the benefit of current and future generations.

Richard Powell OBE

Chair of the Rural Development Strategy
steering group

September 2013

George Nobbs

Leader and Cabinet Member for
Economic Development, Norfolk County
Council

Executive Summary

Norfolk is a rural county with 53% of its population designated as rural and only two districts, Great Yarmouth and Norwich, which are primarily urban. Addressing rural issues is thus central to the County's future.

This strategy is focused on how rural areas can be developed so that the rural economy continues to grow, the community in rural Norfolk is successful and inclusive and Norfolk's high quality natural environment is maintained and enhanced. This strategy was developed with the rural community and its success depends on action by businesses and local communities, with the public sector playing a supportive and enabling role.

The principles underpinning this strategy are that it must be: ambitious for rural Norfolk; strategic, proactive; innovative and optimistic. It focuses on the long term success of rural Norfolk and how this can be delivered.

The relationship between Norfolk's urban and rural communities needs to be strengthened. Current policies are viewed by those in rural areas as favouring urban led economic growth. This is seen by many as leading to an unsustainable model of development, in which rural areas have a rapidly growing population many of whom commute to urban areas for work, education or to access services, leaving rural areas as dormitories for the rich and affluent.

The 2020 Vision for Rural Norfolk is to:

Achieve inclusive, sustainable rural areas which provide their inhabitants with a high quality of life through a dynamic economy, vibrant community and healthy natural environment

Rural Norfolk is keen to develop its economy. With the right support to increase skills, an enabling planning system and digital connectivity, it can deliver substantial economic gains.

The ten priority issues for rural development in Norfolk are to:

1. Build on strengths in agri-tech, engineering and manufacturing sectors
2. Increase the quality and number of rural jobs
3. Increase the number of rural business start-ups
4. Deliver superfast broadband
5. Improve mobile phone coverage
6. Increase attainment in rural schools
7. Improve links to research and development to drive innovation
8. Increase the rate at which new affordable housing is developed
9. Increase private water storage capacity
10. Increase the area of land in environmental management

This strategy will be used to help secure the resources needed to deliver growth by:

- Providing an evidence base and priorities for bids for EU, LEP and national support
- Encouraging new models of commercial funding to support emerging sectors including the Agri-tech sector where Norfolk is a World leader

The strategy identifies:

- Emerging and existing sectors which can deliver long term growth and high value jobs
- Other sectors which are important to the future of the rural economy
- Key areas of enabling action (enablers) which are needed to deliver sustainable growth

Emerging and existing sectors

The long term focus for rural growth will be on four inter-related sectors with high Gross Value Added (GVA) per job and where Norfolk has globally competitive advantages:

- **Agriculture and the food chain** where Norfolk's commercial strength and World class research base will be used to deliver innovation, including: increased resources for high value crop production - water supplies and skilled employees; adding value to food by processing and marketing; creating new technology to increase agricultural productivity
- **Energy** where the largest offshore investment in the World is expected in the Southern North Sea creating thousands of new jobs both for those working offshore as well as those supporting the sector onshore. There is also potential to utilise agri-food waste streams, solar and small scale wind power on land to generate further renewable energy
- **Manufacturing and engineering** with rural Norfolk having a large concentration of businesses and a much higher proportion of its workforce in this sector than urban areas. Notable areas for growth include food processing, agri-tech and energy equipment
- **The knowledge economy** building on Norwich Research Park (NRP) and growth in the demand for knowledge based services to grow the agri-food, energy, manufacturing and engineering sectors. Unlocking this potential requires improved broadband, new skills and the development of improved links between rural businesses and the research base

Growth of these sectors requires entrepreneurship, and whilst much of this must come from Norfolk, it is important to attract new talent to the county. A **High Growth Rural Norfolk** programme will attract inward investors, professionals and skilled technicians to the county to help these sectors grow and deliver economic growth. Short term investment will focus on two areas related to these sectors where Norfolk could take a national lead:

- **Agri-food technology** - this is a major strength of Norfolk and will be used to lead a new green revolution in the UK by building on the cluster of businesses and research centres in this sector. The focus will be on addressing water, energy and nutrient supply challenges, genetics, diet and health, supply chain management and engineering
- **Healthy ageing technology and systems** - a partnership of NRP, Hethel, the NHS and businesses should be established to address the challenge of a rapidly ageing rural population by creating new technology, services and businesses through a healthy ageing programme to help rural Norfolk address its largest social challenge whilst simultaneously creating new jobs and increased economic output

Other sectors

Two further sectors will continue to be important to Norfolk's rural employment base in the long term, although there is a challenge in both to try to create more full time employment, increased wage levels and higher GVA per employee. These sectors are:

- **Tourism** by focusing on Norfolk's natural and built heritage to drive an increase in quality, season extension, and higher economic returns from the 34.6 million tourists who visit Norfolk each year (3.4m staying visitors, 31m day trippers), by increasing overnight stays, promoting local food, drink and crafts and by increasing the activities available
- **Services and social care** where the growth of the rural population, particularly the retired, will lead to increased demand for services in rural areas. Meeting demand will require policies to train employees for these roles, innovation in how services and social care are delivered and provision of affordable housing for those providing these services

Enablers

To deliver growth in these sectors of the economy a number of areas need to be addressed:

- **Meeting the skills challenge** - the Norfolk Employment and Skills Board should review the delivery of rural skills and co-ordinate a programme to help schools raise attainment by using professionals and rural business leaders to support school leadership.

Addressing skills gaps requires better careers advice and the delivery of more vocational education from 14+ to allow all young people to fulfil their potential whilst meeting industry needs. A range of solutions including remote access and online content are needed to help address under performance across all skill levels in rural parts of the county.

- **An enabling planning system** which encourages and supports jobs growth in rural Norfolk will deliver sustainable growth. Planning policy will focus on the creation of balanced communities where housing and population growth is matched by job creation. Creating new rural jobs will reduce pressure on key commuting routes and make rural communities more sustainable. The priority action is to ensure that both small and larger rural businesses are supported to grow so that they can provide high quality local jobs. Inward investors in rural areas will also be encouraged.
- **Improved connectivity** - the Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBfN) programme will make substantial progress in providing faster broadband to rural Norfolk by 2015. All available technologies must be used to close the gap in digital access, but there is a risk that some rural properties will fail to keep up with the pace of change in digital services in the longer term as currently only fibre based solutions can provide superfast access speeds.

Mobile access is also a critical issue in which parts of rural Norfolk have poor or even no service and the solutions are more challenging than for broadband. Norfolk County Council will review how best to address mobile phone access by working with businesses, community groups and telecoms providers.

Transport connectivity is also important and policy must recognise that rural transport will continue to be dominated by private transport, whilst supporting, where possible, the growth of community and public transport.

- **Green infrastructure** is vital to the future wellbeing of rural Norfolk, both inherently to support biodiversity, the natural environment and landscape, and also as an enabler of community health and wellbeing and to attract visitors to the county. As most of Norfolk is managed by private landowners, working with them and ensuring that they have the support and incentives to manage the environment effectively is essential. Rural Norfolk also needs to build greenspace and infrastructure into new developments and adopt effective adaptation strategies to cope with climate change.

Enabling Structures

Delivery of the strategy will be enhanced by supporting:

- **A Norfolk Rural Bid consortium** - to help rural businesses access potential funding. With established business groups such as NNBF, FSB, Chamber of Commerce, Anglia Farmers, NFU and the CLA there is scope to reach many thousands of rural businesses quickly and effectively with funding updates. The objective would be to inform, broker and facilitate an increased number of good bids from Norfolk companies and consortia for national and EU funds.

In addition there is a need to develop a team which works to develop potential larger projects (even before the funding source is identified) so that rural Norfolk proactively develops innovative and substantial projects.

- **Leader Local Action Groups (LAGs)** - the role of LAGs will be extended by linking them to the Norfolk Rural Bid consortium, so that they help local businesses and communities access all the potential funds available to them. To maximize the efficiency with which LAGs can be supported a central county wide administrative system will be provided so that back office functions are delivered efficiently, allowing dedicated LAG staff in each Leader area to focus on supporting local projects.
- **A Communities for the Future Programme** will be established whereby at least one community in each district or Leader area is used to test new ways to create sustainable rural communities. These would focus on the priorities for vibrant communities including: increasing the quality and range of rural jobs to raise incomes; focusing on how to make rural areas attractive for young people and families (e.g. affordable housing) and developing new ways to deliver services to rural communities.
- **Business School Partnerships** - will be strengthened to raise aspirations and promote careers in rural business, with a programme to link businesses and schools. This will build on the work of other programmes such as Beacon East, Norfolk Knowledge, the Edge apprenticeship programme and existing work by Colleges.
- **Rural Enterprise Zones** - will support clusters of rural businesses. However, where these are developed and companies are provided with benefits through locating in an enterprise zone, they will be encouraged to provide benefits back to the local rural community e.g. by supporting local schools, providing work experience, taster sessions or mentoring. This will help to develop links between businesses and the community.

Chapter 1 Background

Purpose

The Norfolk Rural Development Strategy is intended to focus rural development by providing clarity on the issues which need to be addressed and how the rural community can work to deliver beneficial change. This strategy has been developed with the rural community and supported by the County Council and public sector which will help to deliver it.

The accompanying rural data report expands on the facts and figures used within this main strategy document and provides the evidence needed to help support bids for funding.

This strategy is not intended to be a blueprint or to be set in stone. Instead it is a living document and it is inevitable that future changes in the economy, environment or community priorities will occur. Norfolk County Council will therefore work with stakeholders to ensure that it remains relevant and up to date, with a formal review proposed for 2016.

This strategy makes no apology for its focus being on how to create rural economic growth, as this is essential to secure the resources needed to deliver its ambitions on social inclusion, the environment, jobs and wealth. In focusing on the economy it is also essential to consider how growth can benefit the community and be delivered in a way that supports a healthy environment.

This strategy also considers how funding can be secured to support its ambitions by providing a clear evidence base and set of priorities to help support bids for funding. It seeks to encourage innovative new models of funding to support sustainable growth, e.g. venture capital to support growth in sectors such as the Agri-tech sector.

Case Study - Dents of Hilgay

Dents of Hilgay has developed over the years from a 120 acre farm to a successful business incorporating five fishing lakes, a garden centre and a farm shop. Located just off the busy A10 at Hilgay it is in an ideal position to capitalise on passing trade with the farm and gift shop now accounting for over 50% of turnover.



Dents of Hilgay aim to capitalise on their success by establishing themselves as 'a food hub destination for a day out'. Their emphasis has always been on high quality, local produce and they will develop this expertise still further by creating a 'theatre style commercial kitchen' in an oak framed tea room which will host cookery demonstrations and gourmet evenings with guest chefs, along with providing 'every day' quality snacks and lunches. A 'covered street' links the farm shop and cafe and a porch will provide a welcoming entrance.

The total investment of over £500,000, which has been supported with an RDPE grant from the Fens Adventurers LAG, will more than double the retail floor space and create nine full time jobs and benefit 74 local suppliers through increased sales. www.dentsofhilgay.co.uk

Rural and Urban Norfolk

Norfolk is a predominantly rural county, with the rural population representing 53% of the county's total population and all but two districts in the county are predominantly rural. The relationship between Norfolk's urban and rural communities is therefore vital to the future of the whole county. The relationship must be supported by policies which see rural and urban Norfolk as mutually supportive, and be more sophisticated than seeing urban areas as the centre of economic growth with rural areas as attractive dormitories.

The consultation process identified that planning policy can lead to what many see as an unsustainable model of development, in which rural areas have a rapidly growing population but few additional employment opportunities. Many rural businesses have fared better in the last 5 years in creating economic growth than those in urban areas and policy should thus support the potential for more rural economic growth in the future.

The UK and Global Context

Rural Norfolk has to respond to large changes taking place across the World. Key external challenges and opportunities include:

- **The UK & Global Economy** - the recession affecting developed economies since 2008 is the longest downturn in over a century. There are signs the UK economy is improving, but projections for growth are still modest, meaning economic growth must be achieved in a challenging environment. The balance of the global economy is moving South and East, with the World's fastest growing economies in Asia. This is an opportunity as global trade grows, but requires established economies to embrace export opportunities.
- **Resources and Natural Capital** - despite the protracted downturn, resource demands have continued to grow due to population growth and this increases pressure on the environment. This trend will continue, with global population projected to increase by a further 36% by 2050 and economic growth will increase resource costs further.
- **Demographic change** - the UK population is projected to grow over the next 20 years. Supporting older workers to remain in work (including voluntary work) and building on their experience can help to facilitate economic growth and community led action. The growth in the retired population is a global 'mega trend' which projections suggest will continue for decades, leading to one of the fastest growing global markets.
- **Government** - the economic downturn has put pressures on public spending across the developed World, leading to austerity, public sector cuts and attempts to rebalance the economy towards the private sector, which will remain for many years. This is likely to continue to lead to more reliance on local action by businesses and communities.
- **Divergence in the Employment Market** - the UK is expected to see rapid growth in high skill knowledge based jobs which will increase by 2 million jobs by 2020, as well as more modest growth of 300,000 jobs in lower skilled service sector employment (as consumer service and social care demands increase), whilst public sector employment will fall.
- **Digital revolution** - the uptake of digital and online technology is changing the way people access work, education, services, recreational services and retail and how they communicate with friends and relatives. Access to latest generation digital communication technology is becoming a key determinant of the economic sectors a location can support and how effectively the population can access services.

Chapter 2 Vision for Sustainable Rural Communities in Norfolk

Rural Norfolk is a good place to live for many people and the challenge is to ensure that this good quality of life, economic success and community support is achieved by all.

The 2020 Vision for Rural Norfolk is to:

Achieve inclusive, sustainable rural areas which provide their inhabitants with a high quality of life through a dynamic economy, vibrant community and healthy natural environment

To deliver this the following objectives need to be achieved:

In relation to ***Innovation, Skills and Employment*** rural Norfolk will have:

1. closed the gap on school attainment with no district in the bottom 20% of districts nationally for attainment at GCSE or 'A' Level by 2020
2. grown private sector employment in rural areas by more than the increase in rural population (in percentage terms) by 2020
3. replaced the jobs projected to be lost in the public sector with private sector jobs by 2020
4. reversed the decline in business start up rates in rural districts, so that they are back to the average rate for Norfolk in 2005-07 by 2015, and match the rates in rural Cambridgeshire and Suffolk by 2020
5. embraced opportunities in agri-technology and value added food production, to increase the proportion of rural jobs in engineering, manufacturing and the supply chain by 2020

In relation to ***Facilitating Growth*** rural Norfolk will have:

6. delivered universal superfast broadband to every dwelling and business to meet the EU digital Access target of 30Mbps by 2020
7. removed all remaining mobile phone 'notspots' in the County by 2017
8. worked with telecoms providers to increase the accessibility of mobile data services in rural Norfolk by 2017
9. increased private water storage capacity by over 50% by 2020 to meet the long term challenge on water security for agriculture and other industry

In relation to ***Quality of Life and Social Inclusion*** rural Norfolk will have:

10. doubled the 2011/12 rate at which new affordable housing is built in rural districts by 2020
11. established at least one 'Community for the Future' in each district and Leader area by 2017, to test and demonstrate how to deliver truly sustainable rural communities in the 21st Century
12. increased by 2020 the area of private land in positive environmental management by 10% compared to the area in environmental stewardship in 2013

Chapter 3 Delivery of the strategy

Delivery of the Norfolk Rural Development Strategy will require:

- local leadership from businesses, communities, the public sector and individuals
- businesses to be engaged and incentivised to deliver benefits for the community
- the public and private sector to work collaboratively to secure funding to deliver growth
- a recognition that rural Norfolk is part of a wider area in which links to urban areas, neighbouring counties and other areas in the UK and internationally are important

Local Leadership

Local Leadership is essential to achieve change which commands the support of the rural community. Delivery of the strategy needs to link to existing projects such as RDPE, ERDF, ESF and environmental projects and many others. The complexity and number of organisations requires co-ordinated leadership at County level.

A **Strategy Delivery Group** will be formed to have oversight of the strategy and its first task will be to develop an action plan. The delivery group will also ensure that the strategy is used to inform investment plans at the local, county and LEP levels by working closely with:

- Business and rural community organisations;
- Councils and the public sector;
- Leader groups;
- LEP subgroups including Food, Farming and Rural Enterprise Board (FFREB), Green Pathfinder and Wild Anglia to progress aspects of the strategy.

The strategy and its delivery will be reviewed in 2016. This will ensure that once the new EU programmes for 2014-2020 are operational and initial actions have been implemented that the focus, management and oversight arrangements for the strategy are still appropriate.

Given constraints on public expenditure it is essential for businesses and communities to be engaged and incentivised to deliver benefits (e.g. jobs, services) for their local community. This can include:

- Promoting commercial investment in production, skills and infrastructure
- Supporting community led action including through the Leader approach

Delivery of the strategy must include looking at ways in which rural Norfolk can work collaboratively with other areas to mutual benefit including:

- Larger urban areas in Norfolk e.g. Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Kings Lynn
- Neighbouring counties which share rural borders, similar challenges and where commercial, social and public service connections often cross the county boundary
- The wider UK and global market

Funding

Delivery of the strategy will require funding to be directed effectively to tackle the challenges and opportunities highlighted. This funding includes:

- Mainstream funding from the County Council, NHS, central government and its agencies
- Project specific funding from UK and EU programmes - this funding is very significant to rural Norfolk with, over the 2007-13 period, the RDPE programme investing £15m in 190 social and economic projects in rural Norfolk worth £41m (at an average 36% grant), and a further circa £135m in environmental stewardship and woodland grants
- The Structural and Investment Fund (SIF) plans which are being developed by LEPs to focus their investment via ESF, ERDF and a small proportion of the RDPE programme over the 2014-2020 period
- New grant schemes such as the Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) which is very relevant to the county given its extensive coastline and the focus in the CCF on topics, e.g. skills, which are priorities for rural Norfolk
- Commercial investment and community fund raising to match fund grants

With constraints on public funding, it is essential for rural Norfolk to:

- Proactively identify ways to use public funding more effectively to deliver rural outcomes
- Secure local business investment and community funds to deliver sustainable growth and to match fund bids to government, the EU and charities

There is a role for the County Council and Leader groups in facilitating this, but in addition two further specific actions are required:

- **Norfolk Rural Bid Consortium** - an information and capacity building system is needed so that businesses and their advisers can subscribe to a system which screens new funding announcements to identify those which are suitable for Norfolk rural projects, and then ensures that those who could benefit are alerted to these opportunities and put in contact with others who may be interested in collaborating on a bid
- **Proactive project development** - in addition to responding to funding announcements, the county should establish a small team which proactively develops potential large rural projects, even before the funding source has been identified, so that the county can take the lead in seeking funding for innovative ideas

The LEP FFREB sub group and business groups such as the NFU, CLA, Anglia Farmers, Chamber of Commerce and North Norfolk Business Forum, have a role to play in helping to ensure that this proactive approach is successfully promoted to businesses.

Chapter 4 Introduction to Rural Norfolk

This chapter looks at key facts and figures relating to rural Norfolk today, as well as reviewing some of the major opportunities and challenges it will face in the future.

It draws on the evidence in the accompanying data report to this strategy. This expands on each area to give more in depth information and full references.

Norfolk's rural population

53% of Norfolk's population is designated as rural and all Norfolk districts except Great Yarmouth and Norwich have 49% or more of their population classified as rural with North Norfolk the most rural at 88%. Rural issues are therefore important to the whole county.

Norfolk's rural population today and into the future has the following characteristics:

- Norfolk's rural districts have a low population density (at 55% or less of the English average in every rural district), and there is a band of sparsely populated communities running north south in Breckland and along the western end of the North Norfolk coast
- By 2026 most rural districts in Norfolk are expected to see a 9% increase in population (from 2010), but there is a larger projected increase in the two rural districts which form part of the Greater Norwich area of 15% in Broadland & 19% in South Norfolk
- However, this population growth in total population will also be characterised by significant demographic change in rural areas, with in every rural district:
 - young people (0-24) as a proportion of the total population falling
 - the adult workforce (25-65 age group) as a proportion of the population falling
 - the retired population (65+) increasing by 40% or more, with the over 85 age group increasing by 77%
- These projected rural demographic changes are the reverse of Norwich, where only a very modest increase in the elderly population (+3% from an already low base) is predicted, with the fastest growth being in those 24 and under (+22%)

As a result rural Norfolk needs distinctive policies on the economy, skills, housing, service provision and health care. Key population challenges and opportunities in rural Norfolk are:

Challenges

- A small or negligible growth in working age population may constrain economic growth unless productivity growth can be increased
- To retain young families childcare, schools and suitable housing are essential
- A big rise in the retired population will increase demand for social and health care

Opportunities

- Develop policies to make rural areas more attractive to young people and families, with a particular focus on employment and skills opportunities
- Many retirees have good disposable incomes to purchase goods and services
- Encourage older people to use their experience and expertise to support economic development either directly, or by assisting others

The Norfolk rural economy

The rural economy provides 44% of Norfolk's jobs but is home to 53% of the population with many rural people commuting to urban areas to work, increasing pressure on roads and affecting community viability because they access retail and other services whilst at work.

The economic mix of rural and urban areas is now very similar, with in every Norfolk district:

- 26-30% of jobs in the public sector (where job numbers are projected to fall)
- 33-40% in building, wholesale, retail, transport, storage, accommodation and catering
- 4-6% in arts, entertainment and recreation

The main differences in the economic mix between Norfolk's urban and rural districts are:

- primary industries (agriculture, forestry, mining) are concentrated in rural & coastal areas
- manufacturing is concentrated in rural areas, 14% of the workforce in Breckland against only 6% in Norwich
- Norwich has the highest % of the workforce (21%) employed in business and professional services, at nearly double the rate found in some rural districts

Agri-food supply chain

- Norfolk has the largest agriculture sector of any English county (over 5% of the English total), in a sector whose GVA grew by 25% over 2007-2010 (against 4% for the whole economy), with global predictions of a 50% increase in the demand for food by 2030
- Norfolk generates 3% of English food processing output. The sector is now hi-tech and automated with an average GVA per employee, at over £50,000 per job, nearly double the average of the Norfolk economy as a whole
- Agriculture, food processing and ancillary businesses are struggling to find the additional highly skilled staff needed to deliver growth in the industry, and resource constraints (water, energy, land) are also reducing growth potential
- The Norwich Research Park and its wider cluster (UEA, Norfolk & Norwich Hospital) delivers World Class research relevant to food production, consumption, diet and food chain sustainability, all of which are areas of growing interest commercially

Case study: Norfolk Food Hub

Norfolk Food Hub is a proposed 40hectare development adjacent to the Norwich southern bypass which will focus on adding value to local food, supporting Norfolk food distribution into national markets and providing services to the agriculture and food sector in Norfolk.



The Food Hub will also help to bridge the gap between the public and food sector by providing education on how food is produced, the way in which modern farming and food production is adopting new technology and the link between dietary choices and health.

When fully operational the Food Hub will provide over 2,000 new jobs in the higher value parts of the food chain and increase the GVA of the Norfolk economy by £80m.

Tourism

- Norfolk tourism is concentrated in rural areas with 12 out of 14 of Norfolk's largest tourism attractions in rural locations. The tourism sector is valued at £2.7bn but growth has been constrained in recent years by poor weather and a weak economy, despite the increase in the staycation market. GVA fell by 34% over the period 2007-'10 and in 2010 was only 4% higher than in 2001
- Tourism GVA per job is comparatively low due to seasonal and low GVA service jobs
- 61% of Norfolk's tourism turnover is derived from day trippers, 35% from UK staying tourists, with only 4% from overseas visitors
- National research by Visit England shows that rural tourism is also much more seasonal than tourism as a whole, with 70% concentrated in spring and summer and only 7% occurring in winter

Marine and Energy

- Norfolk is at the centre of the Southern North Sea where an expected £50bn will be invested in renewable energy, oil and gas and the marine sector by 2040
- Many of the marine and offshore sector businesses based in areas such as Great Yarmouth grew by 20-40% in 2012
- The marine and offshore sectors will require large numbers of additional highly skilled staff but is struggling to find new staff with the skills needed locally.

Case Study: Scira and Sheringham Shoal Offshore Wind Farm

A formal celebration on Friday 19th April 2013 marked Scira Offshore Energy's move from the 'Prepare for Operations' stage of the Sheringham Shoal Wind Farm to its long term 'Operation and Maintenance' stage. Norman Lamb, the MP for North Norfolk and Minister of State at the Department of Health, formally opened Wind Farm Place, the purpose-built Operation and Maintenance base at Egmere near Wells-next-the-Sea, which Scira moved into in February.



With 88 turbines Sheringham Shoal is one of a number of major investments being made in offshore wind energy off the Norfolk coast. Wind Farm Place is located three miles south of Wells-next-the-Sea in North Norfolk and is a low energy consumption building – low energy lighting, highly insulated walls, and a 'green' roof to reduce rainwater run-off. With office accommodation and warehousing, Wind Farm Place now houses Scira's management and administration staff and serves as the base for the wind turbine technicians working on the maintenance of the offshore wind farm on a daily basis. A new dedicated harbour at Wells has also been constructed to serve the wind farm without disrupting existing users of the town's original harbour.

Green Economy

- Norfolk's rural areas have a key role to help deliver growth in the Green Economy from tourism, to renewable energy, clean technologies and renewable materials
- Norwich Research Park can support growth in the rural green economy by building on its strong research base in this sector
- As the demand for resources increases investment in areas such as water resources, recycling and biomass energy is growing
- Most of Norfolk's tourism sector is built on the area's natural heritage and countryside

Business Start Ups

Norfolk has low business start up rates compared to neighbouring counties or UK averages, which are particularly poor in the most rural districts, notably North Norfolk. The start up rate also fell faster in rural than in urban areas during the downturn, and at -25% in Breckland & Broadland and -41% in North Norfolk, (2005-07 average compared to 2010) is a significant economic challenge. Rural businesses are, however, resilient and survival rates are good.

The key rural economy challenges and opportunities in Norfolk are:

Challenges

- Resource constraints (land and water) may affect how fast the agri-food sector can grow
- Tourism GVA per employee is relatively low, many jobs are seasonal and the sector has been hit by the recession
- Many of the services and engineering needs of the growing marine & renewables sector are being imported or supplied from elsewhere in the UK
- The growing agri-food, marine & renewables sectors are struggling to find the new skilled staff locally to support their expansion
- Business start up rates are lower than in urban areas and have fallen faster during the downturn in rural Norfolk than in urban Norfolk or the region

Opportunities

- Primary industries including energy and food have been growing strongly in recent years and prospects appear good for further growth due to rising prices
- Government policy is focusing on supporting growth in manufacturing to rebalance the economy which is good for rural Norfolk which still has a strong manufacturing base
- More food processing would add value to Norfolk farm output & create high value jobs, particularly if linked to improved logistics and marketing through a Norfolk Food Hub
- Improving digital connectivity will increase rural economic growth
- Improvements to the A11 and railways will make rural Norfolk more accessible for tourists including for those who wish to walk, cycle or sail in Norfolk
- Extending the tourism season would add value to the industry and increase the number of full time jobs in rural areas
- Developing additional training and skills provision in the agri-food, renewables and marine sectors will create new jobs for local communities & reduce youth unemployment

Skills, Education and Employment

Employment - national reports by UKCES suggest that by 2020:

- There will be a reduction in public sector employment from 27% to 25% of the workforce, which given its importance in Norfolk's rural areas (26% or more of the workforce in each district) means the economy needs to restructure to provide new private sector jobs
- Business services jobs will increase by 1million (+12%) and be the fastest growing part of the economy. This is a challenge for rural Norfolk as it currently has a low proportion of its workforce in this growth sector, with 12% of the workforce employed in this sector in Kings Lynn & West Norfolk and 14% in Breckland, against 21% in Norwich
- There will be a rise in the demand for higher level skills across the economy by 2020, with jobs demanding higher skill levels rising from 42% to 46% of the workforce
- Skilled and administrative job roles are expected to reduce by 2020 due to continued automation of many of these roles, however in rural Norfolk projected strong growth of the agri-food, energy and marine sectors may buck this trend
- There will be a small rise (+3%) in lower skilled jobs concentrated in the care sector (+10%), and given the much faster growth in the retired population in rural Norfolk this is a sector where we can expect more rural jobs to be created

Schools and Further Education:

- Rural Norfolk has many rural schools but given its rural nature, accessibility is generally poorer (travel distances are longer) than England, particularly for secondary school and College provision in the more sparsely populated areas
- Primary school attainment is variable, but a trend to federate smaller schools is helping to address weaknesses by providing more critical mass to help smaller schools obtain access to a wider range of staff and facilities
- Secondary school attainment in the districts in rural Norfolk is very variable, with:
 - both Broadland and South Norfolk being in the top 15% of districts nationally for average GCSE performance (although their performance slips slightly for A Levels)
 - in contrast the more rural districts of Breckland, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, and the coastal urban district of Great Yarmouth score badly when compared to England, with Kings Lynn and West Norfolk amongst the worst 10% of districts nationally for A level (or equivalent) pass rates and in the bottom 2% for GCSE pass rates

Higher Education:

- In the UEA, Norfolk has a World class university which has recently achieved the accolade of being the best place to study in the UK for the quality of the student experience
- A number of Colleges are developing locally responsive HE provision and transport provision to help rural students access courses, with Easton and Otley College specialising in this provision for the rural community
- Norfolk is a net exporter of university students and this creates problems in securing graduates to deliver the growth knowledge based companies are looking to create

Workforce skills:

- The workforce in the rural districts of Broadland and South Norfolk is similar in its qualification profile to that found in Norwich
- The workforce in the more rural or peripheral districts in contrast has more employees with no qualifications and fewer workers with L4 (degree) and above level qualifications
- The rural districts of Breckland (311th) and King' Lynn and West Norfolk (303rd) are amongst the worst 20% of districts nationally (out of 348 districts in England and Wales) for the proportion of the workforce with L4 and above qualifications, with the coastal district of Great Yarmouth in last place nationally (ranked 348th out of 348)
- The same 3 districts along with North Norfolk are also in the worst 20% of districts nationally for the proportion of the workforce with no qualifications

The key rural skills, education and employment challenges and opportunities in Norfolk are:

Challenges

- Public sector cuts will affect rural employment as much as in urban areas and require an increase in private sector employment to compensate for the loss of jobs expected
- Rural areas are comparatively very weak in business and professional services jobs which are predicted to grow the most strongly in the number of jobs they provide
- Some Norfolk rural districts have very poor performance compared to the rest of the country at both GCSE and A Level
- Raising of the Participation Age will mean that the range of training opportunities in rural areas will need to meet the requirements of the local economy and 16 to 18 year old young people
- With low workforce qualifications concentrated in the most rural locations the rural economy will find it hard to embrace the expected growth in high skill jobs
- Online training services are expensive to develop, but are growing rapidly and may change the economics for training providers in Norfolk (schools, Colleges and HE)

Opportunities

- Continue the process of federating smaller rural schools to maintain local provision, whilst controlling costs, facilitating high quality staff recruitment, increasing staff retention and thereby increasing effectiveness and educational attainment.
- Improve the range of school facilities supported by business to improve the educational offer. This approach could be trialled with secondary schools to enable them to offer a broader curriculum and links to business
- Linking schools and the FE sector more closely with employers to develop new vocational courses which meet employer needs
- Increase the local provision of HE to meet the needs of a rapidly changing and growing rural economy in Norfolk
- Develop online provision to help rural employees combine work and study to meet future skill needs (including ensuring ICT skills to access this)

Deprivation and Housing

- Deprivation statistics are poor at accurately reflecting the true nature and scope of rural deprivation because in rural areas the poor and more affluent live cheek by jowl, unlike in most urban areas. Thus whilst national statistics suggest deprivation in Norfolk is concentrated in urban areas, the reality is that similar numbers of those who live in rural and urban areas are deprived at household level
- Norwich and its adjoining districts of Broadland and South Norfolk have the smallest proportion of households in deprivation, with at district level every rural district showing more households with at least one type of deprivation
- Furthermore, the statistics do not take account of the fact that rural households need to earn more to sustain the same standard of living because costs are higher in rural areas, estimated (nationally) at an additional 30-50% income being needed, depending on family structure
- Deprivation indicators are particularly poor for lack of central heating where 63% of affected households are rural, 59% have a limiting long term illness and 58% claim pensioner credit
- Deprivation related to barriers to housing and services are concentrated in rural areas due to higher house prices and lower wages, with the highest average house prices being found in North Norfolk which is the most rural district with the lowest incomes
- Affordable housing construction is a priority for young families, but in North Norfolk in 2011-12, only 30 new affordable houses were built, 4% of the Norfolk total in a district with 12% of the Norfolk population
- Holiday homes are concentrated in the 2 districts of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk and North Norfolk, with the rate per 1,000 residents at 48 in North Norfolk - 48 times higher than the rate found in Norwich and 24 times the rate found in South Norfolk and Broadland
- The northern part of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk has 3 of the top 30 locations nationally for the proportion of 2nd homes, with Brancaster on the coast having 41% of all its homes recorded as holiday homes (the 3rd highest rate nationally)

Case study: Broadland Farms

To address a shortage of local housing and to help a staff member who was commuting over 20miles to access work on the farm, Broadland Farms is developing new affordable housing for its own staff and the local community.

The houses are owned by the farm and tenants have no 'right to buy' so that the houses remain available for rental in the long term. A condition of planning permission was that the houses must remain affordable in perpetuity, with the rents pegged at 80% of the market rate. Despite this condition the new houses are projected to produce a reasonable economic return for the farm and are being developed with no public subsidy.

The key deprivation and housing issues in rural Norfolk are:

Challenges

- Deprivation statistics tend to hide the true nature of rural deprivation, and also fail to recognise the higher costs of living in rural areas, both of which leads to less rural focus in intervention programmes than rural areas should receive
- Holiday and second homes are competing for limited housing stock in some of the most rural areas where incomes are also low and house prices are high relative to local earnings
- A lack of new affordable housing being built in rural areas are making housing less accessible for local people
- Right to buy has also reduced the affordable housing stock and needs to be balanced with a programme to reinvest in new houses for those who need them

Opportunities

- Target deprivation interventions more locally using local intelligence to identify need, with less reliance on national statistics and ward level and above data, which tends to hide rural deprivation
- Develop schemes to reduce the additional costs of living in rural areas
- Provide services targeted at the needs of holiday home owners and visitors to support growth of the rural economy
- Develop more affordable housing targeted at local workers in rural areas, using Community Land Trusts, exception sites, shared ownership models and private landlords

Case study: Homes for Wells

Homes for Wells (HfW) was established to support the local community by providing housing for local people, keyworkers and others making a significant contribution to the local community and economy.

Since its launch in 2006, HfW has provided housing for over 50 people by managing private lettings where the landlord has agreed to charge an affordable rent and by gradually acquiring its own properties and managing and letting these at affordable rents whilst phasing out the management of the private lettings.

All the Homes for Wells tenants have lived in the parishes of Wells, Warham, Wighton, Holkham and Stiffkey and priority is given to those who work in a paid or voluntary capacity in occupations essential to the life of the community. Due to low wages and high property prices, these people have insufficient funds to rent or buy a property. Lack of help would result in them leaving the area leading to the essential services being understaffed.



Health and Social Care

- The statistics used to identify health needs can mask health inequalities as rural needs are often locally focused (below ward level), whilst others occur across areas which cross district or ward boundaries, making a coherent approach to health care difficult
- The most important determinants of health outcomes are education, employment, incomes, housing, car ownership and remoteness from service centres, meaning that tackling broader development issues can have a marked impact on health outcomes
- Norfolk's peripheral rural districts have a lower % of the population in very good health (39-42%) than in Norwich, Broadland & South Norfolk (44-46%). The rate is correlated to the retired population, with the lowest % being in North Norfolk. The gap is likely to grow with future growth of the retired population focused in rural areas
- Social care needs are growing strongly in rural Norfolk, and with the growth of the retired population (the major users of social care) projected to be concentrated in rural areas, these will see a big increase in the resources needed to meet social care needs
- Some causes of acute illness, e.g. air pollution, are lower in rural areas than in urban areas, although the difference is lower than in the past. Across Norfolk death rates from these causes vary by under 10%
- Advances in medical care are affecting where care is provided, with an increase in:
 - the range of procedures which can be conducted locally in a GP practice or health centre (which would previously have required a hospital stay or hospital day surgery)
 - the provision of remote access to services online and by telephone
 - the concentration of acute services (e.g. cancer care) in regional centres where a cluster of specialist staff & facilities can have a marked positive impact on outcomes
- For rural Norfolk, whilst the service improvements these changes provide are welcome, accessibility to centralised services is often poor for those without their own transport (16% of households in rural Norfolk), or for whom online services are difficult to access
- More local community provision (in GP practices or health centres) and centralisation of specialist services in regional centres, means the role of district general hospitals needs to change to reflect improvements in health care in other parts of the health economy
- Rural people tend to present later for treatment on average than those who live in urban areas and this can have a detrimental impact on health outcomes and increase health care costs as conditions are more acute before treatment commences
- Hidden deprivation, isolation and an increasing elderly population means that rural Norfolk has a problem with high rates of mental illness including depression and dementia much of which is under-reported, and this needs recognising and tackling

The Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-14 identifies 4 priorities, to:

- Promote healthy lifestyles
- Strengthen investment in prevention and early intervention
- Promote integration of care pathways
- Reduce health inequalities

Case study: Clinks Care Farm 'farming on prescription'

Clinks Care Farm is a 143 Acre county farm in Toft Monks, South Norfolk (just north of Beccles). As a care farm it combines the care of the land with the care of people and has been supported by the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).

It offers opportunities for disadvantaged people to help out on the farm. Because of the natural therapeutic environment this can aid people's recovery and even be a preparation for work. The care farm can also provide an alternative to day care.

Farming on Prescription was launched as a pilot project in November 2010 as a partnership between Clinks Care Farm, the Great Yarmouth & Waveney Primary Care Trust and the local mental health recovery team after being awarded an NHS Innovation grant. The scheme allows GPs and Mental Health Link-workers to refer patients with mild mental health problems to the Clinks Care Farm for a 12 week program for 1 day per week.



Many of those attending report improvements in their mental health such as improved mood, better sleep and appetite and more motivation. After the pilot finished in March 2012 Clinks Care Farm and the local NHS agreed to carry on with the farming on prescription program. It will be opened up to people with mental health issues and physical health problems.

The key health and social care issues in rural Norfolk which build on these priorities are:

Challenges

- New treatments demand access to specialist facilities in major urban centred hospitals, which increases accessibility issues for rural people in remote or peripheral areas
- Rural health needs will change rapidly as population demographics change
- The retired population have higher health and social care needs, are concentrated in Norfolk's rural areas, with future population projections showing that the growth will be fastest in these rural areas, with growth in the 85+ age group fastest of all

Opportunities

- Reconfiguration of health care for rural areas, using all possible service delivery routes can be used to help meet the changing health care needs in rural areas
- Make primary care more accessible in rural areas, 7 days a week and over extended hours to reduce the need to travel and the pressure on A&E and secondary services. Currently the only 24/7 walk in centre in Norfolk is in Norwich
- New techniques are allowing procedures which originally needed hospitalisation to be conducted in the local community and when linked to telemedicine can allow access to remote specialists and diagnostic facilities without the need to travel
- The big growth in social care needs may create openings for new third sector and rural businesses to meet these needs
- Using the natural environment and countryside to help tackle mental illness and obesity

Travel, Transport & Access to Services

Transport and access to services:

- Rural Norfolk is much more dependent on private transport than urban areas, and whereas 33% of Norwich households don't have access to a private vehicle, all rural districts have 16% or less of their households without a vehicle (11% in Broadland). Similarly the % of households with 3 or more vehicles is more than double (7-8% of households) in all Norfolk's rural districts compared to only 3% of households in Norwich
- Whilst 9% of Norwich's workforce travels to work by public transport, rural districts record rates from 3% in North Norfolk to 6% in Broadland. Rural people are less likely to use a bike or walk to work, with the rate in Broadland & South Norfolk a third of the rate in Norwich. In contrast 76% of those in Breckland, Broadland and South Norfolk use a car to travel to work against only 51% in Norwich
- The use of private cars is a necessity in most rural areas and for poor families this leads to the need to reduce other expenditure given the rising costs of running a private vehicle
- Whereas parts of Norwich have less than 10% of their workforce who travel outside their travel to work area to access work, in sparsely populated parts of rural Norfolk it can be over 70% who do so, indicating significant out commuting amongst the rural population
- Access to services and employment by public transport is particularly poor in Breckland, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk and North Norfolk, which are all amongst the worst 10% of districts in England on this measure. Many communities are 2 hours or more by public transport or walking from more than one major service with the most common types of services to be 2 hours or more away by public transport or walking for rural people are FE Colleges, hospitals & secondary schools
- Access to services in rural Norfolk is significantly worse than urban areas e.g.:
 - 40% are further than 2km from a cashpoint compared to under 1% in urban areas
 - 48% are further than 2km from a GP compared to under 2% in urban areas
 - 68% are further than 2km from a secondary school compared to 8% in urban areas
 - 23% of rural Norfolk households more than 1hour by public transport from a hospital
- Rural specific access solutions are required which recognise that rural Norfolk is predominantly serviced by private transport provision, whether owned privately or operated by community transport groups. Improving roads and ensuring that policy does not discriminate against the rural community (e.g. restrictions on parking) and trying to contain increases in private vehicle costs would benefit rural households

Broadband and telephony:

- The use of broadband services has increased very rapidly in recent years with:
 - 70% of the population aged 16 or over using broadband every day (Spring '13 data), which is more than double the rate in 2006
 - 90% of those aged 16-25 use social networks every day
 - The use of mobile internet doubled from 24% to 50% of the population over 2010-'12
 - 92% of the adult population now uses a mobile phone

- The average UK broadband speed for domestic customers in November 2012 was 12Mbps (having trebled in 4 years). In Norfolk the Better Broadband for Norfolk commitment is to get 2Mbps to every property by 2015, with 83% of Norfolk premises expected to receive 24+Mbps by 2015. The EU Commission Digital Agenda for Europe target of universal 30Mbps access by 2020 means that continued investment in new technology and infrastructure will be needed to ensure that this can be achieved across Norfolk's rural areas as only fibre can currently provide these speeds.
- Even with current roll out plans in place, there is a risk that some rural Norfolk properties which are not able to connect to fibre will continue to suffer from slower access speeds than is provided by superfast broadband.
- Mobile internet and data services are of growing economic importance as sectors such as agriculture adopt precision farming and the tourism sector develops new apps which require data exchange to help tourists navigate local attractions and access services.

The key travel, transport & access to services issues in rural Norfolk are:

Challenges

- Access to high speed broadband is essential for economic growth, social inclusion and service delivery. Whilst current plans will get all properties to 2Mbps by 2015, continued investment will be needed to meet aspirations for universal superfast broadband access
- Although the Government's Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP) will seek to address complete 'Not Spots' it will not address the widespread weak mobile signal which exists across Norfolk and this creates problems for mobile data services
- Rural Norfolk is dependent on private transport, the costs of which have risen rapidly
- Rural people are much more likely to travel long distances to access work than those living in urban areas, with subsequent consequences for economic and social cohesion
- The long term trend of a rapid rise in the elderly population means many more rural residents will be unable to drive
- The most rural parts of rural Norfolk are some of the worst nationally for access to services by public transport

Opportunities

- Implement the Better Broadband for Norfolk Programme, which has commenced rollout and is scheduled for completion by the end of 2015 when all premises in Norfolk will have access to the Government's Universal Commitment of 2 Mbps, using both fibre and alternative technologies where needed to meet this target. Over 80% of premises will have access to Superfast broadband.
- Invest in a range of technologies to support improved access to broadband and mobile telephone services in rural areas to support economic growth, service delivery and social inclusion and ensure that future technology (e.g. 5G) is targeted at rural areas
- Reduce the need to travel by supporting the creation of more local jobs and creating new ways to access services in rural areas
- Increase the use of innovative community transport provision such as car shares, fast bus routes, community buses, buses on demand, increased rail provision, cycling and walking routes to help those without access to private vehicles

Environment

- Norfolk's rural areas are some of the most diverse in the UK with a wide variety of soils, landscapes and habitats including coast, heathland, wetland, forest, woodland, grazing marshes, rivers, Broads, arable and improved grassland
- This rural landscape diversity in Norfolk is vital to:
 - biodiversity with Norfolk having recorded 88% of birds on the national bird list, 59% of the national moth list and 36% of all BAP species
 - the tourism sector, which as noted above is mainly focused on the rural and coastal areas of the county, with surveys repeatedly showing the quality of the environment as being a key factor for tourists in choosing Norfolk
 - the quality of life for those who live in Norfolk
- Climate change is a significant threat for all rural areas, but arguably rural Norfolk is in the frontline of the challenges it brings given a long, low lying and sinking coastline, allied to rising sea levels which increases the risks of saline intrusion, flooding and coastal erosion
- Climate change is also thought to be putting increased pressure on biodiversity with many new diseases (notably affecting the county's tree stock), invasive species and pests threatening established habitats and wildlife
- Resource such as water reserves are under pressure from rising population, climate change and increased demand for irrigation, and coupled to tighter limits on water borne pollution are leading to new land management practices
- There are 1,629 land management agreements in rural Norfolk supported by agri-environment schemes on 307,000 hectares (56% of the county).
- 67% of current agri-environment agreements are for Entry Level Stewardship (ELS), 32% are either partly or wholly Higher Level Stewardship (HLS), and 1.5% are organic. In total in 2012/13 these schemes invested nearly £20m in supporting the county's landscape and biodiversity
- The future of agri-environment schemes is current under review in the light of changes to the CAP from 2014, which will lead to a Greening Payment for all farmers as part of the replacement for the Single Farm Payment. The relationship between this greening payment and agri-environment schemes is currently unclear and this has led to a small fall in the number of contracts in place whilst both government and land managers wait for the detail of the changes to be agreed

The key environmental issues in rural Norfolk are:

Challenges

- Changes to agri-environment schemes may reduce the area in formal environmental management or change the uptake of particular land management practices
- Resource pressures will require new agreements on how to meet competing demands for resources such as water, land and energy
- Climate change adaptation is growing in importance if the impact in rural areas is to be managed effectively

Opportunities

- Rural Norfolk can add value to the economy by using the environment to differentiate products and services (e.g. through eco tourism), and through sustaining its attractive environment to encourage professionals and entrepreneurs to live in the county
- Changes in resource management, e.g. new reservoirs, can be used to deliver multiple benefits such as providing new habitats, improving the landscape and reducing the pressure on water resources as well as providing commercial benefits by securing water resources for commercial use. Water recycling schemes and rainwater harvesting can also be used to increase water supplies
- NRP and the UEA are World leading centres in the study of climate change and management of the water and land environment and their expertise can be used to take a lead on new rural environmental management schemes

Chapter 5 Growth Sectors in the Norfolk Rural Economy

The Norfolk rural economy has good potential to grow by focusing on its existing strengths and by embracing new industries. In doing this it is important to recognise and build on Norfolk's physical, human and natural capital to deliver sustainable growth.

Smart specialisation

In responding to the issues facing all developed economies, rural Norfolk will have to focus on areas where it can be globally competitive. The consultation process concluded that it is important to support:

- sectors which build on Norfolk's research and knowledge base so that the rural economy can embrace smart specialisation to develop globally competitive products and services
- the growth of existing rural businesses as well as stimulating new business creation
- established key sectors which have growth potential as well as embracing emerging industries in which Norfolk has natural advantages
- a diversity of sectors which provides jobs for the whole of the potential workforce
- sectors which can attract investment in rural Norfolk from both the private and the public sector (e.g. EU grants)

Given the concentration of SMEs, self employment and home working in rural Norfolk, these will remain key employment types, but it is also important to help develop the potential of larger employers and to attract new larger employers to rural Norfolk.

In rural Norfolk this could be achieved by investing in sectors such as:

- rural and agri-food projects linked to the World renowned Norwich Research Park to develop new food and natural products as well as the technologies to deliver them
- developing a Norfolk Food Hub to add value to Norfolk's food and farming sector as the demand for provenance increases strongly in food markets
- the £50bn growth in offshore renewable investment in the Southern North Sea by 2040
- embracing the demand for healthy ageing technology and services
- building on Norfolk's land, cultural and environmental assets to grow the green economy and attract high value eco-tourism

Case study: Adapt Group investing in new technologies

The Adapt Group at UEA has run a successful Low Carbon Innovation Fund supported by ERDF and private investors to help stimulate and commercialise low carbon technologies. The fund allows companies to secure up to 50% of the funding needed to develop new products, with funding in the range of £25-750,000 available per project.

To support the development of new agricultural technologies the Adapt Group is now extending its portfolio of funds by developing a specialist Agri-Investment fund to support the early stage development of new agricultural technologies by helping companies secure the funding needed to bring them to market. With Norfolk's agricultural research and commercial expertise in engineering and manufacturing this new fund will help develop new products to meet one of the World's biggest market opportunities.

Sectors for Growth

Consultees were asked to rank a number of sectors *in terms of their ability to create rural economic growth* and the results were consistent across both the consultation events and online survey. The priority given to each sector was:

| Rank | Sector | Average score |
|--|---|---------------|
| 1 st | Agriculture and the food supply chain | 2.3 |
| 2 nd | Tourism | 3.3 |
| 3 rd | Energy | 3.7 |
| 4 th = | Knowledge economy - professional services, innovation, creative & media | 4.4 |
| | Manufacturing and engineering | 4.4 |
| 6 th | Green industrial economy e.g. natural chemicals, building materials | 5.1 |
| 7 th | Service sector companies e.g. retail, social care, catering | 5.2 |
| 8 th | The Third Sector e.g. charities, trusts, not for profit sector | 7.3 |
| <p>The average score is based on consultees ranking the 8 sectors from 1 for the most important to 8 for the least important in terms of their ability to create rural economic growth, and is based on 183 unique responses</p> | | |

The priority sectors supported by the consultation process are closely aligned with the priorities identified by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the UK Industrial Strategy and projections for economic growth at local and national level.

Key Growth Sectors

The Norfolk rural economy needs to create new private sector jobs to compensate for the expected fall in public sector jobs. The growth of the economy needs to focus on key business sectors which are anticipated to be able to create new private sector jobs. The priority is:

A primary focus on four sectors which can deliver long term economic growth and high GVA jobs in rural areas:

- Agriculture and the food supply chain
- Energy
- Knowledge economy
- Manufacturing and engineering

With modest investment in two other sectors which will remain important in providing rural employment:

- Tourism
- Service sector companies

Agriculture and the Food Chain

The Norfolk agriculture sector is the largest in any county in the UK, which when coupled to the concentration of research and supply chain businesses and growing global demand for food, creates the potential to add value along the food chain as well as in ancillary sectors.

Priorities for investment

The priorities for investment in the Norfolk agri-food supply chain are:

1. **Smart growth**, by supporting:
 - a. **Knowledge led investment**, by building on the concentration of globally significant expertise at UEA, Norwich Research Park (NRP), Easton and Otley College, Poultec and Hethel. Norfolk will aim to be a key delivery location for the UK Agri-tech Strategy to support the commercialisation of new agricultural science and technology products and services for UK and overseas markets. By working with a wider regional cluster, including the research base in Cambridge, Norfolk is well placed to lead delivery of the Agri-tech Strategy nationally
 - b. **Skills development** - building on the success of Easton and Otley College, Poultec and the industry led Edge Apprenticeship project by increasing the resources for workforce development by utilising RDPE skills funding and supporting the creation of a UK top 10 agricultural education centre linked to the UEA, Easton and Otley and NRP. A greater focus on STEM subjects in schools is also needed to provide young people with the right grounding for the careers available, or to help them start their own businesses by providing mentoring and business support
 - c. **The adoption of precision farming** - so that resources are used more efficiently. Supporting the adoption of precision farming not only helps farms reduce costs, it also improves quality, disease and pest management and reduces diffuse pollution
2. **Addressing resource and environmental pressures**, by tackling:
 - a. **Water resource pressures** - by securing more sustainable water supplies the agri-food industry will have the confidence to invest in high value crops (e.g. salads, fruit), where demand is rising and which create many more jobs than arable farming. Support for water storage reservoirs, both individual and collaborative, water efficiency and water distribution systems will all deliver large benefits to the economy
 - b. **Environmental impact** - by ensuring that in the transition to the new CAP that the substantial benefits from stewardship to the Norfolk landscape and biodiversity are not lost. Norfolk will continue to experiment with new land and forestry management techniques, such as catchment management, to help reduce diffuse pollution and secure the future of the county's biodiversity
 - c. **Waste and energy** - the recycling of food chain wastes can help to generate energy through AD and similar technologies as well as recycling nutrients back to the land. Investment in energy will also include solar and small scale wind energy, but should not encourage energy from grown crops where this displaces more valuable food crops (which offer greater economic opportunities down the supply chain)

3. Adding value

- a. **Food processing** - Norfolk is currently stronger in its share of agriculture (>5%) than food processing (2-3%) in the national economy. In the food chain for every £1 of GVA in agriculture there is a further £4 in food processing, wholesaling and logistics. Adding value to more Norfolk produce would create new high value jobs
- b. **Intensive crops** - Norfolk has a suitable climate and soils for high value crops (e.g. vegetables) and as demand for these products grows could increase its agricultural output by prioritising investment in high value crops by securing the resources needed (e.g. water). These crops currently use 3% of the farm area but produce over 20% of crop value, so expansion of the area of these crops would grow the economy
- c. **Health foods** - using the research base at the Institute of Food Research (IFR) in Norwich can help the Norfolk food chain embrace rapidly growing global markets for health and functional foods. From products such as Beneforte broccoli developed at IFR to 'superfood' crops such as blueberries the growth in the demand for health foods continues to grow and will be exploited
- d. **Food Hub** - the proposed Norfolk Food Hub could add significant value to the Norfolk agri-food chain through its focus on adding value to Norfolk production, improving logistics and providing a shop window to promote Norfolk food and drink nationally

Case study: Place UK Ltd, Tunstead - market focus and sustainability

Place UK grows and processes fresh and frozen soft fruit for supermarkets and food manufacturers. Tim Place is managing director of the third-generation family-run company. His father, John, built the soft fruit enterprise of the business and recollects supplying raspberries and strawberries to King George VI's garden parties in 1937.

The company has a turnover of £13.5 million and employs 61 full time local staff, as well as up to 450 seasonal staff. These jobs bring money into the local economy through local food and drink sales, as well as the provision of evening entertainment for the employees.

Place UK produces around 2.5 million punnets of strawberries and 2 million punnets of raspberries every year to Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Morrison's through the marketing cooperative Berry Gardens. The company also supplies cartons of frozen rhubarb, strawberries, raspberries and blackberries to local businesses, as well as national manufacturing companies and retailers.

The success of Place UK is due to the quality of its produce, which is achieved by accurate monitoring of water and nutrients to its plants. The methods used are not only economically successful, but also have positive environmental benefits. For example, the crops are watered and fed with nutrients through trickle irrigation pipes laid directly beside each plant, so the risk of nutrient and water loss to the soil is greatly diminished.

The company has won two awards for water efficiency from the Environment Agency, one for water recycling and one for its irrigation monitoring and scheduling, which only adds the optimal amount of water at the correct time to ensure the best yield and quality of fruit.

(Courtesy of: Why Farming Matters in the Broads by the NFU)

4. Farm diversification

- a. Diversification of farm businesses into other aspects of the rural economy remains important but the focus needs to be on how Norfolk can maximize the economic value generated. Some traditional forms of diversification, such as B&B and equine, are believed to be at, or close to, saturation in many rural locations and new investment may thus lead to displacement for existing businesses
- b. In contrast other types of diversification can add significant value to the economy:
 - Adding value to Norfolk farm produce and marketing it nationally or internationally
 - Care farms and similar projects can deliver significant community and social benefits (e.g. care services, skills development, community engagement) as well as creating more jobs than a typical farm producing crops or livestock
 - Redundant farm buildings can be used to create workspace for rural start ups or those who wish to work close to home (e.g. rent a desk). The creation of small business units increases employment in the host community reducing the need to commute, delivering community, economic and environmental benefits

County Council Farms

Norfolk County Council should conduct a review into how to use its county farms portfolio to stimulate new business and job creation. With increased scale needed to make some types of farming economic (e.g. cereals), this review should look at whether a change in emphasis could lead to the creation of more rural businesses and jobs by focusing county farms on more intensive sectors, added value enterprises or community services (e.g. care farms).

Case study: Hill Farm Combinable Processing Plant

Hill Farm grain processing plant in Stowbridge was supported by Norfolk County Council working with three of their tenant farmers to build a co-operative grain processing centre. The project involved enlarging a building with improved road access which serves a large block of the Norfolk County Farms estate. The building works and associated infrastructure were funded from the County Farm estate with returns being linked to future rent reviews.

The local farmers in this co-operative venture invested in the refurbished second hand equipment creating the opportunity to add value to their cereals by drying and dressing their grain close to their fields without incurring haulage costs or excessive 'double handling' charges. The dried and dressed cereals will be stored on the farm or sold as it meets the required quality and moisture level standards with most going as 'biscuit wheat'.



Alex Wilcox, the project manager, said "The Fens Adventurers support towards specialist equipment costing £57,000 has allowed the three farms involved to reduce haulage costs and access new markets. It supports other local farmers who need to have their grain dried and dressed and deliver wider benefits to these local businesses – particularly in wet years. We are all continuing to invest and build our businesses in cost effective ways".

Energy

The Norfolk energy sector has traditional strengths in oil and gas in the Southern North Sea. Whilst new investment in oil and gas is being made due to higher prices, the real advantage that Norfolk has is by being at the centre of the largest investment area for offshore renewables in the World, with an estimated £50bn to be invested by 2040.

The energy opportunity for rural Norfolk is to supply energy directly (e.g. solar, biomass), as well as hosting offshore renewables businesses and the services on which they depend.

Commercial investment in the renewable energy sector is supported by funding schemes including the Feed in Tariff (FiT) and Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROCs). The new Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) launched in June 2013 provides support for feasibility studies into community renewable energy projects and the future RDPE programme is likely to support biomass projects. The InCrops project based at UEA is also working on new biofuel sources from algae.

Priorities for investment

The priorities for investment in the rural Norfolk energy sector are:

1. **Onshore**, by supporting the growth of rural energy supply including:
 - a. Biomass - with a focus on using waste streams such as food and agricultural by products and wastes, rather than grown crops, to avoid the diversion of farmland to energy crops at the expense of food production. Woodfuel also has more potential, although care needs to be exercised to ensure that the supply of fuel is developed in step with the installation of new demand. Straw based biomass schemes are already placing heavy demands on straw supply and creating consequential impacts for other straw users and therefore no additional straw fired systems should be developed
 - b. Biofuel development will focus on using the County's research base to develop 2nd and 3rd generation biofuels which use non food feedstocks and which offer greater long term potential to develop new exportable technologies
 - c. Many rural businesses, communities and households have the potential to use solar, small scale wind, ground, air and water source heat pumps and these will be encouraged. Given concerns about increased demand for food, the emphasis will be on schemes which don't compete with land for food e.g. roof mounted solar panels
2. **Offshore**, by supporting:
 - a. The development of services which support the offshore sector by providing facilities e.g. ports, services e.g. food, and supplies e.g. components, to the offshore industry
 - b. The growth of the engineering and manufacturing sector so that more of the supplies needed by the offshore industry are produced in rural Norfolk

Major beneficiaries of the offshore sector are likely to be in coastal communities e.g. Wells, although engineering and supply businesses across rural Norfolk can benefit.
3. As with the agri-food sector the energy sector is suffering from challenges in recruiting new employees. It is important to support the growth of the sector by ensuring that STEM subjects are promoted in schools and that the further and higher education sector and research base supports the industry in meeting its skills and innovation needs.

Knowledge and Creative Industries, Manufacturing and Engineering

Rural Norfolk will capitalize on growth of the Knowledge & Creative Industries, Manufacturing & Engineering (the knowledge economy) to create new jobs, increase wages, increase rural GVA and increase workforce skills in Norfolk. However, the growth of this sector will depend on improving Norfolk's digital connectivity and skills attainment so that the benefits of the knowledge economy can be realized across the county.

Digital connectivity can free these businesses from the need to be in urban areas. Many knowledge based workers enjoy the countryside and will relocate to secure a high quality of life in rural areas if this does not disadvantage them in terms of connectivity or career prospects. Proactively supporting this sector in rural areas would attract professionals and entrepreneurs to rural areas with significant spin off benefits for the wider rural economy and community due to their higher spending power.

The knowledge economy is strongly supported by funding such as the ERDF programme and this will be used to support this sector in rural Norfolk. In addition specialist funds such as the Sustainable Agriculture budget in Horizon 2020 and the forthcoming launch of an EU Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) for 'healthy living and active ageing' can support technology development. Rural engineers also need to be linked to the current energy EZ in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

Case Study: Highline Extreme

Highline Extreme started in 2004 having seen gaps in the market for mobile climbing walls and skate parks. The company was operating from small buildings in Hilgay and needed to have more space to expand and make traditional climbing walls and skate parks on a larger scale. Demand for their products grew to the point where their existing production capacity was inadequate and inefficient.

The construction of a £428,000 purpose built manufacturing unit of 5,000 sq feet with integrated office of 1,000 sq feet in Downham Market was supported with an RDPE grant from the Fens Adventurers LAG.

The facility has cad-cam capabilities linked to the production space. Extra production has provided more opportunities to export to Australia, India, California and Canada.



The additional space has enabled the purchase of a large flat bed router which has improved production capabilities and made better use of off cuts. Five new jobs have been created and four local suppliers to Highline Extreme are also benefitting from increased sales

www.Highlineextreme.co.uk

Priorities for investment

The priorities for investment in the rural Norfolk knowledge economy will focus on building on the area's strengths and research base by supporting collaboration between the research base, Norfolk businesses and the wider rural community (as a testbed of users) in areas including research, manufacturing and engineering.

Research and technology development should focus on:

1. **Agri-tech** - the combination of Norfolk's World class research base, strong agri-food sector and established agricultural technology businesses can create new jobs, products and services to meet rapid increase in demand for these services across the World. When coupled to Norfolk's strong agricultural consultancy sector and large agri businesses Norfolk provides an ideal testbed to develop and market new technology
2. **Healthy ageing** - where rural Norfolk's ageing population, NRP, UEA, Hethel and the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital can be used to support the development of technology to support healthy ageing to both support the rural community by allowing the elderly to stay active and in their own homes and to stimulate new business creation
3. **Environmental management** - including land and water management, waste and resource efficiency which are global challenges where Norfolk's existing research base could support the development of new technologies which are marketable globally

Manufacturing & Engineering can grow and deliver large multipliers in the wider rural economy by focusing on the growth of established rural Norfolk sectors including:

1. **Advanced engineering** to support companies in sectors including automotive (e.g. Lotus), energy (e.g. the Enterprise Zone), agri-tech (e.g. Sands Agricultural Machinery)
2. **Food manufacturing sector**, where GVA per job is double the Norfolk average, which in turn will also support jobs in the farming supply chain and stimulate the demand for services from packaging to logistics, buildings, machinery and professional services

Development of the manufacturing and engineering sector will support the development of UK and export markets. It will be important to work with UK Trade and Investment to promote rural Norfolk products and services and to attract inward investment to the area.

Case study: Norwich-Cambridge partnership for Agri-tech

Building on the World class research base for agri-food technology in Norwich and Cambridge the partnership has successfully secured £3.2m towards a £10m programme to develop the agri-technology sector across the region. The project will also help the counties prepare for opportunities linked to the new £160m investment being made by the government in the sector following the publication of the UK Agri-tech Strategy in July 2013.

The Green Industrial Economy

Norfolk has strengths in the development of the green economy through its research and academic base, the New Anglia Green Economy pathfinder and translational and applied research projects such as those run by the UEA's Adapt group. The economic downturn has made businesses more sceptical about this sector and therefore investment will focus on areas in which rural Norfolk has natural assets or established businesses which can act as pathfinders. There is also a need to support established businesses to enter this sector.

Green economy sectors with local potential for the rural economy include:

1. **Building materials** such as hemp, reed and timber, where strong local supply can be combined with the Centre for the Built Environment at UEA to develop new products
2. **Renewable packaging, textiles & bioplastics** where local manufacturers are combined with a large end user community (e.g. food manufacturers) and raw material supply

Tourism

The tourism sector is a large industry in the Norfolk economy and is predominantly a rural and coastal sector where Norfolk's extensive coastline, diversity of natural environments and market towns are key attractions. Tourism also has significant impacts on other sectors by driving the demand for products and services such as transport, food and drink and retail.

The sector remains seasonal and this coupled to relatively low wages, means that efforts to grow the sector need to focus on how it can be developed to provide more full time jobs with higher wages. Sector growth requires a focus on how income per visitor can be increased, rather than simply attracting more visitors, so that the sector does not create additional congestion, or lead to the peace and tranquility which many seek in rural Norfolk being lost.

Funding for small scale rural tourism development is available from RDPE and it is important to co-ordinate this investment with the work of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) Visit Norfolk, Visit East Anglia and Visit England so that promotion of rural Norfolk as a high quality destination is co-ordinated.

Priorities for investment

The priorities for investment in the rural Norfolk tourism sector are:

1. **Growth in visitor days**, through:
 - a. Season extension so more tourists can be attracted without putting pressure on peak season facilities and to support year round employment. Season extension will focus on events, promotions and Norfolk's natural assets e.g. winter bird visitors, Norfolk Food Festival
 - b. Promoting overnight stays so that day visitors are encouraged to stay for longer thus increasing their economic impact. This can be encouraged through visitor packages which include the joint promotion of events (e.g. festivals), accommodation and travel which makes rural Norfolk an attractive and easy destination to visit. Attracting group tours (e.g. coach parties) through appropriate accommodation could also help to extend the season, and increasing overseas visitors by positioning the Broads and Coast alongside major UK destinations such as the Lake District could bring benefits
2. **Consumer focus**, by:
 - a. Increasing quality of provision to meet rising consumers expectations in terms of the quality of accommodation, food, drink and activities
 - b. Responding to increased consumer interest in provenance by promoting local food, drinks and crafts so that tourist receive a distinctive Norfolk experience and to drive sales of these products once they return home
3. **Eco tourism**, by:
 - a. Utilising Norfolk's natural and built heritage including nature reserves, the coast, Broads, Brecks and historic houses and parklands to support the visitor economy
 - b. Promoting sustainable travel such as the 'Coasthopper' bus service, rail, walking, cycling, horse riding and sailing so that tourists can enjoy Norfolk's rich and varied landscape without using private vehicles
 - c. Promoting 'glamping' and other forms of low impact accommodation which attract wealthy, discerning and ecologically focused tourists

Case study: Waveney Valley Market Town Audio Tours

This project has commissioned the production of a series of “audio tours” for the seven Market Towns situated or near the Waveney Valley in Norfolk and Suffolk supported by the Waveney Valley Leader programme.

Creating a set of audio tours will help to attract and support tourism in the Waveney Valley and encourage local people to learn more about their area, both historically and currently. The project will help to develop “Local trails” accessible to all and promote community inclusion by drawing upon local knowledge and expertise to develop the project.

The “audio tours” will celebrate both the towns’ common heritage and explore and identify their own unique history and key features. The narrative of each guide will reinforce the interrelationship between the towns, exploring common historical and cultural themes, (e.g. Christianity in East Anglia, The Vikings, the Normans, American links c17th and c20th, agriculture and landscape etc.).



The walks can be downloaded as free MP3s and a mobile phone app, can be borrowed on an MP3 player or picked up as a leaflet from each towns’ information centre. Printed maps will be available to support the routes and 30,000 promotional booklets will be printed for distribution around the eastern region. <http://www.explorewaveneyvalley.com>

Service Sector

The service sector is large in rural areas. However, many of the jobs its provides are low paid and part time and have smaller economic multiplier effects for the rest of the economy when compared to sectors such as manufacturing.

The service sector is expected to grow naturally as the rural population rises, although this may be constrained for some services (e.g. retail) by an increasing tendency for rural inhabitants to purchase services remotely for home delivery and for service providers, both the public and private sector, to concentrate service provision in urban areas.

Whilst social care jobs can be low paid, the outcomes for individuals, communities and the public sector, by allowing people to remain independent, are of very high value.

The two areas where there is believed to be potential for the service sector to grow more rapidly than the rural population are:

1. **Health and social care services** for the elderly, given the 40% or more increase in the population over 65 in every rural district by 2026 and the 70% increase in the over 85 age group who are disproportionately users of these services
2. **Domestic services for high income households** - rural Norfolk is an attractive place to live and many of the inward migrants it attracts (whether younger or older) have high incomes. Ensuring that the rural business community targets these customers with services such as hospitality services, building maintenance, retail and recreational facilities will create jobs in the rural economy. Supporting the provision of these services in rural areas will ensure that more of the spending power of these inhabitants is captured locally

As outlined above there is also thought to be potential to use rural Norfolk as a location to develop and test new adaptive technologies to support healthy ageing. These may allow social care to be delivered more effectively and with less labour input, allowing wages for care workers to increase and new products to be developed which can be sold nationally.

Case study: Glandford Barn Conversion

Buildings at Manor Farm on the Bayfield Estate had been rented for many years by local commercial businesses. One of the tenants, Cley Spy, a binocular and outdoor specialist, were outgrowing their accommodation, so the farm decided to develop a redundant barn to offer their tenant a larger and much improved space.

This also presented the opportunity to improve facilities by installing public toilets and upgrade the car park to serve customers for the businesses and those walkers that enjoy the 9 miles of permissive access on the estate. The new toilet block offers specialised adult changing facilities, which were found lacking in North Norfolk.



The project was completed in February 2010, and according to Director, Roger Combe, “went according to plan, squeezed in just under budget and to the expected timescales”. Cley Spy have expanded into the new barn conversion, and a new Art Cafe has taken the vacated space. Both businesses will be benefiting from a newly installed wood burner heated by timber supplied from the Estate. The project was supported by the Norfolk Coast and Broads Local Action Group, RDPE.

The Third Sector

The third sector (community groups, trusts and charities) are not expected to create additional jobs in the rural economy, although they are important for the provision of some services including community transport, sports, heritage, the arts and social care provision.

The sector is, however, rated highly for its inclusivity and many of those who work in it, either as paid employees or volunteers, progress to careers in other sectors as the third sector is a provider of high quality training and career development support.

The third sector is under pressure as it has been very reliant on public sector funding and donations, both of which have been reducing during the downturn. Addressing the funding gap faced by many charities and third sector organisations, and their capacity to deliver, is essential if their role in the delivery of services was to be expanded.

Chapter 6 The Skills Challenge

Meeting the skills challenge will focus on:

- Raising aspirations
- Strengthening education links with careers, employers and the local community
- Securing additional competitive funds for rural skills

There is a need to focus on skills and raising aspirations as key enablers in helping to deliver new jobs, create new businesses and to drive the growth of existing SMEs, with parts of rural and coastal Norfolk having some of the worst statistics nationally for attainment levels for workforce qualifications. Addressing the skills challenges in rural Norfolk is in some areas a generational challenge, which if achieved could have a fundamental impact on the ability to grow the Norfolk rural economy.

The key areas which need to be addressed are:

- **Raising aspirations** across rural Norfolk so that young people, the workforce and those who influence them (e.g. parents, teachers, colleagues) recognise how employment is changing and how skills attainment can unlock their career potential
- **Increasing the role of Further and Higher Education** by working with schools to aid progression to further training and raising awareness of education and career pathways which are available. In the context of a growth in the demand for knowledge based workers, bridging the gap between school, further education and careers is essential
- **Engaging employers in promoting career opportunities** by using employers to explain the career opportunities they have and supporting the provision of skills development in schools, colleges and universities. Employers must also be encouraged to work with education providers to ensure that the curriculum meets their needs

A persistent under investment in vocational education is seen as holding back business growth, with the emphasis on academic study at 16+ not appropriate for many young people. This leads to a shortage of technically qualified new staff to support the growth of technology companies. Three of the priority sectors for growth in the rural economy: agri-food; energy; manufacturing and engineering, have problems with recruiting advanced technical skills.

Given the magnitude of the challenge faced on skills the county should establish a county wide programme to tackle under achievement in rural schools and skills attainment. This needs to include:

- working with the Employment and Skills Board to bring together school leaders, Further and Higher Education, employers and the County Council to collectively agree on an action plan to raise rural skills attainment
- supported by a Capturing Talent and Experience programme to engage employers, retired and practicing professionals who are prepared to commit their time to supporting school leadership to build links to the business and employer community, Further and Higher Education (linked to Norfolk Knowledge)

Priorities to Tackle the Skills Challenge

Consultees were asked to rank a number of ways in which the skills challenge could be addressed and the results were consistent across both the consultation events and online survey. The priority given to each issue was:

| Rank | Issue | Average score |
|-----------------|--|---------------|
| 1 st | Improving the attainment of children in school | 2.2 |
| 2 nd | Having a balance between vocational and academic subjects | 2.7 |
| 3 rd | Having structured career/education pathways for young people | 2.9 |
| 4 th | Developing the skills and qualifications of the existing workforce | 3.2 |
| 5 th | Improving access to further and higher education in Norfolk | 3.9 |

The average score is based on consultees ranking the 5 issues from 1 for the most important to 5 for the least important in terms of their ability to tackle the skills challenge, and is based on 183 unique responses

The priority for investment in skills will be on improving attainment in schools, linked to a better balance between vocational and academic subjects which prepares young people for structured career and education pathways. If this can be delivered it will lead through into increased progression rates to Further and Higher Education and more enthusiasm for workforce development initiatives.

The role of the business community and wider community in helping to support, guide and/or fund education also needs to be strengthened.

In tackling this it will be important to use funding imaginatively and to secure additional cash and in kind support for education and skills development from a wide range of sources. Funding sources which need aligning are:

- employer investment in workforce development
- core funding to schools, both via the LEA and direct to schools
- core Further and Higher Education funding
- workforce and employment focused funds such as ESF, Employer Ownership of Skills fund, RDPE skills funding
- charity, trusts and National Lottery funding

The Employment and Skills Board should work with rural employers to develop a series of bids to secure funding for Norfolk schools and colleges to enable them to modernise facilities, develop their skills offer, engage employers and the wider community, and address access challenges (e.g. transport and digital access to learning).

Delivering enhanced skills

The strategy focuses on four main areas of intervention:

Schools and young people

The main areas in which provision for young people in school needs to be improved are:

- supporting school leadership with expertise from experienced and talented members of the local community (e.g. professionals and managers) so that schools develop new ways of working and enhanced links in the local community
- raising aspirations by developing more effective partnerships between employers and rural schools to enable young people to:
 - make well informed subject choices which meet the needs of the rural workplace through improving careers advice at a younger age before subject choices are made
 - access well structured ongoing careers advice from the age of 14-18, so that they learn about the workplace and the career options it contains alongside their studies and appreciate the role of skills development in helping them achieve success
- providing all 11-14 olds with some vocational training alongside their academic study, and introduce life skills and etiquette training to extend the citizenship curriculum to prepare young people for interviews and careers
- increasing support for vocational educational so that young people are prepared for technical careers as a well paid alternative to academic routes
- ensuring that at both 16 and 18 young people have an appropriate range of career and educational pathways available to them, with impartial advice to choose the best route

In addition, pre-school services are vital to help young families in rural areas support their children to make a good start in life. This needs to include playgroups and nurseries, whole day and wrap around care in high quality facilities. Facilities for this can be supported by the basic services funding in the RDPE programme.

Progression to Further and Higher Education

Increasing progression to Further and Higher Education is an important way for rural Norfolk to address the low qualification profile of its workforce. Priorities are to:

- support advanced vocational education at level 4 plus as an alternatives to degree provision for those who want a more vocational route so that both young people and employer needs are better met
- increase Norfolk's degree provision in sectors which are growing in the rural economy, including: agri-food, energy; manufacturing and engineering
- improve links to the county's research base so that further and higher education is aligned with the county's World class research strengths
- support transport solutions which increase access to education for those in rural areas
- promote flexible modes of study e.g. part time, day release and distance learning which are accessible to rural people and which support workforce development

Case study: Innovative transport solutions at Easton and Otley College

Norfolk is a large and sparsely populated county with many of the more remote rural locations having poor public transport links.



Easton and Otley College, a specialist land based and sports college with two campuses, one located to the West of Norwich and the other near Ipswich has recognised this limitation and now runs dedicated bus services to address the problems that poor access can create.

It has worked with the Council to establish a network of direct bus services to move students from outlying locations to the College. With each year seeing more routes added to the network, the College has been able to open up its courses to many more students and this has helped to address low take-up in the more remote rural parts of the county.

Workforce Development

Rural employers already make substantial contributions to workforce development by funding training and development activities, but further work is needed.

Key areas for action include:

- Leadership and management training to meet the need for junior managers, and to help business owners improve their management skills
- New technology skills so that rural businesses are at the forefront of the adoption of new technologies which can increase efficiency
- Helping more rural employers employ young people by providing support, guidance and information on how to support their recruitment, training and development

Rural Norfolk needs to ensure it makes strong bids for rural funding, such as the RDPE skills programme, but also needs to be proactive in developing proposals for funding from ESF to support workforce development.

Attracting Skilled People to Norfolk

Entrepreneurs and professionals can have a positive effect on rural communities by bringing dynamism and knowledge to bear on the community and economic growth. Many employers report problems in attracting new talent to rural Norfolk, whether to work in schools, the NHS, or to run commercial businesses.

Attracting additional skilled people to relocate to rural Norfolk would raise aspirations and help to support the creation of more high skill jobs for local people. To encourage highly skilled people to relocate a good quality of life is essential coupled to a supportive environment to grow a career or business. Two areas are important to deliver this:

- Commercial factors, including: an enabling planning system, broadband and physical connections, skilled workforce and workspace for new companies
- Family factors, including: good quality housing, high achieving schools, first class cultural and recreational facilities, and a high quality natural environment

Chapter 7 An Enabling Planning System

An enabling planning system will:

- Promote rural job creation to make rural communities more vibrant and to reduce the need to commute
- Support the growth of enabling infrastructure to facilitate economic development
- Create a number of 'Villages for the Future' to test new ways to deliver rural communities which combine housing growth with new jobs, services and a sustainable environment

Rural planning needs a clear vision of how to create truly sustainable rural communities which are good places to live but which also have a dynamic economy providing high quality jobs for local people in a healthy, diverse environment.

To develop new ways to support this vision, a programme of Norfolk **Communities for the Future** will be developed, with each district or Leader group hosting at least one 'testbed' sustainable rural community where new ways to promote the parallel development of housing, jobs, education and services in a well cared for environment can be trialled. The Communities for the Future programme will also be used to inform a strategic policy environment for the development of rural communities by informing national and local policy.

A stronger vision for balanced rural development would provide certainty to developers and encourage more sustainable developments which avoided single use estates (e.g. only housing) which are resisted by most rural communities. Mixed use development will allow more local 'economic capture' so that rural communities are economically sustainable.

The key areas which need to be addressed are:

- embracing **paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** to promote the presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs', by delivering economic, social and environmental sustainability in parallel
- supporting a **Prosperous Rural Economy** by taking a positive approach to rural development, including supporting: the expansion of existing businesses; attracting new businesses to rural areas; agricultural diversification; leisure and tourism; the retention and development of local and community services
- **removing the sequential testing approach for smaller rural developments** e.g. applications for rural offices or other small scale development which provide local jobs and reduce the need for commuting
- **delivering a wide choice of quality housing** to support community sustainability through small scale developments integrated with the existing community, built from local materials and meeting the wide range of housing needs in rural communities

This framework will inform Local Plans which need to support modest scale development in most rural centres, rather than focusing all development in a small number of designated larger service centres.

Priorities to Create an Enabling Planning System

Consultees were asked to rank a number of ways in which an enabling planning system could be created and the results were consistent across both the consultation events and online survey. The priority given to each issue was:

| Rank | Issue | Average score |
|--|---|---------------|
| 1 st | Valuing rural job creation as much as urban job creation in the planning system | 2.2 |
| 2 nd | Supporting growth of road, rail & other infrastructure (e.g. water) | 2.6 |
| 3 rd | Creating Rural Enterprise Zones to support clusters of new businesses | 3.2 |
| 4 th | Supporting housing growth to meet the needs of a growing rural community | 3.4 |
| 5 th | Designing in environmental features into new developments e.g. renewable energy systems | 3.5 |
| <p>The average score is based on consultees ranking the 5 issues from 1 for the most important to 5 for the least important in terms of delivering enabling planning, and is based on 183 unique responses</p> | | |

The priority for creating an enabling planning system was to support rural job creation so that rural communities can be more sustainable through the parallel development of new economic opportunities at the same time as housing growth and local services.

Consultees were clear that planning policy must avoid creating a self fulfilling prophecy by restricting the growth of small rural communities due to the perception that they are too small, which in turn condemns these communities to an unsustainable future. A more progressive approach which supported balanced development would avoid rural communities being dormitories for the affluent.

The key areas which need addressing are supporting:

- rural job creation so that rural communities are sustainable
- the growth of infrastructure for sustainable rural communities including telecoms, roads, rail, water and energy to facilitate growth

This focus will be supported with action on three further areas:

- the development of small scale Rural Enterprise Zones in market towns
- a mix of housing to meets needs across the whole rural community, including young families and lifetime homes for the growing elderly population
- the adoption of sustainable design features into new properties e.g. renewable energy

Simplifying the planning process would help to promote rural development and mechanisms such as Local Development Orders (LDO) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) can be useful in supporting small to medium scale rural development.

Encouragement of farm diversification to create new rural workspace, as supported by recent planning changes, will also be promoted to support rural job creation.

Employment growth

Support for rural job creation in the planning systems needs to include:

- live/work units which respond to the growing potential for knowledge based small businesses to be based from home and for professionals to work, at least partly, from home reducing the need to commute and promoting community sustainability
- workspace for new business start ups and small scale business parks for office and light industrial use adjacent to existing settlements
- business units for multiple small companies or those who are able to work from their village or market town (e.g. 'rent a desk' schemes)
- the growth of larger employers in rural areas

Rural Enterprise Zones will be encouraged across rural Norfolk which provide:

- a simplified route to develop new business
- incentives such as reduced business rates, empty rate relief and relief from CIL

To create direct benefits for the host community, businesses given incentives to bring new employment into Rural Enterprise Zones could be required or encouraged to provide direct benefits to the local community e.g. by employing local people, making their facilities available to the local community, supporting the local school or community groups. This will both encourage communities to host Rural Enterprise Zones, support the companies in them and promote more sustainable rural communities.

Infrastructure

Rural sustainable development needs to be supported with improvements in rural infrastructure to ensure that development can be accommodated in rural communities. Key areas are:

- roads, rail, footpaths, cycleways and bridleways to allow rural people, goods and services to be transported and to support the visitor economy
- water infrastructure to meet the needs of housing, industry and agriculture at the same time as promoting water quality and availability in the natural environment
- the energy network, so that rurally embedded energy generation and the demand for energy to support housing and businesses can be delivered
- communications infrastructure e.g. broadband cables and telecommunications masts, so that rural communities can benefit from the digital age

Infrastructure can be expensive and new ways to support investment are needed which combines government, business and community investment to secure the infrastructure needed. This will facilitate sustainable growth and avoid the costs of infrastructure restricting sustainable development.

Housing

Additional rural housing is needed to accommodate the projected 9% or greater increase in the population of all rural Norfolk districts by 2026. The key priorities are to:

- ensure that local plans require new houses to be of high quality and designed to fit within their host community, using for example local design features and materials
- ensure that local plans promote both affordable and market housing to recognise the diverse needs in the rural community, not least given the large demographic changes foreseen. However, if conditions on affordable housing percentages are too onerous this will result in no new housing being constructed
- support the use of exception sites, Community Land Trusts and other new approaches to deliver affordable housing in areas of need
- support self build which usually leads to high quality individual designs which can be planned to enhance host communities
- support the creation of new high quality holiday accommodation, particularly that which is suitable for year round use to help extend the tourism season
- meet the needs of the Gypsy, Roma and traveller communities for residential sites

More consideration must also be given to innovative ways in which private landlords can support affordable housing provision, such as agreeing to housing on private exception sites in return for legal commitments to maintain the housing as affordable.

Where the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is applied this will be ring fenced for the benefit of the community where the development occurs.

Environment

The planning system will support developments which bring benefits to the local environment or which help to meet sustainable development targets. However, development must be affordable and therefore the environmental criteria applied must be proportionate and not restrict rural development any more than the conditions applied in urban areas.

Key areas of environmental planning include:

- designing in environmental gain, renewable energy and the provision of greenspace in all new or growing rural developments
- ensuring that medium and larger rural developments include clear provision for footpaths and cycleways, integrating them with the adjacent settlements
- supporting renewable energy schemes both for individual dwellings and through district level schemes will be encouraged as they both help to support sustainability, whilst helping to protect rural communities from energy price rises, particularly in offgrid rural locations where most households use deregulated fuels such as oil
- encouraging the use of natural and local materials which generate local economic opportunities or fit with the existing built environment in terms of the colour, textures and materials used

Chapter 8 Improved connectivity

Improved connectivity will be delivered by:

- Reviewing the delivery of mobile phone coverage in Norfolk
- Supporting a range of technologies to support broadband delivery
- Supporting transport accessibility

Poor digital connectivity is seen as a major barrier to sustainable rural communities, affecting everything from businesses location choice, the potential of businesses to sell their services, access to public services, learning and recreation. Unless this is addressed the rural economy and communities will be severely disadvantaged.

The EU Commission Digital Agenda for Europe target is set at achieving **universal 30Mbps** access for all properties by 2020 although current UK government plans are more modest and shorter term. The key challenge for rural Norfolk is to avoid being in the digital slow lane, where urban digital speeds and mobile telephony continues to develop at a much faster rate meaning that rural areas always lag behind.

The objectives for digital connectivity should be for the County Council to work with rural business and community groups to:

- meet the UK government targets for access to superfast broadband
- improve mobile coverage so that rural communities have access to effective voice and data services across the county to support business activity, safety and social inclusion by working with business, community and telecommunication company representatives to identify how gaps in coverage can best be addressed

In addition to digital connectivity, rural Norfolk needs to address the challenges presented by transport in a large rural county, with the twin objectives of:

- reducing the need to commute, primarily in relation to employment, by developing a more dispersed model of economic growth across the county so that more people work close to or at home in rural areas
- ensuring that rural roads, public transport and sustainable transport access options (e.g. safe cycling and walking routes) are developed to meet the needs of a growing population

Priorities to Improve Connectivity

Consultees were asked to rank a number of ways in which connectivity could be improved across rural Norfolk and the results were consistent across both the consultation events and online survey. The priority given to each issue was:

| Rank | Issue | Average score |
|-----------------|--|---------------|
| 1 st | Universal broadband via fixed line, satellite & wireless which keeps pace with UK average speeds | 2.0 |
| 2 nd | Enhancing mobile phone and mobile broadband access (20% of population don't have landlines) | 2.7 |
| 3 rd | Developing more rural jobs to reduce the need to travel to work | 2.8 |
| 4 th | Supporting the growth of public transport, cycling and walking | 3.7 |
| 5 th | Developing the rural road network to make it easier for people and goods to be transported | 3.8 |

The average score is based on consultees ranking the 5 issues from 1 for the most important to 5 for the least important in terms of improving connectivity, and is based on 183 unique responses

The clear priority for improved connectivity is universal broadband access in rural areas which keeps pace with UK average speeds, supplemented by the need for enhanced mobile access which was particularly highly rated by businesses and employees in rural areas.

The key areas which need addressing are:

- using all available technologies, fixed line, wireless and satellite to provide fast broadband access to all properties in rural Norfolk so that businesses and communities are not disadvantaged as more systems go online
- increasing mobile telephone coverage for voice and data services to support rural users, many of whom now need data access to complete their work e.g. GPS enabled systems

In developing new broadband infrastructure it is important to develop long term solutions which allow superfast access. For this reason current government investment is focused on extending the reach of fibre for those with less than 2Mbps. Where it is not possible to provide fibre, commercial wireless and satellite systems can help rural properties access faster speeds but currently do not provide 24Mbps or more (i.e. superfast) solutions.

In parallel to developing digital access there is strong support for:

- developing the rural economy so that it creates more high value jobs to reduce the need to commute (as set out in other chapters). Improved digital access is essential to realising this ambition, but has the potential to reduce pressure on other infrastructure such as roads in and around major urban areas

Whilst transport infrastructure is important to rural areas, both sustainable transport and private road transport, it was rated as less important than digital connectivity. Community transport programmes are important to support accessibility for those without transport, disproportionately the young and old.

Digital

Addressing the digital challenge will not be easy in a large rural county with a dispersed population. However, a successful roll out of superfast broadband and improved mobile coverage is essential to rural areas' economic and social wellbeing.

The current broadband roll out programme will guarantee 2Mbps for every premises in Norfolk by 2015 and over 80% of premises will have superfast broadband.

Case study: Better Broadband for Norfolk

Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBfN) is a multi-million pound partnership between NCC and BT to transform broadband speeds across the county.

By the end of 2015 more than 80% of Norfolk's premises are expected to be able to access superfast broadband (24 Megabits per second and above) and it is intended that all Norfolk premises will be able to access a minimum broadband speed of at least 2Mbps. The first BBfN services are now available from Internet Service Providers.



Without BBfN the Council estimates, there would still be around 34,000 premises in Norfolk not receiving a basic broadband service by the end of 2015.

In many rural areas there aren't enough potential customers to make a sustainable commercial business case for the full investment, so Norfolk County Council allocated £15 million and secured a further £15 million from central government to improve the broadband infrastructure in the county. BT, awarded the BBfN contract in December 2012, will also make an £11 million contribution towards the cost of installing the fibre infrastructure.

The rollout of the BBfN infrastructure will happen in phases which will overlap each other.

The priorities for rural broadband connectivity need to support the use of all available technologies to reach all rural properties including:

- fixed line broadband is a good solution for rural properties in more populous areas where a concentration of end users make fixed line connections cost effective. However, for more remote properties the cost can make fibre uneconomic. Whilst delivering superfast broadband by fibre to a local cabinet can allow speeds over the copper network to be increased substantially, the signal degrades quickly with distance, with those over 2.5km from the cabinet only able to access about 2Mbps compared to 24Mbps at 1.2km from the cabinet and 80Mbps at the cabinet itself. Fixed line connections will not provide a universal superfast service to all rural properties and are thus only a partial solution
- wireless broadband access is an alternative to fixed line systems which can help to fill the gaps in provision. As wireless systems rely on direct line of sight to transmit microwaves, there can be access issues for those in valleys or when hidden by trees (as the high water content of the trees restricts the signal). However this can be overcome by using existing masts or repeaters on high buildings, e.g. churches, with the repeater, which typically cost £6-700, being funded by the local community

- satellite is also a direct line of sight system, but with the line of sight being skywards it avoids the problems encountered with wireless systems for those in valleys or surrounded by trees. Whilst more expensive than fixed line systems, approximately £30 per month and an additional cost of £6-700 to set up, it is a relatively expensive system. Satellite broadband is available everywhere and can offer speeds of upto 20Mbps

Mobile phone coverage is a larger challenge for rural Norfolk than broadband connection because current mobile signals are not strong enough over distances greater than 3miles (5kilometers) and each network uses its own masts (although some limited mast sharing has begun). In a large rural county like Norfolk this makes it very challenging for any network to provide universal coverage. Investment in enhanced data networks by all the networks may help in some areas, but the low density of users in rural areas means most of the investment is concentrated in urban areas. Mobile data services are also more challenging to provide than voice services and may need different solutions in remote areas.

Improved mobile access needs new collaborative approaches e.g. shared masts and open infrastructure. To help develop this Norfolk County Council will work with users and providers to explore options to address this problem with mobile access, particularly mobile data access which is important for some commercial businesses and uses such as tourism information apps.

Transport

Transport connections are important to all of rural Norfolk, and as set out elsewhere rural inhabitants are much more dependent on private transport and the road network and less likely to walk, cycle or use public transport due to a lack of safe routes and services.

The key areas which need to be addressed in relation to transport are:

- planning policy must support job development in areas not served by public transport to avoid the default position for people who live in these areas being to commute by private vehicle. A more dispersed model of economic development reduces the need to travel and makes rural communities more sustainable
- safe cycling and walking routes are not only important for rural inhabitants, they also provide vital infrastructure to support sustainable tourism which is growing strongly. As well as well known routes such as Peddars Way and the North Norfolk Coast Path, other routes can stimulate visitor numbers and support small businesses servicing tourism
- community transport services provide a lifeline to many of the poorest, oldest or youngest in rural communities but can be difficult to sustain. Support to set up and manage community led schemes can pay dividends and, where funding is used to support services, stability in services helps to ensure that community benefits are optimised and give more customers the confidence to use the services
- sustainable transport services e.g. the Coasthopper which supports sustainable tourism and the fast bus services such as the X1 from Great Yarmouth to Peterborough and the Fast 8 service from Dereham to Norwich should be supported

Chapter 9 Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure will be promoted by:

- Supporting action by private landowners and communities
- Building green infrastructure into new developments
- Adapting to climate change

Green infrastructure is important to the future success of rural Norfolk in terms of both the area of green infrastructure as well as the quality of the environment or ecosystem services it provides. Wild Anglia will be engaged to help deliver this part of the strategy.

Case study: **Beckhithe Farms, Reedham**



Beckhithe Farms in the heart of the Norfolk Broads is recognised both for its commercial and environmental success. Overseen by chairman Barry Brooks and farm manager Gary Gray, the farm covers 1,700 hectares. Accolades include Farmers Weekly's beef farmer of the year in 2007 and regional winner of Natural England's Future of Farming Award.

The farm has 30 hectares of woodland and 410 hectares of arable cropping land. Maize & wheat are grown for feed for its 3,200 cattle. Finished cattle are supplied to Dovecote Park, which provides Aberdeen Angus for a major retailer.

The farm's commercial beef herd feeds on 1,215 hectares of floodplain grazing marsh. In addition to grazing, silage is cut from 200 hectares of marsh, which accounts for 40 per cent of the farm's winter feed. However, the farm has found little or no difference between those marshes that are cut and managed, and those that are just managed by grazing.

Grazing is vital to keep the marshes in a favourable condition, as it stops the natural succession and reversion to scrubland, while also delivering outstanding biodiversity benefits. These include habitat for 85 pairs of lapwing, 20 pairs of redshank, as well as the numerous pink footed geese, wigeon and golden plovers that nest on the marshes.

All the marshes are below sea level and rely on strict water level monitoring. That has led to the farm creating thousands of metres of foot-drains to prevent both winter flooding and summer drought. Beckhithe has also reinstated 26km of dykes, planted 12.3km of hedgerow and has all its arable upland in an agri-environment scheme.

(Courtesy of: Why Farming Matters in the Broads by the NFU)

The key objectives on green infrastructure are:

- Promoting biodiversity so that the natural environment can support services such as soil function, water quality and storage, natural pest predators and pollinators (eco-system services)
- Delivering sustainable economic growth through eco tourism, e.g. nature reserves, walking, cycling and sailing and using this sector to extend the tourism season
- Delivering economic growth through the provision of management services for the natural environment and the production of natural products, e.g. Norfolk reed, timber
- Making the county attractive to skilled workers and entrepreneurs who will drive growth of the rural economy through making it an attractive place to live
- Delivering physical and mental health benefits to the community through outdoor passive and active recreation
- Education of children about natural processes and systems to prepare them for the increasing careers opportunities in natural resource management

Priorities to Support Green Infrastructure

Consultees were asked to rank a number of ways in which green infrastructure could be delivered in rural Norfolk. The average priority given to each issue was:

| Rank | Issue | Average score |
|---|---|---------------|
| 1 st | Supporting private landowners to provide green infrastructure | 2.6 |
| 2 nd = | Innovation in land management to deliver biodiversity targets | 2.8 |
| | Building greenspace into new developments | 2.8 |
| 4 th | Addressing the impact of climate change | 3.0 |
| 5 th | Promoting public access to the countryside | 3.7 |
| <p>The average score is based on consultees ranking the 5 issues from 1 for the most important to 5 for the least important in terms of supporting green infrastructure, and is based on 183 unique responses</p> | | |

Given the difference in emphasis by consultees and the close ranking of all of the top 4 issues, the focus on green infrastructure needs to be on a combination of:

- Supporting private landowners to provide green infrastructure
- Innovation in land management to deliver biodiversity targets
- Building greenspace into development so that public sector, housing and commercial developments support biodiversity and the provision of eco-system services
- Addressing the impact of climate change through adaptation measures

Green infrastructure needs to be well planned and managed to deliver benefits. The Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership has produced an ecological networks map and this could be used to support the development of a Green Infrastructure Plan for the county.

Private landowners and land managers

Given the large percentage of rural Norfolk (over 80%) managed by private landowners the role of private land management is essential to the future of the natural environment. Working with all private, charitable and public sector landowners will be essential to the delivery of effective green infrastructure.

Priorities in relation to landowners are:

- Supporting private landowners to provide green infrastructure e.g. habitat creation
- Incentivising land managers to provide eco-system services such as pollinator habitats, flood risk management, water quality improvements (through habitats which filter water effectively), climate change adaptation and mitigation, habitats to support bio-diversity (e.g. hedgerows, road verges, field margins, woodland)
- Encouraging collaborative, landscape scale action by coordinating land management between adjacent landowners to create an effective, connected green infrastructure

Innovation in land management to deliver biodiversity targets

Norfolk has a history of leading developments in addressing biodiversity from the development of Environmental Sensitive Areas (ESAs) in the 1980s which were the forerunner of current stewardship schemes. Norfolk can take the lead again by focusing on new emerging areas which will be important for the delivery of environment goals in the next 30-40 years. Potential areas which would enable the county to bring together its research base with farmers and land managers to deliver innovation include:

- managing soil biodiversity as the fundamental building block of both natural eco systems and agricultural productivity, using the science of genomics (in which the John Innes Centre is a leading global research centre) in conjunction with environmental scientists
- carbon sequestration in the soil and natural environments (e.g. woodlands) to help mitigate climate change
- water management systems so that droughts and flooding are better managed, have fewer detrimental impacts on biodiversity and increase clean water supplies

Building green infrastructure into new developments

With a projected increase of 9% in the rural population of Norfolk by 2026, there is an opportunity to ensure that new development supports the provision of green infrastructure. Green infrastructure in new developments in rural area needs to include:

- greenspace so that new development creates both a pleasant environment for people as well as supporting local biodiversity
- natural surfaces to aid sustainable drainage and reduce runoff and flooding
- renewable energy to reduce the energy demands of new developments

Greenspace and green infrastructure needs to be built into new developments at the design stage, and settlement extension will be planned so that new developments have green infrastructure which links to the existing settlement and the surrounding countryside.

Climate Change

Adaptation to climate change is a priority for rural Norfolk because it has a low lying coastline, dry climate, water resource pressures and climate change induced biodiversity risks (e.g. new diseases and pests which survive in milder climates).

Norfolk is fortunate to have one of the top 10 research centres for climate change in the World at UEA and extensive expertise in environmental management, both of which can be used to help develop effective adaptation strategies. With the need to address climate change being a global issue, the solutions, technologies and management systems developed in Norfolk to address climate change can also support export potential.

Managing the impact of climate change will require new management techniques based on science and technology. Key areas for action include:

- water resource management technology and systems to cope with rising demand, more erratic rainfall and higher summer temperatures, and increased demand for water storage and management programmes
- pest and disease monitoring using established and new technology e.g. the mobile phone app 'Ashtag' developed at the UEA to track the progress of ash dieback disease
- ensuring that tree planting is future proofed so that climate change does not cause large losses in tree cover and that good bio-security protects trees from pests and disease
- rising sea levels and how to sustainably manage coastal defences, including management by private landowners and communities

In addition to adaptation rural Norfolk will continue to invest in mitigation which can both develop new jobs as well as reducing carbon emissions. Key areas include:

- developing low carbon products and services
- embracing renewable energy generation
- building soil carbon reserves through tree planting, grassland management and by adding organic wastes to the soil
- promoting sustainable building materials such as hemp, timber and reed, the production of which can reduce the carbon footprint of construction whilst providing new habitats

Public access

Public access to the countryside is a supporting area which has clear economic, social and health benefits. Priorities for supporting public access include:

- supporting access in areas where the tourism sector is important, as tourism in Norfolk is heavily dependent on access to the natural environment and coast
- ensuring that public access is supported with adequate parking, public transport, facilities, information, interpretation and signage to help visitors enjoy their visit
- developing economic opportunities linked to access such as catering, accommodation and paid for visitor attractions which can increase the economic contribution from visitors

Access to the countryside by schools and colleges is also a key way in which young people develop an interest in rural careers.

Chapter 10 Supporting Vibrant Communities

Vibrant rural communities will be supported by:

- Raising the quality of rural jobs to increase incomes in rural areas
- Supporting young people and families to stay in or move to rural areas
- Promoting new ways to deliver rural community services

Vibrant communities are dependent on rural areas being able to sustain themselves, through a balanced demographic mix, dynamic economy and access to quality education and services to allow everyone to fulfil their potential.

Achieving vibrant communities draws on many of the areas described in the earlier chapters, with the key areas which need to be addressed including:

- the need for a dynamic local economy which provides well paid jobs so that rural communities are resilient and self reliant
- support to develop education and skills facilities which support the whole community to fulfil their potential
- housing and infrastructure which supports a diversity of people so that rural areas maintain a good demographic mix
- services and facilities to make rural communities inclusive and positive places to live
- supporting community led solutions which lead to enhance capacity in community organisations or community led initiatives
- a healthy natural environment in which to live

Achieving all these aims is not easy, and rural Norfolk will embrace the idea of a Communities of the Future programme to investigate how best to deliver these objectives in a modern context.

Priorities to Support Vibrant Communities

Consultees were asked to rank a number of ways in which vibrant communities could be achieved across rural Norfolk and the results were consistent across both the consultation events and online survey. The priority given to each issue was:

| Rank | Issue | Average score |
|-----------------|---|---------------|
| 1 st | Increasing the quality of rural jobs to raise incomes | 1.8 |
| 2 nd | Encouraging young people and families to stay in, or move to, rural areas | 2.4 |
| 3 rd | Creating effective rural specific approaches to health and social care | 3.1 |
| 4 th | Developing new ways to deliver community services | 3.6 |
| 5 th | Supporting local third sector groups to deliver services to the community | 4.2 |

The average score is based on consultees ranking the 5 issues from 1 for the most important to 5 for the least important in terms of how to deliver vibrant rural communities, and is based on 183 unique responses

The emphasis on vibrant communities needs to be on two issues, which collectively can help rural areas respond positively to the projected demographic challenge they face:

- increasing the quality of rural jobs to raise incomes to both encourage more people, especially the aspirational young, to live and work in rural areas whilst also making rural areas more economically sustainable
- adopting policies which support young people and families to live in rural areas by ensuring that housing, schools, jobs and services meet their needs

These priorities need to be supported by action to develop effective methods of delivering public, social and community services to the rural community.

The role of the third sector was seen by consultees as being constrained by funding, with a strong preference for services to remain in the public sector. However, the third sector does have a key role to play in delivering services such as social care and community transport, but it is important to ensure that the support they receive to do so is sustainable and sufficient for the expectations placed on them.

Developing sustainable communities is challenging and to help deliver them, new integrated and collaborative approaches to rural development are needed.

To trial these new approaches a Communities for the Future programme would allow new methods to retain young people, provide services and work across the private, public and third sector to be developed. It should be linked to the Leader approach with at least one trial community in each Leader area.

A Communities for the Future programme would also act as a trial for community led local development (CLLD) which underpins the future Structural and Innovation Fund and Rural Development Programme.

Norfolk's rural areas are some of the safest in the country, but the perception of crime is also important and needs addressing to give everyone, particularly the growing elderly population, the confidence to live active lives in rural areas.

Employment quality

Increasing the quality of jobs available in rural areas is the priority issue to deliver vibrant communities. Good quality jobs increase health and social wellbeing, generate revenue and create local economic multipliers allowing rural communities to flourish.

The key areas which need to be addressed are:

- using the planning system to support rural job creation
- increasing the number of high skill, high wage jobs in rural areas by encouraging the growth of employers who provide highly skilled technical roles in sectors including agri-food, energy, manufacturing, engineering and the knowledge economy
- focusing on adopting technology and new ways of working so that low paid jobs become more productive and thus command higher wages
- encouraging entrepreneurs to establish companies in rural areas through the provision of workspace, digital connectivity and skills development

Addressing rural job quality would help to rebalance the rural demographic by ensuring that young people can aspire to a good career in a rural area rather than feeling they have to move to urban areas.

Young people and families

To respond positively to demographic change, rural areas must both meet the needs of the growing elderly population as well as ensuring that young people and families find rural areas attractive to live in.

To attract young people and families rural areas must:

- provide quality career and job opportunities suitable for younger people
- ensure that appropriate affordable starter and family homes are available which are well positioned to facilitate access to services important to younger people e.g. good schools
- provide good quality child care, both full time and wrap around, schools and further educational access, so that young people and their families believe that they can achieve their potential in rural areas
- provide appropriate and easily accessible health care for young families
- support and recreational activities for families e.g. sports facilities and greenspace to make rural communities attractive places to live
- public transport and youth groups and clubs so that older, teenage, children can have a good social life whilst staying in rural areas

Measures to keep young people and families in rural areas will help to avoid the decline in working age population projected for much of rural Norfolk and a consequential loss of economic vitality and services.

Delivery of community and public services

Rural communities have unique challenges with the provision of services given their low population density. Overcoming this has been compounded by the tendency in both public and commercial service provision to move towards larger centres and more remote delivery of services to achieve economies of scale. As the size of unit needed to justify service provision grows rural areas need to adopt innovative ways to access services, including:

- multi-use facilities so that the costs of overheads are shared by encouraging the growth of programmes such as Pub is the Hub, community shops
- peripatetic services visit the community e.g. post offices, health care and library services;
- remote access to alleviate rural accessibility challenges, but thus is dependent on improved digital connectivity

All services in rural areas will have to respond to the large projected demographic changes which rural areas are expected to see, with the increase in the elderly population being the most marked change expected.

Public services, such as the NHS and social services, will have to ensure that they are configured to meet the rapid growth in the demands on these services in rural areas. To achieve this, the extension of primary care, more local service delivery and remote service access which recognises the particular challenges for old people of using these services is needed.

One opportunity this creates is that healthy ageing is a universal challenge, which the combination of a rapidly ageing rural population and the county's knowledge base could turn to the county's advantage by trialling new approaches to care for the elderly which are then developed by local businesses.

Third sector

The third sector has a role to play in both facilitating community led leadership and in delivering services to rural communities.

Key areas where third sector leadership and delivery is essential are:

- health and social care as the demand for care increases and to recognise that effective local care can help groups such as the elderly remain independent and in their own community
- community transport which can meet the access gap felt by some in the rural community without their own private transport
- skills and support for the unemployed to help them retrain and access employment
- environmental and cultural activities and services which are provided volunteers both enrich rural communities as well as supporting sectors such as tourism
- charities, clubs, groups and societies which have allowed rural areas to retain a sense of community and which help to provide support, education and services to those living in rural communities

Chapter 11 Conclusion

Rural Norfolk has the potential to lead a significant growth in the county's economy, deliver enhanced environmental benefits and demonstrate how new models for vibrant rural communities can be delivered in the 21st Century.

There are challenges, particularly on skills and digital access, but with a positive attitude these can be overcome. Norfolk's rural economy is already strong in sectors which are predicted to see significant growth globally by 2050: food chain, energy and advanced engineering. It is an attractive county which will continue to entice visitors and needs to develop its tourism sector so that it is less seasonal and focused on high value tourists.

Many of the actions which will realise Norfolk's potential demand long term attention and there are few quick fixes. Those who contributed to the strategy were keen to adopt a long term view whilst recognising that we also need to address short term issues. On major challenges such as skills, there is widespread support in the community to contribute more to helping to solve persistent issues such as the need to raise aspirations and attainment by increasing the links between business, education services and young people.

Throughout the consultations for this strategy a number of issues were raised repeatedly, and these will be the priority issues for implementation to help deliver the considerable potential in the Norfolk rural economy. Whilst this in no ways diminishes the importance of other areas, these priorities will allow a focused set of actions to be delivered, including to:

- Business: 1. Build on strength in agricultural technology, engineering & manufacturing
- 2. Increase the quality and number of rural jobs
- 3. Increase the number of rural business start-ups
- Connectivity: 4. Deliver superfast broadband
- 5. Improve mobile phone coverage
- Skills & 6. Increase attainment in rural schools
- innovation: 7. Improve links to research and development to drive innovation
- Community: 8. Increase the rate at which new affordable housing is developed
- Environment 9. Increase private water storage capacity
- & resources: 10. Increase the area of land in environmental management

As the county which led the agricultural revolution and, arguably, facilitated the industrial revolution and coming of the modern age by releasing labour from the land to manufacture new products and services, rural Norfolk will remain at the cutting edge of innovation and creativity. Working with the World class knowledge base in Norwich, much of which deals with growth sectors of the rural economy such as agri-food, energy and health, there is a willingness and desire to drive forward innovation.

Norfolk is renowned for its '*Do Different*' attitude and this will be applied to rural development. To succeed it is time for rural Norfolk to not only lead the development of new products and services for a changing and growing World, but also to look at how new models of truly sustainable rural community development, *Communities for the Future*, by embracing global challenges such as ageing populations and agri-technology development can be addressed by using new knowledge and new ways of working.