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# Breckland Economic Prosperity Strategy 2006-10

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## Version 6.2

Produced by:

Public & Corporate Economic Consultants (PACEC) & Breckland Council

for the Breckland Local Strategic Partnership



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## Version Control

Release	05 December 2006
Author	PACEC / Breckland Council
Owner	Breckland Economic Development Thematic Group
Client	Breckland Local Strategic Partnership
Document Number	V6.2

Document Location	This document is only valid on the day it was printed. It is located at Economic Development, Breckland Council
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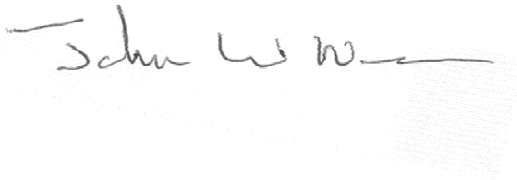
## Revision History

Version Number	Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes
6.	01.07.06	n/a	Final version created incorporating all consultation comments
6.1	01.11.06	01.07.06	Version control added (p1) , Page Numbering amended, Referencing to all Strategic Objectives targets and programmes, Referencing to Performance Indicators
6.2	05.12.06	01.11.06	Chairman's Foreword added (p2), amendment to SO3:5.3 & SO3:5.4, page numbering amended

## Foreword

Welcome to the Economic Prosperity Strategy (EPS). This is the first economic strategy for Breckland that represents the collective aspirations of all principal partners and stakeholders within the District on behalf of our resident and business communities. It will also be one of the first to have sign up from all those organisations who have a responsibility for making Breckland a prosperous place to live and work. The EPS is a crucial tool for directing economic activity that will address the specific challenges now identified within the Breckland economy. Over time, the EPS will inform and influence both local and regional partnership plans and resources for the benefit of the area. The EPS sets out the areas economic Strategic Objectives and subsequent targets, actions to achieve those targets and the priority for doing so.

In conjunction with the Community Plan and other LSP strategies the EPS will provide the necessary analysis and actions to help address the combined social, economic and environmental needs for the area.



William Nunn  
Breckland LSP Chairman

## 1) Introduction

### 1.1) The Purpose

This Economic Prosperity Strategy for Breckland has been produced by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to help inform and mould its actions and initiatives, and those of its partners, to achieve its vision:

***‘To improve the quality of life for all people living and working in and visiting Breckland’***

And with reference to the Breckland economy:

***‘To make the district an economically prosperous place which attracts and supports local businesses and encourages local enterprise’***

The strategy is designed to strengthen economic development and regeneration, with partners and stakeholders, in the area. Focusing on the 2006 to 2010 period, the strategy provides a framework for the deployment and integration of resources and actions to ensure that there are significant improvements to economic performance and environment in Breckland, that raise the standards of living and quality of life in the area. It is designed to help and allow the area, its residents, businesses and

other organisations realise their potential to contribute to sustainable economic growth.

### 1.2) The Background to the Strategy

Following the expiry of the Breckland Council Economic Development plan in 2004, there was no framework in place to co-ordinate and focus the development of the Breckland economy. In addition there was a need to;

- Understand the changing nature of the Breckland economy and the circumstances and opportunities.
- Monitor and review the changes and the economic performance and trends on key indicators.
- Take stock of the needs of businesses, residents, and organisations in Breckland.
- Identify the key initiatives and actions which will address needs
- Effectively communicate where information and support can be obtained by business and residents.
- Take account of the changing policy context and funding opportunities; for example, replacement to the EU Objective 2 funding programme which ends in 2006.
- Work in partnership with local and regional stakeholders ensuring their input and ‘sign up’ to the development and regeneration of Breckland.

- Clarify the role of Breckland Council and its partners, particularly the LSP, in the economic development and regeneration, as well as other stakeholders where appropriate.
- Examine the role of partners in coordinating funding to support Breckland initiatives.
- Coordinate regeneration activity in Breckland, ensuring a 'joined up' approach and laying the foundations for delivery.
- Sell and market a vision for Breckland to help improve the Breckland Economy and engage firms, residents and stakeholders.

The combination of these factors is the main driver behind the production of this strategy.

### 1.3) The Approach

The strategy has been prepared in close consultation with strategic and local partners including, for example, EEDA, GO-EAST, Norfolk County Council, the Area Partnerships and Town Councils, Keystone, the LSC and Business Links as well as the private sector. The aim has been to assemble a significant base of evidence which identifies the main issues and changing policies, funding sources, and delivery structures, on which to base the strategy. The approach has also included:

- **Economic Analysis.** A review of economic performance, employment overall and by sector and clusters, business and workforce trends using the PACEC Local Economic Performance System (LEPS) which utilises and enhances the main data available through the Office of National Statistics (ONS) including, for example, the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) for 2004 and Census of Population (2001).
- **A Desk Study.** Analysis of some 30 or so reports identified with the strategic partners and other organisations. (See Appendix A)
- **Discussions with Local Support Agencies.** Meetings and interviews with almost 30 stakeholders and partners, training providers, and business support organisations. (See Appendix B)
- **A Business Survey.** A survey with representative sample of over 100 businesses covering different locations and sector / clusters in Breckland. The Survey sought views on the aims of firms and main constraints they faced to the operation of their businesses. These views were designed to help shape the policies in the strategy. (See Appendix C for the types of firms surveyed).

Furthermore, an overview of the main projects underway or planned in Breckland was carried out to assess the relevance and coverage of

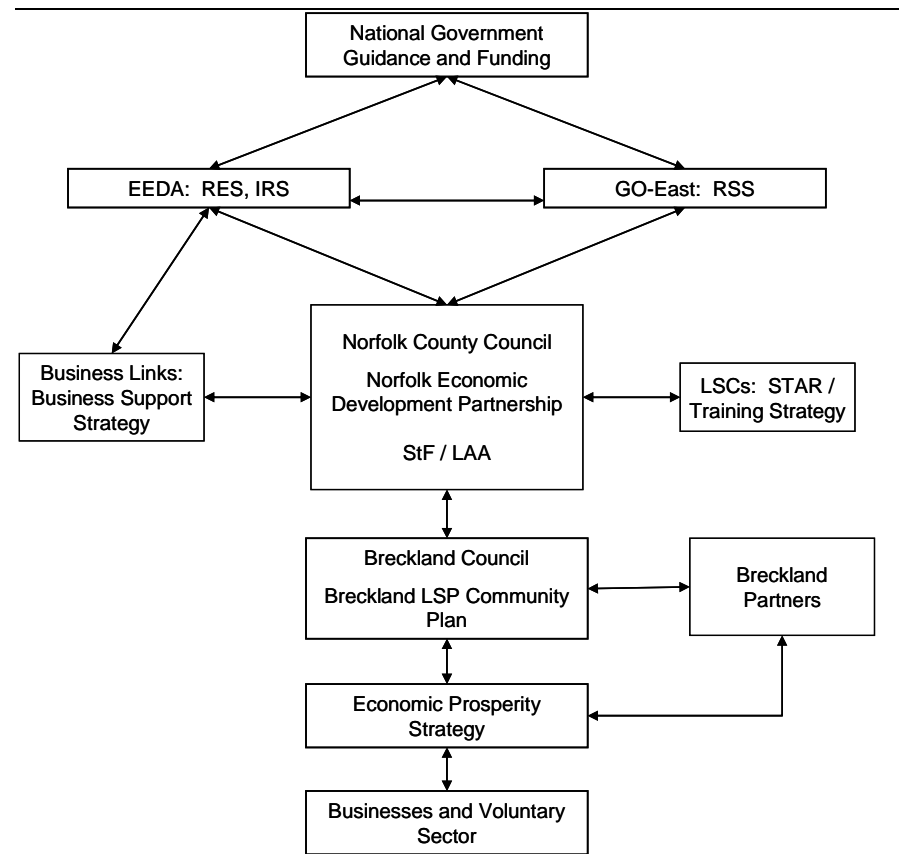
projects, their scale and the extent to which they addressed the issues arising from the research above, best practice, and where there were potential gaps which could be filled through developing new initiatives and projects with partners.

### 1.4) Strategic Fit

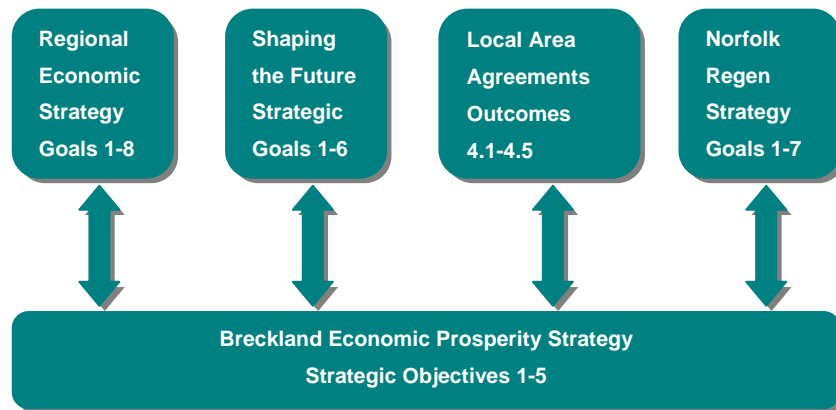
It is important that the strategy fits in with, and influences other regional and local strategies. The figure 1.1 indicates how the Breckland Economic Prosperity Strategy relates to key partners.

Each of the core organisations has its own strategies which are being implemented and prepared. These reflect the aims of the other organisations and partners to provide an overall strategic fit. At a regional level the RES and IRS are important, together with the Local Area Agreement (LAA), Shaping the Future (StF) and the emerging strategies for the LSC and Business Links. The relevant parts of the LAA include improving the economic wellbeing of children and young people, and educational attainment at GCSE level and at Key Stages. The interface and fit with Shaping the Future includes its goals to improve business performance, innovation and entrepreneurship, promote learning and skills, reduce social exclusion, improve the transport infrastructure and the environment. StF's focus on engineering, tourism, and the rural economy are also important.

**Figure 1.1 Strategic Fit. The Core Organisations**



The Breckland Economic Prosperity Strategy has defined five main strategic objectives 1 to 5 (see below). These strategic objectives have been developed to map into and enhance the strategies of the key partners at the regional and Norfolk levels.



In order to implement the strategy it will be appropriate on key issues to work with a wider partnership in adjoining Local Authority areas to Breckland

### 1.5) The Strategy Structure

The next three chapters summarise the results of the research and analysis that has been undertaken, showing the drivers of change, the current initiatives that are being implemented or planned in Breckland and a statistics profile of the Breckland economy.

These lead into and inform chapter 5 which provides the core of the strategy by highlighting five strategic objectives for the development of the Breckland economy, namely:

- SO1 Improving Business Competitiveness**
- SO2 Attracting and Retaining Inward Investment**
- SO3 Enhancing Workforce Development and Skills**
- SO4 Improving Transport and Infrastructure**
- SO5 Regenerating & Developing the Breckland Environment**

The strategic objectives have equal status and are all important in ensuring an integrated and comprehensive approach to the issues facing Breckland. For each of these objectives a mission is identified along with the key issues faced, the outcomes to achieve to address them, and the required programmes. The chapter also sets out the priorities / timescales and lead partners.

The final two sections then highlight how the strategy is to be implemented / delivered and performance / progress monitored (including performance indicators). Appendix E provides a glossary and definitions of the main terms used in the strategy.

## 2) Drivers of Change in Breckland

The Breckland economy is dynamic and influences and responds to changes over a wider area. Many of these originate internationally (eg the European Union), nationally, and within the region such as the designated growth areas such as the M11 Corridor including Stansted Airport and the Cambridge area.

The current **drivers of change** which are impacting upon the economy of Breckland may be summarised under four headings: **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities** and **Threats**. Most of the drivers will impact upon all parts of the district. Where a **driver is of particular significance** for one of the five market towns and their immediate hinterlands, they have been identified.

As you see from the summary of the following page on balance the **strengths of, and opportunities for**, Breckland possibly outweigh the **weaknesses and threats**. However, policy needs to be shaped and initiatives undertaken, to build on strengths, take advantage of the opportunities, address the weaknesses and minimise the risk associated with the threats.

## STRENGTHS

- Good living environment for attracting staff with market towns, outdoor recreation facilities, environment and forests
- Diversity of the five market towns
- Growing labour force and population, i.e. Dereham and Thetford
- Full employment and high employment activity
- Inward migration of skills workers (from UK and other EU countries),
- Sectoral strengths in engineering, food processing, pharmaceuticals, furniture, logistics, and construction
- Relatively low cost base across the area
- Proximity to the growing economies of Norwich and Cambridge, especially Thetford
- Strong economic development and regeneration agencies in all towns
- Key transport links to regional growth areas

## WEAKNESSES

- Increased international business competition
- Agricultural contraction acceleration in rural areas, eg single payment system
- Contraction of major employers, including the military establishments, eg Dereham and Thetford
- Inadequate infrastructure and utilities with growth in population, notably Thetford
- Retail competition from Cambridge, Bury St Edmunds, Kings Lynn and Norwich
- Changing policy context, restructuring, and uncertainty over funding
- Weakening economic development services
- Disengagement of the unqualified from the labour force, especially young people, particularly Thetford
- Central government focus elsewhere: high growth areas in the Eastern Region

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Population growth and restructuring, especially Attleborough and Thetford as a growth point
- The A11 Corridor: the REV, Snetterton, key sectors, links to Cambridge and Norwich, e.g. Dereham / Thetford
- Building on sectoral strengths
- The Outer Harbour Development at Great Yarmouth
- Renewable energy supply chains
- Growth areas in the East and the airports including the M11, Stansted Airport and Cambridge
- The new migrants: skills and enterprise, especially in Dereham / Thetford
- New investments in land and property, especially that owned by the District Council in rural areas
- Growth in leisure, tourism (especially 'nature based') and visitor expenditure, especially in Attleborough, Thetford and Watton
- Growing relocation of firms from higher cost areas (e.g. Norwich / Cambs)
- Development of new environmentally related businesses in rural areas
- Agricultural business diversification in rural areas
- Local increase in agricultural value added in rural areas

## THREATS

- Limited hi-tech high value added employment
- Limited high productivity skills in the labour force
- Low average incomes, relatively small local markets
- Sectoral weakness in agriculture
- Limited educational ambition and attainment at secondary and post-school age levels, especially Thetford
- Social exclusion and de-motivation, e.g. Thetford
- Risk of losing well qualified staff
- Low Skill and competency training: attitudes and provision
- Transport congestion on major roads
- Poor quality housing in some locations, especially Thetford
- Perception of Breckland as "just rural"

### 3) Current Economic Development Initiatives

It is important for the strategy to draw on and complement existing and planned initiatives and services of partners. This section lists the main agencies and organisations offering services to achieve economic development and regeneration in Breckland. Further details on the role of agencies are provided in Appendix D. Agencies are grouped under key headings:

- Strategic Regional and County Policies and Support
- Director Providers of Services and Support
- The Breckland Local Area Partnerships
- Workforce and Skills Development Agencies
- Other Organisations concerned with Tourism

The tables below do not show the specific services and support of Central Government departments as these can be delivered centrally or through other agencies. Examples include some of the innovation and business support services offered by the Department of Trade and Industry, the Small business Services and the Defra programmes and support.

#### 3.1) Strategic Regional and County Policies and Support

Agency/Service	Strategy and Guidance	Policy Integration	Funding for Projects
Government Office for the East of England (GO-East)	★★★★☆	★★★★	★★★★
East of England Development Agency (EEDA)	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
East of England International (EEIA)	★	★	★
East of England Regional Assembly (EERA)	★★	★★	
Norfolk County Council (NCC)	★★	★★	★★
Shaping the Future (StF).	★★	★★★	★★

<sup>1</sup> The number of stars broadly illustrate the scale and focus of activity

### 3.2 Direct Providers of Services and Support

Agency/Service	Promotion of new initiatives	Information and Advice to Businesses	Property	Training Support
Breckland District Council (BDC)	***	***	***	*
Business Link for Norfolk (BLN)	***	***		**
Norfolk Chamber of Commerce		***		***
Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services (NWES)		***	**	***
Women's Enterprise and Training Unit (WEETU)		***		***
Poultec Training				***
Princes Trust		***		
Norfolk Rural Bus. Advisory Service (NRBAS)		***		

Norfolk Rural Community Council.	**			
A wide range of private sector providers	**	***	***	***

### 3.3) Breckland Local Area Partnerships

Agency/Service	Forum for local groups	Project deliverer	Available property	Training provider
Keystone Development Trust	***	***	***	**
Attleborough Area Partnership	***			
Wayland Part. Development Trust	***	***	**	**
Iceni Partnership	***	***		
Dereham Area Partnership.	***	***		
Weeting 21	***	***	*	**

### 3.4) Workforce and Skills Development Agencies

Agency/Service	Funding source: secondary and FE	Funding source: Work based	Information and Advisory services	Training provider
Learning and Skills Council, Norfolk (LSC)	★★★★	★★★	★★	★★
The Job Centres			★★★	
Connexions			★★★	
Norfolk Library and Information Service			★★	
Norfolk Adult Education Service		★★★	★★	★★★

### 3.5) Other Organisations concerned with Tourism

#### Development

Agency/Service	Promotion activity	Business advice	Tourist facilities
The East of England Tourist Board (EETB)	★★★	★★★	
The Brecks Tourism Partnership	★★★		
The Forestry Commission			★★★
Norfolk Museums and Archaeological Service (NORMAS)			★★★

The prosperity strategy strategic objectives and target outcomes will look to build on and develop these initiatives with partners.

## 4) Overview of the Economy and Trends

### 4.1) Introduction

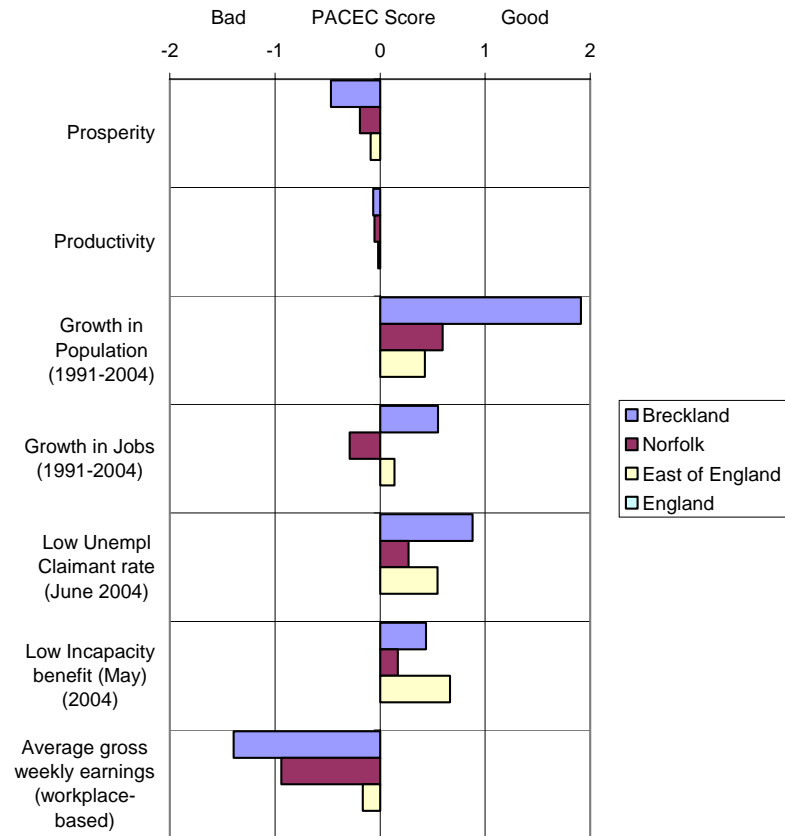
This chapter seeks to provide context for the Strategy by using published data to profile the local economy in Breckland by comparison with Norfolk, the East of England, and Great Britain<sup>1</sup>. Initially, it sets out the performance of the local economy on a set of key indicators. It then goes on to characterise enterprise activity, trends in employment, labour force and skills issues, and deprivation.

### 4.2) Overall performance

Figure 4.1 shows Breckland’s performance on a series of key indicators. Breckland and its comparator areas are benchmarked against Great Britain, in order to show its relative performance. The performance indicators are rated on a scale from -2 to +2, relative to Great Britain, which always has a score of 0. A negative score for Breckland or a comparator area means that the area’s performance is less than the national average, and a positive score means that it is above the national average.

<sup>1</sup> Or, if data are not available for the whole of Great Britain, with England and Wales, or England.

**Figure 4.1 Performance Indicators**



Source: ONS; PACEC

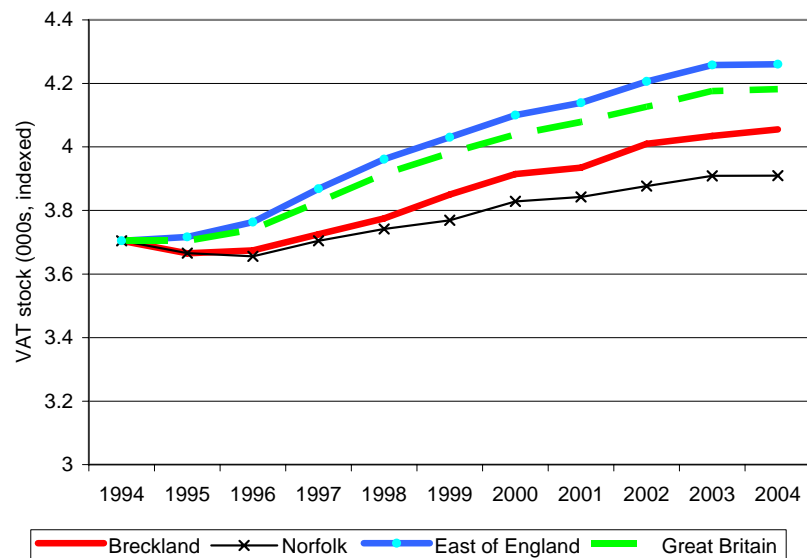
The indicators underlying figure 4.1 are as follows:

- a Prosperity. Gross value added per head in 2004 was £12,800 in Breckland, £15,500 in Norfolk, and £16,500 in the East of England. All these figures are below the Great Britain average of £17,400.
- b Productivity. Gross value added per workplace job in 2004 was £32,800 in Breckland, £33,000 in Norfolk, and £33,400 in the East of England. The national figure was £34,000.
- c Growth in Population 1991-2004. Population growth was 16.2% in Breckland, 8.2% in Norfolk, and 7.2% in the East of England; these all compare favourably with the population growth of 4.1% in Great Britain as a whole.
- d Growth in Jobs 1991-2004. Job growth was 23.1% in Breckland, 11.3% in Norfolk, 17.3% in the East of England, and 13.7% in Great Britain.
- e Unemployment claimant rate June 2004. This was 1.5% in Breckland, 2.4% in Norfolk, 2.0% in the East of England, and 2.8% in England and Wales.
- f Incapacity benefit claimant rate (hidden unemployment) May 2004. This was 5.3% in Breckland, 6.0% in Norfolk, 4.7% in the East of England, and 7.0% in Great Britain.
- g Average gross weekly earnings by workplace 2005. Weekly earnings were £413 in Breckland, £450 in Norfolk, £512 in the East of England, and £518 in Great Britain.

### 4.3) Enterprise activity

Enterprise is a key engine of growth in jobs and a generator of income and gross value added. Figure 4.2 shows how the stock of VAT registered businesses in Breckland would have changed over the period 1991-2003 if it had grown at the same rate as its comparators. The figure shows that enterprise activity in Breckland has lagged behind England and Wales and in particular the Eastern Region, but it has drawn ahead of the rest of Norfolk over the last eight years.

**Figure 4.2 Stock of VAT registered businesses**



The graph shows how Breckland would have grown if it had had the growth rates of the other areas.

Source: ONS: Vat registrations; PACEC

Between 1994 and 2004, the number of VAT registered firms in Breckland grew by 9.4%, from 3,710 to 4,060. The full breakdown of results in Breckland and its comparator areas is given in table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1 Stock of VAT registered businesses (2004, 1994)**

	Breckland	Norfolk	East of England	Great Britain
2004	4,060	25,700	184k	1.76m
Change	350	1,350	23,900	201k
Change (%)	9.4%	5.5%	15.0%	12.9%
Benchmark (%)	12.9%	12.9%	12.9%	12.9%
Differential (%)	-3.4%	-7.3%	2.1%	0.0%
Excess	-127	-1,780	3,380	0
Indicator (high score is good)	-0.38	-0.81	0.23	0.00

Breckland is benchmarked against different areas

Source: ONS: Vat registrations; PACEC

The latest VAT registration and de-registration activity in Breckland and its comparator areas are shown in table 4.2 and table 4.3 below. While low-turnover micro-businesses are not obliged to sign onto the VAT register, VAT registration and de-registration can be used as proxies for business start-up and failure rates<sup>1</sup>. The rates of enterprise registration and de-registration in Breckland are both around 2% lower than the comparative figures for Great Britain. The low registration rate suggests that entrepreneurial activity in Breckland is below the national average, but as the business de-registration rate is also lower than that in Great Britain as a whole, the “churn rate” of businesses in Breckland (the total of registration and de-registration activity) is lower than the national figure.

<sup>1</sup> For comparison, the 1-year business survival rate for Norfolk in 2003 was 92.7% (SBS).

**Table 4.2 VAT registration rate (2004)**

	Breckland	Norfolk	East of England	Great Britain
Stock of Vat Registered companies	4,060	25,700	184k	1.76m
Vat registrations	345	2,030	17,600	177k
VAT registration rate	8.5%	7.9%	9.6%	10.1%
Benchmark	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%
Differential	-1.6%	-2.2%	-0.5%	0.0%
Excess	-63	-553	-905	0
Indicator (high score is good)	-0.94	-1.30	-0.30	0.00

Breckland is benchmarked against different areas

Source: ONS: Vat registrations; PACEC

**Table 4.3 VAT deregistrations (2004)**

	Breckland	Norfolk	East of England	Great Britain
Stock of Vat Registered companies	4,060	25,700	184k	1.76m
Vat de-registrations	325	2,030	17,500	175k
VAT deregistration rate	8.0%	7.9%	9.5%	9.9%
Benchmark	9.9%	9.9%	9.9%	9.9%
Differential	-1.9%	-2.0%	-0.4%	0.0%
Excess	-77	-521	-745	0
Indicator (high score is good)	-1.10	-1.17	-0.23	0.00

Breckland is benchmarked against different areas

Source: ONS: Vat registrations; PACEC

#### 4.4) Trends in employment

In 2004 there were approximately 48,900 jobs in Breckland. A breakdown of these jobs by 22 industrial sectors is given in table 4.4 below, along with two measures of concentration relative to national employment rates: location quotient (LQ) and excess. The LQ is a measure of local employment concentration relative to the national concentration; an LQ of 2 denotes that the percentage of employment in that sector in Breckland is twice the national percentage. "Excess" employment is the absolute number of employees over and above what would be expected if Breckland had the same employment breakdown as Great Britain.

**Table 4.4 Employment by 22 sectors (2004,1995, GB LQ) – Breckland**

	Workplace Share (%) Jobs 2004	LQ	Excess	Change	Change	Change
						(%)
Agriculture/Extraction	3,200 6.6%	4.07	2,400	-1,300	-29%	
Manuf: hi-tech metal	400 0.7%	0.72	-100	200	100%	
Manuf: trad metal	2,400 5.0%	1.36	600	0	0%	
Manuf: chemicals	1,800 3.8%	2.02	900	800	80%	
Manufacturing (other)	5,100 10.5%	2.26	2,900	200	4%	
Utilities	n/a n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Construction	5,000 10.2%	1.51	1,700	1,300	35%	
Motor vehicle sale	1,500 3.0%	1.38	400	-300	-17%	
Wholesale	1,400 2.9%	0.77	-400	100	8%	
Food retail	3,400 7.0%	1.58	1,300	1,100	48%	
Other retail	2,600 5.4%	0.82	-600	1,000	63%	
Hotels, bars	2,000 4.1%	0.61	-1,300	500	33%	
Transport	3,400 7.0%	1.16	500	1,100	48%	
Financial services	500 1.1%	0.29	-1,300	-100	-17%	
Property, renting	1,300 2.6%	1.23	200	600	86%	
Computing, R&D	300 0.6%	0.30	-700	100	50%	
Prof. business serv.	1,400 3.0%	0.49	-1,500	0	0%	
Oth. business serv.	1,900 3.9%	0.66	-1,000	700	58%	
Public admin & def	1,200 2.5%	0.52	-1,100	0	0%	
Education	3,500 7.1%	0.85	-600	1,400	67%	
Health, care	4,200 8.6%	0.77	-1,300	1,400	50%	
Personal services	2,000 4.1%	0.73	-700	200	11%	
<b>Total (by SIC)</b>	<b>48,900 100.0%</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,800</b>	<b>22%</b>	

"n/a": Not available due to confidentiality restrictions of the ABI

Source: Office for National Statistics: Annual Business Inquiry, Census of Population, Labour Force Survey; PACEC

The largest sectors were non-metallic, non-chemical manufacturing (5,100 jobs) and construction (5,000 jobs).

The table also shows that the main increases in absolute terms over the period 1995-2004 were in education and in health and social work (both of which grew by 1,400 jobs). The largest increase in percentage terms was in hi-tech metal manufacture, which grew by 100%. The "agriculture, extraction, forestry, and fishing" sector suffered the largest decline, falling by 1,300 jobs. It was also the steepest decline in percentage terms, falling by 29%; professional business services and motor vehicle sale and repair also fell sharply, both by 17%.

The Breckland economy has some important sector specialisms, as reflected in concentrations over and above the national average. The "Agriculture, extraction, forestry, and fishing" has the highest local concentration, or "location quotient"; the percentage of jobs in this sector in Breckland is over four times greater than that of Great Britain as a whole, giving rise to 2,400 excess jobs over and above the national employment distribution. Since agriculture is in decline nationally and locally, these excess jobs could be seen as vulnerable. Non-metallic, non-chemical manufacture has a local concentration of over two-and-a-half times greater

than in Great Britain; this gives rise to 2,900 excess jobs over and above the national employment distribution.

Table 4.5 gives a 22-sector breakdown of the employment structure of Norfolk and the East of England. Breckland's local strengths in agriculture and manufacture are mirrored to a degree in the rest of Norfolk, which has a higher percentage share of employment in these sectors than the East of England (except in hi-tech metal manufacture and engineering). The East of England typically has higher concentrations in service sectors than Breckland and, to a lesser degree, Norfolk, with regional strengths including professional business services, computing, and research and development. Norfolk is generally stronger in service sectors than Breckland, notably in finance, and property and renting, in which its share of employment exceeds that of the East of England.

**Table 4.5 Employment by 22 sectors in Norfolk and the EoE**

	Norfolk		East of England	
	2004 jobs	Structure	2004 jobs	Structure
Agriculture and extraction	15,700	4.1%	51,800	1.9%
Hi-Tech metal man/engineering	2,700	0.7%	32,300	1.2%
Trad metal man/engineering	14,400	3.8%	95,400	3.5%
Chemical manufacture	9,500	2.5%	52,800	2.0%
Other manufacture	21,800	5.7%	126,600	4.7%
Utilities	1,000	0.3%	17,800	0.7%
Construction	36,500	9.5%	232,400	8.6%
Motor vehicle sale, repair	10,100	2.6%	70,500	2.6%
Wholesale	12,600	3.3%	110,000	4.1%
Food retail	20,800	5.4%	137,400	5.1%
Other retail	26,100	6.8%	182,900	6.8%
Hotels and bars	23,500	6.1%	160,900	5.9%
Transport	18,600	4.8%	170,900	6.3%
Financial	15,200	4.0%	81,600	3.0%
Property, renting	12,600	3.3%	64,500	2.4%
Computing, R&D	3,100	0.8%	68,600	2.5%
Professional business	16,900	4.4%	160,900	5.9%
Other business services	15,400	4.0%	152,000	5.6%
Public admin, defence	14,400	3.8%	107,600	4.0%
Education	26,900	7.0%	220,600	8.1%
Health, care	47,100	12.3%	271,900	10.0%
Personal services	18,000	4.7%	138,100	5.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>382,800</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,707,500</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Office for National Statistics: Annual Business Inquiry, Census of Population, Labour Force Survey; PACEC

## 4.5) Key Sectors and Clusters

Close examination of the data for the sub-sectors within the larger sectors shows some key local strengths; sectors where Breckland has locally clustered employment. As with the 22-sector breakdown above, the analysis shows the number of jobs in the sector, the location quotient, and the number of “excess” jobs over and above the national average. Location quotients above 1.0 indicate where Breckland has a higher share of employment than the UK; the number of excess jobs is the scale of Breckland’s concentration of employment in these sectors. Table 4.6 shows the most locally concentrated sectors in Breckland, along with their percentage change in employment since 2000.

The main tradable / exporting sectors (by LQ size and relatively large number of employees) were pharmaceuticals (allied with chemicals), food processing (allied with agriculture), furniture manufacturing (with wood), engineering / motor vehicles (and related sectors) and the warehousing and freight sectors.

**Table 4.6 Key Sectors and Clusters**

	Jobs	LQ	Excess	Change 00-04
<b>Agriculture</b>	3,200	4.77	2,500	-8%
<b>Man: food</b>	3,000	4.86	2,400	-21%
Construction	5,000	1.51	1,700	19%
Retail: food	3,400	1.58	1,300	23%
<b>Man: furniture</b>	900	4.17	700	5%
<b>Freight &amp; pipeline</b>	1,800	1.61	700	9%
<b>Man: pharmaceuticals</b>	600	6.17	500	-1%
<b>Warehouse &amp; freight forward</b>	900	1.74	400	185%
<b>Man: motor vehicles</b>	700	2.17	400	5%
Renting: construction	400	6.04	400	191%
<b>Man: mechanical engineering</b>	800	1.69	300	-6%
Man: metal goods	800	1.44	300	24%
<b>Man: other chemicals</b>	500	1.99	200	22%
<b>Motor vehicle repair</b>	700	1.45	200	-12%
Motor vehicle sale	800	1.32	200	13%
Man: rubber & plastics	500	1.54	200	-6%
Man: jewellery, game	300	2.10	200	-39%
<b>Man: instruments</b>	300	1.80	200	143%
Retail: general, maintenance	900	1.21	100	19%
Courier	300	1.80	100	66%
<b>Man: wood</b>	300	1.58	100	-21%
<b>Wholesale: basic materials</b>	500	1.23	100	-6%
Library & museum	200	1.58	100	91%

Property development & letting	500	1.18	100	95%
Social work & care	2,000	1.04	100	3%
<b>Wholesale: agriculture</b>	100	2.65	100	66%

The impact of farming upon the Breckland economy is much greater than the 3,200 jobs in the agriculture sector. The majority of local food manufacture jobs are accounted for by the production and preservation of meat and meat products; this also impacts upon Breckland's higher-than-average local concentration of specialist and non-specialist food retailers and wholesalers. There are also several hundred jobs which can be identified upstream of the farming industry, in such sectors as manufacture of animal feed, fertilisers, and agricultural machinery, wholesale of agricultural machinery, veterinary activities, and agricultural real estate and letting.

#### 4.6) Labour force and skills

The total resident population of Breckland according to the 2001 Census was 121,000. Of these, 71,200 were of working age, a rate of 58.7% - this is roughly the same as the rate in Norfolk (59.0%), and slightly less than the rates in the East of England (61.0%) and in Great Britain (61.4%). Over the intercensal period from 1991-2001, the working age population grew by 7,930. This growth was well in excess of that in the comparator areas, in percentage terms. However, as the total population also grew rapidly, the working age population actually fell as a proportion of the total.

The population statistics for Breckland and the comparator areas are summarised in table 4.7 below.

**Table 4.7 Population of working age**

	Breckland	Norfolk	East of England	Great Britain
Population of all ages	121k	797k	5.39m	57.1m
Population of working age	71,200	470k	3.29m	35.1m
Pop of working age (% of total)	58.7%	59.0%	61.0%	61.4%
Growth in working age pop.	7,930	26,900	176k	2.74m
Growth (%)	12.5%	6.1%	5.7%	8.5%
Differential (%) growth	4.1%	-2.4%	-2.8%	0.0%
Excess	2,570	-10,600	-87,300	0
Indicator (high score is good)	0.63	-0.37	-0.44	0.00
Change in rate (%)	-0.4%	-0.4%	-0.5%	0.1%
Differential change in rate (%)	-0.5%	-0.5%	-0.6%	0.0%
Differential change in rate (#)	-592	-4,110	-33,100	0
Indicator	-0.30	-0.32	-0.38	0.00

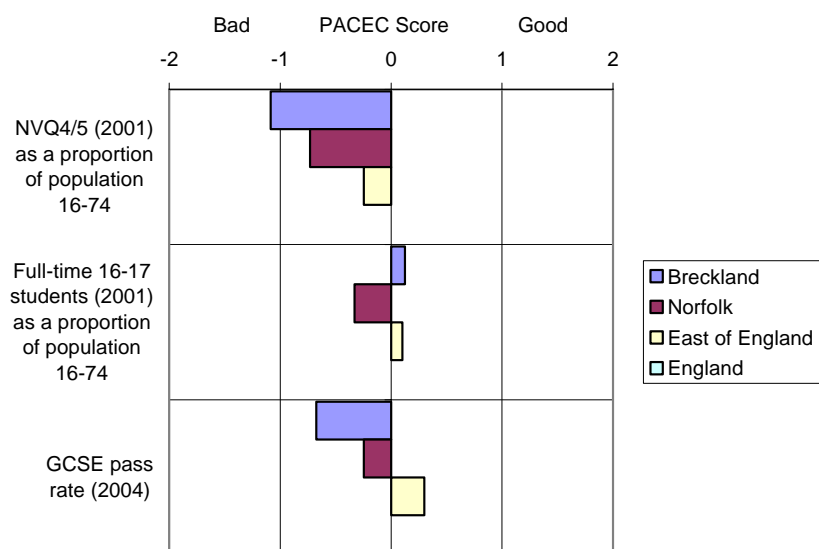
Breckland is benchmarked against different areas

Source: Census of Population 1991, 2001; PACEC

The number of economically active in Breckland was 58,100, or 81.5% of the working age population. This compares favourably with the Great British economic activity rate of 78.3% and the Norfolk figure of 80.4%, but is marginally below the East of England activity rate of 81.9%.

The workforce skills are shown in figure 4.3 below. The proportion of the working age population in Breckland who have degree-level qualifications (NVQ level 4 or 5) is 12.1%; this is well below the rate of 19.9% in England as a whole, and also below Norfolk (14.7%) and the East of England (18.1%). The share of 16- to 17-year-old full-time students is similar to the national and East of England figures (and ahead of Norfolk), but the GCSE pass rate is lower.

**Figure 4.3 Skills indicators**



Source: ONS; PACEC

The full breakdown of qualifications among the adult population for Breckland and the comparator areas is given in table 4.8 below. As well as the lowest rate of NVQ level 4 or 5 qualifications, Breckland has the highest share of adults lacking any qualification (i.e. NVQ level 0).

**Table 4.8 Qualifications (Census 2001)**

	Breckland	Norfolk	East of England	England
16 - 74 Population	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
NVQ0	33.7%	32.4%	27.9%	28.9%
NVQ1	18.9%	18.0%	18.2%	16.6%
NVQ2	20.1%	19.5%	20.5%	19.4%
NVQ3	6.6%	7.4%	7.9%	8.3%
NVQ4/5	12.1%	14.7%	18.1%	19.9%
Missing	8.6%	8.0%	7.2%	6.9%

Source: Census of Population, 2001; PACEC

Table 4.9 below shows the percentage of 15-year-old GCSE students achieving 5 GCSEs of grade A\*-C in Breckland and the comparator areas. At 48.8%, the pass rate in Breckland is under half, less than that of Norfolk (52.4%) and substantially behind England (54.4%) and the East of England in particular (57.0%).

**Table 4.9 5 GCSEs A\*-C pass rate**

	Breckland	Norfolk	East of England	England
Number of GCSE students (aged 15)	1,350	9,380	70,100	634k
Number of students (aged 15) obtaining 5 GCSEs A* to C	659	4,910	39,900	345k
Proportion of students with 5 GCSE A*-C grades	48.8%	52.4%	57.0%	54.4%
Differential	-5.7%	-2.1%	2.5%	0.0%
Excess	-77	-193	1,770	0
Indicator (high score is good)	-0.67	-0.25	0.30	0.00

Each area is benchmarked against England

Source: DfES - Performance Tables; PACEC

These qualification levels are reflected in Breckland's occupational structure. As table 4.10 shows, Breckland has lower levels of management, professional, and associate professional occupations than the East of England and the rest of England and Wales, and higher levels of elementary occupations.

**Table 4.10 SOC (Census 2001)**

	Breckland	Norfolk	East of England	Eng&Wales
Managers and senior officials	13.9%	13.8%	16.3%	15.1%
Professional occupations	7.1%	8.7%	10.8%	11.2%
Associate professional and technical occupations	11.9%	12.4%	13.5%	13.8%
Administrative and secretarial occupations	11.0%	11.6%	13.7%	13.3%
Skilled trades occupations	15.2%	14.3%	12.1%	11.6%
Personal service occupations	7.5%	7.5%	6.7%	6.9%
Sales and customer service occupations	6.5%	8.0%	7.3%	7.7%
Process; plant and machine operatives	11.6%	9.5%	8.1%	8.5%
Elementary occupations	15.2%	14.2%	11.5%	11.9%

Source: Census of Population, 2001; PACEC

The number of unemployed residents in Breckland in 2001 (using the ILO definition<sup>1</sup>) was 2,290, a rate of 4.0% among the economically active population. This rate is lower than in Norfolk and in Great Britain as a whole, but greater than that of the East of England region. Full

<sup>1</sup> ILO unemployment is a count of jobless people who want to work, are available to work, and are actively seeking employment.

unemployment statistics for Breckland and the comparator areas are given in table 4.11 below.

**Table 4.11 ILO unemployed**

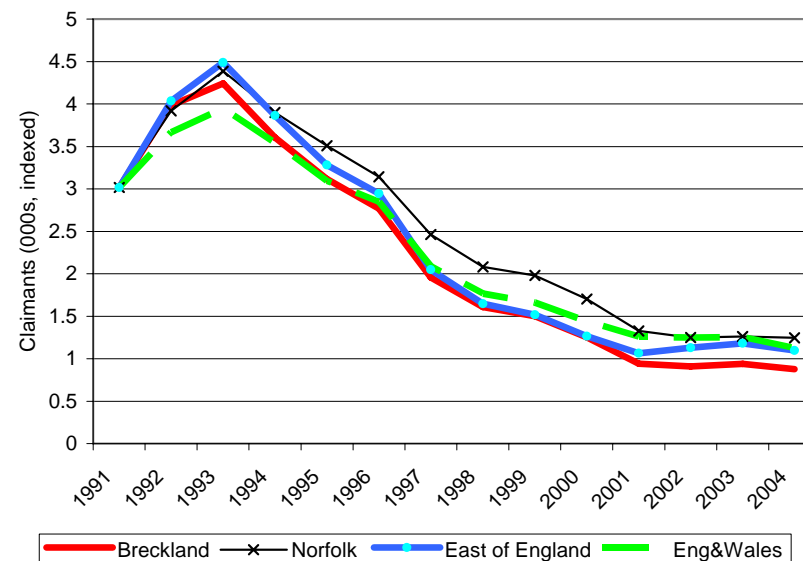
	Breckland	Norfolk	East of England	Great Britain
Economically Active	58,100	378k	2.69m	27.4m
Unemployed (ILO)	2,290	17,100	101k	1.41m
Unemployment rate	4.0%	4.5%	3.8%	5.1%
Benchmark	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%
Differential (%)	-1.2%	-0.6%	-1.4%	0.0%
Excess	-688	-2,310	-37,100	0
Indicator (high score is good)	0.61	0.31	0.71	0.00

Each area is benchmarked against Great Britain

Source: Census of Population 1991, 2001; PACEC

A dynamic measure of unemployment is given by the computerised benefit claimant count, which records all those who claim unemployment benefit. Figure 4.4 below shows how the number of unemployment benefit claimants has varied as a share of the economically active. Trends in unemployment since 1991 have been very similar across Breckland and its comparators, but the unemployment rate has dropped slightly more quickly in Breckland.

**Figure 4.4 Claimant unemployment (2004, 1991)**



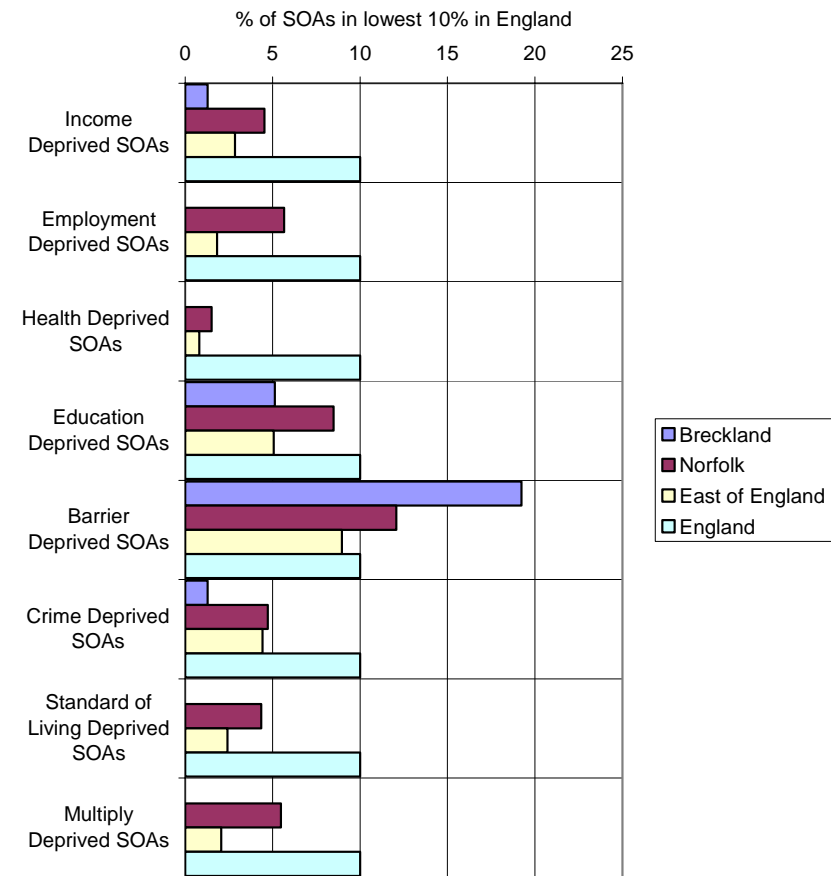
The graph shows how Breckland would have grown if it had had the growth rates of the other areas.

Source: ONS: Claimant Unemployment; PACEC

Deprivation at local level is measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which is itself split into seven categories or “domains”. Deprivation statistics are produced for each Super Output Area (or SOA: a sub-ward geographical unit used in Census data collection). In Breckland, no SOAs fall within the most deprived 10% in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation, a rate of deprivation lower than that in Norfolk (5.5%),

the East of England (2.1%), and England (by definition, 10%). Breckland has below average incidences of deprivation in all domains except barriers to housing and services, where 19.2% of Breckland SOAs fall within the most deprived 10% in England – such deprivation is characteristic of rural areas, and is found throughout Breckland, except in the population centres of Thetford, Swaffham, Watton, East Dereham, and Shipdham. In all other domains bar Education (5.1%), the rate of deprivation is 1.3% or lower. See figure 4.5 below.

**Figure 4.5 Percentage of SOAs in the lowest 10% in England**



SOAs are Super Output Areas, as defined by Census 2001

Source: Index of Deprivation 2004; PACEC

## 4.7) Regional Comparison

The following summarises Breckland's performance relative to the East of England region:

Breckland...

- is **less prosperous** in terms of GVA per head than the East of England (£12,800 vs £16,500)
- has **lower productivity** in terms of GVA per job (£32,800 vs £33,400)
- has had **higher population growth** since 1991 (16.2% vs 7.2%)
- has had **higher jobs growth** since 1991 (23.1% vs 17.3%)
- had a lower VAT registration rate in 2004 (8.5% vs 9.6%) but also a lower VAT deregistration rate (8.0% vs 9.5%)
- has **lower unemployment** in 2004 (benefit claimant rate of 1.5% vs 2.0%)
- has **lower earnings** in 2005 (£413/wk vs £512)
- had **lower business growth** between 1994 and 2004 (9.4% vs 15.0%)
- had a **less well-qualified workforce** in 2001 (33.7% vs 27.9% with no qualifications; 12.1% vs 18.1% with degrees or equivalent)

## 4.8) Summary of the Current Position

The key points from this chapter are as follows:

- Breckland has shown strong growth in population over the past decade, and has favourable rates of jobs growth, unemployment, and hidden unemployment; however, productivity (GVA/job), prosperity (GVA/head), and gross weekly earnings are lower than the national and regional average.
- Enterprise activity in Breckland (in terms of the number of VAT registered companies) has lagged behind Great Britain over the past decade. The rate of company registrations is lower than the GB figure; however, the rate of de-registrations is also slightly lower, leading to lower "churn" of businesses.
- In 2004 there were 48,900 jobs in Breckland. The largest sectors in absolute terms were manufacture, and construction. Education, health and social care, and construction have grown most rapidly over the past 9 years, while agriculture has fallen the most rapidly.
- Certain key sub-sectors have employment concentrations well above the national average. These include: agriculture; manufacture of food, pharmaceuticals, and furniture; and renting of engineering / motor vehicles and distribution.
- The total population of Breckland in 2001 was 121,000; of which 71,200 were of working age; this rate is similar to the rest of

Norfolk but slightly below the East of England and Great Britain.

The proportion of working age has fallen slightly over the intercensal period of 10 years.

- Workforce qualifications in Breckland are below the rest of Norfolk and well below England. A lower proportion of the population have A-level or degree-level qualifications, and a higher proportion have no qualifications.
- Breckland has lower levels of management, professional, and associate professional occupations than Norfolk, the East of England, and the rest of England and Wales, and higher levels of elementary occupations.
- The number of unemployed residents in Breckland in 2001 was 2,290, a rate of 4.0% among the economically active population. This rate is lower than in Norfolk and in Great Britain as a whole, but higher than in the East of England. The total had fallen by 1,470 since 1991 (or 39%), leading to a fall in the unemployment rate of 3.3 percentage points.
- No part of Breckland falls within the most deprived 10% areas in England. Breckland scores extremely well on all measures of deprivation except barriers to housing and services, which score almost double the national average.

## 4.9) Future Trends In Breckland

Over the relatively short period of the strategy the trends over the past few years are likely to continue and provide a focus for policy.

- Breckland is likely to continue to experience relatively strong population growth and increases in jobs (linked to the A11 growth corridor and Thetford) compared to Norfolk and the region.
- Lower levels of unemployment compared to Norfolk and the region are likely to continue. However, the areas of unemployment (for example parts of Thetford and rural pockets) are likely to persist.
- Lower earnings and productivity will probably continue although higher levels of growth may close the gap with Norfolk and the region.
- The enterprise and business start rates are likely to continue to be higher than in Norfolk but lag behind the region.
- The economy will continue to restructure in favour of services and away from agriculture / farming and manufacturing. This is likely to be the case in the East and Norfolk. The Breckland strengths - food, pharmaceuticals, furniture, engineering / motor vehicles, and distribution are likely to continue especially the latter as growth picks up on the M11 / A14 corridor.

- The Breckland workforce is likely to remain less qualified, compared to Norfolk and the East although an influx of skilled workers and improvements in school attainment could be a positive influence.

These trends will be addressed by the strategic objectives and programmes shown in the following chapter.

## 5) Strategic Objectives (SO)

This chapter outlines the five key strategic objectives that should be focused upon in order to foster a prosperous economy in Breckland.

When considering these strategic objectives, particularly the priorities, programmes & partners element, the definitions detailed in the following table should be considered.

Programmes	
<b>Initiate</b>	Indicates there is currently no, or little, activity being undertaken in relation to the programme and that there is a need for activity to be initiated.
<b>Enhance</b>	Indicates there is existing activity being undertaken in relation to the programme, but this activity needs to be improved and built upon.
<b>Maintain</b>	Indicates that the existing provision needs to be maintained.
Priority Level	
<b>H</b>	indicates the programmes are of the highest priority and requires activity to be started ideally within the first half of the strategy period, i.e. 2006-08
<b>M</b>	indicates the programmes are of medium priority and requires activity to be started at least mid way through the strategy period.
<b>L</b>	Indicates the programmes are of low priority and requires activity to be started by the end of the strategy period providing the H & M priority programmes have been commenced.

Where programmes are initiated or enhanced they are designed to fill gaps in provision. Other programmes should be maintained to prevent gaps from occurring.

While certain programmes are allocated under one strategic objective / target outcome, they do in many cases relate and contribute to other strategic objectives / target outcomes and should be considered in this context.

Performance indicators for each strategic objective have been indicated in section 7 so progress can be monitored.

Both the Strategic Objective and associated priorities and programmes and the Performance indicators have been referenced for ease of navigation and progress reporting.

## 5.1) SO1: Improving Business Competitiveness

***Mission:*** *To stimulate business competitiveness resulting in better quality jobs and higher incomes in Breckland.*

### Key Issues

Business competitiveness is critical if Breckland is to maintain and enhance its quality of life and economic prospects. Both new and existing businesses provide the largest share of the employment opportunities and income for residents in Breckland.

The number of jobs in Breckland numbered almost 49,000 in 2004, an increase of some 8250 since 1991, or 20.8%. **This rate of change was higher than for Norfolk as a whole and the Eastern Region.**

The structure of employment in Breckland was different in some respects to the Eastern Region and Norfolk. In Breckland some 20% of jobs were in manufacturing and almost 7% in agriculture / extraction, which was higher than Norfolk and the East of England. The share of employment in retailing and wholesale was similar to the sub-region and Norfolk shares, though food retail is more prominent in Breckland. **There were slightly lower shares** in construction, hotels and bars (leisure), business and

financial services and the **high-tech sectors of high tech manufacturing and computing and R&D activities.**

Breckland had strong growth in construction, retailing, the manufacture of chemicals and transport, between 1995 and 2004, but there was a significant decline in agriculture. This pattern was similar elsewhere. In agriculture, in particular the changing nature of support and the single payment system will increase the decline.

**There were strong Breckland clusters in pharmaceuticals, agriculture, food processing, engineering (advanced engineering), furniture and wood, distribution, retail and motor vehicles sales.**

**The prosperity of residents and incomes per head in Breckland in 2004 were lower than in Norfolk, the East of England and the UK.** The average weekly wage in Breckland was some 20% lower than the rate for the Eastern Region. **Productivity per job in Breckland was similar to Norfolk but some 15% below the regional rate.**

The stock of VAT registered firms in Breckland grew by some 9% in the past decade. Between 1994 and 2004 the number of firms grew in Breckland from 3724 to 4060, while in Norfolk the rate of increase was 5.5% but 15% in the East. **Hence Breckland performed well below the regional average in business creation and lagged behind.**

The company formation rate in 2003 was similar in Breckland and Norfolk but lower than the rate for the region. The closure rate reflected a similar pattern. **Breckland company formation was low given that the number of people living locally, and a source of demand for goods and services, was increasing more rapidly in Breckland compared to the region.**

Consultation with over one hundred businesses across Breckland in key industrial sectors, different size bands and locations helped identify some of the constraints they faced. **Very few businesses were seeking to grow significantly.** Firms in the area were mainly aiming to stay the same size or grow moderately. The main constraints facing businesses were:

- Sites and premises (16% of businesses), their accessibility (18%), physical environment and parking (10%) and the cost of premises (6%).
- Concerns about actual and perceived crime and security related to premises.
- Transport in terms of local access roads, major roads and congestion (18%). These constraints impacted on customers, suppliers and employees.
- An inability to innovate and adopt new technology (21%). Just a third had developed new products within the last year and a fifth carried out any R&D.
- One in five businesses did not see innovation as relevant or they lacked finance or time to innovate (15%).
- Two fifths of businesses took no steps to improve their productivity.
- Very few businesses (one in five) sought finance to assist them to operate or grow.
- A fifth of businesses faced recruitment difficulties. These were for skilled trades, personal service / customer liaison skills and some professional occupations. Applicants lacked the required skills and / or there were too few applicants.
- A tenth of businesses had internal skills shortages for skilled trades, customer liaison and management skills.
- A third of firms do not recruit young people, almost two thirds do not recruit unemployed people or migrants. These groups were seen as unreliable or lacking the appropriate skills.
- Two thirds of businesses did not have a training plan or a training budget.
- Around a quarter of businesses were members of a trade group or business association. Networking and

collaboration was relatively low with suppliers, other firms, training providers, business support organisations, Further and Higher Education organisations. This was especially so in the services sector and amongst smaller firms.

- Over 80% did not work with business support organisations or seek their advice
- Less than one in ten firms had achieved or were considering acquiring any quality or occupational standards such as ISO or BS standards or Investors in People.
- Businesses in the tradeable and exporting sectors were very dependent on local and sub-regional markets with just 6% exporting outside the UK.

The main issues constraining competitiveness are that while businesses face some problems with premises and transport there were key issues: **most companies were not seeking to grow and expand their markets, innovate and adopt new technology, provide training for their staff or improve quality and standards.**

These findings reflect those in previous studies on Breckland<sup>1</sup> where issues of transport, a lack of penetration of non local markets, and firms'

small size restricted opportunities. There was also little use of business support. These issues have been picked up more generally in the draft Regional Business Support Strategy<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Business Support in Rural Areas. A case study in Breckland. Bao Ha Dinh. UEA (2005)

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<sup>2</sup> The Regional Business Support Strategy (EEDA) reflects some of these issues. Draft Report for Consultation (2006).

## Target Outcomes

The target outcomes below are based on the evidence of trends in Breckland and the views of Breckland companies.

- a) To increase the number of successful businesses by stimulating business start-ups and survival rates.
- b) To increase the competitiveness, productivity and growth of businesses and strengthen:
  - Innovation and the take up of technology
  - Workforce development and training to raise quality and standards
  - The development of new markets and exports
  - Access to, and take-up of, finance.
- c) Improve the business facilities and infrastructure: premises, their physical environment, major roads, local access and traffic management.

These outcomes tie into and will contribute to the goals / priorities of the following key regional / sub regional strategies / agreements;

Regional / Sub Regional Agreements	Goals/Priorities (Sub Goals / Priorities)
Regional Economic Strategy	2 (1-5) / 4 (2)
Shaping the Future	1 (1-5) / 4 (1) / 6 (3)
Local Area Agreements	4.2 / 4.3
Norfolk Regeneration Strategy	5 / 6

## Programmes, Priorities &amp; Partners

SO1: Lead Partner – Business Link<sup>1</sup>

Target Outcome	Programmes	Priority Level	Programme Lead Partner (s)
1. To increase the number of successful businesses by stimulating business start-ups and survival rates.	1. <b>Enhance</b> business start-up initiatives	H	Business Link
	2. <b>Initiate</b> a review of initiatives which target under-represented groups such as young people, women and graduates, in conjunction with schools (and Education Business Partnerships), the HE and FE sectors, women's groups and other key partners	M	Business Link
	3. <b>Enhance</b> initiatives for enterprise amongst the unemployed and disadvantaged through intermediaries such as the voluntary and community sector and social enterprises	M	Keystone Development Trust
2. To increase the competitiveness, productivity and growth of businesses and strengthen:  –Innovation and the take up of technology	1. <b>Initiate</b> in depth SME support initiatives to stimulate innovation and the adoption of technologies, through greater access to grants and other support including collaborative activity, and the improvement of skills and systems for innovation in businesses	H	Breckland Council
	2. <b>Initiate</b> steps aimed at improving the adoption of ICT, access to IT / broadband infrastructure and other technologies	H	Business Link
	3. <b>Initiate</b> the feasibility study for an innovation / incubation centre for firms to provide workspace and business support for innovation.	M	Breckland Council

<sup>1</sup> At this point in time Business Link is best placed to be lead partner on this strategic objective, however with the regional business strategy in mid consultation and the delivery of business support in the region out for tender, this designation may need to be revised when the position of these has been clarified.

– <b>Workforce development and training to raise quality</b>	4. <b>Enhance</b> steps to encourage training generally and to cover skilled trades, personal services and customer liaison and management skills required by Breckland businesses	<b>H</b>	Breckland Council
	5. <b>Initiate</b> and launch a quality initiative to upgrade standards in Breckland, the adoption of organisational and occupational standards	<b>M</b>	Breckland Council
– <b>The development of new markets &amp; products</b>	6. <b>Initiate</b> and encourage the development of new markets & products both for business (i.e. renewables) & in support of business.	<b>M</b>	Business Link
– <b>Access to, and take-up of, finance</b>	7. <b>Enhance</b> the ability of businesses, and their investment readiness, to access finance for development	<b>H</b>	Business Link
	8. <b>Maintain</b> the availability & visibility of grants for development and growth in key sectors	<b>H</b>	Business Link
3. <b>Improve the facilities and infrastructure: premises, their physical environment, major roads, local access and traffic management.</b>	1. <b>Enhance</b> the stock of premises for SMEs through enterprise centre workspace, eg in key locations such as the Thetford as a growth centre.	<b>M</b>	Breckland Council
	2. <b>Maintain</b> sufficient serviced sites for firms seeking to relocate and / or expand. These will include industrial and business parks, especially in Thetford as a growth area	<b>M</b>	Breckland Council
	3. <b>Enhance</b> and encourage the use of appropriate buildings in rural areas for diversification and compatible employment uses	<b>H</b>	Breckland Council

NOTE: Target outcomes a, b & c should be primarily but not exclusively focused on key sectors for Breckland namely advanced engineering / high-tech manufacturing and services / agricultural sector / food processing / tourism and leisure, furniture manufacture and wood.

## 5.2) SO2: Attracting Inward Investment

**Mission:** *To encourage high levels of inward & local investment for the benefit of Breckland's economy and community..*

### Key Issues

Inward investment, whether through the location of new businesses, the acquisition or merger of others, or through tourism, or through external funding brings significant benefits. There is greater prospect of achieving critical mass in key activities and sectors, strengthening the image and visibility of Breckland, diversifying and deepening activities, improving skills, the transfer of knowledge and know how. Appropriate investment results in wider opportunities and choice, increased employment opportunities and higher incomes for residents.

While Breckland is located close to relatively fast growing areas, and is located in one of the fastest growing regions in the UK **it has not attracted any private inward investment of any scale in the past decade or so.** There have been few significant investments close to Breckland which have benefited the local economy. There are some examples close by, such as Centre Parcs, the military bases, the University of East Anglia and a few firms locating near Norwich. The

**exceptions to this are the growth of firms in or close to Thetford,** the influx of branches in retailing, financial and business services in the town centres which have, to some extent, aided their regeneration, and the growth in leisure and hospitality related to tourism (through day trippers and short stay tourists). The **character and attractiveness of Breckland,** together with its history and culture and its physical environment have **stimulated and helped capture a growing number of tourists.**

Breckland itself, and its network of market towns, **does not provide a large market for inward investors** seeking to sell their goods and services. However, the **A11 corridor and Thetford provides a gateway** to the more substantial markets of Norwich, the East Norfolk coast and North Suffolk, and provides access to the growing Cambridge sub-region, one of the most significant high-tech locations in Europe. It also has a relatively low cost base and a reasonable supply of labour, sites and premises, and an emerging business services infrastructure to support investors.

Some of the key issues faced are **concerned with the product that Breckland can offer inward investors** and the markets to target to take account of some of the disadvantages, but advantages, of its location, i.e. what is Breckland offering by way of access to markets, premises (for medium sized and smaller firms in work place centres, industrial and office

parks), skills and labour and a developed business support infrastructure that can promote Breckland (with a distinctive brand), host inward missions, make introductions to suppliers and service providers, network with business “champions” and provide an aftercare service to support and retail firms. Linked to this is the issue of the sources of inward investment, for example companies moving from overseas (especially Western Europe to be close to high tech activities in the Cambridge sub-region or the M11 growth corridor), others moving from the Cambridge or Norwich ring to a lower cost base, and those in leisure / hospitality, to take advantage of growing tourism.

A further source of investment is the attraction and retention of high skilled workers and graduates as residents (who may be employees, commuters or home based working providing services elsewhere).

**Tourism is also a key market where issues of market segments should be addressed**, for example day trippers and short / longer stay tourists (from European and UK locations) visiting the cultural and heritage facilities, the significant outdoor and leisure attractions, and the emerging rural hospitality sector.

### Target Outcomes

The target outcomes below are aimed at addressing the key issues;

- a) To attract and retain businesses in the key growth sectors.
- b) Strategic Cohesion in promoting and capturing inward investment sectors.
- c) Improve the provision of premises for inward investors, their quality and environment.
- d) Attract and retain skilled labour.
- e) Strengthen the Breckland brand and its attraction as a location for tourism.

These outcomes tie into and will contribute to the goals / priorities of the following key regional / sub regional strategies / agreements;

Regional / Sub Regional Agreements	Goals/Priorities (Sub Goals / Priorities)
Regional Economic Strategy	2 (4)
Shaping the Future	5 (1&2)
Local Area Agreements	Indirect Contribution
Norfolk Regeneration Strategy	Indirect Contribution

## Programmes, Priorities &amp; Partners

SO2: Lead Partner – Breckland Council

Target Outcome	Programmes	Priority Level	Programme Lead Partner(s)
1. To attract and retain businesses in the key growth sectors	1. <b>Enhance</b> development of high tech manufacturing and service sectors / clusters (based on growth and spill over in Cambridge and Norwich) . The sectors of focus being food processing, advanced engineering, furniture, tourism and leisure..	H	Breckland Council
	2. <b>Initiate</b> the preparation of a Breckland Prospectus for potential investors showing the strengths of Breckland and opportunities	M	Breckland Council
2. Strategic Cohesion in promoting and capturing inward investment	1. <b>Initiate</b> a strategy to focus on the Breckland brand, the key markets, the 'offer' (sites, premises, workforce / skills, low relative costs) and reflect regional / Norfolk partner activities.	H	Breckland Council
	2. <b>Enhance</b> arrangements to host visiting companies	L	Breckland Council
	3. <b>Enhance</b> arrangements for after care and on going support	L	Breckland Council
3. Improve the provision & access of premises for inward investors, their quality and environment	1. Refer to programmes relating to target outcomes SO1 b & c	-	-
4. Attract and retain skilled labour	1. <b>Enhance</b> work with Higher Education sector on graduate opportunities and retention	M	Breckland Council
	2. <b>Initiate</b> the promotion of the quality environment and facilities to attract higher skilled residents commuting or working from home	L	Breckland Council

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<b>5. Strengthen the Breckland brand and its attraction as a location for tourism</b>	1. <b>Initiate</b> the preparation of a tourism strategy which identifies the key strengths: attractions, the environment, outdoor leisure (eg Thetford Forest), the market, and the promotional activities which complement other regional / sub regional activities.	<b>M</b>	Breckland Council
	2. <b>Enhance</b> the development of products to promote Breckland, i.e. DMS	<b>M</b>	Breckland Council

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### 5.3) SO3: Enhancing Workforce Development & Skills

***Mission:** To offer support that will grow and develop the skills and competencies of the Breckland workforce, raising the employability of the unemployed.*

#### Key Issues

The skills and aptitudes of the workforce available to employers in Breckland underpin all that is achievable in terms of **raising productivity, enhancing quality, applying new technologies, innovation in goods and services**, and **supporting new levels of investment**: all that is required to grow the local economy to serve an increasing local population.

At the same time, the creation of new forms of employment and enhanced labour productivity in existing sectors within Breckland leads to higher incomes, and can lead to a **wider distribution of the benefits** of a growing economy. This is important for some groups of relatively disadvantaged Breckland residents.

As is the case nationally, the demand for skills in Breckland can be expected to change over the next five years, with the intensity of skill

demand increasing. **Anticipation of shifts in demand** is a key function of training support offered in the district. Emerging areas of demand for skills include all levels of engineering, the financial services sectors, retailing, tourism, the personal and health care sectors and construction.

In the Breckland District resident population of 124,000 in 2003, some 71,200 people are estimated to have been in the 16 to 74 working age band. Of these, 55,600 were in employment (including self-employed, employers and employees<sup>1</sup>); 78.1%, a high proportion in comparison with all of Norfolk (76.4%) and with England (74.2%). There was a net outflow of daily commuting workers of 10,200 in 2003, mainly to Norwich, but also to Bury St Edmunds, the USAF airbases at Lakenheath and Mildenhall and King's Lynn, therefore giving a total of workplaces in Breckland as 45,400. The age distribution of the Breckland workforce yields a significant annual **replacement demand** for employees.

Unemployment levels in the district were low in 2003: 2,290 workers or 4.0%<sup>2</sup>, compared with 4.5% across Norfolk and 5.1% for all of Great Britain. However, in three wards in Thetford and in Harling & Heathlands and in Wayland the proportion of the **unemployed who are in the 16 to 24 year old age group** is far higher than in Norfolk or in England, a

<sup>1</sup> Unregistered in-migrant workers may well have pushed this total higher.

<sup>2</sup> Using the International Labour Organisation definition.

significant social inclusion issue<sup>1</sup>. The Abbey ward in Thetford has a significantly high unemployment rate across all age groups.

The Breckland economy grew strongly in the 1991 to 2003 period, creating 8,250 new jobs or an increase of one fifth. While this growth is reassuring for an area that is growing in population (up from 108,000 in 1991), the Breckland economy has many sectors exhibiting **levels of productivity that are low by national standards**. Overall, gross value added per job in Breckland in 2001 was about 17% below the Great Britain figure, and the work-based average weekly earnings figure was 12% below the Norfolk figure and 35% below the England figure. These figures point to a need not only to introduce further higher value added jobs but also where possible to **upgrade existing work practices**. This normally involves additional investment complemented by the **introduction of new skills**. Over half the firms in the PACEC survey had developed or introduced new products/services or processes in the last two years.

Breckland has a relatively high proportion of its 16 to 74 age population with **lower levels of qualification**: 52.6% with no formal qualification or only to NVQ level 1. This compares with 50.4% across Norfolk, and 45.5% in England. The relatively low proportion of managerial, professional,

<sup>1</sup> In 2001, in Harling & Heathland 43.5%, in Thetford Abbey 38.8%, in Thetford Guildhall 37%, in Thetford Saxon 33.5% and in Wayland 38.8%; compared with 25.3% in Norfolk and 25.6% in England.

senior official, associate professional and technical occupations recorded among Breckland residents in the 2001 Census, given the commuting patterns, is another indication of the lower level of qualification<sup>2</sup>. A Skills Stakeholder Group is being formed for the LSC Southern area which includes part of Breckland to address overall skills issues. This is under the Norfolk Skills Forum Group.

The **lower level of attainment of new entrants** into the labour force is indicated by the 48.8% of Breckland students aged 15 in 2004 with 5 GCSE A\* to C grades compared with 52.4% for Norfolk and 54.4% across England<sup>3</sup>. **Advising and engaging** individuals with low attainment and motivation levels is often best achieved by initiatives within the voluntary sector and community and social enterprises. Several firms in the PACEC Business Survey made reference to the lack of reliability of young people. Well over half the firms responded that they did not recruit from among those who had been unemployed or who were in the 16 to 24 age group (or from migrant workers or people with a disability).

<sup>2</sup> To reduce by at least 40% the number of adults in the workforce who lack an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent qualification by 2010 is national priority 2 under: *Transforming Learning and Skills: Our Annual Statement of Priorities*, Learning and Skills Council, November 2005.

<sup>3</sup> At the same time the staying –on–rate for 16 to 17 year olds in Breckland in 2001 was above the Norfolk and England totals, showing a proportionate increase of nearly one quarter compared with a decade earlier. To increase by five percentage points the proportion of 19 year olds achieving at least Level 2 qualifications by 2008 is national priority 1. This follows from the DfES White Paper, *14-19 Education and Skills*, February 2005.

**Low levels of educational attainment are particularly marked in certain wards in Breckland.** The education, skills and training domain measure in the 2000 Index of Deprivation places the four Thetford wards in the bottom 10% of wards in England, with two of the wards in the bottom 3%. There has been improvement since then but part of the Abbey ward is in the worst 1% of Super Output Areas nationally in the 2004 Index and three of the Saxon ward SOAs are in the bottom 10%. The two High Schools in Thetford had low rates of GCSE achievement in 2003: 30% and 24%. Thetford Abbey and Thetford Saxon wards had particularly high proportions of people aged 16 to 74 with no qualifications in 2001<sup>1</sup>.

While the educational achievement in secondary schools in Breckland has been improving, the need for skill training and for educational and skill enhancement in the existing labour force continues. Anecdotally, and in the PACEC survey of Breckland businesses, employers voice opinions of both **specific skill shortages** and of **poor levels of generic skills** (among would-be or existing employees). These views are reinforced by evidence from a 2005 survey of 130 companies in Breckland, sampled by both size and sector<sup>2</sup>. Training in **English for Speaker of Foreign Languages** for migrant workers is a rising priority in Breckland. Employers in the survey reported specific **hard-to-fill vacancies** across all

<sup>1</sup> Abbey 40.7% and Saxon 41.5%, compared with Norfolk 32.4% and England 28.8%. Source: *Review of post-16 education and training in West Norfolk*, Norfolk LSC, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Shiyun Luo, *Improving Workforce Skills: The Breckland Skills Survey*, Master of Business Management Thesis, University of East Anglia, 2005.

occupational groupings, especially in the associate professional, craft and related occupations and plant and machinery operatives grades, and especially in the manufacturing, engineering and food processing sectors, key growth sectors for the Breckland economy<sup>3</sup>.

The same survey found that while **employer provided or supported training** was common among larger businesses, it was not in businesses employing less than 10 people, and such businesses were poor at anticipating skill shortages. Only one third of firms in the PACEC Survey had a specific training budget. Training provision within companies also tended to be concentrated at the higher end of the occupational groups. Engagement in **Work-Based Learning** in Breckland is weak compared with other areas. **Management and Leadership Skills** need to include abilities in finance, marketing and personnel relationships, and ability to access sources of **knowledge transfer**<sup>4</sup>. An Employer Training Initiative under the LSC is being developed across the East of England Region.

Employers prize transferable skills and adaptability within existing employees. A considerable potential for the Breckland economy is offered with the arrival within the last decade of a large number of foreign national

<sup>3</sup> The *National Employers Skills Survey 2004*, Learning and Skills Council, July 2004 found just over 8% of Norfolk business establishments had hard to fill vacancies. The PACEC Business Survey found one fifth of firms questioned had problems in recruiting staff in the last two years, particularly in skilled trades occupations.

<sup>4</sup> One area in which the PACEC Business Survey found a low rate of achievement by firms was in meeting national quality standards.

migrant workers. While many are currently employed, on a longer term or seasonal basis, in basic manual tasks, within this sub-population are many skills suitable for application or adaptation to areas of skill shortage<sup>1</sup>. There is a need for recognition of **qualification mapping of transferable skills**, to alert employers and remove barriers to the more productive employment of the in-migrants. The UK NARIC system is used by the Breckland New Communities Project, run by the Keystone Development Trust.

### Target Outcomes

The target outcomes below are aimed at addressing the key issues:

- a) To provide to employers a workforce with rising levels of skills and abilities.
- b) To raise the levels of attainment of school and college leavers in Breckland.
- c) To engage more employers in support for training and education among their employees.
- d) To increase the demand for lifetime learning at all levels
- e) To raise the employability of the socially excluded.

These outcomes tie into and will contribute to the goals / priorities of the following key regional / sub regional strategies / agreements;

Regional / Sub Regional Agreements	Goals/Priorities (Sub Goals / Priorities)
Regional Economic Strategy	1 (1-4) / 5(1-3) / 7 (3)
Shaping the Future	2 (1-4) / 3
Local Area Agreements	4.1 / 4.5
Norfolk Regeneration Strategy	1 / 2 / 3

<sup>1</sup> See C.Schneider and D.Holman, *A Profile of Migrant Workers in the Breckland Area*, Keystone Development Trust, July 2005: a survey of 168 migrant workers and 35 local employers. The survey found that migrant workers "...possessed fairly high levels of generic skills such as numerical skills, communication, problem solving and other languages" and "...IT and numerical skills match identified skills shortages among the indigenous population". Over 15% had managerial and professional occupations in their home country.

## Programmes, Priorities &amp; Partners

SO3: Lead Partner – Learning & Skills Council <sup>1</sup>

Target Outcome	Programmes	Priority Level	Programme Lead Partner (S)
1. Provide to employers a workforce with rising levels of skills and abilities.	1. <b>Initiate</b> analysis of skill requirements in growth sectors	M	Breckland Council
	2. <b>Initiate</b> the Skills Stakeholders Group	H	LSC
	3. <b>Maintain</b> provision of FE vocational training opportunities in areas of required skills	M	LSC
	4. <b>Initiate</b> new FE courses in emerging sectors	M	LSC
	5. <b>Maintain</b> back-to-work training for the unemployed to increase basic skills, lower level skills and the employability for employees	M	LSC
	6. <b>Initiate</b> support for focussed on-the-job or short course training in skill shortage areas	H	LSC
	7. <b>Enhance</b> dialogue between FE and HE providers and employer representative bodies, working with the Norfolk “Aim Higher Consortium”.	M	LSC
	8. <b>Enhance</b> support for international in-migrant workers to learn English	H	LSC

<sup>1</sup> At this point in time the Learning Skills Council is best placed to be lead partner on the strategic objectives / programmes shown, however with the organisation going through a period of reorganisation, the designations presented may have to be revisited once the reorganisation has been completed.

	9. <b>Initiate</b> analysis and dissemination of corresponding qualification levels of international in-migrant workers	<b>H</b>	Keystone Development Trust
<b>2. Raise the levels of attainment of school and college leavers in Breckland</b>	1. <b>Maintain</b> support to Breckland secondary schools to achieve national average standards in English, Maths, ICT and Science.	<b>M</b>	Norfolk CC
	2. <b>Enhance</b> the proportion of secondary school leavers progressing to full-time education or training, or employment with occupational training (eg through Education Business Partnerships and business events) and raise aspirations	<b>M</b>	Norfolk CC
	3. <b>Enhance</b> efforts to raise educational and career aspirations in school and college leavers	<b>M</b>	Norfolk CC
	4. <b>Enhance</b> the local provision of FE courses	<b>M</b>	LSC
	5. <b>Maintain</b> the support of travel costs for students	<b>M</b>	Norfolk CC
<b>3. Engage more employers in support for training and education among their employees</b>	1. <b>Initiate</b> publicity of employers with developed staff training programmes	<b>L</b>	Business Link
	2. <b>Enhance</b> the number of companies undertaking a training audit	<b>M</b>	Business Link
	3. <b>Enhance</b> the number of employers as Investors in People	<b>M</b>	LSC
	4. <b>Maintain</b> support for generic skill training in the workplace	<b>M</b>	LSC
	5. <b>Enhance</b> local training of management and leadership skills and knowledge	<b>M</b>	Business Link
<b>4. Increase the demand for lifetime learning at all levels.</b>	1. <b>Maintain</b> publicity for learning & skills courses	<b>M</b>	Norfolk CC
	2. <b>Initiate</b> a review of access to opportunities	<b>L</b>	LSC

	3. <b>Maintain</b> the learning infrastructure in libraries	<b>M</b>	Norfolk CC
	4. <b>Maintain</b> support for the local learning partnerships	<b>H</b>	LSC
	5. <b>Enhance</b> the provision of adult learning classes in rural areas	<b>M</b>	Norfolk CC
<b>5. Raise the employability of the socially excluded.</b>	1. <b>Enhance</b> support for community based provision in education for basic literacy and numeracy, especially in Thetford	<b>H</b>	LSC
	2. <b>Enhance</b> support for community based provision in training in ICT, in basic construction skills, in customer care and in social care.	<b>H</b>	LSC
	3. <b>Enhance</b> support for unemployed residents in job seeking skills through New Deal and other job seeking services.	<b>M</b>	Job Centre Plus
	4. <b>Maintain</b> reduction of unemployment for those with physical or mental health issues and learning difficulties.	<b>M</b>	Job Centre Plus

## 5.4) SO4: Improving Transport and Infrastructure

***Mission:** To increase investment in transport infrastructure and services, and to secure the provision of essential utility services for businesses in Breckland.*

### Key Issues

Breckland District is a large rural area with no single urban focus for a local transport network. The key transport issues that have a bearing on the economic prosperity of the district relate to the three major through routes, the A11, the A47 and the Norwich to Ely rail line, the access to Norwich airport, and the provision of public transport to villages.

The **A11 trunk road** that passes through the south of the district bypasses Thetford and Attleborough and is dualled from the Norfolk county border to Norwich.<sup>1</sup> The delays from congestion and accidents that adversely impact upon Breckland business traffic to and from the south, including Cambridge and London and Stansted Airport, arise on the 8km stretch from the south west end of the Thetford bypass to the Barton Mills junction with the A1101 from Bury St Edmunds and the A1065 from Swaffham.

<sup>1</sup> The Attleborough bypass dualling is due for completion in 2006.

Local businesses report that the delays are costly<sup>2</sup>. A decision is awaited on the time table for up-grading to dual standard, but the provisional regional programme places it post 2011.

On the **A47 trunk road** similar delays from congestion and accidents occur on the six km single carriageway stretch from the eastern end of the East Dereham bypass at Hockering to the western end of the Norwich Southern Bypass at Easton. This is both a key commuter route for Breckland residents as well as a key business link to suppliers and customers in the Norwich area for Breckland businesses, and the link to the growing level of scheduled air services using Norwich Airport. Of the towns outside Breckland within the East of England region with which firms in the PACEC Business Survey had training or business links, Norwich stands out as by far the most important.

The level of HGV congestion, and the consequent cost to the national economy, on both the A11 and the A47 may increase when the East Port in Great Yarmouth opens, as planned by 2012. The proposed **Northern Distributor Road** on the north side of Norwich will provide easier access for Breckland businesses to the concentration of industrial areas of Norwich as well as to the airport.

<sup>2</sup> The Gateway A11 Group has gathered information from local businesses. Companies in the PACEC Business Survey also highlighted difficulties from delays.

The **rail service** on the Norwich to Ely line, and then direct to Cambridge, has greatly improved since the introduction of an hourly timetable in 2001. The use of both Thetford and Attleborough stations by both inward and outward bound commuters has increased markedly. The stations also provide a service for tourists and for business visitors. There are issues of **car parking** provision at both. There is a potential for direct services to Stansted Airport. The freight spur to Snetterton is an underused asset.

**Public transport** for the villages of Breckland is a perennial problem. For a minority of village residents, tending to be teenagers, the elderly and those on low incomes, a bus service is regarded as essential, securing access to education and training, and employment, as well as to shopping and entertainment. However only larger villages or those on a convenient route are currently served by the bus network. Except at peak hours, and not always then, on many routes the level of usage tends to be too low to support a full commercial service. Most bus routes therefore have to be grant aided, with difficult decisions to be taken on the possible level of support per passenger mile. Community bus initiatives may provide a more cost effective solution. An extension of the Breckland Car Scheme / a similar demand responsive scheme could be investigated.

Companies in the PACEC Business Survey cited issues of **local access** to premises for both staff and customers as well as suppliers as issues of constraint on the efficiency of their business. Transport difficulties and the

need for road improvements were the two most cited individual weaknesses of the Breckland economy.

As with transport investments, in a district with a growing population and expanding levels of business activity, the **provision of the infrastructure of essential services** (water, gas, electricity, telephone and IT capacity) for industrial and commercial investments is chicken-and-egg. The utility companies do not wish to invest until they can see a clear return on the capital involved, but the absence of or delay in such investments may well deter the prospective user investment altogether. In support of economic development this dilemma may possibly be met by an up-front financial grant from a public agency, or by an agreed developer contribution that is given in part to the utility company<sup>1</sup>, or by a form of guarantee of a future level of demand.

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<sup>1</sup> These contributions have been by Section 106 agreements with the local planning authority. These payments are not usually designed to support private sector investments. A new system of developer payments, Supplementary Planning Gain, is now planned by central government.

## Target Outcomes

The target outcomes below are aimed at addressing the key issues:

- a) A11 and the A47 trunk roads developed to dual carriageway standard..
- b) Building of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road.
- c) Increased the passenger capacity & utilisation of rail services relating to the Breckland area.
- d) Increased car parking capacity and facilities at Thetford and Attleborough railway stations.
- e) Improved accessibility for non-car owners in villages
- f) Supply of utility services improved to new business investments in rural areas.

These outcomes tie into and will contribute to the goals / priorities of the following key regional / sub regional strategies / agreements;

Regional / Sub Regional Agreements	Goals/Priorities (Sub Goals / Priorities)
Regional Economic Strategy	4 (2) / 6 (3&4)
Shaping the Future	6 (1&2)
Local Area Agreements	4.4
Norfolk Regeneration Strategy	7

## Programmes, Priorities &amp; Partners

SO4: Lead Partner – Norfolk Chamber of Commerce

	Target Outcome	Programmes	Priority Level	Programme Lead Partner (s)
1.	<b>A11 and the A47 trunk roads developed to dual carriageway standard.</b>	1. <b>Maintain</b> & co-ordinate publicity and pressure from user groups, i.e. A47 Alliance / Gateway A11 group, especially re: access to Thetford.	<b>H</b>	Norfolk Chamber
2.	<b>Building of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road</b>	1. <b>Maintain</b> & co-ordinate publicity and pressure from prospective user groups	<b>H</b>	Norfolk Chamber
3.	<b>Increased the passenger capacity &amp; utilisation of rail services relating to the Breckland area.</b>	1. <b>Maintain</b> support for local rail user group	<b>M</b>	Norfolk Chamber
		2. <b>Initiate</b> an investigation into utilising the Snetterton rail link more effectively.	<b>L</b>	Breckland Council
4.	<b>Increased car parking capacity and facilities at Thetford and Attleborough railway stations.</b>	1. <b>Initiate</b> an investigation into the feasibility of increasing car parking capacity at Thetford & Attleborough.	<b>M</b>	Breckland Council
5.	<b>Improved accessibility for non-car owners in town centres and villages.</b>	1. <b>Enhance</b> and develop demand responsive initiatives relating to community transport, similar to the Breckland Car scheme.	<b>M</b>	Area Partnerships
6.	<b>Supply of utility services improved to new business investments in rural areas.</b>	1. <b>Maintain</b> & co-ordinate dialogue with utility companies and development support agencies	<b>M</b>	Breckland Council

## 5.5) SO5: Regenerating & Developing the Breckland Environment

***Mission:** To enhance and regenerate the Breckland district developing and utilising the physical environment and building community capacity.*

### Key Issues

The Breckland environment comprises both the community and social environment and the physical environment with attractive landscape & features. In a predominantly rural case such as Breckland these are interrelated and form part of the culture and history of the area. The community and social environment contributes to regeneration and economic development through the community and voluntary sector, the ability to involve local people and build capacity and support facilities. The physical environment also helps to underpin and support economic development and regeneration.

The environment of the five principal towns of Breckland, of the larger and the smaller villages and of the extensive rural areas of farmland and forest is a key factor in the **quality of life experienced by residents,**

**businesses and employees alike.** Indeed for many the attractive and unspoilt environment was a key factor in their decision to live in Breckland.

Among the public sector services, access to educational, recreational and to health care services are key factors in residential decisions. The community and voluntary sector also support and provide facilities through community and social centres and increasingly its role in building community involvement and capacity is important in meeting and identifying needs. Important services from the private sector will include retail provision, professional and personal services, cultural and leisure facilities and the infrastructure for sporting pursuits.

Through partnership led regeneration initiatives, **the quality of the urban core** in the Breckland market towns has improved in the last five years. The market towns retain their quality services, townscape and key buildings which characterise their history & culture. There has also been a sensitive upgrading of buildings and facilities. For example: Swaffham has gained a new community centre and a refurbished social facility in the town centre which has helped build community capacity and involvement. Dereham has a new public library and new commercial leisure facilities, with agreement reached for a new public swimming pool. Attleborough has a new library and multi resource learning centre. Watton high street has been refurbished and the Wayland Centre for Innovation & Enterprise has been established. All of these towns now have regular farmers' markets

and town centre events. In all of the towns issues of car parking, access and traffic management remain. The need to continue to make redevelopment use of previously used land continues.

The **'Moving Thetford Forward'** initiative (emerging from the Breckland CER Package) is a set of proposals to radically improve the urban centre of Thetford, to take more advantage of the riverside location, to improve access, to raise the quality and scale of the retail mix, and to provide new 'urban living' housing in the core area. Commercial investors and developers will be able to participate within an overall master plan. Also under regeneration initiatives, Thetford has received an upgrade to its museum, the Abbey Neighbourhood Centre<sup>1</sup>, and a Healthy Living Centre as well as a continuing programme of cultural opportunities for young people. The feasibility of a new Carnegie Centre in the town centre is being studied. Potential 'Growth Point' status brings forward further opportunities.

The **quality of the environment in the villages** of Breckland will depend upon how future land-use planning decisions result in additions to the built environment that enhance the existing street scenes and community and social facilities. In terms of the local community and social and economic environment, many village residents see the retention of a village shop, a

<sup>1</sup> This is in addition to the more business focussed Keystone Enterprise Factory and the Keystone Innovation Centre.

pub, a primary school and community facilities and a post-office as a key to community sustainability. All four village amenities are under threat from services in larger centres where they may not be complementary. Under the preferred options in the Breckland Local Development Framework, twelve of the 108 villages in the District will be defined as Local Service Centres. These Centres will receive priority in public supported services and facilities (including community facilities) as well as in permissions for new housing and buildings required for economic and community activity.

Incomes and employment in both these Local Service Centres and in other villages, as in the five principal towns, will be supported by the **strengthening of the rural economy and increases in visitor and tourist activity**, expenditure and use of facilities. This will involve improving the existing attractions and facilities, improved marketing, and giving a sympathetic welcome to new attractions<sup>2</sup>. For example, developments at Snetterton, linked to the Rural Enterprise Valley project, should secure a more regular flow of motor sport visitors. The district has a shortage of hotel and guest house accommodation.

The quality of the physical & social Breckland environment is a factor that feeds into the economic prosperity of the district. In supporting the demand

<sup>2</sup> The Brecks Tourism Partnership is achieving a stronger 'branding' for tourism in the south of the district. The Norfolk Museums Service has invested recently in both the Thetford Ancient House museum and the Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse museum. BDC has recently granted planning permission for a whisky distillery at Roudham.

for additional homes in the district, it is a factor that attracts well-qualified in-migrants to live in Breckland, enhancing the capacities of the local labour force. It is also a factor that can be reassuring to inward industrial and commercial investors, in the quality of life for entrepreneurs and their families and for the quality of the employees they are able to recruit. And, in a district with few major sources of individual visitor attractions, it is a factor that supports a significant source of income and employment from both day visitors and longer stay tourists.<sup>1</sup>

The **appearance of rural Breckland** may show changes over the next decade as a result of **adjustments and restructuring, in particular in agriculture**. Under EU rules, the subsidy system to farms is to progressively change from a price support basis on individual crops and products to a Single Payment System based on the areas available for cultivation. Certain environmental subsidies linked to landscape and wildlife husbandry may be available in addition. An anticipated result of the changes is that incomes for some farmers may fall. Hence many farmers will seek to develop new products or services to supplement the sale of core outputs<sup>2</sup>. There will be knock-on effects on employment, positive and negative, and further changes in the appearance of some cultivated areas and in the use made of agricultural buildings. These changes will require a

balanced response to protect activities and take advantage of opportunities, including steps to provide advice and support to help the farmers and the sector diversify. Planning decisions will also be important here.

The **protected wildlife sites** in Breckland are both an asset to residents and also an attraction for tourists. The wildlife includes indigenous and migratory birds, deer, waterside species and water life as well as extensive wild flora with grasses and flowers. These conservation and wildlife areas need to be protected.

The **woodland areas** of Breckland under the ownership of the Forestry Commission are extensive with mature mixes of evergreen and deciduous trees which improve air quality and freshen the environment. They are home to leisure, walking and cycling facilities and outdoor recreation. They also provide extensive habitats for wildlife and plant life. The adjoining heath land in turn is an attractive setting. In economic terms the forest areas are facing new competition in the market for soft woods from the Accession States of the EU. The Commission, while protecting the environment is therefore looking to sources of income that can take advantage of the land holdings and the support which may be offered covering forests and diversification. This will include building upon the visitor attractions of High Lodge, the holding of summer concerts and

<sup>1</sup> The East of England Tourist Board has estimated that the value of tourism to Breckland is an income of approximately £268m, supporting almost 6,000 jobs in the district.

<sup>2</sup> Examples may include crops for bio-fuels, use of land for leisure activities, new woodland, value-added in processing, farm shops, tourist related initiatives etc.

encouragement of open access to the forest and events including training and enterprise.

The **history and heritage of Breckland** is reflected in the variety of attractions which retain their environments. Among these are the many beautiful gardens to be found in the tranquil countryside such as West Wretham Heath, Gooderstone Water, the Nunnery Lakes Reserve, and Weeting Heath. There are also the historic sites and houses such as Oxburgh Hall, Thetford Priory, the Warren Lodge, Gressenhall Farm and Grimes Graves.

The environmental qualities of Breckland also offer an **indirect support to companies** concerned with renewable energy, waste and recycling and environmental goods and services. These environmental sectors of the local economy are growing and have considerable potential for the future in terms of jobs and incomes.

## Target Outcomes

The target outcomes below are aimed at addressing the key issues;

- a) **Improved physical environment of the five principal towns.**
- b) **Enlarged capacity within community groups & organisations.**
- c) **Increased provision of community & social facilities / public and private sector amenities in the principal towns & villages.**
- d) **Enhancement of the physical and social environment of villages and countryside.**
- e) **Improved choice and publicity of visitor attractions and accommodation.**

These outcomes tie into and will contribute to the goals / priorities of the following key regional / sub regional strategies / agreements;

<b>Regional / Sub Regional Agreements</b>	<b>Goals/Priorities (Sub Goals / Priorities)</b>
Regional Economic Strategy	4 (1,4,5)
Shaping the Future	3 (1&3)
Local Area Agreements	4.4
Norfolk Regeneration Strategy	4

## Programmes, Priorities &amp; Partners

SO5: Lead Partner – Breckland Council

Target Outcome	Programmes	Priority Level	Programme Lead Partner (s)
1. <b>Improved physical environment of the five principal towns.</b>	1. <b>Initiate</b> policies for Town Councils and Local Partnerships to work with property owners on upgrading standards	<b>L</b>	Town Councils / Area Partnerships
	2. <b>Initiate</b> an investigation into the feasibility of a regeneration company to take forward / co-ordinate the physical development.	<b>H</b>	Breckland Council
	3. <b>Maintain</b> activity in the redevelopment of previously used land.	<b>M</b>	Breckland Council
2. <b>Enlarged capacity within community groups &amp; organisations</b>	1. <b>Maintain</b> work with community & voluntary groups with regards to addressing needs eg: facilities, housing, safety and training issues.	<b>M</b>	Breckland Council / Area Partnerships
3. <b>Increased provision of community &amp; social facilities / public and private sector amenities in the principal towns &amp; villages.</b>	1. <b>Maintain</b> level of activity in bringing forward opportunities for increasing & publicising provision in market towns & associated villages.	<b>M</b>	Area Partnerships / Town Councils
	2. <b>Initiate</b> activity to take advantage of potential growth point & other	<b>H</b>	Breckland

	regeneration designations for areas within Breckland		Council
	3. <b>Maintain</b> support and analyse the needs of small village-based businesses, especially those involved in farm based diversification.	<b>M</b>	NRCC / NRBAS
4. <b>Enhancement the physical and social environment of villages and countryside.</b>	1. <b>Maintain</b> the protection afforded to designated wildlife sites	<b>L</b>	Norfolk CC
	2. <b>Maintain</b> the criteria of design quality in development control decisions	<b>L</b>	Breckland Council
5. <b>Improved choice and publicity of visitor attractions and accommodation.</b>	1. <b>Enhance</b> the level of publicity given to visitor attractions and accommodation in the area.	<b>H</b>	Breckland Council
	2. <b>Enhance</b> support given to tourist related SMEs	<b>M</b>	Breckland Council

## 6) Implementation and Delivery

The implementation of the strategy and the delivery of programmes to meet the desired outcomes is the ultimate responsibility of the Local Strategic Partnership Board who will carry this out through its partners and thematic groups. This strategy will inform the economic related actions designated in the LSP Community Plan.

The figure 6.1 gives an outline of partner responsibilities for implementation and delivery:

Matching resource to the requirements of the strategy is a fundamental element in successful implementation. All the specified outcomes and programmes within this strategy have been formulated with realistic resource parameters in mind, but not constrained. By signing up to this strategy the lead partners & co-ordinators have indicated their commitment to direct activity relating to their designated strategic objective / programme.

**Figure 6.1 Partner responsibilities for implementation & delivery**

SO1	SO2	SO3	SO4	SO5
<b>Lead Partner</b>				
<b>Improving Business Competitiveness</b>	<b>Attracting Inward Investment</b>	<b>Enhancing Workforce Development &amp; Skills</b>	<b>Improving Transport &amp; Infrastructure</b>	<b>Regenerating &amp; Improving the Breckland environment</b>
Business Link	Breckland Council	Learning Skills Council	Norfolk Chamber of Commerce	Breckland Council
<b>Programme Partners</b>				
As above + Breckland Council	As above	As above + Norfolk CC Business Link Breckland Council Job Centre Plus	As above + Area Partnerships Breckland Council	As above + Area Partnerships Town Councils NRCC NRBAS Business Link
<b>Potential Delivery Partners</b>				
As above + NEAT Private Sector Partners Area Partnerships NWES Poultec Training Norfolk Chamber	As above + Norfolk Chamber Norfolk CC Private Sector Partners	As above except for the LSC + Area Partnerships NWES NCC (Adult Ed) Connexions UEA Poultec Training City College Private Sector Partners	As above + Norfolk County Council Highways Agency Town Councils Private Sector Partners	As above + Community / Voluntary Groups Private Sector Partners Tourism Partnerships Forest Commission
<b>Strategic Partners (including)</b>				
Government Office / EEDA / Learning & Skills Council / Norfolk CC (inc Shaping the Future)				

Initially this direction and resource commitment will be in the form of action plan development. Lead partners responsible for the overall strategic objective delivery will work with those designated as lead co-ordinators for the programmes to produce these lower level practical delivery plans which will amongst other things define projects that will contribute to the defined programmes, highlight funding gaps, milestones, project based performance indicators etc.

These actions plans will take the strategy forward providing innovative solutions, leading to practical delivery and the securing of additional resources where appropriate.

With the strategy clearly linking into the major regional & sub regional strategies and priorities, partners in the Breckland district have access to and the opportunity to influence the following organisations and the funding sources they are responsible for:

- Government Office for the East of England, i.e. Structural Funds
- East of England Development Agency, i.e. Invest in Communities
- The Business Links (BLN)
- East of England International
- The Learning and Skills Councils
- The Higher and Further Education Sectors
- The Sector Skills Councils

- DEFRA (with NRBAS and Easton College and ADFS)
- The Forestry Commission
- Natural England
- Norfolk County Council
- Breckland Council

There are additional resources which are available to some extent as part of the national programmes of government departments (for example the DTI). The private sector is also a potentially significant source of resources through finance, facilities, and in-kind contributions. The community and voluntary sector is also a very important resource providing know-how, volunteers, and facilities.

Throughout the delivery and implementation partners will abide by the following guiding principles which cut across the strategic objectives:

- **Opportunities for all and Diversity.** Promoting social inclusion, equal opportunity and diversity in recruitment policies, and community cohesion. Reducing barriers to ensure all individuals, and those from disadvantaged groups, have opportunities to maximise their potential through training, employment, and entrepreneurial activity. This will be in line with the Local Strategic partnership's social inclusion strategy.

- **Sustainability.** Within all projects / actions developed sustainability, especially 'environmental sustainability' will be at the core. The aim is to improve competitiveness and prosperity while protecting and enhancing the unique rural and urban environments, utilising resources prudently, efficiently and in a sustainable way. This is in line with goal 8 of the Regional Economic Strategy and Shaping the Future strategic goal 4.
- **Ensuring effective partnership working and delivery.** Sharing information and agreeing the way forward, policies, resources, activities and delivery with partners. This will involve clear governance, mechanism and structure, working arrangements, leadership and roles.
- **Balance of activity.** Policies, actions, and the allocation of resources which address needs across the different locations and communities of Breckland.

## 7) Monitoring Progress

The actions and programme put forward in the strategy are intended to improve the prosperity of Breckland over the period 2006 to 2010 and beyond this time period. As the intention is for this strategy to be a 'living / breathing' document, it is critical that progress is monitored and reviewed with programmes adjusted and developed based on evidence. There will be three core elements of this:

### 1) Quarterly Implementation Review

This will involve assessing progress against agreed action plans on a quarterly basis with lead partners reporting back to the LSP Board.

### 2) Annual Review

As per element 1 above, this will involve assessing the progress against agreed actions plans. In addition it will provide an opportunity reassess the programmes highlighted within the strategy and make alterations to respond to changing needs within the economy. These reviews will also involve an interim assessment of the Breckland Economy based on the indicators highlighted in table 7.1, where the data is available. This will give visibility as to whether the Breckland Economy is heading in the right direction, especially in relation to the targets set.

### 3) 2010 Review

As 2010 approaches a full review of the strategy implementation and achievement will be undertaken. This will include a detailed analysis looking at how far the Breckland economy has progressed, especially in relation to the Performance Indicators in table 7.1, and the activity carried out as a part of the strategy. In addition 'lessons learned' will be captured. This review will be used to inform the development of a successor strategy.

The methods used to monitor implementation, progress to targets and the Breckland economy will include published data, management information, interviews and survey research where appropriate. The Breckland economy indicators are shown below.

**Table 7.1 Breckland Economy Performance Indicators**

Ref	Indicator	Related Strategic Objective	Baseline 2005	Target By 2010
P1	Gross value added (GVA)	All <sup>1</sup>	£1,600m	£1,920m
P2	GVA per head	All	£12,800	£14,769
P3	GVA per employee	All	£32,720	£34,142
P4	Total population	All	125,000	130,000
P5	Total population of working age	All	71,200	79,032
P6	Number of population being economically active	All	58,064	68,500
P7	Average gross weekly earnings	SO1/3	£413	£496
P8	Proportion of people of working age in employment (employment rate)	All	78.09%	83.00%
P9	Proportion of people of working age in employment in Priority Sectors & Clusters	All	14.74%	15.27%
P10	Economic activity rate of working age population	All	81.55%	86.67%
P11	ILO unemployment rate	All	3.94%	3.31%
P12	Proportion of the unemployed out of work for more than one year	All	26%	20%
P13	Stock of VAT registered	SO1	4,060	4,305

<sup>1</sup> As the related indicator stated is a general measure of the economy, it has been assumed this will contribute to All of the strategic objectives.

Ref	Indicator	Related Strategic Objective	Baseline 2005	Target By 2010
	businesses			
P14	VAT registrations (business start ups)	SO1	345	360 per ann
P15	Average Rateable Value [£ m2]	SO1/2	£28.46m2	£31.31m2
P16	Net In Commuting	SO4	-10,200	-9,180
P17	Proportion of workforce with no Qualifications	SO3	26.77%	21.77%
P18	Proportion of working age residents qualified to level 1	SO3	21.87%	23.55%
P19	Proportion of working age residents qualified to level 2	SO3	22.54%	24.28%
P20	Proportion of working age residents qualified to level 3	SO3	7.52%	8.10%
P21	Proportion of working age residents qualified to level 4/5 or above	SO3	12.84%	13.83%
P22	Percentage of total SOAs in bottom 10% Index of Multiple Deprivation	SO5	0%	0%
P23	Index of Multiple Deprivation for Breckland – LA Ranking	All	222 out of 354	Lower than 222
P24	House Price to Income Ratio	SO2	7.12	6.50
P25	Proportion of the economically active workforce (16+) who are self-employed	SO1	14.4%	15.23%
P26	Proportion of 16 year olds getting 5 or more GCSEs at	SO3	53.9%	58.9%

Ref	Indicator	Related Strategic Objective	Baseline 2005	Target By 2010
	<b>Grades A*-C or equivalent</b>			
P27	Proportion of 16 year olds getting no GCSEs	SO3	3.20%	3%
P28	Percentage of Companies that recognised innovation as important	SO1	80%	85%
P29	Proportion of businesses with a training plan	SO1	35%	45%
P30	Number of Companies Investing in Breckland	SO2	-	5
P31	Total Investment Value in Breckland (Companies & External Funding)	SO2/5	-	£5m
P32	Number of Community & Voluntary Groups Supported	SO5	-	50
P33	Total Direct Visitor Spend in Breckland	SO2/5	£272m	£299m
P34	Number of Visitors (Tourism Visitors) to Breckland	SO2/5	£8.8m	£9.6m
P35	Number of local village / farm / tourism businesses supported	SO5	-	250
P36	% of programmes undertaken	All	0%	75%

Sources: Office for National Statistics (Regional Accounts, ASHE, ABI, LFS, Census, VAT register); ODPM (Index of Multiple Deprivation); PACEC, Breckland Council, East of England Tourist Board, Breckland Stakeholders

# Appendices

## Appendix A – The Desk Study

### Principal Documents Consulted (include);

- *A Profile of Migrant Workers in the Breckland Area*, Keystone Development Trust, 2005
- *Breckland Local Area Framework. A Delivery Plan for Breckland's Objective 2 Programme*, Breckland District Council, 2005
- *Breckland Urban Capacity Study*, Breckland Council, 2004
- *Business Plan 2004 - 2010*, Breckland Council, 2004
- *Business Support for Rural Areas: The Case Study in Breckland District*, Bao Ha Dinh, (MBA Dissertation for the University of East Anglia), 2005
- *Community Plan for Breckland 2005/15 and Action Plans 2005/8*, Local Strategic Partnership for Breckland, 2005
- *Corporate Plan 2005/6 – 2007/8*, EEDA, 2005
- *Improving Workforce Skills: The Breckland Skills Survey*, Shiyun Luo, (MBA Dissertation for the University of East Anglia), 2005
- *Key Messages from Skills in England 2002*, Learning and Skills Council
- *Keystone Profile: A Reference Document*, Keystone Development Trust, 2004
- *Local Development Framework (Strategy and Core Policies)*, Breckland District Council, 2005
- *National Employers Skills Survey 2004*, LSC.
- *Norfolk Ambition*, Norfolk County Strategic Partnership, 2003
- *Norfolk Employment Growth Study*, Roger Tym and Partners, 2005
- *Regional Economic Strategy*, EEDA, 2005
- *Regional Spatial Strategy: the East of England Plan*, EERA, 2004
- *Retail and Town Centre Study*, Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners for BDC, 2004
- *Review of Post-16 Educational and Training in West Norfolk*, Norfolk Learning and Skills Council, 2003
- *Rural Development Programme for England 2007-2013: Consultation*, Defra
- *Rural Enterprise Valley – Phase 1 Draft Business Plan*, Breckland District Council, 2005
- *Shaping the Future Strategy 2006 – 2015 (Draft)*, The Economic Development Partnership for Norfolk, 2005
- *Strategic Employment Sites for Norwich and Norfolk*, GVA Grimley for Norfolk County Council, 2005
- *Sustainable Futures: The Integrated regional Strategy for the East of England*, EERA, 2005
- *The State of the Countryside 2005*, Commission for Rural Communities
- *Towards a Norfolk Local Area Agreement: summary of work in Progress for Stakeholders*, Norfolk Ambition, 2006
- *Transforming Learning and Skills: Our Annual Statement of Priorities*, Learning and Skills Council, 2005

## Appendix B – Interviews with Partner Representatives

David Wilson

EEDA

Lindsay Able	Attleborough Area Partnership
Tricia Bailey	Asset Management, Breckland DC
Dennis Bishop	Norfolk Business Link
Ralph Burton	Economic Development, Breckland DC
Anne Embry	Forestry Commission
Lynne Finnigan	Brecks Tourism Partnership
Martin Frost	Norfolk Learning and Skills Council
Jan Godfrey	The Wayland Partnership
Michael Hand	Economic Development, Norfolk CC
George Hayes	Dereham Area Partnership
Louise Humphries	WEETU
Ray Johnson	Asset Management, Breckland DC
David Ovenden	Dereham Area Partnership
Geoffrey Leigh	Norfolk Rural Community Council
Jo Middleton	Economic Development, Norfolk CC
Thelma Paines	Thetford Town Council
Bernie Rappensburger	Iceni Partnership
Pam Sayle	Tourism Officer, Breckland DC
David Spencer	Planning Department, Breckland DC
Neil Stott	Keystone Development Trust
Vanessa Trevelyan	Norfolk Museums and Archeology Service
Lindy Warmer	Economic Development, Breckland DC
Andrew Wilson	NWES
Dennis Halsall	Go-EAST

## Appendix C – Types of Companies Surveyed

The main characteristics of firms in the survey are shown below.

- a A third of firms were in Dereham, a third in Thetford, with the remainder split between Attleborough, Swaffham and Watton.
- b Some 12% were in agriculture / farming and manufacturing, 18% in retail and related activities, 10% in leisure tourism and construction, 14% in wholesale / transport and 24% in business and miscellaneous services.
- c The majority of firms were SMEs with 70% with fewer than 10 employees including the self-employed.
- d Three quarters were a single site business, a fifth were branches and for 6% they were an HQ with sites elsewhere.
- e Some 80% of firms started trading before 2001 (ie 2000) and 20% after this date.
- f Just over 50% of firms considered they were mature, 30% were consolidating / post start-up, and almost 20% were at the start up stage or at early stages of development.

## Appendix D – Current Economic Development Initiatives

This appendix sets out an overview of the main current and planned initiatives in Breckland that offer support to the local economy.

### National, Regional and County Indirect Support

Government Office for the East of England (GO-East). Based in Cambridge, GO-East is an umbrella office for the central government departments that have major spending responsibilities within the East of England region (except Defence). Of particular relevance to the Breckland economy is the funding for regeneration and development activity that is controlled by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). This includes the routing of monies from the Structural Funds of the European Union, in particular Objective 2 funds.

East of England Development Agency (EEDA). Based in Cambridge, in its current Corporate Plan 2005/6 to 2007/8 for the implementation of Regional Economic Strategy (RES) EEDA is laying stress on the development of enterprise hubs and on cluster development with area regeneration, against basic themes of business competitiveness, technology transfer, fostering entrepreneurship, raising productivity and enhancing workforce skills. All of these themes are of relevance to the Breckland economy. EEDA is seeking to move the East of England region into the top twenty wealthiest EU regions by 2010. The Corporate Plan is moving the Agency towards a strategic rather than a funding focus. A new

Business Support Strategy is being developed in the first half of 2006. This links to the Regional Skills Competitiveness Partnership, involving EEDA with the regional office of the Learning and Skills Council.

The Hethel Engineering Centre (opened in April 2006) is of particular relevance to the further development of the A11 corridor based on advanced engineering. Growth in manufacturing in the corridor will be enhanced by EEDA support for the Rural Enterprise Valley project along the A11 in Thetford. The Norwich Research Park, close to the border of Breckland, is a further Hub. The Investing in Communities programme supports area regeneration in Thetford. From April 2005, EEDA has responsibility for the Business Link services (taken from the Small Business Service of the Department of Trade and Industry).

EEDA also agrees with the Learning and Skills Council for England, the DTI, the DWP and the DfES the regional skills agenda under the Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA)<sup>1</sup>. It offers the 'Towards 2010' programme of direct support for employee training.<sup>2</sup> EEDA is responsible for the regional delivery of the 2007 England Rural Development Programme, and will be a core agency in delivery of the 2007 to 2013 Structural Funds programme of the EU within the region, should this go ahead. EEDA support for the Eastport development at Great Yarmouth will have knock-on consequences for Breckland.

<sup>2</sup> A programme of 70% grant support for staff training in businesses, "Towards 2000", to run to August 2007 with a target of training 5,000 employees.

EEDA manages the MAS-East support service to manufacturing companies, the Selective Finance for Investment grant, R&D grants and Create East of England, the regional venture capital fund. It has responded to the Lambert Review of links between business and universities by establishing a Science and Industry Council in the East of England. Technology transfer to across a European network is supported in Norfolk by EEDA through the East of England Innovation Relay Centre, which has an office in Norwich. Inspire East, based at EEDA's Thetford office, is a regional centre of excellence for the furtherance of sustainable communities, including an economic dimension and applicable to regeneration areas in both urban and rural districts.

East of England International (EEI). As part of EEDA, EEI deals with inward investment and promotes the Eastern Region to potential inward investors. It also provides an aftercare service to foreign owned businesses in the region.

East of England Regional Assembly (EERA). The Assembly has responsibility for the preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy, the core document in the allocation of target new housing numbers to district councils and in guiding investment by public agencies. The Assembly has also prepared a Regional Sustainable Development Framework and regional strategies for Transport, Housing, Social Issues, Cultural Issues, Waste Management and the Environment. The over-arching Integrated Regional Strategy for the East of England, "Sustainable Futures", was published in October 2005.

Norfolk County Council (NCC). The County Council offers indirect support for both existing and new businesses in Breckland through its Economic Development Unit as well as direct support through a number of services referred to below.

The County Council takes the lead in the Norfolk Strategic Partnership, in agreeing the Local Area Agreement (LAA) on funding for 3 years from April 2006, for submission to the ODPM. It has also prepared a Regeneration Strategy for Norfolk, outlining needs and priorities feeding into a business plan as part of the EEDA Investing in Communities programme. The Strategy is very much driven by the Indices of Deprivation and is therefore of particular relevance to West Thetford and some of the rural areas of Breckland<sup>1</sup>.

The County Council is also responsible for under 16 education in the public sector and the significant contribution to workforce skills.

Shaping the Future (StF). Working with the support of the Economic Development Unit of Norfolk Council as a lead partner, the Shaping the Future Partnership works through an extensive network of participant public sector, business and not-for-profit organisations across the county. Its 2001 to 2010 Economic Development Strategy provides a focus and direction for all business support activity as well as for the promotion of the economy of the county and for liaison and lobbying activity with the arms of regional and central government. The Strategy links to the EEDA RES<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The Local Public Service Agreement 2 of Norfolk County Council, which runs from 2004 to 2007, has 12 targets, of which 3 concern education.

<sup>2</sup> The draft of the revised Strategy, to run from 2006 to 2015, is out for consultation.

StF has set priorities for the development of the economy and has seven key sectors/clusters as Sector Groups which promote and support and network with local companies. All seven are of particular relevance to Breckland :- the East of England Energy Group, the Engineering Sector, the Health and Life Sciences Sector, Creative Industries, Tourism, The Rural Economy, and the Financial Services Group.

### Agencies and Organisations Directly Providing Services

Breckland District Council (BDC). BDC has an 'entrepreneurial' approach to delivering services in the area. The Economic Development Unit of the Council offers an advisory and signposting service to sources of advice and assistance, both to assist start-up businesses and businesses seeking to expand or which are facing particular problems. The Unit has been central to the regeneration activity in Breckland over the last 3-5 years and has acted as co-ordinator for the Breckland Local Area Framework for the Objective 2 expenditure 2000 to 2006, expenditure which includes many elements of business support. It also acts as co-ordinator for the Economic Development Theme Group (EDTG) of the Breckland Local Area Partnership. The Unit co-ordinates policies of the Council that are of relevance to the local economy. It can act as a broker to link together both investors (from both the public and private sectors) and relevant regulatory agencies. It initiates networking and promotional events within the district (as with the Thetford Manufacturing Club). The Unit acts as promoter for developments such as the Rural Enterprise Valley scheme in Thetford, and Moving Thetford Forward. The Unit maintains the Breckland4Business

web site, a free online search facility for grants and funding support schemes; it also co-ordinates the Breckland Business Support Forum.

The Asset Management Division of the Council can help prospective tenants with small business rate relief, office accommodation and commercial premises. As a large industrial property owner, the Council can offer both land and factory space on a variety of lease terms.

The Planning Policy Team of the Environmental Planning Department draws up the land-use development policies of the Council, currently dovetailing the new Local Development Framework for the district with both the policy guidance of central government and the policies of the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA). It also provides advice and guidance on planning issues to investors.

The Council supports Breckland tourist businesses through publications and publicity and the work of its Tourist Officer. The Council also offers assistance to businesses on matters relating to Business Rates and to licensing, food hygiene and environmental health.

Business Link for Norfolk (BLN). Based in Swaffham, Business Link advisors offer specialist advice and support, including guidance on IT issues, introductions to sources of finance, exporting, employment law, health and safety issues, management training, and waste management. BLN contracts a start-up support programme through NWES and NEAT (see below), and a specialist programme for new and expanding social enterprises through The Guild. It manages the Investors in People programme. Until March 2006 it offered help with employee skill training

through the Invest in Norfolk Skills programme, with funds from the LSC and the ESF. With ERDF funds it manages the East of England Co-Investment Fund (COIN) in the region, a venture capital scheme for medium sized companies. Breckland is an eligible area. Business Link also administers the Small Firms Loan Guarantee Scheme of the Department of Trade and Industry<sup>1</sup>. It co-ordinates the Norfolk Business Support Alliance. The Business Link franchise is up for tender in 2006.

Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Norfolk Chamber of Commerce is an independent organisation with more than 100 years experience in helping businesses to succeed and prosper. It also represents business at local, regional and national government levels.

With offices across the county in Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Kings Lynn, and a potential new office base in Thetford, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce can provide networking, training, promotional opportunities, International Trade advice and services to help all businesses. In addition with membership encompassing the whole company, every member of staff can take advantage of the benefits. Go to [www.norfolkchamber.co.uk](http://www.norfolkchamber.co.uk) for more information.

The Chamber's accredited Enterprise Agency, NEAT, can also offer help and support to those wishing to start their own company. Go to [www.neatbusiness.co.uk](http://www.neatbusiness.co.uk).

<sup>1</sup> The Department of Trade and Industry offers financial support for: Knowledge Transfer Networks and Partnerships, Research and Development within small companies or in collaboration or via consultancy, and support for Best Practice in ways of working.

Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services (NWES). NWES is a DTI registered Enterprise Agency, offering advice and start-up training programmes to new businesses and expanding smaller enterprises. NWES has worked in Breckland since 2003. Services are delivered on behalf of Business Link (via the Start-Up programme), in conjunction with the Norwich Enterprise Agency Trust (NEAT) under 'Best Start Norfolk'. It has a Rural Enterprise Scheme, loan and grant schemes, a Mentoring scheme and a Student Placement scheme. A 7-day training scheme, the Rural Enterprise Scheme in Norfolk (RESIN), for entrepreneurs in market towns has been funded by the LSC but finished in March 2006. The New Entrepreneur Scholarship Scheme, operated with the Prince's Trust and the College of West Anglia, offers support to young entrepreneurs from the most deprived wards in Thetford. The New Deal for Self Employment, operated on a contract from Job Centre Plus, offers both training and support (with 78% success) to entrepreneurs who have been unemployed for more than 18 months. NWES has 140 units in business/innovation centres elsewhere in Norfolk but not in Breckland.

Women's Enterprise and Training Unit (WEETU). A full range business support service for self-employed women, including specialist training programmes, support and loans. Activity in Breckland has been limited, but the recent response to courses in Dereham has been strong.

Poultec Training Ltd. Poultec is a training organisation based in Mattishall and offering a wide range of free and subsidised courses to both entrepreneurs and their employees. It has been the home for the BRITE (Breckland Rural Innovation and Training Enterprise) project.

Princes Trust. A charity which offers training, mentoring and financial assistance to help 14 to 30 year olds develop their potential, including the establishment of new businesses. The Trust has undertaken important work in Thetford.

Norfolk Rural Business Advisory Service (NRBAS). Based at Easton College with past funding from EEDA, Business Link for Norfolk, and currently all of the rural District Councils, NRBAS offers advice, mentoring and skill development to new and existing businesses based in rural areas. The Rural Enterprise Grant (from the Norfolk Rural Development Programme) is now in its last year, with Defra's Project Based Schemes under the England Rural development programme to end in October 2006. Breckland is an eligible area for the DEFRA Selected Rural Business Support Scheme for appraisal and specific consultancy of non-farm rural businesses: this was a pilot scheme run in 2004-05 that was managed by Business Link for Norfolk with case load delivered in part by NRBAS.

NRBAS is complemented by the Farm Business Advice Service (Mark II and managed by ADAS) which offers farmers specific advice related to the new Single Farm Payment. Within Norfolk, ADER, the Agricultural Development in the Eastern Region programme, works with NRBAS to provide both advice and training (via Easton College in Norfolk) to farmers.

A Rural Affairs Forum is to be established in Norfolk under StF, as part of the Regional Rural Affairs Forum.

Norfolk Rural Community Council. The RCC administers a number of grant aid funds for voluntary and community groups, as well as providing advice

and information to rural communities. With the abolition of the Countryside Agency in April 2005, RCC funding comes from both local and national government including from April 2006 DEFRA's Rural Social & Community Programme as well as the EU and other agencies. Support for business is indirect through highlighting issues that affect economic activity in rural areas and concerns for local services such as village shops and post offices. Direct support for community groups setting up social enterprises is part of the RSCP

Private Sector Business Support. Within Breckland local businesses have access to a wide range of professional and support services, covering areas such as legal advice, accountancy, travel and transport, marketing, training and personnel issues.

Local Networking Opportunities. These are offered by:

- The Breckland Chamber of Commerce and Industry (with the Norfolk Chamber).
- The Manufacturing Excellence Club in Thetford.
- Women in Business in Thetford
- Business Network International in Thetford
- Retailers Forum in Thetford
- West Norfolk Federation of Small Business

- Larking and Gowan Business Breakfast Forum in Dereham
- BRITE Small Business Club in Mattishall and Dereham
- Attleborough Business Club and Women in Business
- The Norfolk Network

### The Breckland Local Area Partnerships

Keystone Development Trust. Covering Thetford and surrounding villages, Keystone developed from a Single Regeneration Budget award to West Thetford, with four wards of high scores under the Indices of Deprivation. As a social enterprise company, Keystone provides a range of community facilities and support activities for local groups and children's and youth activities. In addition Keystone Enterprise and Keystone Property provide shop units, a social enterprise centre with workspace units and a 4 storey Innovation Centre. An advice service is provided for Portuguese immigrants. Basic training is offered in a number of skill areas (in partnership with the West Suffolk College, with past support from the LSC, ESF and the Home Office): in building construction work, in customer care, in health and social care, and in job-seeking skills.

Attleborough Area Partnership. The Partnership area includes 8 villages as well as Attleborough. The Partnership acts as a forum for participation by local groups and associations and as a pressure group for the delivery of services by public agencies.

The Wayland Partnership Development Trust. The Trust is a community partnership for Watton and 13 surrounding villages. As well as social, environmental and cultural objectives, the Trust has an economic objective of offering support to local businesses where it is able. It has initiated tourist related projects and at the end of December 2005 opened Wayland House – Centre for Innovation & Enterprise.

Iceni Partnership. Formed at the end of 2000, the Iceni Partnership addresses economic, social and environmental regeneration in Swaffham and 20 surrounding villages. Through the Breckland CER package, the Iceni Partnership has enhanced Swaffham town centre, refurbished a Grade II listed building for public use, supported local voluntary organisations and has built a new Community Resource Centre.

Dereham Area Partnership. The Partnership includes 38 parishes with Dereham. It has been involved in a number of environmental improvements, most notably the refurbishment of Nelson Place, in the operation of a business/learning/community chest and in supporting community events such as the Christmas Lights Switch-On. Support is given to the Mid-Norfolk Portuguese Association via a planned Community Fund bid to the Lottery that was awarded in December 2005 and will be implemented over the next two years.

Weeting 21. Located in South West Breckland, Weeting 21 provides a wide range of services and activities to residents in and around Weeting. From the 'Old Schoolhouse' (which acts as a local community centre) the community organisation is responsible for initiatives such as the healthy living centre and youth music project. In addition it runs regular breakfast,

holiday and after school clubs for children as well as life long learning & IT courses.

### Agencies concerned with Education and Skills Development

Learning and Skills Council, Norfolk (LSC). The LSC funds education and training across the county at post-16 secondary and further education levels. It is preparing a new Learning Strategy for Norfolk. This will respond to the National Skills Strategy of 2005, working with EEDA under the Regional Skills and Competitiveness Partnership. Mainstream further education services for Breckland are provided at Norwich City College, the College of West Anglia at King's Lynn and at the West Suffolk College in Bury St Edmunds. The LSC supports training and basic adult education under the European Social Fund (ESF).

Breckland lies within 3 of the 5 Learning Systems areas (based on secondary school catchments) of Norfolk, as outlined for the current Strategy Review. Provision for the 14 to 19 year olds is the key driver for current policy. Work based learning is offered through annual contracts with providers. Adult education is funded to NVQ Level 2 only. The LSC is currently moving to a regional rather than a county based structure. With the Employer Training Initiative for the East of England region under the national Employer Training Programme, the LSC is taking over the relevant broker budget from Business Link.

The Job Centres. There are Job Centres in Dereham, Swaffham and Thetford.

Connexions. The Norfolk Careers Service, offering personal adviser and support services to 14 to 20 year olds. There are also services for adults from offices in Thetford and Dereham

Norfolk Library and Information Service. In addition to offering a full range of library services, libraries in Watton, Dereham, Thetford and Swaffham (and shortly in Attleborough) offer courses in Internet training.

Norfolk Adult Education Service. Norfolk Adult Education provides education services which include courses of both direct and indirect relevance to local companies in Thetford and Swaffham. It also acts as co-ordinator for E-Business Byte, specialist support for applications of IT in general by smaller companies (under 50 employees) and the use of Broadband for e-commerce in the county.

### Further organisations concerned with Tourism Development

The Brecks Tourism Partnership. This partnership seeks to publicise and support tourist activities in parts of four local authority districts geographically around Thetford. It administers the Brecks Sustainable Tourism Project (October 2002 to March 2006) and has recently been promised further core funding by Breckland Council. By improved marketing (including a web site), the promotion of summer time events and working with the tourism officers in the district councils, the Partnership is strengthening local identity, building upon the area's environmental assets and developing networking between tourism businesses. This Partnership is complemented in Breckland by local town tourist forums.

The Forestry Commission. In the past ten years the price of softwood in the United Kingdom has halved. The resulting pressure on the income of the Forestry Commission for England has led to a search for alternative sources of income, through the trading arm, Forest Enterprise. Forest Enterprise brings day visitors and, to a lesser degree, staying tourists to the three local authority districts surrounding Thetford (Breckland, Forest Heath and Bury St Edmunds). It is responsible for the High Lodge Visitor Centre. The large forest estate offers possibilities for partnership investing in further visitor attractions.

The East of England Tourist Board (EETB). The EETB provides business information and advice to providers of accommodation and businesses offering tourist attractions to both local, national and international visitors. The Board runs a Quality Assurance kite marking service, a web based publicity service, and the “Welcome to Excellence” training programme. Training support is also offered through the “Towards 2010” programme of EEDA, via Business Link until August 2007. Tourist businesses in Breckland (as an Objective 2 area) are eligible for financial support under the Tourism Capital Grants Scheme until the end of 2006.

Norfolk Museums and Archaeological Service (NORMAS). The role of the Service in providing for in-coming visitors as well as local residents is recognised in all current developments. In Breckland these include the enhancement of Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse and development of the Thetford Ancient House Museum. The future of the Burrell Museum in Thetford is under review with the trustees. Partnership with national museums is increasing and funds are available via the Renaissance in the Regions programme of the DCMS.

## Appendix E – Glossary of Terms

BDC	Breckland District Council
BLN	Business Link for Norfolk
CER	Community Economic Regeneration
CP	Community Plan
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DCMS	Department of Culture Media & Sport
DMS	Destination Management System
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EEDA	East of England Development Agency
E EI	East of England International
EERA	East of England Regional Assembly
EETB	East of England Tourist Board
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
GO-EAST	Government Office for the East of England
GVA	Gross Value Added
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IRS	Integrated Regional Strategy
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LDF	Local Development Framework
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership

LQ	Location Quotient
NARIC	National Recognition Information Centre
NCC	Norfolk County Council
NEAT	Norfolk Enterprise Agency Trust
NORMAS	Norfolk Museums and Archaeological Service
NRBAS	Norfolk Rural Business Advice Service
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
NWES	Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
ONS	Office of National Statistics
RES	Regional Economic Strategy
REV	Rural Enterprise Valley
SME	Small Medium Enterprise
SOA	Super Output Area
StF	Shaping the Future
VAT	Value Added Tax