

FAQ's-Businesses

List of Questions

1. How will 1st East look to engage with or optimise the benefits for the current significant interests in the boroughs?

1st East aims to stimulate new investment in Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth; businesses in both towns are expected to benefit. A common refrain is that 'something needs to be done' and the underlying broad support for the regeneration plans is clear. We expect to provide opportunities for existing companies to expand locally rather than locate elsewhere and we expect to attract new investment particularly in the growth sectors for which the two towns are well placed to take advantage. The existing energy and tourism and heritage sectors have specific interventions supporting them (e.g. East of England Park and Runham Broad). EastPort and Fishers' Wharf both directly promote growth in the port and maritime sector. Town centre retail businesses see strong support as out-of-town developments are discouraged and new retail developments are encouraged in the centres. Many landowners and business have an opportunity to benefit from changed land-use where they see land values increase thereby opening up new choices. Local developers and the professions engaged in the building industry will have new opportunities. The existing health and education sectors have been closely engaged and the plans support the promotion of training and skills – a benefit to all businesses, as well as specific projects where increased FE/HE provision is anticipated. However, it is impossible to promote large scale regeneration in Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth, or indeed anywhere, without some established interests being challenged. Where there is friction the key is to look for negotiated solutions. Businesses that have concerns should contact us directly.

2. Infrastructure is key to effective regeneration if so then why push the 3rd River Crossing in Gt Yarmouth back to stage two and where is a co-ordinated infrastructure plan.

The Area Action Plan advances the 3rd river crossing. It clearly states this is "the" infrastructure project for Great Yarmouth. Additionally, historic projects that have been competing for public funding - such as the A47/A149 link - are now seen as being developer funded and not requiring contributions from the public purse. This clear signal is important because public funding decisions for the 3rd Crossing will be made at a regional level and decision makers need to know it is "the" priority. At the moment, funding for the bridge could not be realised until 2016. 1st East's aim is to try to bring this funding forward by demonstrating how important the bridge is to the over-all delivery of the regeneration

plan, as well as advancing the technical studies required so that we have a mature and developed project. We are working with the Highways Agency, Norfolk County Council, GYBC and other partners to secure the feasibility funding and to lobby key local, regional and national bodies. The 3rd Crossing proposal in Lowestoft does not currently enjoy any public funding allocation. The need for a bridge is important to realising the potential of the town and 1st East is engaged in advancing the cause. In both cases, 1st East's access to government helps with this process.

3. Radical change to 1st East Board needs to reflect interest of both towns.

The status of an Urban Regeneration Company is bestowed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (formerly the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister). Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth received this status in March 05. Although constituted as a private company (limited by guarantee), the government lays down guidance as to the constitution of the board. It states: A URC Board will be chaired by a representative of the private sector. A URC Board will not have a public sector majority and no local authority influence or control as defined in legislation. ODPM will expect to see LSP or other community membership, Private sector Board representation should be drawn from prominent local, (preferably) regional or even national bodies. 1st East Board is constituted exactly in accordance with these guidelines. The selection of Board members was an open process organised by the national recruitment consultancy Veredus. The vacancies were advertised in the Eastern Daily Press on 17/5/05 and the East Anglian Daily Times on 18/5/05. Veredus also organised a national recruitment campaign (advertising in The Sunday Times and trade papers such as Regeneration and Renewal) for the selection of the Chief Executive (who is also a Director of the Company). Competitive interviews took place between June and August 05. The selection panel was made up of representatives from the five funding partners (Waveney District Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils and the East of England Development Agency). As Director vacancies arise a transparent process will be adopted to recruit replacements.

4. What are plans for CPOs – location and timescales?

1st East has no plans for CPOs. CPO's may ultimately be required in order to deliver large scale regeneration but they are a blunt instrument and a last resort. With the new projects that we are proposing we will seek to negotiate with landowners to ensure a mutually beneficial outcome. This might include acquisitions; joint venture arrangements (where landowners remain part of the development); land swaps; relocation packages etc. It is worth

noting that 1st East does not have CPO powers itself but, in the event that we believed the CPO was the only way forward to unlocking regeneration potential, we would ask our partners that do have the statutory powers to use them. Contrary to a few reports, we have not made any such requests to date.

5. Regeneration must be employed driven what are plans to increase employment? And: What is 1st East plans to attract inward investment for creating more long term and sustainable employment?

1st East is an employment-led regeneration company. By that we mean that we are not just about residential growth but that we are looking to bring forward mixed use developments – residential, retail, and commercial. Some URCs are in designated ‘growth areas’ where, because of their relatively good communications links, the emphasis is on accommodating more residential development. Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth need more balanced development (in other words, sustainable development) where job opportunities and home provision are in close proximity. Economic analysis reveals that in both towns there is a concentration of employment in sectors that are still declining nationally and, an under-representation of service sector jobs – research, finance, etc. 1st East hopes to encourage more office-based employment so as to broaden the economic base of the two towns. It will do this through allocation of land for that purpose; linking more profitable developments (retail and residential) with the provision of new commercial workspace; and, through the use of public sector land-holdings and capital. There are good examples in both towns where the provision of high-specification offices has retained existing businesses that might have otherwise left the towns as well as attracting new businesses to the area – Riverside Business Centre in Lowestoft and Beacon Park in Great Yarmouth. The regeneration plans particularly encourage new business development in South Denes, and North Quay in Great Yarmouth: Kirkley Waterfront and the Power Park in Lowestoft. In the case of the latter, the aim is to support existing energy businesses by creating a cluster of companies engaged in the oil, gas and renewables sector. The recent decision by EEDA to contribute £6m, which attracts a further £3m from the EU, is part of this project and is aimed at encouraging new investment.

6. How does 1st East intend to re-launch/market tourism of both areas during run up to completion (!?).

Marketing tourism is something to which 1st East can contribute but is more properly led by the existing tourism bodies. What we have done in both towns through the regeneration plans is to look at how we can help diversify the tourist offer, extend the traditional tourism season and attract new visitors. Runham Broad in Great Yarmouth is a good example of this where,

working with the Broads Authority, we are aiming to provide a new destination and create a link between the seaside offer and the Broads holiday experience. The idea is to create a new broad that is made up of different activity lakes e.g. sports and recreation supporting this with a hotel and visitor centre. In Lowestoft, the East of England Park project is aiming to make something of Ness Point as a tourist destination and link it to the existing tourist offers such as the Maritime Museum. Peto Square and Fishers' Wharf (the major town centre projects in Lowestoft) aim to build on the Wavney Sunrise scheme and make Lowestoft more attractive to visitors. What we are trying to achieve is to once more connect the town to its waterfront both in the inner and outer harbour. This would involve shifting the A12 to the west and allowing the historic scores to once again connect to the activity in the outer harbour – and here we hope to encourage new leisure and marine businesses, shops, restaurants and café's. The InteGreat and Waveney Sunrise schemes have done much to improve the public realm of the two towns and make them more attractive to tourists and 1st East is proposing to build on these initiatives by improving other public areas, promoting access to the waterfronts and making entrances to the towns more appealing. Additionally we want to ensure that investment decisions, such as the location of new retail developments, reinforce rather than threaten existing businesses. We aim to work in a co-ordinated way with tourism partners to market the two towns externally. One major set-piece promotion will be in October 07 when we will launch the ideas to investors and developers at the House of Commons, hosted by the two local MPs.

7. When will 1st East be able to tell businesses what final plans are – development is being stopped – businesses find it impossible to plan?

The regeneration plans are about bringing about certainty where it has not previously existed. The whole idea behind a URC is to develop a plan that makes the best use of the assets and shows how the development in one area is linked to that in another – it therefore promotes comprehensive development as opposed to isolated and sometimes contradictory piece-meal developments. This reduces the risk of investment because developers will know what type of development the two towns want and where they want it. The regeneration ideas already have a planning status as they have been approved by both full councils as draft Area Action Plans. This means that planning applications are already being evaluated in light of the proposals. The key to identifying what land use is being proposed is the 'Major land use map' – available on our website at www.1steast.co.uk/action-areas.php (available in low and high resolution).

Some elements of the plan need to be further refined. For instance, in both towns, the regeneration plans promote river crossings; what is less clear at the moment is exactly what alignment the bridges would take and clearly this does bring an element of uncertainty until technical evaluations are complete. So, both towns strongly feel the need for new bridges but there is no shortcut through the work that takes the idea from concept to delivery. The important point is that the regional and national decision makers now know that the bridges are an integral part of delivering the wider regeneration that 1st East was set up to deliver. The next formal stage for the action plans is that they will be submitted to the Secretary of State after which they will undergo a further (third) period of public consultation. A public examination will follow this consultation and then, finally, the two planning authorities will be able to adopt the AAPs. The absolute earliest this could be concluded is late 2008 but there are several factors that determine the timetable. For instance, the AAP is part of a 'family' of planning documents and one of these, the Core Strategy, must precede the AAP through the planning cycle.

8. When will local businesses specifically affected be talked to – many have not been consulted directly. Also: When will there be an effective process for the resolution of specific company issues and requirements?

Over the course of the last year, we have endeavoured to promote the plans very widely but inevitably some businesses will not have been reached. While we have set new benchmarks for the promotion a planning document and have received regional awards for this, that does not mean much to a company or individual that has only just become aware of the plans. We have held hundreds of one-2-one meetings with business and have specifically promoted the plans through economic forums, rotary clubs, client groups, sector representatives and business organisations. But, we know that this activity has not reached everyone. Last year we set up a community forum as a way of keeping in touch with interested individuals and proposed a similar idea for keeping businesses informed. This has proved a popular idea and one we will advance. Meanwhile, we are a very approachable company and will be happy to respond directly to individual companies inquiries.

9. When will an economic study be done?

We have already undertaken a lot of economic analysis that has informed and shaped the AAP. An economic baseline report was undertaken in 2005/6 and is available published on our website: www.1steast.co.uk/files/category.php?category=URC+Information+%7EBackground+documents

In addition we have undertaken specific land and property studies which are also on the website. It is worth remembering that the lack of current new development and investments (with some notable exceptions) is because for many reasons development is not seen as viable and so the market is not delivering. A further piece of work is now quite advanced which look at the 12 intervention areas (6 in each town) from a property perspective which will help determine where funding gaps appear and what other barriers there are to delivery. We expect to publish the high-level findings in March 07 with a level of detail required by the Secretary of State before submission of the AAP. The economic work being undertaken will identify that some of the proposed interventions are riper for the market than others and therefore will give an indication of where we should initially concentrate efforts and how delivery might be phased. For instance, in the case of Ice House Quay in Great Yarmouth (the residential-led mixed-use development) this will be a phased development with some areas of land more easily assembled than others. As specific projects are then worked up there will be much more detailed economic analyses mostly by interested investors who ultimately determine whether development is viable. 1st East's role is to make this as easy as possible.

1st East Feb 07.