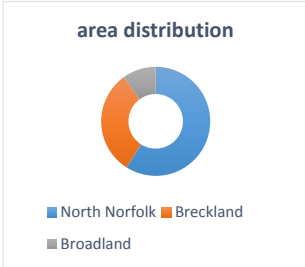




Wensum and Coast LAG



The Wensum and Coast LAG area cuts across the three district council areas of North Norfolk, Breckland and Broadland

The towns of North Walsham and Dereham are seen as hubs in the area but Fakenham and all other towns and villages on the coast and inland are included along with the 'very rural' parts in between.

These areas are all possible sources of people and business that could benefit from LIFT projects

Local Business Overview

There are a significant number of small to medium enterprises (SMEs) in the area

Size (employees)	No.
Micro (0 to 9)	3800
Small (10 to 49)	435
Medium (50 to 249)	45

2015 figures shown

The local business survival rate beats the national average year on year

Certain business sectors and employers dominate in the Wensum and Coast area. They are retail, accommodation and food services, health and care, construction and education. Other significant sectors include offshore wind, agriculture, artisan food, tourism and heritage.

Other sectors are also represented and the LAG believes there are **opportunities** for growth and employment in: micro food enterprises; farm diversification and engineering and manufacturing to support/service offshore wind and future energy projects. Also a year round tourism offer.

Any local, rural SME business from any sector can be eligible for support from a LIFT Skills or LIFT Trials project

Local Skills Overview

Improving the skills and qualification of working age people in the area is key to supporting the local economy and raising household incomes

Whilst North Norfolk has performed better than the national average in the lower end of qualifications (from no qualification to NVQ level 2), the district still lags behind national performance when it comes to NVQ level 3 and onwards. This suggests the educational achievements is low to mid-level skilled, and there is a lack of higher qualified residents in the area

North Norfolk	Number	% local resident population aged 16-64	National average
No qualification	5400	7.2	8.8
NVQ1 and above	67000	89.3	85.0
NVQ2 and above	58700	78.3	73.3
NVQ3 and above	41000	54.6	56.7

For other district areas of the LAG, in Breckland for example 11.1% of the resident population has no qualifications, in Broadland the figure is 6.1%. (see also the similar information provided for the Broads LAG and the Brecks LAG)

LIFT Priorities

The LIFT programme is looking to fund projects that will offer solutions for local businesses and people to:

- ✓ Enable rural businesses to recruit, train and retain staff they need
- ✓ Overcome the barriers faced by many working age residents in rural areas to be ready for, and to secure employment including self-employment.

The Wensum and Coast area has a higher than national average proportion of residents working in basic level jobs and a lower than national average proportion people working in high skilled, professional level jobs

There is a need to support existing businesses by helping them to 'upskill' existing employees with bespoke training packages in order to keep their business operating to capacity and to develop and grow

Improving English language and basic numeracy, literacy and ICT skills could raise the confidence and prospects of employees and job seekers. This may also encourage those not currently seeking work to enter the local workforce.

Overall the LIFT funding programme must deliver the following as a minimum:

- 351 unemployed people (including long-term unemployed) and 151 inactive people supported towards or into employment, of whom 176 are expected to be in employment at the end of the project.
- 713 people in employment supported to develop their skills to benefit their own careers and to enhance their contribution to their employer businesses, of whom 120 will have no basic skills at the outset of the training.
- 61 businesses supported to deliver work trials for those with limited or no workplace experience, and from disadvantaged communities.

Other targets include support for groups of participants who may face additional barriers because they are

- without basic skills
- over 50
- from an ethnic minority group
- have a disability
- single parents

Some key local statistics to inform LIFT projects ideas might be:

- 27.8% of the North Norfolk population is economically inactive, in Breckland and Broadland the rate is lower than the national average at 17.7% and 18 % respectively
- The total claimant count in North Norfolk for the main out of work benefits is 4360, of which 470 is claiming JSA, 3370 is claiming ESA and incapacity benefits, 380 is lone parents support, 150 is others on income related benefits.
- There are 160 claimants over the age of 50 claiming JSA and universal credits. These are the people who are capable of, available for, and actively seeking work (Feb 2016).
- There are also 580 residents claiming disability benefits. (Aug 2015).

(see also the statistical information provided for the Broads and Brecks LAG areas)