

**Ideas collated at the Suffolk Economic Suffolk**  
**4 December 2008**

**HOUSING**

1. Get families into affordable homes quickly by speeding up the way they are planned and built
2. Make use of empty properties to help landlords and agents get more decent homes available for rent
3. Provide a mortgage rescue service across Suffolk linked to both government and independent schemes
  - Roll out the Coastal Housing Action Group's independent Mortgage Rescue Scheme.
  - Link to government-backed mortgage rescue schemes (run by local authorities and mortgage lenders) to deliver a comprehensive mortgage rescue service across Suffolk.
4. Avoid repossession by working closer with banks and building societies
  - Help to avoid repossession by sharing information with banks and building societies.
  - Encourage them to join county-wide and local strategic partnerships.
5. Get families into proper houses instead of paying for bed and breakfast
6. Prevent repossession by using our expertise and facilities to give people better advice
  - Help prevent repossession and homelessness by providing local, targeted support, advice and mediation (for example, by providing integrated Citizens Advice Bureau, Job Centre Plus and bank information in children's centres, community centres and libraries).
  - Delivery could be supported through specialist staff secondments (accountants, solicitors, etc) from the county and district/borough councils.
7. Investigate the potential to use council tax from second homes to provide social housing.
8. Use housing regeneration grants to pay for social housing projects
9. Prevent homelessness by getting credit unions to support Rent Deposit Schemes

## **EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS**

10. Help people train for new jobs by giving them better advice and access to money available. (Commitment already made by Councils on 4 December)
11. Keep people in employment by Councils speeding up investment in local building projects (Commitment already made by Councils on 4 December)
12. Take a fresh look at strengthening the Suffolk-wide redundancy group to see if there are more opportunities to keep people on Suffolk in work
13. Provide better advice on redundancy to employers and workers
  - Give focused advice to employers who are making people redundant
  - Give focused advice to employees who are at risk of being made redundant
14. Keep apprentices in training
  - Identify those (at risk) if apprenticeships are pulled (learning and skills council)
  - Develop alternatives for continuing in training (JCP and others)
15. Give people more information on training, volunteering and getting back to work throughout all our locations
  - Develop 'hubs' (community centres, village halls, volunteer centres and Citizens Advice Bureau) providing information for people being made redundant on training/skills, volunteering, jobs and starting a business
16. Promote Suffolk's education, employment and economic opportunities
  - Market and promote Suffolk's strengths in education and employment (for example, University Campus Suffolk, expansion of Felixstowe Port, and the Olympics) to maintain confidence in the Suffolk economy (Commitment already made by Councils on 4 December)
17. Improve skills by getting more people into Train2Gain scheme
18. Bring work experience into schools through films and events
  - Promote 'virtual work experiences' with local business in schools (for example, showing films about working in a particular industry or sector, and information about career paths)
19. Use the internet and other ways to promote the work of our local businesses
  - Use a website and other media to promote the work of local businesses with a particular emphasis on jobs and products
  - Better PR for local businesses
  - Create entrepreneurs forum
20. Help our colleges and schools to match people's skills to where they are needed
  - Colleges and other learning providers: do more to match skills to vacancies (for example, filling the skills gap left by migrant workers in plumbing, decorating, domiciliary care and so on)
21. Work closely with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to get more funding for training

- Help colleges where they are constrained to provide courses with qualifications in order to receive appropriate LSC funding.
  - Lobby the appropriate government department to lift this restriction on the LSC - "You don't necessarily need a qualification to have a skill".
22. Boost the Job Centre Plus scheme to give people better access to training
- Build on the current scheme that provides access to skills and training providers
23. Do more to get young people to work for themselves
- Do more to encourage self employment among young people – entrepreneurs can be made as well as born!

## **BUSINESSES**

24. Get Councils to pay invoices from local businesses quicker (Commitment already made by Councils on 4 December)
25. Get more people to enjoy a holiday in Suffolk
  - Promote local tourism as an alternative to going abroad, encouraging people to take breaks and holidays in Suffolk to boost the local economy (Commitment already made by Councils on 4 December)
26. Get Councils to use local suppliers
  - Introduce more 'localism' into procurement for local authority goods and services and local business supply chains, supporting investment and reinvestment in the Suffolk economy
27. Make advice to businesses clearer and easier to find
  - Co-ordinate business support across organisations that give business advice in different ways (for example, Federation of Small Businesses, Business Link East, Chamber of Commerce) to develop better, more consistent signposting to information
28. Ensure workers are treated fairly by helping businesses understand the law
  - Help businesses to understand their legislative responsibilities to avoid unintentional discrimination or unfair dismissal (for example, against young people who may be more at risk of redundancy)
29. Get businesses together and talking to help each other
  - Support increased business-to-business networking to share good practice and ways of dealing with the credit crunch
30. Reduce rates for smaller businesses that are feeling the impact
  - Help Small-to-Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with a business rate relief system (for example, limited period rate holidays, rate relief on high-impact businesses), and lobby for a return to a 50% rate for empty business properties
31. Give more council money to business enterprise agencies
  - Enterprise Agencies provide business support and offer accommodation to SMEs
  - Increase funding to invest in start up businesses

## **FINANCE AND ACCESS TO ADVICE AND BENEFITS**

32. Stop people using loan sharks by providing more money to credit unions  
(Commitment already made by Councils on 4 December)
33. Get Councils to help voluntary organisations secure more funding and grants  
(Commitment already made by Councils on 4 December)
34. Use one website to give people all the advice they need to manage their debts in one place
  - Create and publicise a central website of debt-management advice, including a full range of advice on benefits, organisations who can help with different issues, grants and funds etc.
35. Train more advisors to help people deal with all of their financial problems
  - Work with partners to train multi-skilled, multi-agency advice workers, creating a co-ordinated network of advice across Suffolk
  - Put extra money into Citizens Advice Bureaux and other advice agencies to pay for more money advisers to meet growing demand (Commitment already made by Councils on 4 December)
  - Train more money advisors to meet increased demand Commitment already made by Councils on 4 December)
36. Provide information to help people get the best deals from energy companies
  - Research and promote the availability of social energy tariffs and other good practice of energy companies to combat fuel poverty
  - Councils: promote information and lobby central government/utilities/regulators to improve utility company practice
37. Get councils to help people find the advice they need
  - Promote a series of 'Networked Information Clinics' (starting with areas of greatest need) to raise awareness of existing advice and assistance services, allowing officers to be alerted to early signs of problems
38. Use all the organisations we can to spot people most at risk of suffering
  - Link local volunteers, lunch clubs, parish councils, HomeShield and Suffolk County Council
  - Identify people who are at risk of becoming isolated and make sure they get the pre-emptive support they need
39. Get the Suffolk Strategic Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce together to urge food shops and suppliers to help
  - For example, get supermarkets to help people in food poverty
40. Use charity hardship funds to strengthen support to people who need it most
  - Create and strengthen points for people to get access in what advice they can get (Commitment already made by Councils on 4 December)

## **DELIVERY MECHANISMS**

41. Know more about people at risk of suffering and help them before it's too late
  - Early intervention – focus on prevention
  
42. Find every possible way to help the voluntary sector fight the credit crunch
  - Find ways to maintain, sustain, fund and develop the capacity of the voluntary sector so they can support credit-crunch busting activities
  
43. Ensure the Local Strategic Partnerships keeps local plans focused on achieving priorities for Suffolk
  - Develop local plans to deliver on priority themes for Suffolk in current climate, pulling together initiatives across third sector, public sector and the provider sector
  - Suffolk Constabulary ask LSPs to draw on Suffolk ACRE, business links, LSCs, JCP and key voluntary organisations for support