

My Community

Case study *Great Yarmouth CED Plan*



Community Economic Development programme

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Who should read this

The learning from this case study should inspire other communities who are interested in following this approach and shaping their local economies for the benefit of the community. The learning will help to inform policy-makers, funders and other statutory bodies interested in understanding the key issues and challenges faced by local communities following this approach and how best to support them.

How did the CED programme work

Each community formed an area leadership team and developed partnerships that included a range of stakeholders such as local businesses, voluntary and community sector representatives, statutory sector, housing associations and many others.

Each area received a package of support, which included:

- Support from a Community Economic Development Adviser. Each community was allocated a support provider who was the main point of contact, providing guidance and support through each stage of the programme. This included pulling together the local leadership team, delivering a workshop to explore opportunities and priorities and helping with the grant and technical support application.
- Technical support from a specialist provider. In combination with the grant, each community received four days of additional specialist technical assistance to help them write their plan.
- A grant of up to £5,000 to help with community engagement and development activity

Great Yarmouth CED Plan

The Great Yarmouth CED Plan has been led by Great Yarmouth Borough Council, and aims to set up a 'co-operative incubator' that complements and links up to other initiatives aimed at increasing opportunities for local residents. Great Yarmouth faces considerable socio-economic challenges that have, in the main, not been resolved by traditional approaches to

economic development. The project leaders saw the CED plan process as a good opportunity to develop an alternative approach to improving outcomes for *existing* residents.

The plan builds on the ambitions of the £3m local ‘Our Place’ programme ‘[Neighbourhoods that Work](#)’ (NTW), which includes the formation of an ‘incubator’ for locally owned and managed co-operative enterprises. The incubator aims to help local residents pool assets to tap into economic opportunities and increase their role in providing services and amenities. The design of the incubator is ongoing, but so far, the most developed project is a local cultural services co-op that offers hospitality, cultural and creative services to the local public and private sectors and its employees.

Key learning outcomes

- CED plans are most successful when they can draw upon, and link up with existing traditional economic initiatives. In the case of Great Yarmouth this included Government supported Enterprise Zones¹ and an existing local project, Neighbourhoods that Work (NTW)²
- Timescales need to take into account local community engagement, which can be lengthy, particularly when relying on volunteers.



¹ Established in 2012, Enterprise Zones are at the heart of the Government’s long-term economic plan, supporting businesses to grow. They are designated areas across England that provide tax breaks and Government support

² ‘Neighbourhoods that work’ approach built on the concept that only by building the resilience of the community can you hope to underpin sustainable economic growth and improve the quality of public services - all three are intrinsically linked.

Context and area description

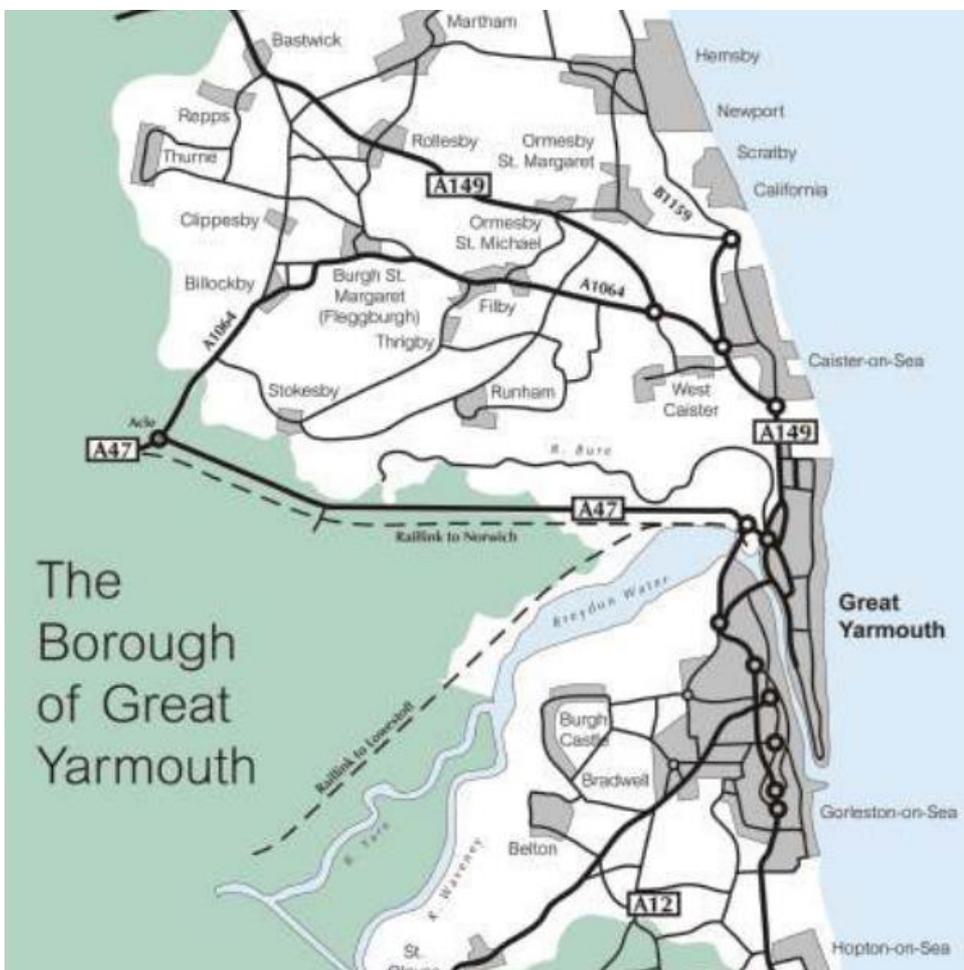
The Borough of Great Yarmouth is located on the coast of Norfolk and has a population of approximately 97,800 residents. As well as a large tourist industry, the town hosts a growing offshore energy sector and has recently gained Enterprise Zone status to help grow and develop business for the local area.

Juxtaposed with these new opportunities are the challenges of local pockets of deprivation in the town, which have high levels of need and above average levels of long-term unemployment. Almost 19% of all working age residents living in the Borough are claiming at least one out of work benefit. In the Nelson Ward, this figure increases to 38%. 15% of working age residents in Great Yarmouth do not have a recognised qualification compared to 8% across the eastern region as a whole. Non-residents who work in the Borough earn on average £40 a week more than employed local residents, reflecting a lack of skills for higher value jobs.

Great Yarmouth is a coastal town that faces considerable socio-economic difficulties. Multiple deprivation index data ranks it in the bottom 10% in England. As well as being home to a 400-company strong marine energy supply chain, Great Yarmouth retains its position as one of the leading holiday resorts in the country, ranked third in size. According to 2011 figures, tourism in Great Yarmouth accounts for 1.1 million staying visitors plus 3.9 million day visitors trips, generating a direct and indirect spend of £531 million per annum. This represents around one third of the area's wealth and one third of its jobs.

Official data suggests that the Borough has come through the most recent economic downturn with reasons to be optimistic. The Borough hosts one of the best performing enterprise zones in the country. It is investing, and attracting external investment into, the development of economic growth sites including Beacon Park and the South Denes Industrial Estate, making the most of being a supply base for the offshore gas and renewable industry in the southern basin of the North Sea, supported by a 24-hour port operation.

Great Yarmouth has eight urban wards, Central & Northgate, Claydon, Gorleston, Magdalen, Nelson, Southtown & Cobhol and Yarmouth North, including sixteen neighbourhoods in the bottom 10% multiple deprivation index. The eight urban wards are supported by three resident-led neighbourhood management boards ('Come-unity', 'Make it happen' and 'MESH') that oversee community development work. Annually they have succeeded in attracting £250,000 through grants and investments to support community groups. The CED plan aims to build upon these assets to develop a more robust co-operative sector.



Who is involved

The CED programme was open to existing organisations based in England, whether they were a community group, local business, parish council or any other local body. Groups needed to demonstrate a commitment to partnership working across the local community. Each successful CED group pulled together a leadership team representative of local stakeholders and made up of passionate people committed to working together on a local economic plan that can deliver real local benefits. The Great Yarmouth leadership team is composed of a wide range of individuals and groups who have worked closely on a range of other initiatives, including ‘Coastal Communities’(CC), a pre-runner to the NTW programme and a current bid for the Big Lottery’s Building Better Opportunities (BBO) programme. The Leadership team comprised of members from existing community groups, “Come-unity”, “Make it happen” and “MESH”. This enabled more focused community engagement around three neighbourhood areas. Much of the engagement, needs assessment and asset-raising, was carried out through these structures.

The leadership team	
Paul Cheeseman	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Tom Richards, Ella Smith, and Alan Whistlecraft	Neighbourhood boards - Come-unity, Make it Happen and MESH
Ben Samson, and Simon O’Leary	Voluntary Norfolk
Anne Rawston and Jackie Tinckler	Job Centre Plus, The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Key aims and priorities

The CED local leadership team believed that, despite this significant investment and the existence of enterprise zones, the developments have failed to create jobs for local residents and the employees and supply chains of new enterprises are not fully integrated locally.

“I think the energy industry as a whole has been an example of why CED is needed. We’ve had a huge energy boom, we’re second only to Aberdeen in terms of employment numbers, but those jobs don’t come here. It’s intangible for local community. It’s our poster child for why we need CED”. Ben Samson, leadership team member and employment services manager at Voluntary Norfolk

The group came to the project with a very clear idea that social and economic outcomes delivered by these larger initiatives would be enhanced by developing a larger local co-operative enterprise sector, which could make better use of local human and physical assets and build links with the larger initiatives.

The main value added by the CED plan is therefore the opportunity to tap into expertise around community finance and co-operative enterprise models, with a view to setting up a local ‘co-operative incubator’ tasked with supporting local people develop and implement business plans.

Paul Cheeseman, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, and leadership team member, argued that this more granular and fine-grained ‘micro’ form of economic development is important, if the kind of ‘macro’ investment in the recent enterprise zones and offshore energy is to gain traction in the local economy. This idea has emerged from work on the NTW programme and, has “been the main attraction of the programme for most people”.

The technical support on co-operative enterprise models aims to develop the local economy in two ways. First, as highlighted by Anne Rawston, relationship manager at the DWP and a member of the leadership team, it offers opportunities for greater local employment, and if

paid employment is not possible, it can bring people closer to the labour market. Second, it can increase the level of economic activity in the area, including the cultural offer, and thus contribute to a greater attraction and retention of residents in good local employment.



There is a strong tourist economy, providing seasonal employment opportunities for local residents, and a hospitality and cultural offer heavily centred around the beachfront in the summer months. Whilst this is seen as valuable, an important ambition of the CED plan is to move beyond this seasonal economy.

This involves increasing the number of small local enterprises, developing a night-time economy by extending the opening hours of hospitality and cultural enterprises. The success of the local Portuguese community in doing this is an important example of such opportunities.

“Ensure that holiday makers can spend money in the local area all year round”. Natalia Fernandez, CED adviser

Consolidating networks

The ‘collaborative ethos’ amongst the local public and private sectors is highlighted as a particular resource by those involved in the CED plan process. The idea to apply for CED programme funding was developed through collaborating on previous initiatives, sharing learning and opportunities

The group has had some previous experience of CED related projects. The Borough Council had carried out previous work mapping local spending patterns. Other CED related projects, led by the local public and voluntary sector include the £3 million [Neighbourhoods that Work](#) (NTW) programme.

‘Come-unity’, ‘MESH’ and ‘Make it Happen’ are resident-led boards supported by community development workers that the CED plan also builds upon. Notably, ‘Come-unity’ has delivered a project, which has successfully brought local artists together to develop an offer for an evening cultural event. This highlighted the possibility of both drawing on local assets to develop enterprise, and expanding the cultural and night-time economy.

In essence, the group saw the CED programme as a good opportunity to develop projects that would complement and link up existing initiatives, as well as future bids - such as a £3.5m bid to Big Lottery’s ‘Building Better Opportunities’ (BBO) currently in development.

Delivery activities and community engagement

As part of the programme, Great Yarmouth received support from Natalia Fernandez, a CED adviser who facilitated the ‘plugging the leaks’ workshop. Additional technical support was provided to help set up a co-operative incubator.

"Our collaborative ethos is one of the reasons why the CED plan came on the radar. Great Yarmouth has been a constant receiver of area based grants and regeneration programmes. Everyone coming together realised that there is a group and cohort of people that get stuck because economic development has not made the desired impact."

Ben Samson, Voluntary Norfolk

As part of NTW, local charities collaborated with the job centre to carry out focus groups and 3000 local residents responded to a survey to understand barriers to employment. The results highlighted the extent to which certain parts of the population remain detached from employment and economic initiatives and the findings demonstrated that many respondents did not know what an “enterprise development zone” was. Interviewees broadly agreed that this had been productive in encouraging innovative, collective thinking about how to meet local needs by developing local economic opportunities.

Representatives from the three boards took part in the first technical workshop provided by the CED adviser. The ‘Plugging the Leaks’ workshop was designed to foster understanding about the circulation of money in the local area, in order to identify opportunities to develop local economic enterprise. It is a tool specifically designed for economically disadvantaged areas.

“Plugging the leaks brought lots of people together with different levels of understanding and perspectives including the job centre, voluntary sector, the council and local residents. We were all talking about the same issue from different points of view and it made people think: this is what we’ve done for the last ten years, these are the leaks, what can we do?” Paul Cheeseman, Great Yarmouth Borough Council



[Plugging the leaks](#) is a way of showing money flowing in and out of the local economy and looking for opportunities around that. The plugging the leaks workshop established baselines and identified opportunities that could be further explored in the project and refined into a clear initial ‘ask’.

This resulted in proposals to test the incubator model on the creation of a series of micro-enterprises that are emerging from engagement work carried out by 'Come-unity'. The aim of the workshop was to show how a co-op incubator could sustain itself financially and support micro-enterprises in terms of accessing private and public sector supply chains.

What has been achieved

The community engagement activities and workshops, helped to identify next steps and priorities for the CED plan:

- Support a local community 'Skatepark Group', exploring cooperative models for a new community facility.
- Support the local 'Come-unity' Programme to develop a feasibility and business plan for the development of a neighbourhood-focussed cooperative incubator, that aids collectives of people and groups who are interested in working together to develop a safe and diverse evening economy offer matched with environmental improvements.
- To assess the feasibility of scaling-up the neighbourhood-focussed incubator at level 2, so that it provides urban-wide coverage and the capacity to attract development and growth grants / investments in partnership with two other local authority areas.



Local skatepark group, now being support by the CED Programme to take forward their ideas for a cooperative skatepark (picture source: Great Yarmouth Mercury)

In terms of the **development of local enterprises**, the development of the CED plan has led to

- The modelling for an incubator that will assist in the development of local community enterprises, and plan for implementation. This is specifically focussed around developing local cultural and creative offer, and supporting local employment opportunities for residents;
- Further plans for staging a successful event in collaboration with local artists and restaurateurs, that has begun to establish the viability of developing the night-time economy;

The plan has also **created and consolidated networks**, including:

- Opening up conversations with private sector housing maintenance providers (NORSE) around developing small contracts for community enterprises;
- Linking with existing projects developing contracts with local higher education to develop apprenticeships and adult educational support for residents;
- Contributed to new conversations with Norwich and Lowestoft Councils about applications to ESIF funding and an overarching framework to develop communities enterprises in the region;

In terms of **financial benefits**, the plan has

- Fed into, and strengthened, funding bids for initiatives that are complementary to the CED plan, including a £3.5m bid to the Big Lottery Building Better Opportunities Programme;
- Fed into conversations with Norwich and Lowestoft around ESIF funding.

Finally, the plan has generated a further set of ‘soft’ outcomes around generating new ideas, local buy-in, and **increased understanding of community economic development** and its potential by

- Challenging the collective economic thinking of agency and neighbourhood representatives;
- Opening conversations locally about moving beyond a summer time economy, and using local resources more effectively;
- Generating interest amongst informal community groups in scaling up activities;

What could have been better

The challenge as always with a funded programme is the constraints around being able to deliver activities within the agreed timescales, and this meant that not all the support could be delivered.

“Time is a big issue, people volunteer their time. It takes time to win people over and get them to commit”. Paul Cheeseman, Great Yarmouth Borough

It would have been helpful to be provided with “more practical examples of what CED is” and this raised the concern that without this, the concept of CED can fall out of bids developed by partners for other projects.

Although engagement and involvement was comprehensive, it was not possible, in the time-scales available, to set up interviews with local business representatives for inclusion in this

case study. It was noted that by some that the private sector is a “tough nut to crack” in terms of bringing it on board to develop more local employment opportunities and this may have been an area for improved engagement.

Next steps

Great Yarmouth has set out activities to deliver short, medium and long-term outcomes.

- In the **short term**, the group aims to launch the plan in April 2016, and aid its implementation by setting up a working group of commissioners to test mechanisms for making contracts more accessible to small enterprises.
- In the **medium term** (2017-2019), the group aims to draw in ESIF and ERDF funds to develop a community economic development support framework; recruit three community development works; and establish a local investment body for community enterprises.
- **Longer term** (2019-2020 and beyond) the CED plan aims to have delivered nine community enterprises locally, including three that operate across local authority boundaries.

The next step is to secure funding to implement the CED Plan. Potential funders include ESIF and ERDF. Moreover, the plan has strengthened a substantial bid to the BBO project, and our interviewees felt confident about using it to help access future opportunities.

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