Lowestoft & Waveney Chamber of Commerce

Business is at the heart of the community and the backbone of Lowestoft's drive for robust economic growth. Whether you are a new start business or a blue chip organisation, it's always good to know that you've got someone to rely on to help you promote, support and grow your business.

Lowestoft & Waveney Chamber of Commerce is the largest independent, private sector forum in the town, with the aim of meeting the needs of its member companies and the wider business community.

Lowestoft & Waveney Chamber regards it as a privilege to support business activity and growth alongside representing member companies’ interests on issues shaping the business environment. As the voice of Lowestoft’s business community, Lowestoft & Waveney Chamber, through its local board and team on the ground, as well as through the use of Suffolk Chamber’s more extensive services and resources, is equipped to react to issues and take the initiatives, when required, with reference to local, regional, national and international matters affecting local firms.

The voice of business in Britain’s most easterly town

Lowestoft’s economy has changed greatly in character in recent years with traditional industries dying away and being replaced from the mid 1960s by the oil and gas industry which brought fresh industrial investment and jobs. The town remains an active centre for the industry, particularly the renewable energy industry and tourism providing fresh wealth and job opportunities.

Whilst it is true that Lowestoft has some of the most serious social deprivation in Suffolk, the current government has recognised this and, in August 2011, Lowestoft was selected as a location for an enterprise zone with the development of which ought to bring 13,500 jobs to Lowestoft and its near neighbour, Great Yarmouth. The two towns form a single identifiable economic unit with many shared characteristics and thus benefit from a shared strategic approach.

By encouraging the establishment of new businesses and nurturing those already in existence and by attracting new visitors to the town, fresh opportunities will emerge. This drive has to be led by the local Chamber and wider business community with a clear and transparent strategic focus on a number of key priorities.

It is clear that the business community of Lowestoft has had to face a number of setbacks and the situation remains challenging, but the Chamber’s member companies are resilient and used to facing adversity. They now need to see commitment from policy and decision makers who influence and shape the business environment in the town and surrounding areas. This manifesto lays out our priorities for paving the way to a bright economic future.

Summary

This manifesto lays out our priorities for working together and pooling our resources to pave the way to a bright economic future. We will succeed in improving our business environment if our members become the eyes and ears of the chamber.

In so doing, we will identify ways of beating congestion and we will ensure that we work with organisations that can implement the changes that will make important and positive differences to Lowestoft.
Beating the congestion of:
- Bureaucracy to speed up decision-making;
- Infrastructure to find and remove bottlenecks;
- Speedy changes to ensure all firms get the chance to participate and benefit the local economy

Driving Forward Economic Development
Lowestoft & Waveney Chamber will work in partnership with the wider business community and local authority to ensure that the town’s firms are at the heart of the economic development decision-making process.

Businesses recognise the need for planning decisions that acknowledge their concerns and interests, but our member companies also believe that decisions need to be more supportive of private sector investment and job creation. We will be pressing for a less administrative and speedier planning process, ensuring that more can be offered to businesses in new planning opportunities, particularly in the light of the new National Planning Policy Framework.

The Suffolk Chambers of Commerce, with offices in Westminster and Brussels; therefore able to ensure Lowestoft & Waveney Chamber is a very active element of the County Chamber in Suffolk, to widen strategic roads such as the A12 and A146, so that all these networks facilitate places a heavy burden upon business, stifling enterprise, particularly in smaller firms. Positive infrastructure, for example, bringing railways fit for the 21st Century to the town and upgrading strategic roads such as the A12 and A146, is welcome news and something that the Suffolk Chambers of Commerce has long sought.

Lowestoft needs to bring a thriving town centre management scheme in Lowestoft and hopes to nurture both the new town and quality of life, capable of attracting shoppers and tourists to the heart of community. As Mary Portas suggested in her examination of ways of making our high streets viable in the future, there should be considering ways of reducing or reorganised car charges. Lowestoft’s car parks are under-utilised and need to be made more user-friendly. Many town centres seek to make their car parks well-maintained, clean and with generous parking spaces. Many people find this a real attraction when considering where to do their shopping. The Chamber will seek to nurture a more efficient parking policy in the immediate future.

Growing the Night Time Economy
If Lowestoft is to attract business and leisure visitors to expand its working day by stimulating the night-time economy; thus developing new business growth and boosting employment and so advancing the town’s overall proposition of being an attractive and exciting centre. The night-time economy needs a different philosophy to car parking: it needs to be considered as an asset to the town and a key component of the town’s night-time economy. This is welcome news and something that the Suffolk Chambers of Commerce has long sought.

The Chamber is already involved in town-centre management schemes in Lowestoft and hopes to nurture both the new town and quality of life, capable of attracting shoppers and tourists to the heart of community. As Mary Portas suggested in her examination of ways of making our high streets viable in the future, there should be considering ways of reducing or reorganised car charges. Lowestoft’s car parks are under-utilised and need to be made more user-friendly. Many town centres seek to make their car parks well-maintained, clean and with generous parking spaces. Many people find this a real attraction when considering where to do their shopping. The Chamber will seek to nurture a more efficient parking policy in the immediate future.

Developing a Modern Procurement System that Grows Local Business
In these challenging economic times, the Suffolk Chambers of Commerce, the Chamber and its own chambers in Lowestoft and Lowestoft, which, in turn, will be in a time to road crossings such as Gurston Bridge, and secondly, working to bid for and Lowestoft’s, long overdue, town centre traffic management scheme including the signages on the north and south bridge approaches. Lowestoft & Waveney Chamber is represented on both the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce’s Procurement Taskforce and the LEP’s Transport Forum, so is well-placed to influence decisions involving local transport networks.

The Chamber will press for Lowestoft to be a high priority for the roll out of the country’s ‘Better Broadband’ project, bringing speeds of up to 25Mbps to homes and businesses in the local area.

In Lowestoft, there remains a real need for improved public transport services to encourage those people to move to Lowestoft and the Chamber has long sought.

The Suffolk Chambers of Commerce, with offices in Westminster and Brussels; therefore able to ensure Lowestoft & Waveney Chamber is a very active element of the County Chamber in Suffolk, to widen strategic roads such as the A12 and A146, so that all these networks facilitate places a heavy burden upon business, stifling enterprise, particularly in smaller firms. Positive infrastructure, for example, bringing railways fit for the 21st Century to the town and upgrading strategic roads such as the A12 and A146, is welcome news and something that the Suffolk Chambers of Commerce has long sought.

Lowestoft & Waveney Chamber will work in partnership with the wider business community and local authority to ensure that the town’s firms are at the heart of the economic development decision-making process.

Businesses recognise the need for planning decisions that acknowledge their concerns and interests, but our member companies also believe that decisions need to be more supportive of private sector investment and job creation. We will be pressing for a less administrative and speedier planning process, ensuring that more can be offered to businesses in new planning opportunities, particularly in the light of the new National Planning Policy Framework.