

Entrepreneurial Intensity in Lowestoft Waveney

BARRIERS

AGENCIES	BUSINESSES	SCHOOLS	INCUBATORS/BUSINESS CENTRES
(A) Agencies not taking their services to the people - would-be entrepreneurs have to go and find them	(A) BL not in touch with small businesses. Entrepreneurs need readily available, straightforward, cheap, legal and other advice	(E) Education not viewed as a priority in the region historically	(A) BL has too much emphasis on technology/product and not enough on markets, sales and cash flow
(A) BL people not entrepreneurial enough. They have mostly come from big business and have no understanding of small business needs	(A) BL resources are not up-to-date nor commercially applicable, e.g. standard employment contract provided was inadequate and torn up by lawyers - a waste of time	(E) Lack of transition mechanisms to allow students to get more involved with local businesses and join them post-school	(A) BL is too inward-facing and spends too much on running itself
(A) BL too expensive (£500 per day) and aloof 'consultants' for simple Waveney entrepreneur	(A) Funding from BL calls for guarantees that the company will employ 30 people in two years. This requirement puts people off	(E) Poor progression rate from those sitting GCSEs to those attending tertiary education	(A) BL tends to interfere too much - let people get on with running their businesses
(A) Lack of free, accessible professional advice to assist local people in building a business	(A) Level of advice and training in the region poor. No value added knowledge but plenty of red tape	(E) Teachers' attitudes generally are anti-enterprise, so this will affect the teaching of enterprise skills	(A/LNG) Not enough mechanisms for helping entrepreneurs of all ages and throughout their careers
(A) Low professional standard of advice available. Bank managers consulted were not of the highest quality	(A) Not enough people within BL who have successfully built small businesses	(E) The school does not get enough inspirational business speakers whom the students could relate to	(E) Education level is quite low. Big educational shortfall in that young people are taught to look for a job, not to think entrepreneurially. Setting up your own business is almost frowned upon by both schools and universities
(A) Number of agencies but no interaction and collective approach	(A) Too many agencies and too little co-ordination, no sign-posting	(E) There seems to be no broad framework for involving businesses in schools in more entrepreneurial ways	(E) The existing educational system is killing thinking outside the box
(A) Very low awareness of agencies	(A) Too much BL emphasis on planning and not enough on doing	(E/S) Too many students who leave the area to study do not come back, hence a significant drain of skilled employees	(E) The option of entrepreneurship as a career needs to be promoted more at schools and colleges and combined with better general academic standards

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(E/L) Major vacuum in terms of education and leadership	(E) Entrepreneurship studies and not business studies should be the target of teaching	(F) Currently no budgets for setting up enterprise/entrepreneurial skills courses, so teachers are having to do this in their spare time (they are, in effect, entrepreneurs themselves)	(F) Access to small amounts of funds inadequate and too complex a process
(E/P) The value of learning should be recognised. We need to engender more confidence	(E) Lack of basic education of young people, e.g. mental arithmetic	(F) There is an attitude that making money is bad and 'the middle classes are set to exploit the students'. Being an employer is seen as a bad thing to be and is not something most students aspire to	(F) Insufficient access to money up-front rather than having to claim it back
(F) Ability to obtain finance - a major barrier, though now declining. Many young people can't even get a bank account, let alone start-up finance.	(E) No business contact with LEAs	(L) Leadership vacuum commercially and politically	(I) Broadband telecoms infrastructure needs resolving in both Norfolk and Suffolk. Would enable more small businesses to set up in more flexible locations. NWES had to install their own broadband infrastructure at considerable cost.
(F) Fear of debt - also fear of institutions who provide debt. No understanding how to manage debt; very debt-averse and dependent on the benefit culture	(E) Schools and businesses need to work together more	(LNG) National Curriculum is good generally but has forced thinking back 'into the box', which is not good in terms of creativity	(LNG) Council perceptions of small businesses needs updating: small business don't fall into neat categories

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(F) Funds such as ERDP are too prescriptive, preventing farmers innovating and looking at new markets	(E) Tried to participate in the Teaching Company Scheme but this failed	(LNG) National Curriculum so prescriptive that it leaves no opportunity for out-of-the-box thinking	(LNG) LA planning dept regulations and enforcement is against helping small businesses. Eg, at the Lowestoft Enterprise Park, NWES has redeveloped a building which now cannot house a retail business that has operated from there for 15 years, even though there is no material difference to the operating method
(F) It appears there is plenty of cash around but no-one has the skills or ability to ask for it nor where and how to access it.	(E/S) Too much degree-level education and insufficient 'practical'/basic skills. [Food company] has to run their own highly extensive training programmes to 'grow their own apprentices'. Estimated cost of training to be 6-7% of overheads.	(LNG) Schools' successes, though now drawing the attention of local and national government, have been generated and sustained by the schools themselves	(LNG) LAs don't proactively engage with small businesses. They are too risk-averse and very slow in dealing with procedures. They don't understand the difficulties that entrepreneurs have and won't face up to them
(F) Lack of family money, confidence in dealing with financial institutions, commercial skills, experience - all factors	(F) Bank managers are very inflexible, making obtaining finance a particularly acute issue	(LNG/E) Disconnection between Connexions service offering careers advice and the schools - can't be good	(LNG) The council should employ people with real business skills to help decide policy and drive improvements
(F) Loss of benefit or security of paid job - major concern especially on 'disability living allowance'	(F) Fear of debt a barrier for individuals	(P) Fear and stigma of failure	(N) Not enough business networks and many people working out of bedrooms without the knowledge of how to expand their businesses
(F) Low pay area	(F) Funding for biotech in Suffolk is very hard as no-one understands it. Funding process for this needed in the area	(P) People can't cope with uncertainty or ambiguity in their lives here	(P) General apathy of people in Lowestoft, although this is gradually changing

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(F) No understanding of organisations, resources and finance options available to the people of the district	(F) Hard to access small amounts of cash without disproportionate amounts of bureaucracy/paperwork to complete and rules to comply with	(Percn) Entrepreneurship is associated with academic, professional and vocational failure - the measure of success needs to be changed	(P/Percn) People lack motivation, particularly to develop growth businesses, not life-style businesses. In part, this is because the risk of growing businesses is perceived as being high
(F) Not enough available funding for small to medium amounts. Applications processes are so arduous that most businesses do not bother or cannot afford the time to do so	(F) Insufficient access to funding up front rather than having to claim it back	(Percn) Lowestoft feels it is outside the technology corridor between Cambridge and Ipswich	(Percn) People's understanding of what an entrepreneur is is wrong. It's not just about raising big bucks and high tech, it's much more self-employment and getting small businesses off the ground
(F/N) Access to real money challenging and very 'closed network'	(F) Local government and agencies not supporting local business financially	(Percn) People are not even aware of the word, 'entrepreneurship'	(RT) Employment law is becoming a problem for small businesses and companies are recruiting less as a result
(I) Geography - poor access to the region	(F) Loss of secure income stream seen as barrier	(Percn) There is a perception that it is very complex to set up a business	(RT) Fear of high taxes such as business rates, business insurance etc for individuals operating out of bedrooms stops them coming forward. The interviewee believes that there are many undeclared businesses
(I) Inadequate infrastructure	(F) No money for non-technical products. Should be more focus on good ideas	(Percn) There is little awareness of business risk, however, this is improving through activities such as the students setting up a Young Enterprise Company	(S) Knowledge of what is required for business start-up is missing. Perception is that it is very difficult and you need to be a 'Del Boy'

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(I) Insufficient access to start-up accommodation and incubator space	(F) Smart award is taxable	(Percn) Young people tend to think about entrepreneurship as something for later life, post-degree or when older, so not interested now	(S) Marketing skills in particular are very bad. Most entrepreneurs are failing because they don't understand their markets/customers; know how to access their market in an economically viable manner
(I) Lack of broadband telecoms infrastructure prevents farmers meeting the demand for office space provision in rural areas for high-tech workers	(F) SMEs too big for agency grants but too small for material (over £500k) EEDA and other development board grants	(RT) Regulations aren't an issue because you don't even get to there	(S) Young people don't have the skills to succeed. Older people who have learnt a skill are much more likely to be successful
(I) Lack of transport - worse effect on the poorest of the region and youth; reinforces 'rurality' of the region	(I) Office facilities difficult to get - Riverside is filling up quickly	(S) Key issue is getting extra teaching resource to teach these vocational and business skills	Map routes by which entrepreneurs emerge and look at what can be done at each of the key stages, e.g. school, further education, first job, potential entry points into entrepreneurship
(I) Third crossing issue not addressed	(I) Premises can be a problem. Facilities give you credibility, contact with other people, advice on hand and a good working environment	(S/E) Schools generally are training students to be employees not employers	
(L) No vision or leadership from business or local government community	(I) Transport and geographic isolation - dual carriageway needed	(S/E) Skill base geared to former employer requirements (didn't need an educated workforce) and not appropriate to modern industry requirements	
(LNG) Great Yarmouth authorities more approachable from a business perspective than those in Waveney	(I) Transport links very bad - had to build their own road to the factory. For such a large company shipping bulky products, this is a major factor	Reliance on a few key industry employers	

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<p>(LNG) Retail supply chain for farmers very difficult in the UK due to the domination of the 5 big retail chains. Local authority support for more farm shops and farmers' markets would open up new markets and help rural entrepreneurship. This would encourage more people into the trade and raise levels of entrepreneurship</p>	<p>(LNG) Council - great people there, well intentioned but struck with 'corporate inertia'</p>	<p>Waveney lacks charities, which often support the application for specialist college status for schools</p>	
<p>(LNG) The local council is dislocated from the community and what they need and procrastinate when people need immediate answers and assistance. They have no vision, are sentimental and backward-looking. The council blocks everything that could contribute to growth</p>	<p>(LNG) EEDA not supportive. In comparison with their Tyneside equivalent they are too cautious with their investment decisions</p>		
<p>(LNG) Unsympathetic planning regulations and enforcement by local authorities makes alternative uses of farm buildings difficult. General feeling expressed that the council fights any initiative by the farmers tooth and nail</p>	<p>(LNG) EEDA too far away. Based in Cambridge, they don't even want to visit the area</p>		
<p>(LNG) WDC very set in their ways, not proactive and unhelpful/obstructive to local small business</p>	<p>(LNG) LA has a very adversarial relationship with small business which doesn't encourage people with ideas and skills to become entrepreneurs</p>		

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(LNG/A) Institutions and agencies forget about the people who should be the focus in a concerted, collective way	(LNG) LA initiatives to improve the business environment take too long to deliver		
(P) Even younger generation lives in the past - the press encourages this	(LNG) LA support for big business in general, the focus seems to be on small business even though big business employs large numbers of people		
(P) Jobs-for-life mentality - scarcity of jobs leads to little job movement and people won't give up their job to pursue a business idea	(LNG) Local district council bogs the company down in regulation. An initiative took three years to gain approval, which would have brought immediate major benefits to region		
(P) Lack self-motivation	(LNG) National and local government issues take up so much time and resource that it affects competitiveness		
(P) Low expectation levels because of family, region, history etc (some third-generation unemployed families)	(LNG) Small businesses have disproportionate levels of council-imposed fixed costs, e.g. business rates, which makes the initial risk of setting up quite high		
(P) Low literacy	(LNG) The LA promises a lot but does little actually to help small businesses		
(P) Many have never set foot in a bank (30% of Lowestoft population doesn't have a bank account) nor dealt with professional services people - 'fear of ridicule'	(LNG) UK and European definitions of small businesses too rigid - huge difference between micro and small businesses. Not enough relief for micro businesses for whom the volume of red tape is a huge burden		

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(P) Many not used to, nor interested in, conforming or dealing with institutions	(N) Entrepreneurs need a track record and contacts to get sales. Very hard to sell into a general market when you have no brand or reputation, hence the importance of contacts and networks		
(P) Many won't take advice on how to start a business	(N) Established business networks operate like an old boys' network - very difficult for newcomers to break into		
(P) No aspiration nor desire to deal with uncertainty	(N) Small businesses have to fight above their weight to gain business, which can be hard to do if a one-man band working in isolation. Networks are therefore vital for small businesses as reputation forms the basis of the sales process		
(P) People are focused on their own immediate geographic area	(P) Barriers are not really barriers - the key is aspiration levels. If people want to be entrepreneurs everything they need is available		
(P) Personal issues	(P) Family pressure to take a secure job is a major issue		
(P) Used to taking from society and so don't want to help themselves	(P) 'It is important to be able to hire entrepreneurial people but I wouldn't try to engender an entrepreneurial spirit in people myself'		
(P) Very low, if non-existent, expectation levels for personal achievement (education, career etc)	(P) It's 'horses for courses': you are either entrepreneurial and cope with the level of risk or you are not.		
(P/A) People will not engage agencies for advice	(P) Large amount of apathy socially		

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(P/F/S) Major barriers for women: children, low self-confidence, no current skills, loneliness, benefit will be affected by self-employment, glass ceiling in institutions still exists	(P) Minimal aspiration levels of the majority of the population		
(Percn) Ageism. Everything geared to assisting the young. Plenty of people in older generations that want to and could start a business but no focus on assisting them. Govt agency, Prime, offers assistance to people over 50	(P) People don't understand what it means to be employed in a small company where job flexibility is key		
(Percn) Area very conservative - low adoption rates for new ideas, innovation etc	(Percn) Education doesn't teach young people to realise that they need to make opportunities for themselves ('any more'). Teaching kids that they will get a job if they get their A levels/degree isn't sufficient: they need to be taught that this is one option but it's not the only way		
(Percn) Association of entrepreneurship as post-redundancy option only	(Percn) Entrepreneurship as a career option not considered and actively discouraged with the exception of the building trade and potentially arts and craft people		
(Percn) Entrepreneurship is made to look too difficult	(Percn) Entrepreneurship isn't that hard. People need to be shown that this is the case		

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(Percn) Fear and stigma of failure - a major issue in a small community: people have 'memories like elephants'. Also UK culture that 'looks down on success'	(Percn) Entrepreneurship simply not in anyone's vocabulary		
(Percn) General culture of defeat	(Percn) General public perception that company directors are crooks		
(Percn) Institutions in the region don't present entrepreneurship as an option	(Percn) Lack of perception of entrepreneurship as a career option, especially for women		
(Percn) Perception of entrepreneurship as a career option doesn't exist	(Percn) Many don't travel outside their own county or neighbourhood - region is effectively in another world		
(Percn) The word 'entrepreneurship' isn't heard here. It's something people in London do	(Percn) No culture of enterprise in the region		
(Percn) Waveney doesn't identify itself with either Suffolk or Norfolk - geographic and mental dislocation. No urgency to belong, not forward-looking	(RM) Entrepreneurship would be promoted more effectively by shifting marketing efforts towards success stories, thereby showing people that it can be done		
(RM) Lack of effective role models in the entrepreneurial or business community - no success stories	(RM) Major issue is no role models or success stories, especially for women. Interviewee looks locally, nationally and internationally for these		
(RM) No family, street or even neighbourhood or community role models	(RM) Role models are not really needed. Just watch the cash flow and do what's necessary to ensure that the company remains in the black		

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(RT) Business regulation on small business is generally far too high and stifles growth	(RT) Complexity of regulations, especially health and safety and employment law		
(RT) Complexity of regulations, especially for those on benefit who don't want to risk losing its security	(RT) Fear of hiring other people and the difficulties associated with that		
(RT) Process, regulation and timeframe diminish people's enthusiasm for starting a business	(RT) Government regulation, primarily tax		
(RT) Regulation is an issue but many never get to the stage at which this becomes an issue - they give up way before then	(RT) It would not be possible to start a business such as Bernard Matthews in today's business environment. Mr Matthews began by delivering chickens in his car - something that would now immediately have his business shut down. Hence the attitude in this industry that entrepreneurship is just too hard		
(RT) Regulations do not distinguish between small and micro businesses, therefore it's difficult for micro businesses to become established	(RT) Process of setting up a business is quite confusing if you haven't done it before (legal aspects, Companies House, Inland Revenue and so on)		
(S) Business skills are quite low among many MDs	(RT) Self-employed individuals/micro businesses seem to be subcontracting to one another to get around having to hire people, circumventing tangling with employment law		

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(S) Lack of training on how to use new technologies	(S) Hard to find people with the right technical skills who also have the right attitude towards small business development and towards working in small business		
(S) Large number of institutions and agencies in Lowestoft focusing on vocational skills, where there is little or no demand for them, and not business/commercial skills	(S) Lack of business acumen in existing companies. There is insufficient emphasis on differentiating themselves from competitors and little recognition of what kind of business they are in - niche or mass market, for example		
(S) Little training that is geared to entrepreneurship - it is almost solely focused on making people go into trade	(S) Lack of commercial skills in the region, especially marketing skills		
(S) Low skill base	(S) Marketing skills in particular very bad. Most entrepreneurs are failing because they don't understand their markets/customers; know how to access their market in an economically viable manner		
(S) Not enough businesses understand that innovation is the key to ongoing success	(S) People need to think outside the box to get around resource constraints. Most need training and help in order to do this		
(S) Not enough skilled middle managers - no source of these in Waveney	(S) People spend too much time on business planning and agencies encourage this. You must understand your markets but you need to get out there and sell, not write about them		

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(S) People are being educated in vocational skills, but not the business or entrepreneurial skills needed to start a business	(S) There need to be more mechanisms to enable companies to understand their business environment and identify opportunities		
(S) Rural skills declining, making it harder to find good help	(S/RT) Lack of skilled workforce. Not an issue so long as small businesses have enough flexibility to train employees. Incoming regulations are making it harder to take the risk necessary to do this. In an area such as Lowestoft, where people need retraining after the major industries have shut down, this is a major issue and will prevent employment levels rising		
(S) Skills taught in schools very 'manufacturing' oriented, not enough 'service' oriented skills nor innovative thinking taught	Key issue is that the region is made up of little villages - very disparate economy to generate critical mass in commercial and entrepreneurial activities		
(S) There appears to be a very limited opportunity for training in the region; difficult to find placements within firms, who can't afford to bring on trainees	Macroeconomic issues such as (1) UK government agreeing to foreign imports in exchange for arms deal. (2) strong sterling, resulting in 'unnecessarily high levels of competitive pressure'		
(S) Thinking skills are being lost in the education system. Students need to 'learn how to learn'			

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(S/P) No-one teaches management of money skills, especially at the 13-17 age range. 80% of referrals to the CAB are in relation to personal debt			
Black economy - everything done on a barter system, therefore low cash society			
Built environment very poor			
Engine room of the economy (18-40) either leaves and never comes back or leaves every morning and comes back in the evening - no local commerce			
Lack of population density			
Low cross-cultural fertilisation due to make up of local population - very little ethnic diversity			
Shopping in bigger centres has made commerce in villages and rural areas very difficult			
Smaller farm owners, in particular, are already working very hard to keep their heads above water. Not much time to consider entrepreneurial activities			
Strong pound and cheap agricultural produce imports driving small farmers out of business			

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A - advice	LNG - local and national government		
BL - Business Link	N - networks		
E - education	P - personal issues		
F - finance	Percn - perceptions		
I - infrastructure	RM - role models		
L - leadership	RT - red tape		
LA - local authority	S - skills		