

Lowestoft Vision Mid-Term Report

A town of opportunity



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It has been a successful 2½ years for Lowestoft Vision, seeing a wide range of opportunities and benefits for the town

On behalf of local businesses Lowestoft Vision has been delivering the agreed actions of the Business Improvement District since August 2013. Our agreed aims and objectives have always been to make Lowestoft More Secure, More Appealing, More Attractive, More Accessible and for Lowestoft Vision as an organisation to be More Influential.

During this time we have begun to see reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour; seen footfall to the town centre area increase in a time when other town centres see a continued decrease; capitalised on the visitor economy by launching the Discover Lowestoft Brand; and welcomed new business into the BID area.

As part of the wider Lowestoft & Waveney Chamber of Commerce we have been continuing to assist with the business case for the Third River Crossing and improvements to traffic flow in the town. In addition we have funded periods of free parking in the town and continue to work with Waveney District Council to provide a competitive parking structure for the town.

During this term and following feedback with businesses we have been able to make effective changes to projects. In 2013 we started the Street Ambassador programme and in 14 months the Street Ambassadors dealt with 8,000 enquiries which included general information and security issues. In response to business requests, in January 2015 we replaced the

Street Ambassador scheme with a dedicated Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) who now successfully patrols the BID area.

Our continued projects to make Lowestoft More Attractive have included Christmas lights, floral displays and seasonal decorations in the town. We have also been invited to be part of the Lowestoft Coastal Communities Team and a number of other groups to help shape Lowestoft's future.

Having the BID has enabled us to successfully apply for external funding to further support Lowestoft Vision projects. For example, in 2014 we helped businesses who were impacted by the 2013 floods with support for their funding applications, which generated £97,000 of funding to 32 local businesses.

Looking forward we will be continuing with our operational projects as well as developing projects to improve signposting to the town. Most importantly we want to attract new business into the BID area and showcase Lowestoft as the Town of Opportunity.

Danny Steel
Lowestoft Vision Chairman



More Secure

What we said we would do

Provision of Street Ambassadors

What we have achieved

Street Ambassador programme was operational from August 2013 to December 2014

Following consultation with local businesses the scheme was replaced with the funded PCSO post for the BID area

Manage the security Radio scheme

We manage the town security radio scheme and have increased the number of businesses that use the scheme

Tackle evening anti-social behaviour

To help tackle evening anti-social behaviour we have funded youth worker projects to proactively address and resolve the issues

300 parking notices issued by BID PCSO from January 2014 to December 2015

80% reduction of regular street drinkers in the town centre

Funded Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)

Lowestoft Vision part funds a dedicated PCSO for the BID area. As part of our agreement with Suffolk Constabulary we set priorities each quarter for the PCSO. Over the last year the priorities were to reduce crime, reduce street drinking and begging and to enforce parking restrictions. As a result we have seen real positive impacts in the BID area.

To contact the BID PCSO email michael.soanes@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

Radio

Lowestoft Vision manages the Security Radio System which allows local businesses to keep in contact with CCTV and each other to monitor potential risks in the town. Lowestoft Vision members receive a discount should they wish to take part in the scheme. For more information on the Radio Scheme contact info@lowestoftvision.co.uk

“As the BID PCSO I deal with a wide range of issues in the town which include anti-social behaviour, dealing with street drinkers and beggars, parking enforcement, theft and supporting businesses with crime prevention.”

PCSO Michael Soanes

“Since joining the Lowestoft Vision Town Security Radio scheme through Lowestoft Vision, it has led to three out of four recent shop-lifters from Annatar to be caught and prosecuted.”

Matthew Wade, Owner of Annatar



- ✓ 47 out of 50 radios used
- ✓ BID PCSO dealt with 150 incidents of shop theft from January 2014 to December 2015
- ✓ Street Ambassadors dealt with 8,000 public enquiries from August 2013 to December 2014

More Attractive

Improve the environment to increase footfall and improve business to the BID area

What we said we would do

Supply and install Christmas lights

What we have achieved

Christmas lights installed by Lowestoft Vision throughout the festive period since 2013

Hanging baskets and floral displays

Over 100 hanging baskets along with additional floral decorations which are on display between June – October each year

Street decorations

Seasonal decorations in the town each year since 2013

‘Welcome to Lowestoft’ leaflet

‘Discover Lowestoft’ leaflet produced in 2015 and distributed throughout Norfolk and Suffolk

Rapid Response

Lowestoft Vision funded removal of graffiti and flytipping throughout the BID area

Signage

Wayfinding audit completed in October 2015

Free cardboard collection

Free cardboard collection service has been in operation since March 2014



Town displays

The purchase of new festive lights for the town was funded by the Portas Pilot project and Lowestoft Vision has organised for the storage and annual installation of the festive lights since November 2013. The festive lights programme also includes the installation of Christmas trees in the town.

Since 2013 Lowestoft Vision has funded floral displays in the town, including over 100 hanging baskets. In 2015 Lowestoft Vision enhanced the displays by purchasing floral planters for the BID area.

Street Decorations

Lowestoft Vision has provided decorative bunting through the summer months to enhance the look of the town.

In 2015 Lowestoft Vision began a programme of decorating vacant premises to make the town more attractive. In November 2015 Lowestoft Vision used a vacant premises for a Christmas competition ‘Lowestoft’s Winning Window’. By displaying a wide range of local gifts and products to be won we showcased shops and services in the town, attracting a positive response from locals and visitors.

Rapid Response

Lowestoft Vision has been working in partnership with Waveney Norse to remove graffiti in the BID area. As a result we have been able to address problems as they have arisen, doing our best to ensure the town is kept free of graffiti.

Lowestoft Vision has provided members with a free cardboard collection service since 2014. The service has been designed to assist with saving members money on waste costs. In total we have collected 114 tonnes of cardboard from BID members. For information on the cardboard collection service please contact info@lowestoftvision.co.uk

“Lowestoft Vision has worked hard on improving the town’s appearance and making the high street a more attractive proposition for shoppers and businesses alike. From the window decoration of vacant premises to the beautiful floral displays, the Vision team have made a real difference.”

Mark Leftley, Store Manager, Marks & Spencer

More Appealing

Develop projects to increase footfall and attract customers into the BID area

What we said we would do

4 annual events

Marketing and promoting the BID area

Website and social media promotion

Town steering groups

What we have achieved

Delivered a wide range of successful events each year since 2013

Programmed ongoing marketing campaigns

'Discover Lowestoft' website and social media channels launched in May 2015

Focus groups take place bi-monthly



Lowestoft Turtle Trail

The Turtle Trail was launched in 2014 and following its success the trail ran again in 2015. Each year the trail has included giant turtles being located around the town in a number of local shops and premises in the BID area.

The trail runs for eight weeks each year and helped to increase footfall throughout this period.



Halloween

Lowestoft Vision hosted Halloween events in the town centre in 2014 & 2015, including a trick-or-treat trail throughout the town centre and a programme of street entertainment. The 2015 event attracted record numbers into the town.

Lowestoft Festival

In 2015 Lowestoft Vision along with a number of other organisations in the town hosted the first Lowestoft Summer Festival. The Festival included a wide range of events taking place over the weekend in July, along with the Street Velodrome which was located in the town centre and was featured as part of a TV series.



Having children and their parents in the shop for the turtle trail helped create awareness of our shop, and created new sales. Can I have one every year please?

Duncan Adams, Dunx Cycles

Discover Lowestoft

In May 2015 Lowestoft Vision launched 'Discover Lowestoft', a new brand for the town to share information and promote businesses, news, offers and events to locals and visitors alike. The development included a new town logo, website and social media pages.

All BID members receive a free listing on the website where they can add special offers, events and news.

"Discover Lowestoft has been a refreshing and extremely rewarding project to have been involved with. Lowestoft Vision have set out to challenge the pre-conceptions of the town and to encourage locals to be proud of the town centre. As a result there has been a noticeable positive change in civic pride and the town centre feels much busier which has in turn encouraged businesses to once again look at investing in the town."

Justin Taylor, Director, Grapitas

Marketing campaigns

Throughout the period of the BID, Lowestoft Vision has developed a wide range of marketing campaigns to promote the town. The 'Discover Lowestoft' theme has been used across all of our promotional activity since its launch in 2015.

In November 2015 we launched 'Discover Lowestoft at Christmas', an 18-page magazine that was inserted into the weekly editions of Lowestoft Journal, Beccles and Bungay Journal and Great Yarmouth Mercury.

Customer Hero Award

In February 2015 Lowestoft Vision launched the Customer Hero campaign which highlighted excellence in customer care in Lowestoft. In the first year we awarded the Customer Hero award to six Lowestoft-based businesses and we are looking to develop the campaign for the future.



Halloween 2015 recorded as the busiest day in the BID area since records began

Footfall to Lowestoft increased by 5% during 2015

27,000 users of Discover Lowestoft in 7 months

3,400 Facebook 'likes' of Discover Lowestoft

More Accessible

Promote an accessible Lowestoft to encourage business to the town

What we said we would do

Negotiate car parking charges in the town

Liaise with Highways authorities on traffic improvements to the town.

What we have achieved

Provided periods of free car parking in the BID area

Partnered with Lowestoft & Waveney Chamber to put forward traffic improvement ideas for the town



Parking

Parking in the BID area is always a hot topic and since 2013 Lowestoft Vision has been working with partners to try and find new schemes which encourage the community and visitors to better access the town.

In 2014 Lowestoft Vision, in partnership with Waveney District Council, part-funded a free car parking scheme on Thursdays after 3pm. The scheme was designed to encourage people into town on what is traditionally a quiet period.

In 2015 Lowestoft Vision funded free Sunday parking throughout December, which proved to be a great success in boosting trade on Sundays.

Lowestoft Vision are currently developing new ideas for parking schemes to be trialled throughout 2016. In addition we are working with all public sector partners to find new ways to address on-street parking.

“The parking scheme has managed to bring customers to town and also increase the footfall in the town centre. With directional signage and customers parking in town I have manage to see double digit growth on my Sundays in December”

Karl Betteridge, Business Development Manager, Lowestoft McDonalds

Infrastructure

As part of the wider Suffolk Chamber of Commerce family, Lowestoft Vision has been leading the case for improvements to the town's road network including the much needed Third Crossing. We will continue to work with all partners to seek this investment to our town.

“Lowestoft and Waveney Chamber of Commerce has been playing a significant part in working towards improvements in the local road and rail infrastructure. Lowestoft Vision have played a vital role in ensuring that the views of the businesses in the BID area have been included. By working together, we have helped the consultants to the local authorities produce a compelling business case for a third crossing.”

James Reeder, Chairman, Lowestoft & Waveney Chamber of Commerce



More Influential

Ensure that Lowestoft Vision has input into key decisions which impact the town

What we said we would do

Ensure Baseline agreements are achieved by the Public sector

No Drinking zones

Future Planning

External Funding

What we have achieved

Lowestoft Vision has ongoing partnership meetings to ensure the public sector are continuing to deliver services for the town

The numbers of street drinkers and beggars in the town continues to decline

Lowestoft Vision is directly involved with a number of projects designed to see investment back into the town

As a BID we have been able to successfully apply for external funding to enhance our projects

Business Support Scheme

In October 2014 Lowestoft Vision provided an externally funded project to support businesses that were impacted by the 2013 tidal surge. The project included assisting businesses with funding applications and providing business cases to help support the application to improve tidal defences in the town.

The fund also enabled Lowestoft Vision to run additional events in the town and provide marketing to support those businesses that had been affected.

“Following the 2013 tidal surge, Lowestoft Vision helped us to secure funding to support our business. We were unaware that we were entitled to funding until Lowestoft Vision highlighted it. They were also able to assist us with the application process at what had been a very stressful and difficult time.”

Michael Cook, Cooks Furnishers

County Highways meeting

Lowestoft Vision attends regular meetings with Suffolk Constabulary and Suffolk Highways to discuss traffic safety in the town. We will continue to have input into these meetings to ensure businesses have a voice around the table.

- £97,000 of external funding generated for local businesses
- £90,000 of external funding generated to enhance Lowestoft Vision projects

Rising Star Award

In November 2015 Lowestoft Vision was presented the Rising Star Award in the Great British High Street Awards. The Judges in the awards commended Lowestoft Vision for their work in returning pride to the town for the develop of the Discover Lowestoft Brand.



Coastal Communities Team

Lowestoft Vision is part of the Lowestoft Coastal Communities team which is looks at improving the town as a visitor destination. As a coastal team we are involved with developing future ideas and funding programmes to regenerate Lowestoft.

“As a Business Improvement District we are able to represent and act upon the views of local business. We will continue to work with public sector partners and others organisations and influence decisions to ensure we continue to see business growth.”

Dan Poitras, The Britten Centre

More Inclusive

Join the team at Lowestoft Vision for a series of networking events & forums and help us plan develop Lowestoft as the Town of Opportunity

Lowestoft Vision Members forums

Thursday 2nd June 2016, 3pm - 5pm at the Marina Theatre

Thursday 13th October 2016, 3pm - 5pm at the Marina Theatre

Healthy High Streets retails forum

Wednesday 13th July 5.30pm - 6pm

Wednesday 24th August 5.30pm - 6pm

Wednesday 9th November 8am - 9am

For more information on the above events and details of Lowestoft and Waveney Chamber of Commerce networking events please go to lowestoftvision.co.uk



Suffolk Chamber of Commerce is offering members of Lowestoft Vision a 30% discount to help your business grow

Benefits of Chamber membership include:

- Member to member offers
- Free legal advice
- Business utility discounts
- Networking events with leading business speakers
- B2B trading
- International trade & export documentation
- Business representation
- Policy updates
- Training and skills support & advice
- Mentoring

As the county's largest private sector business forum, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce is a truly grassroots organisation with a local, regional and national voice for business. From entrepreneurial start-ups to some of the biggest companies in our county, Suffolk Chamber membership offers the very best business services, advice and support to help your business grow.

For more information about this special discount offer for Lowestoft Vision members call **01473 680600** or email membership@suffolkchamber.co.uk



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