

COMMUNITIES OF THE FUTURE

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What is this session about?

This session will outline the work of the WFS Europe Chapter in the 2011-12 programme.

It describes how this work fits in with the broader programme that we have been following for the last four years.

It explains the reasons behind the proposed work schedules for the 2012-13 programme.

The material tells a story of 'Scarcity Bites' and examines the twin issues of Climate Change and Peak Oil in the context of the 'Age of Scarcity'.

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Where are we now?

Our map of the 21st Century:

Period	Label	Theme
2001-2008	The Crisis Of Maturity (W5)	Financial Meltdown
2008-2020	A Prelude To Scarcity	Recovery
2020-2030	Scarcity Bites	Shortages and Inflation
2030-2045	Scarcity Abates	A Technological Golden Age
2045-2050	The Crisis Of Maturity (W6)	Financial Meltdown
2050-2075	The Post Scarcity World	Recovery

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Communities Of The Future 2020-30

The theme of this programme is how Peak Oil and Climate Change interact to exacerbate potential scarcities.

Our task was to examine how a number of key communities in the English county of Suffolk would be affected by these factors, with an horizon of 2030.

We plan to have two outcomes from this project:

1. A set of policy recommendations designed to mitigate the worst effects of Climate Change and Peak Oil.
2. We plan to publish a short book to bring together fictional scenarios about each community in one place.

How the Project Was Structured

The project was structured around three teams:

1. The Core Team. This met over six sessions of two hours duration over the course of the programme. The aim of the sessions was to identify the issues affecting each of the communities, and to consider what the policy responses might be. In all, a total of 105 people took part in the Core Group sessions. Following each session, a writing brief was drafted.
2. The Review Team. The purpose of this team was to review the writing brief. It consisted of, in total, 15 futurists, whose role was to comment upon the writing brief, and to suggest improvements and clarifications where needed.
3. The Writing Team. The function of this team is to produce two fictionalised scenarios for each of the communities examined. One scenario would be a positive future, with the other being a dystopian scenario. Each scenario would be introduced and annotated.

The Communities

We identified five key communities in Suffolk that would be affected by climate change and resource scarcity in the next twenty years.

These are:

1. The creative community.
2. The entrepreneurial community.
3. The caring community.
4. The coastal community.
5. The food community.

We also ran an introductory session on modelling the long term future, to set the scene for the later sessions.

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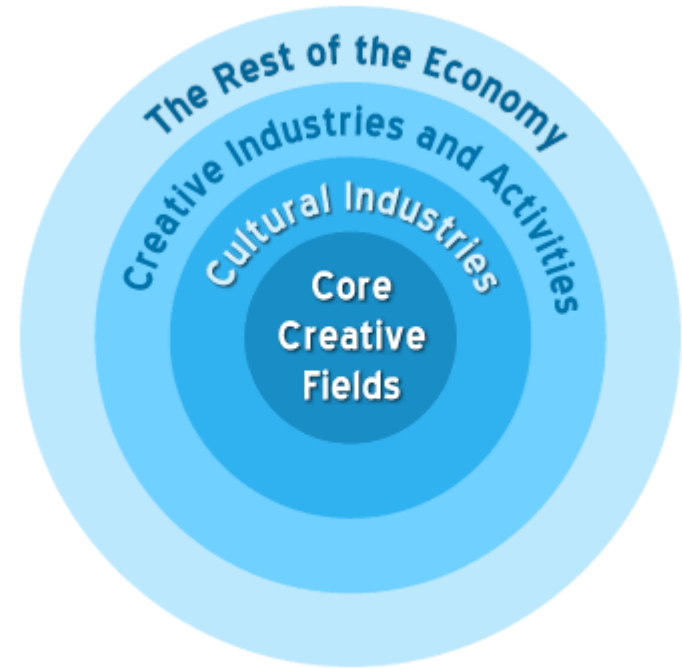


The Creative Community

Our model suggests that a prerequisite for economic growth in the information age is a creative community.

Suffolk doesn't currently have a creative community.

This means that the policy challenge for the future prosperity of Suffolk is to develop a creative community.

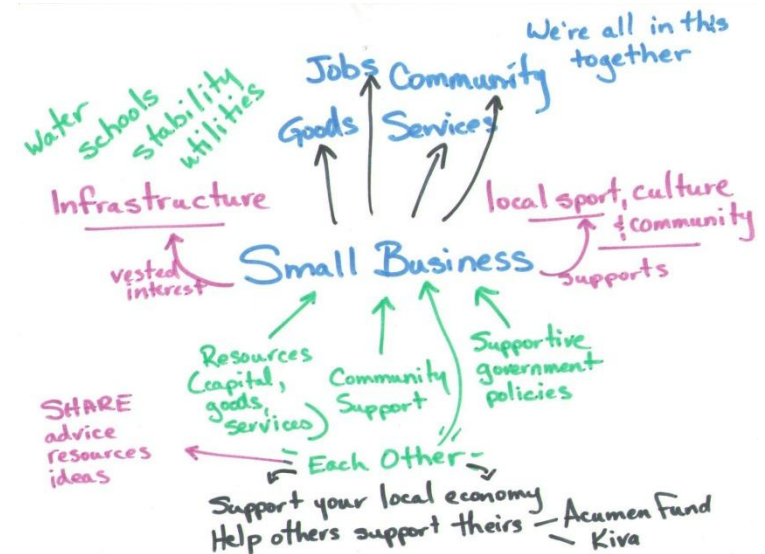


The Entrepreneurial Community

A creative community is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for economic development. Ideas need to be commercialised.

Suffolk currently has a weak entrepreneurial community and a poor business climate.

This means that the policy challenge for the future prosperity of Suffolk is to develop an effective entrepreneurial community.



The Caring Community

Our review of this community examined the impact of Climate Change, Peak Oil, an Ageing Society, and Public Sector Austerity all happening at broadly the same time.

Suffolk currently has good provision in the Caring Community.

The policy challenge for the future is how to maintain good quality social care in an environment that is growing more difficult each year.



The Coastal Community

The coast in Suffolk helps to shape the nature of the county.

The examination of the Coastal Community mainly looked at land use, and how that may be changed by Climate Change and Peak Oil.

The policy challenge for the future is how to reconcile the various interests, who have conflicting objectives for future land use.



The Food Community

Suffolk is an agricultural county, with a relatively high level of employment in the food production and processing sectors.

Peak Oil and Climate Change are likely to have a large impact upon the Food Community .

The policy challenge for the future is to devise a strategy that will mitigate the worst effects of Peak Oil and Climate Change upon the Food Community.



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What Have We Achieved?

We managed to deliver all six of the sessions. The average attendance at each session was 20 people.

Half of the scenarios have been written and are ready for publication, along with about half of the supporting text.

A Creative Group – under the leadership of the Eastern Enterprise Hub - has spun out of the programme and is establishing a small business incubator hub in Suffolk, along with a number of innovation centres.

A Food Group – under the leadership of Transition Ipswich - has spun out of the programme and is strengthening the existing initiatives in the area.

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Where Do We Go Next?

We need to complete the fictionalised scenarios, the supporting text, and publish the book. It is our plan to launch the book at the annual Ip-Art Festival in June 2013.

We shall deepen the work by developing a cross-impact matrix that cross references the long term trends identified in the 2010-11 programme with the communities identified in the 2011-12 programme.

We shall continue the story of the 21st Century by delivering a programme on “The Next Golden Age Of Technology 2030-45”, in conjunction with the London Futurists.

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You can 'like' our Facebook Page at:

<http://www.facebook.com/European.Futures.Observatory>

You can join our group on Linked-In at: The Futurist Group

You can 'follow' us on Twitter at: @eufo

You can join my Circles on Google+: Stephen Aguilar-Millan

You can e-mail me at: stephena@eufo.org

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