

# East Anglia: Exploring economic strengths and addressing productivity challenges

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## Overview

East Anglia, comprising Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Peterborough, plays a key role in the UK economy. Despite its potential, the region faces significant challenges that impact its productivity and growth. These challenges are shaped by disparities in infrastructure, skills, and governance, compounded by its unique geography, which blends urban hubs with expansive rural areas. To strengthen the region's economic position, it is essential to address these interconnected issues. This research highlights a range of cross-cutting themes underpinning regional economic development and productivity. By addressing these regional disparities, we aim to guide strategic efforts that promote inclusive growth and support long-term economic development across East Anglia.

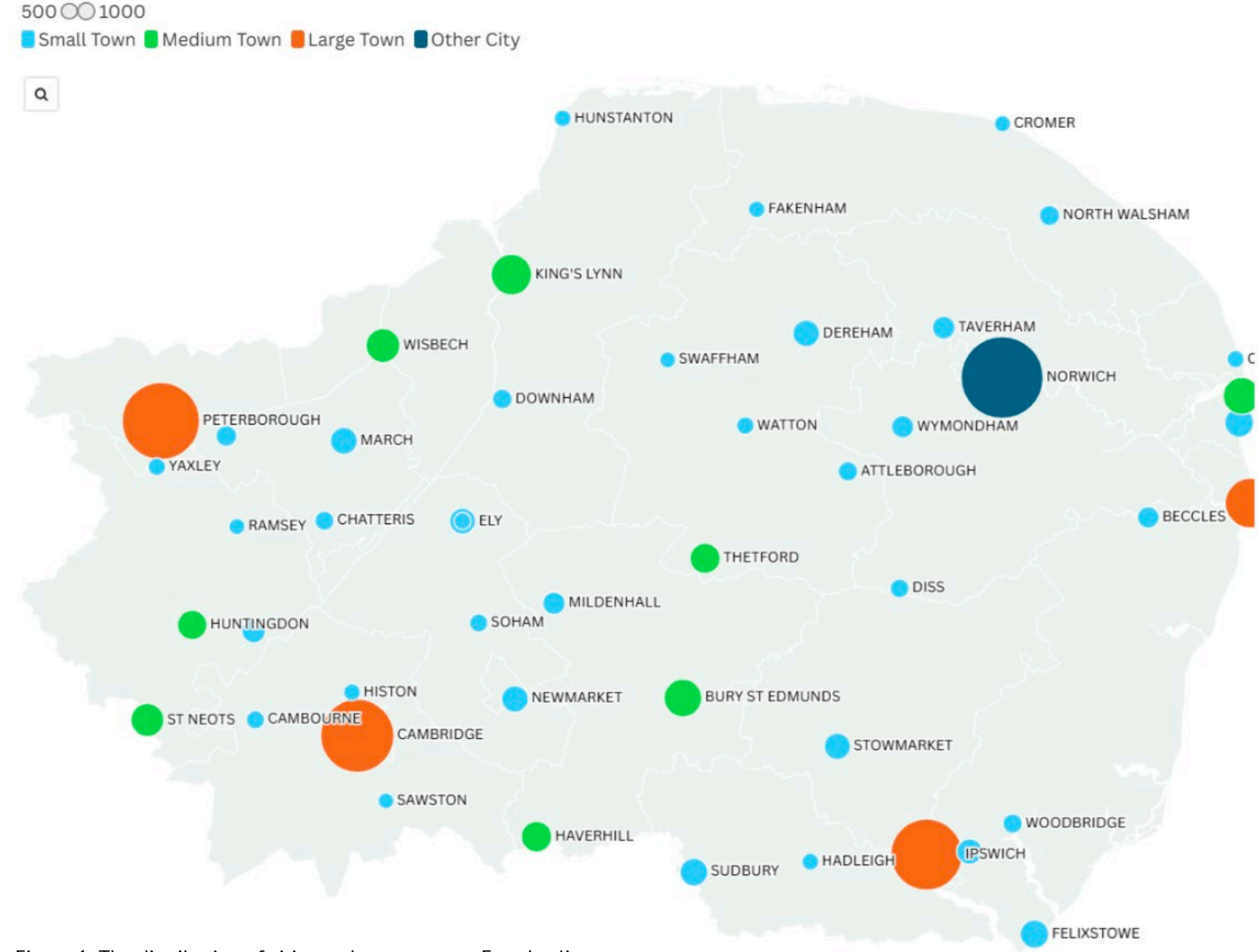


Figure 1. The distribution of cities and towns across East Anglia  
Source: Office for National Statistics (Boundaries), Simple maps (Points)

## Key Themes and Findings

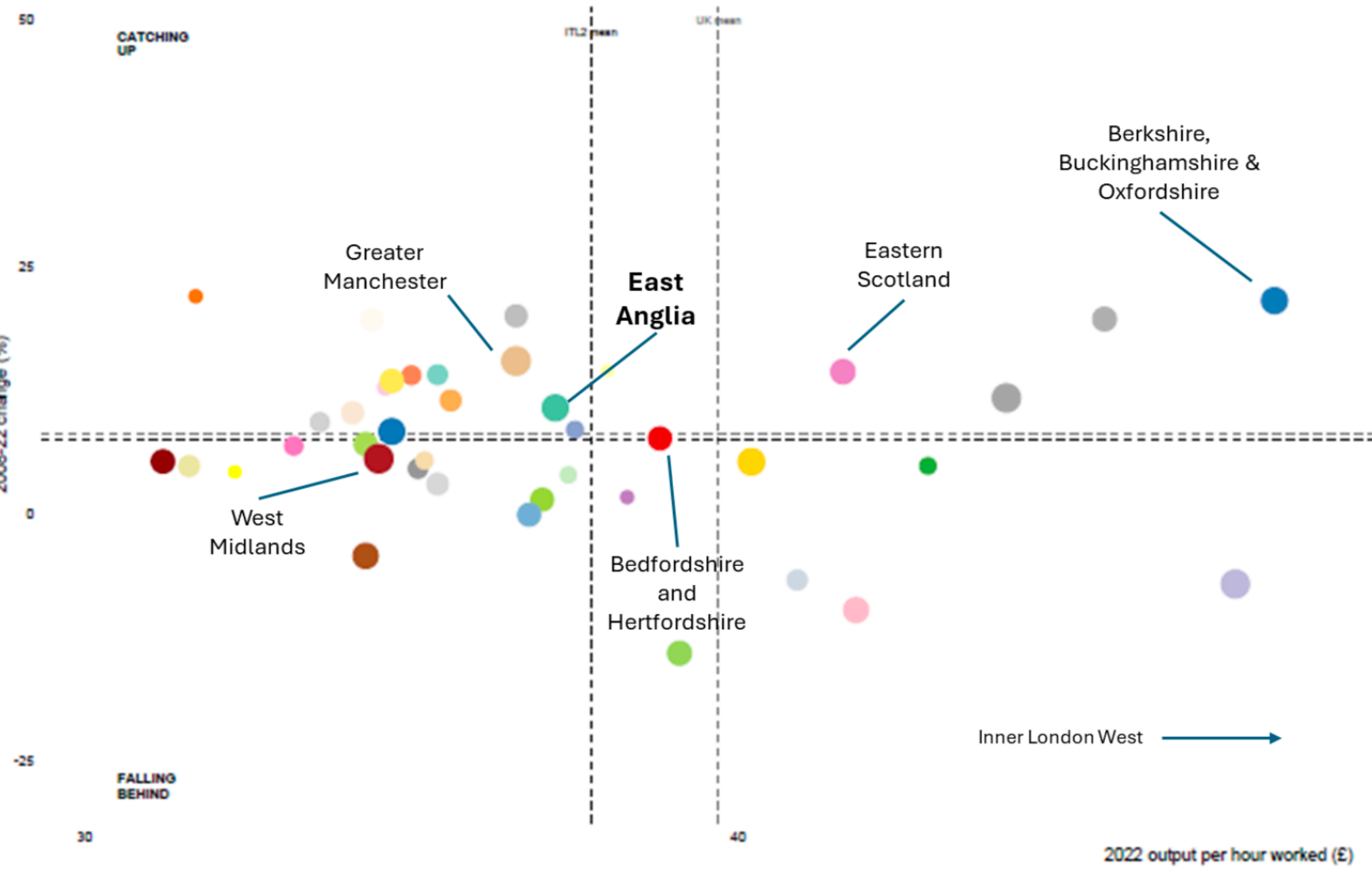


Figure 2. Productivity performance of UK ITL2 regions

East Anglia's productivity performance, as measured by output per hour worked, places it in the "Catching Up" category compared to other UK regions, indicating room for improvement. While Cambridgeshire stands out with strong productivity, other areas like Peterborough and parts of Norfolk are lagging behind, highlighting significant regional disparities that require targeted interventions. The key interconnected themes for addressing East Anglia's productivity challenges are:

- **Inequality:** Regional disparities in skills, infrastructure, and job opportunities hinder inclusive economic growth, particularly in rural areas.
- **Decarbonisation & Sustainability:** East Anglia's leadership in renewable energy, especially offshore wind, positions it as a key player in the UK's transition to net-zero, but climate adaptation is crucial for long-term sustainability.
- **Skills & Workforce Development:** Skills mismatches and a lack of investment in training impede economic growth, highlighting the need for better alignment between education and industry demands.
- **Place-Based Strategies:** Tailored strategies for different areas, addressing local needs and fostering regional coherence, are essential for effective economic development.
- **Governance & Collaboration:** Fragmented governance across counties limits the region's ability to coordinate efforts effectively, highlighting the need for improved collaboration.
- **Connectivity & Infrastructure:** Disparities in digital and physical infrastructure, especially in rural areas, impact regional productivity and access to opportunities.

Category	Driver of Productivity	East of England	Cambridgeshire	Norfolk			Suffolk	Peterborough
				Norwich and East Norfolk	Breckland and South Norfolk	North and West Norfolk		
Productivity	Taxonomy relative to the UK	Falling behind	Steaming ahead	Catching up	Falling behind	Falling behind	Catching up	Falling behind
	Taxonomy relative to ITL1		Steaming ahead	Catching up	Catching up	Falling behind	Catching up	Falling behind
	GVA per hour worked	£37.70	£40.40	£36.80	£35.60	£32.40	£36.50	£35.70
Business Performance	Export Intensity	26.1%	56.4%	23.4%	7.0%	13.1%	13.2%	33.9%
	New Businesses	11.0%	9.7%	10.7%	9.4%	8.8%	10.5%	16.4%
Skills & Training	Low Skilled	8.6%	8.1%	6.7%	8.0%	6.4%	8.1%	14.2%
	High Skilled	41.7%	46.1%	48.5%	37.3%	28.7%	33.6%	34.5%
Health & Well-being	Active	84.2%	84.7%	82.5%	79.9%	82.6%	85.0%	85.3%
	Inactive due to illness	28.7%	25.3%	27.0%	20.1%	23.0%	31.7%	33.1%
	Working Age	56.8%	56.9%	57.4%	55.0%	52.9%	54.5%	55.6%
Investment, Infrastructure & Connectivity	4G connected	77.1%	70.5%	74.7%	57.8%	58.8%	70.0%	89.9%
	Fibre connected	36.8%	38.0%	26.8%	38.5%	26.2%	41.1%	86.6%
	GFCF per job	£12,212	21,457	8,018	9,860	7,995	11,901	9,979
	ICT per job	£371	513	395	277	312	439	429
	Intangibles per job	£4,042	11,847	1,416	1,804	759	2,229	2,236

Figure 3. Drivers of Productivity, East Anglia

