

## **Opening address for the JCS EIP**

The Greater Norwich Development Partnership is the body through which Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council, Norfolk County Council, and the Broads Authority work together to plan and manage future growth to meet the area's needs. We established the GNDP in 2006 as an informal partnership, following the designation of the area as a New Growth Point.

Working together to produce the Joint Core Strategy has been a real achievement. We are proud that the Partnership has worked across local political divides and a changing national political landscape to come forward with a Strategy that sets out a clear vision and framework for the future development of our area.

This shared Strategy will allow our area to continue to provide homes and job opportunities for local people and will mean that as growth happens, it will do so in a sustainable way that complements the distinctive character of Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk.

Developing the Strategy has been a long and painstaking process:

The Partnership has:

- Prepared an extensive evidence base in consultation with stakeholders; and
- Responded to a change in the planning regulations midway through plan preparation;

We recognise the many challenges we have faced in producing the Strategy, but our track record to date shows that the Partnership has been responsive, adaptive and driven with a common desire to provide a comprehensive plan to map out the future of our area. The GNDP has remained united throughout this process despite being engaged in a Local Government Review and the distractions and uncertainties this caused.

We are grateful for the input of all the local people and organisations that have taken part in the process during the last 3 years. The Partnership is confident that the Strategy provides the best foundation for growth and development, ensuring a responsive supply of land that not only supports business growth and increases housing supply but also safeguards the cherished environments that make this area such a desirable place in which to live.

Already the Partnership has worked together to facilitate and fund a number of key local infrastructure projects. These projects will unlock growth, provide opportunities for creating new jobs, improve walking, cycling and public transport and protect and enhance the environment.

To date this includes

- Significant investment in Norwich Research Park, providing hi-tech facilities and employment space for hundreds of new jobs;
- A £3.3 million investment enabling traffic improvements and work to reduce congestion and improve air quality in the St Augustine's' area of the City;

- Major investment in public transport improvements in the area including the Dereham Road public transport corridor which has provided real-time bus information and bus shelter improvements; and
- a number of projects reflecting the Partnership's commitment to the provision and protection of high-quality green infrastructure and the built environment including:
  - Improvements to access to Catton Park and restoring areas of the park, together with Investment in a new education centre;
  - improving paths and access around Whitlingham Country Park;
  - significant improvements to St Georges Street and St Andrews Plain in the City Centre – closing St George's Street to cars and improving walking and cycling access to the Northern City Centre.

Significant investment is required to support growth in the area. Being proactive in managing growth is essential to ensure that we are able to improve services for existing residents, as well as building new and expanded communities with enough jobs, public transport, schools, community facilities and recreational open space.

The Partnership is delighted that the Government has recognised the importance of the A11 to the economic growth of Norfolk, giving the go-ahead ahead for the final stretch to be dualled. We will continue to work hard to ensure that we minimise the impact of growth on the environment and maximise quality of life, while making sure that we have the right supporting infrastructure in the right places, at the right time.

The major growth locations are dependent upon a number of large infrastructure investments. The implementation of the Norwich Area Transport Strategy, including the Northern Distributor Road is an integral part of the successful delivery of the Joint Core Strategy including the implementation of public transport, walking and cycling improvements in the area.

Implementing the Strategy will depend on the coordinated activities of a number of agencies and will require innovative ways of funding. This is even more challenging, given the economic conditions the country is currently experiencing, but our strategy is a plan for the long-term and can respond to changing market conditions.

We are working with a large number of agencies including the Homes and Communities Agency, Children's Services, NHS Norfolk, the Environment Agency and Anglian Water to ensure the Strategy is delivered in a timely fashion. We will maximise all opportunities to secure funding support and are actively developing a development contribution mechanism that will assist in the timely delivery of the Strategy.

The Partnership believes that this Strategy provides the best way for managing growth, delivering improved services, as well as building new and expanded communities with enough jobs, good public transport, schools, community facilities and open space. It is a strategy for jobs, homes and prosperity for local people.