

Greater Norwich Development Partnership

Jobs, homes, prosperity for local people



GNDP Newsletter: Green Infrastructure special

One of the most important parts of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership's (GNDP) work is making sure that growth does not detract from the quality of local life. We work hard to make sure that plans for new homes uphold the very highest of environmental standards, with new houses carefully located and supported by the right infrastructure.

But this alone is not enough. For people to get the most out of the area's outstanding natural assets a wide range of new facilities are needed. These facilities are collectively known as 'Green Infrastructure.'

This special edition of the GNDP newsletter looks at the work the GNDP is doing to develop Green Infrastructure. Alongside a guide to what Green Infrastructure is, it gives details of the process we have put in place to deliver it. It also features details of one of the projects we are supporting: Catton Park.

But the GNDP cannot deliver on the area's Green Infrastructure needs alone. We work with a wide range of partners. One of these is the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, and we are delighted that the Trust's John Hiskett has written an article for this newsletter.



Developing Green Infrastructure is essential to well managed growth in Greater Norwich. We hope you find the details in this newsletter useful. Please do get in touch if you would like any further information.





What is Green Infrastructure?

According to Natural England, Green Infrastructure is a “strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green Infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens.”

Important News



Joint Core Strategy submitted

On Friday the 5th of March 2010, the GNDP formally submitted the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk to the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG).

Planning inspectors will now look in detail at the JCS to ensure it complies with formal guidelines. It will then be put forward for a full public examination.

Once these procedures have been fulfilled the JCS will be officially adopted as the development plan which forms the basis of Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk's local development frameworks.

New GNDP website launched

We have given the GNDP website a major overhaul, making it easier to find out about growth in the area and the work we are doing. In addition, a new resources section collects all of our documents in one place, and offers a full glossary explaining all the technical terms associated with growth.

To visit the website go to www.gndp.org.uk



Why is Green Infrastructure important?

Green Infrastructure can provide many social, economic and environmental benefits close to where people live and work including:

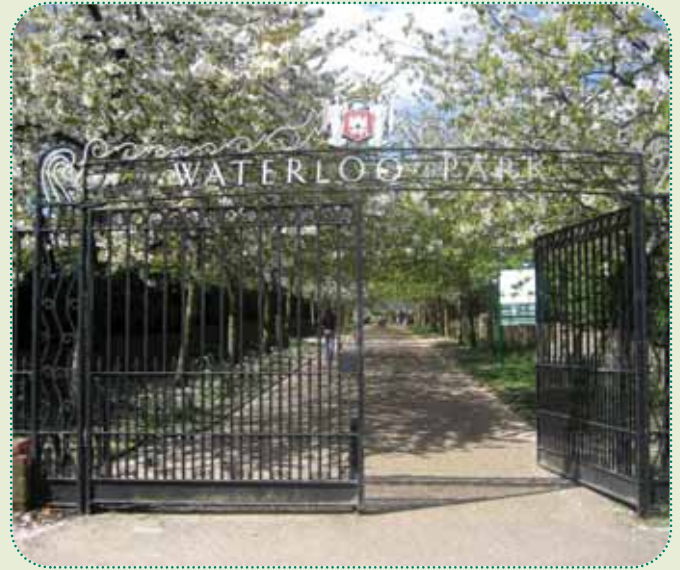
- Places for outdoor relaxation and play
- Space and habitat for wildlife with access to nature for people
- Climate change adaptation – for example flood alleviation
- Environmental education
- Local food production – in allotments, gardens and through agriculture
- Improved health and well-being – lowering stress levels and providing opportunities for exercise

Green Infrastructure should be provided as an integral part of all new development, alongside other infrastructure such as utilities and transport networks.

What type of Green Infrastructure does our area need?

The East of England Plan calls for local planners to meet the following Green Infrastructure requirements:

“Areas and networks of Green Infrastructure should be identified, created, protected,



enhanced and managed to ensure an improved and healthy environment is available for present and future communities. Green Infrastructure should be developed so as to maximise its biodiversity value and, as part of a package of measures, contribute to achieving carbon neutral development and flood attenuation. In developing Green Infrastructure, opportunities should be taken to develop and enhance networks for walking, cycling and other non-motorised transport.

Green Infrastructure should be delivered, protected and managed through the commitment and involvement of the public, private and voluntary sectors across the Greater Norwich Area working in partnership.”



GNDP Green Infrastructure work



In March 2009 the GNDP commissioned a Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan. It sets out a vision for the Greater Norwich area:

“A multi-functional network of green spaces and green links, providing an environmental life support system for communities and wildlife. The network should be high quality, bio-diverse, accessible and be widely valued by local residents, businesses, and also by visitors to the Greater Norwich Area.

Opportunities to inspire local communities to adopt low carbon and healthy lifestyles based on a greater awareness of their ‘environmental footprints’ should be encouraged. The Green Infrastructure network connects Norwich, other settlements and the countryside via green corridors, particularly along the river valleys, providing sustainable opportunities for communities in towns and villages to access, enjoy and appreciate a variety of green spaces on their doorstep and in the wider countryside. The network also connects a diverse range of wildlife habitats and provides important ecological corridors for species dispersal and migration.”

The Delivery Plan identifies five priority areas for Green Infrastructure:

- Norwich to the Broads (Norwich to Acle and Norwich Wroxham)
- Long Stratton to Norwich
- Five Rivers (Tas/Tiffey/Yare/Tud/Wensum)
- Wymondham to Norwich (Wymondham-Hethersett-Cringleford)
- Water City (Yare and Wensum)

The GNDP’s Green Infrastructure work is monitored by a steering group, made up of officers from each of the GNDP member councils and a range of environmental protection agencies, including Natural England, the Forestry Commission, and the Land Restoration Trust. The group meets three times a year to take a strategic look at the development of Green Infrastructure, putting forward particular projects for funding consideration.

Spotlight Project: Catton Park

Project Summary:

- Restoration of a nationally significant park landscape
- Creating a new, bespoke education and community building
- Improvement to access and restoration of pond and quarry area

GNDP funding contribution:

- Park Improvements Funding – £70,000
- Education Building Funding – £250,000

Catton Park covers 70 acres of historic parkland. At less than 3 miles north of the city centre it offers people from urban areas easy access to peaceful walks and recreation throughout its mixed woodlands.

The park has national historic significance. In 1788 it was the first ever paid commission for the famous landscape architect Humphry Repton. It is one of only a few Repton landscapes still standing to this day.

The park was untouched until the Second World War, when the land use was altered to provide food production via arable farming. This destroyed much of the original landscaping; leaving only the outline of the original landscape. After the war, large sections of the park were sold off.

In 2005, plans were drawn up in partnership between the local community and the parish

and district council to restore the former landscape. These came to fruition in 2007, with a joint investment between the Heritage Lottery Fund and the GNDP to restore the original park landscape, improve access throughout the park and build a brand new education building.

The education building will let visitors learn about the history of the park and enjoy all it has to offer. The project is underway and due to be completed in Autumn 2010. The education centre will enhance the visitor experience for tourists, schools and visitors alike.

Judith Cantell, Catton Park's Landscape Architect has welcomed the GNDP's support:

"The new education pavilion will give a base for school visits, providing a classroom space and toilets. This will ensure schools can make the most of their time in the park and help the children enjoy many outside activities as possible. Some activities include pond dipping, bug hunting, and the joys of playing amongst leaves and mud, all in a controlled environment. The pavilion will also be a base for volunteers providing much needed kitchen and office facilities.

Right from the start the Trust had an aspiration to provide an education facility within the park to help many more schools enjoy and learn from this special place. We are extremely grateful to the GNDP for helping to turn this 'dream' into a reality."



Local view

John Hiskett of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust is a member of the GNDP Green Infrastructure Steering Group. Here he gives a personal account of the role Green Infrastructure has to play in Greater Norwich:

Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) has been involved in the Green Infrastructure debate in Norfolk from the beginning. We were instrumental in the Making Space for Wildlife initiative in 2005, which set out the requirements for creating ecological networks in Norfolk, the findings of which were incorporated into the GNDP Green Infrastructure Study. We are taking forward the ecological network concept in the wider countryside through our own Living Landscape Initiatives, and we are involved as a stakeholder in Greater Norwich, including the Rackheath eco-community.

At its simplest, Green Infrastructure involves creating, enhancing and connecting areas of green space for the benefits of both wildlife and people. This linking of the concept of ecological networks with measures to provide access to the countryside is exemplified by projects such as the Burlingham Woodland Walks, which seeks to create and connect woodlands to the north east of Norwich; and the Claylands Living Landscape, where NWT works in partnership with local authorities and communities to enhance and link grassland and woodland habitats in South Norfolk.



We are committed to working with the GNDP to ensure that the ecological side of Green Infrastructure is taken forward. To enable Green Infrastructure to become a reality, we believe that the following are critical:

- **Attractive and ecologically functioning green space is provided at an early stage in all developments.**

Local authorities are understandably keen for new infrastructure to be in place quickly and be visible to the public. Green Infrastructure, particularly the ecological side, suffers in that habitat creation takes time to mature and also may not be in areas of high visibility to the public. It is therefore critical green space is provided at an early stage of development.

- **High quality green space is provided close to new developments in order that residents can take part in outdoor recreation without having to travel far from home.**

We are keen to encourage people to experience wildlife locally, rather than driving to nearby wildlife areas that may already suffer from visitor pressure. New green space will ideally consist of country parks along with projects which seek to enhance biodiversity.

- **Adequate funding is in place to implement Green Infrastructure projects.**

The GNDP needs to continue to take a lead on investigating possible funding sources as well as working with partner organisations that may be able to provide Green Infrastructure. The first stages have already been taken with the production of the Green Infrastructure Study and Delivery Plan, along with a start being made on the demonstration projects, like Catton Park. However, the next stage is to move forward rapidly with the Green Infrastructure Implementation Plan and begin work on larger priority projects in readiness for new growth.

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Dear Sir/Madam,

The GNDP team project manages the delivery of the growth strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, ensuring the services and facilities needed for communities are made available in the right place at the right time.

Our area has been identified as a main focus for growth in the East of England, for new homes and jobs, leisure, cultural and educational development. Our vision is that by 2026 the extended communities of the three districts will be strong, cohesive, creative and forward looking. Between 2008 and 2026, at least 37,000 new homes will be built and about 27,000 new jobs will be created.

Coordinating growth on such a grand scale is a real challenge and can only be achieved through effective management and commitment on the part of everyone involved. In 2006, the Greater Norwich Development Partnership was established in recognition of the fact that no single existing agency or authority could be expected to implement this planned growth on its own.

High quality homes will meet people's needs and aspirations in attractive and sustainable places. People will have access to good quality jobs and essential services and community facilities, with less need to use the car. Development will be to the highest possible standards of design, enhancing the quality and distinctiveness of the area and will bring improved infrastructure, services and facilities to benefit new and existing communities.

The GNDP Policy Group, made up of elected members from each of the partnership authorities, is the key body through which Partnership's objectives are agreed. The Partnership does not have statutory powers, which are the preserve of the democratically elected local authorities.

The Greater Norwich Development Partnership supports a wide range of projects to improve Green Infrastructure in the area. This newsletters start to explain about the importance of Green Infrastructure and the benefits it has.

We are now starting to think about the kinds of Green Infrastructure which might be needed in the future. This will range from a number of different types of Green Infrastructure including allotments, wetlands, local nature reserves, historic parks and gardens, woodlands, country parks, commons, village greens and churchyards.

We are working with the expert teams within local councils to help inform these decisions, however it is important that we have the input at a parish council level as well. Once initial suggestions have been proposed we plan to run a number of workshops with Broadland District Council, which will give parish councils the opportunity to have their say on the proposals for Green Infrastructure in the local area.

We are currently asking parish councils to have a look at the Newsletter enclosed and pass copies on to anyone who would have a keen interest in Green Infrastructure planning.

We would also ask for you to put this matter on to an up and coming agenda for you Parish Council to discuss.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Eastaugh'.

Sandra Eastaugh
Greater Norwich Development Partnership Manager