

Greater Norwich Growth Board

Date: 26 September 2024

Time: 14:30 – 16:00

Venue: The Horizon Centre, Upper Yare Room

Name	Organisation	Role
Cllr Kay Mason Billig	Norfolk County Council	Board Member
Tom McCabe	Norfolk County Council	Officer
Chris Starkie	Norfolk County Council	Officer
Cllr Sue Holland (Incoming Chair)	Broadland District Council	Board Member
Trevor Holden	South Norfolk Council & Broadland District Council	Officer
Phil Courtier	South Norfolk Council & Broadland District Council	Officer
Cllr Mike Stonard (Incoming Vice Chair)	Norwich City Council	Board Member
Louise Rawsthorne	Norwich City Council	Officer
Sarah Ashurst	Norwich City Council	Officer
Cllr Daniel Elmer	South Norfolk Council	Board Member

AGENDA

Item	Minute
1.	Handover of chair
2.	Apologies
3.	Declarations of Interest
4.	Minutes of meeting held on 19 March 2024 (page 4)
5.	Project Showcase: Yare Valley Walk <i>Zoe Betts, Senior landscape architect and technicians team leader, Norwich City Council</i>
6.	Schools' Capital Programme for Greater Norwich (page 8) <i>Samantha Fletcher, Asst Director Education Strategy and Infrastructure, Norfolk County Council</i>
7.	Green Infrastructure Strategy Update (page 20) <i>Wendy Brooks, Head of Environment, Norfolk County Council</i>
8.	Date of Next Meeting <i>28 November 2024 at 14:30</i> <i>The Horizon Centre, Upper Yare Room</i>

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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Please call Grace Burke, Greater Norwich Programme Manager on 01603 222727 or email grace.burke@norfolk.gov.uk in advance of the meeting if you have any queries regarding access requirements.

Minutes of the Greater Norwich Growth Board

Date: Tuesday 19 March 2024

Time: 2pm

Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH

Present:

Name	Organisation	Role
Phil Courtier	South Norfolk Council & Broadland District Council	Officer
Cllr Daniel Elmer	South Norfolk Council	Board Member substitute
Cllr Sue Holland	Broadland District Council	Vice-Chair
Trevor Holden	South Norfolk and Broadland Council	Officer
Cllr Kay Mason Billig	Norfolk County Council	Chair
Graham Nelson	Norwich City Council	Officer
Chris Starkie	Norfolk County Council	Officer
Cllr Mike Stonard	Norwich City Council	Board Member

In Attendance:

Name	Organisation	Job Title
Mike Burrell	Norfolk County Council	GNLP Policy Planner
Grace Burke	Norfolk County Council	Project Team Leader
Wendy Brooks	Norfolk County Council	Head of Environment
Thomas Cushan	Norfolk County Council	Greater Norwich Project Officer
Helen Lambert	Norfolk County Council	Programme and Contract Manager
Nicola Ledain	Norfolk County Council	Committee Officer
Ellie Leeper	Norfolk County Council	Greater Norwich Project Officer
Eliot Lyne	Norfolk Wildlife Trust	Chief Executive Officer
Ruth Oyeniyi	Norfolk County Council	Greater Norwich Senior Project Officer
Rachel Savage	Norfolk Wildlife Trust	Director of Development and Partnerships
Matt Tracey	Norfolk County Council	Sustainability, Infrastructure and Development Group Manager

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Lord John Fuller, substituted by Cllr Daniel Elmer. Apologies were also received from Tom McCabe.

2. Declarations of interest

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

- 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 November 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings.

4. Sweet Briar Marshes Project Presentation

- 4.1 The Board received a presentation about the Sweet Briar Marshes, a Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) project. The presentation is attached at appendix A.
- 4.2 The Board were pleased to see what facilities were planned for the project, particularly those for young children. Future funding for the project would be through the normal income generation of NWT and the 60 nature reserves that they already maintained. This was through fundraising, memberships, and potential corporate support.
- 4.3 The Board were supportive of the project and acknowledged it was a fantastic opportunity with lots of potential particularly due to it's location close to pockets of deprived inner-city areas.
- 4.4 The projects relationship with Aviva was progressing well, and they were a very active partner of the project. It was very much in line with their sustainability agenda in terms of climate change and identity of communities and how communities felt about the place they lived.
- 4.5 The Chair thanked the Norfolk Wildlife Trust for their presentation. They looked forward to hearing the future plans and wished them well for the opening on 12 May 2024.

5. Greater Norwich Annual Growth Programme 2024/2025

- 5.1 The Board received the annexed report (5) which confirmed the Greater Norwich Annual Growth Programme (AGP). These were the new projects which were prioritised for delivery in 24/25 and would be funded either wholly or in part by the Infrastructure Investment Fund (IIF). The AGP was assembled from the Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan, the draft of which was recommended for approval by the GNGB on 30 November 2023 and since been agreed by each of the district partner Cabinets.
- 5.2 A short demonstration of the digital version of the report was shown to Board Members which showcased an interactive map highlighting all the projects across Greater Norwich which had received confirmed funding or had been delivered from the Greater Norwich Growth Board.

5.3 The Board highlighted that the map was extremely useful and it showcased all the excellent work that was being done.

5.4 **RESOLVED**

To accept the Greater Norwich Annual Growth Programme 24/25, committing £3,428,00 to four new projects from the IIF, as outlined in appendix 5a of the report.

6. Greater Norwich Physical Activity and Sport Strategy Annual Update

6.1. The Board received the annexed report (6) which introduced an annual update to the Greater Norwich Physical Activity and Sport Strategy (appendix 6a and 6b of the report), showcasing the work undertaken by the Greater Norwich partners in the year since the strategy was agreed.

6.2 The Chair commented that facilities like The Nest offered extremely beneficial all-inclusive opportunities to access sport and this Strategy would feed nicely into the County's Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy.

6.3 **RESOLVED**

To note the Greater Norwich Physical Activity and Sport Strategy Annual Update (Appendix 6a and 6b of the report)

7. Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Update

7.1 The Board received the annexed report (7) which provided an update on the delivery of the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy (the strategy), work for which was approved by the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) at their meeting on 2 December 2021, with delegated authority granted to the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Delivery Board (IDB) to manage its programme. The strategy commenced in August 2022 and was due to be completed in December 2024.

7.2 **RESOLVED**

To note the appointment of Chris Blandford Associates who would help to deliver the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure strategy and delivery plans alongside the already established cross authority teams.

8. Application for Match Funding – Long Stratton Bypass

8.1 The Board received the annexed report (8) which proposed a new allocation of £2,000,000 from the match funding pot, to support the delivery of Long Stratton Bypass.

8.2 Members supported the application. The proposed bypass would enable development around Long Stratton plus make both Norwich, South Norfolk and Suffolk more accessible, as well as making the commute to London easier. It would also be of benefit to the residents of Long Stratton. The Chair reported that in South Norfolk

District the only place that air quality readings had been poor was in Long Stratton due to the amount of traffic queueing along the High Street and she was sure that local residents would welcome the bypass taking traffic out of the centre of the Town.

8.3 There had previously been concern by some members of the Board at the amount of money that had been contributed to the project and it was hoped that this extra money, which is for a contingency fund, would not be needed. However, it was important for this development to proceed and therefore this recommendation was supported.

8.4 **RESOLVED**

In the event that Department of Transport (DfT) 'Network North' funding was not secured for the current funding shortfall, the GNGB use its delegated authority from district cabinets, to allocate £2,000,000 of Match Funding to Long Stratton Bypass, from the Match Funding category of the Infrastructure Investment Fund.

Subject to the following conditions:

- The project cannot draw down any IIF funding until all remaining match funding is secured, and onsite delivery of the project begins. Until that point, the project will progress towards delivery at its own risk.
- The project must provide confirmation of Land Ownership to the principal contact prior to start on site.
- The project must provide confirmation of Planning Approval to the principal contact prior to start onsite.
- The project has until 31 March 2025 to secure all remaining match.
- In the event that DfT 'Network North' funding is secured for the current funding shortfall for the bypass, this allocation of £2m from the Match Funding category will be withdrawn from the project.

7. **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 25 June 2024 at 10am, Council Chamber, County Hall, Norwich

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 2:50pm

Schools' Capital Programme for Greater Norwich

Report of Isabel Horner, Sufficiency Delivery Manager and Samantha Fletcher, Assistant Director (Education Infrastructure and Partnerships), Norfolk County Council

Summary

The Greater Norwich Growth Board supports Norfolk County Council to deliver its statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places for children of statutory school age. Alongside the residual S106 income and Government grant for Basic Need, an annual contribution of £2.5m from the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Investment Fund has ensured this statutory duty is currently being met. The report provides an overview of the Schools' Capital Programme for Greater Norwich, detailing the current and future educational infrastructure needs, funding sources, and key projects. Norfolk County Council's position on borrowing has changed, reflecting the national economic conditions, and this will have an impact on the capital delivery for schools and the programme timescales.

Recommendations

- The GNGB are asked to note the delivery update on the existing growth programme projects.
- NCC Children's Services will continue to work with the Greater Norwich Project Team (GNPT) to develop the reporting of their capital programme.
- There is no financial request from the Infrastructure Investment Fund (IIF) in 2025/2026, instead NCC Children's Services will work with the GNPT to develop a Major Infrastructure bid towards a new high school in North East Norwich. This will return to the GNGB for a decision at a later date.

Introduction

Norfolk County Council has a duty to secure sufficient pupil places to meet the demands of the school-age population, and the long-term needs are set out in the School's Sufficiency Plan annually. Norfolk County Council receives schools' capital grant funding to support its strategic plans for the provision of additional places and for improving the quality of existing maintained school buildings. The cost-effective provision of high-quality learning environments is central to meeting the County Council's ambition to ensure high standards of achievement in schools as part of the 'Better Together, for Norfolk' Strategy. With the change in Local Government financial context, we annually refresh the schools' capital programme. All schemes in the next two years will be subject to greater scrutiny and prioritisation before being agreed by Cabinet. There has been reduced government grant for mainstream places in the form of Basic Need (reflecting the reduced birth rates and lower demand since 2020). However, the government has recognised pressure on SEND places, and as a result, between 2021 and 2025, Norfolk has received an additional £32,209,646 in High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA).

Norfolk County Council welcomes the beneficial partnership working with the Growth Board for the delivery of vital education infrastructure across the growth area and the delivery of school places via the CIL contributions for strategic projects over the past five years. The education contributions

over this period have been a crucial part of the delivery of a number of key schemes set out in below. We are now asking the Board to consider how we may look to collaborate for future sustainability and provision of a Major Infrastructure Bid toward a new High School in North East Norwich.

Context

For the last ten or more years, the school's capital programme has been exclusively funded from external grants, either from central government or S106 education contributions, and more recently Infrastructure Funds for Greater Norwich. It was apparent around five years ago that CIL was likely to create a shortfall for education places in new development, and as a result the GNGB agreed that the IIF contributions could be used to offset the cost of borrowing for new schools in Greater Norwich.

As the national falling demographics of school age children begins to impact on primary schools in Norfolk, the focus of the mainstream schools' capital programme has been only to address the need for new school infrastructure for large scale new housing. This demographic picture means that the flow of growth funding from Department for Education has reduced considerably. Central government allocate Basic Need funding to respond to demographic changes in demand and is only a small element of funding to support capital costs for new places. However, the DFE expects the highest proportion to meet capital investment in new school places to come via developer contributions which often challenges viability of projects across the county.

The overall increased cost of borrowing is a challenge for all public bodies, and Norfolk County Council is no exception. Therefore, although the GNGB has approved the principle of IIF income to offset borrowing, Norfolk County Council is having to scrutinise all capital expenditure borrowing commitments, including for the schools' capital programme.

As a result of this process, there is only presenting a schools' capital programme for 2024/25 rather than the usual three-year programme from NCC Cabinet Member. There are Greater Norwich schemes on the programme, including the key scheme at Wymondham High for a further stage of expansion to meet pupil pressure created by housing demand in the town.

In addition to the capital programme for 2024/25, there are identified schools' capital projects expecting to progress in the next two years. Due to delays in the progress in key housing developments in Greater Norwich caused by Nutrient Neutrality and socio-economic conditions, we have not seen the need for immediate development on further new schools. Pupils arising from smaller scale developments have been able to be accommodated in capacity that exists in surrounding schools but may not be close in proximity to those communities.

With the indication that some of the larger developments can now move ahead, we would anticipate beginning design work once Reserved Matters are approved. The schemes currently expected to move ahead earliest are Smee Lane, the first Rackheath Primary and the first Beeston Park Primary. These are all set out in the NCC School Sufficiency Plan which is the strategy for ten years and beyond (approved by NCC Cabinet January 2024) but not yet reflected in the schools' capital programme.

As education external funds have dwindled, any NCC schools' capital project will need to be evaluated against other NCC priority capital schemes. This will make delivery more challenging than it has in previous years.

Education Capital Programme

The Greater Norwich area covers a large geographical area within Norfolk, which includes 181 educational establishments. There is 1 maintained nursery school, 150 primary phase schools, 7 special schools and 23 secondary phase schools.

Based on the volume of housing anticipated across the current plan period, we expect there to be a need for 9 additional primary phase schools and 1 new secondary school. The level of demand and pace of housing will inform the timescales for the new schools to come on stream and scheduled as part of the capital programme.

Government funding sources for the NCC schools' capital programme are as follows:

- Government grant: 'Basic Need' for growth places at all state-maintained schools and 'Capital Maintenance' for major condition improvements at NCC- maintained schools.
- High Needs Provision Capital Allocation– central government grant to support provision for children with EHCPs.
- CIL income from the Greater Norwich Growth Area.

The School Sufficiency Plan (replacing the Schools' Local Growth Investment Plan) outlines how the Local Authority is meeting its statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places for Norfolk children aged 4-16. It gives an overview of the key demographic changes that impact on this duty and highlights areas of interest across the county that could be affected by growth or decline. The plan indicates 4 key themes linked to growth and decline and breaks down the county into district areas, giving a clear overview of the different pressures that may exist for schools across the county. It outlines areas of growth and the possible capital solution to develop additional school places based on the proposed development areas and indicates the impact of birth rate decline and areas of challenge impacting schools at different times.

Projected demand for school places is determined at a very early stage of Local Planning Authorities Local Plan stages and education must make calculated assumptions about the level of child yield and use complex forecasting to respond to development projects. As part of that approach, we consider the birth data and assess the level of admissions and capacity within groups of schools within a geographical area. The planning areas which are used to group schools together will be aligned to phase of education but not solely to districts and therefore may cross borders. We then use a more consolidated, localised view when determining options and responses to Local Plans and future planning applications to assess the detail of the local areas in question.

The aspiration of the education authority is to ensure local communities have local school places promoting sustainable modes of transport. In certain areas of the wider Greater Norwich Area those projects are paramount to secure schools in the right locations, but it is vital in developing those new schools we do not destabilise the existing education establishments.

Completed Development

Cringleford: Total Project Cost £10.43m

This project is now complete and [Cringleford Prep](#) opened to pupils in September 2024 under the sponsorship of Inspiration Trust a Multi Academy Trust. The photograph below shows the completed school.



Current developments

Silfield: Total Project Cost £11.4m

A new 420 place primary school for Silfield.

Planning has been approved and there is now activity on site despite previous delays due to land transfer issues. Norfolk County Council officers have been working closely with South Norfolk/Broadland District Planning Officers, and the housing developer. This scheme is funded via S106 contributions and central government grant to Norfolk County Council. Unity Schools Partnership has been selected as the Academy Sponsor for the school. RG Carter have been appointed as main contractor, via the NCC Construction Framework and the current programmed completion date is 2nd September 2025. All parties acknowledge the tight timescale and there are contingency plans if the proposed completion date is not achieved. The playing fields for the school includes a community use agreement.

Blofield Total Project Cost £11.3m

A scheme to relocate and expand Blofield Primary with capacity for 420 pupils. The project is now underway and expected for handover Spring 2025 with Pentaco Construction appointed as main contractor, via the NCC Construction Framework. Once a final building programme has been agreed, a date for the existing Blofield Primary to relocate to the new site can be confirmed.



Wymondham High: Project Cost IRO £14.4m

A final expansion of Wymondham High Academy is planned for 2025/26. As reported previously, the current scheme will be the fourth phase of development to meet the pupil demand from the housing development in the town and includes a new gymnasium and Design and Technology block.

The costs for this scheme have increased from the estimate from 2023/24 by approximately £2m, from £12.4mm to £14.4m.



Other school infrastructure changes affecting the Greater Norwich Area

Under the previous Government Administration, a programme of investment was announced to address the condition of the Education estate across the Country. Responsible Bodies including Local Authorities and Multi-Academy Trusts were invited to apply where there was existing evidence of considerable condition improvements required to one or more buildings on a site. A number of projects were approved in the County and two in Greater Norwich are now progressing towards works on site, and a further one in a later stage of the programme. A key driver alongside addressing poor condition has been reducing the carbon footprint of school buildings.

The most significant is the rebuild of The Hewett School in Norwich. This will result in reduced capacity for secondary pupils to 700 places for 11–16-year-olds, with NCC pupil forecasts shared with the DFE regional programme director. The site at its full capacity in the past was able to accommodate up to 2000 pupils. The majority of the original buildings will be demolished, and the DFE has worked closely with Norwich City Council planning and heritage officers.

The second scheme is the rebuild of Firside Junior in Hellesdon. This is a complete rebuild of the school with no change to capacity. The existing buildings will be demolished once the new buildings are completed.

The final scheme approved is a rebuild of Angel Road Infant School in Norwich, taking into account the site now accommodates pupils from the Junior School following severe condition issues. Plans are yet to be progressed for this scheme.

Greater Norwich Schools' Programme Overview

The table below sets out the pipeline for the next three years for the Greater Norwich Growth area to ensure place planning sufficiency. A combination of funding has been secured to deliver the schools' capital programme across the County, including NCC borrowing once other funding sources have been fully expended. The Infrastructure Fund contributes to Blofield, Hethersett Academy and Wymondham High Academy project budgets. Silfield Primary School is funded significantly by remaining S106 contributions.

Table 1 - Active Projects

Project	Scope	Delivery timescale	Project Cost/Estimate	Funding sources already secured	Anticipated additional funding sources	Anticipated additional funding sources
Cringleford Primary	New school	Sept 2024	£10.43m outturn cost	Basic Need CIL (19/20)	n/a	n/a
Blofield Primary	Relocate and expand to 420 places	Sept 2025	£11.3m	Basic Need, S106 CIL (18/19)	n/a	n/a
Silfield Primary	New school	Sept 2025	£11.4m	S106 Basic Need	n/a	n/a
Hethersett High Academy	Expansion	Autumn 2024	IRO £9.660m	Basic Need, CIL (2021/2-22; 2022/2023)	n/a	n/a
Wymondham High Academy	Expansion	2025/26	IRO £14.4m	Basic Need S106	IIF 2023/2024	IIF 2024/2025

Future Projects

The funding required for the next five-year period is currently forecast in the tables 2 to 4 below. As agreed last year, this is annually to account for any funding received from central government for growth in places. The current estimated total of the Greater Norwich schools' programme is £195.50m.

Capital costs have increased considerably in the last four years due to a combination of general inflation across the construction industry, and the inclusion of Carbon Zero national standards for new school buildings. Regional benchmarking of these costs confirms our costs are currently comparable, and lower than some Authorities in the London area.

This level of cost creates a significant pressure on the existing capital funding, with Basic Need central government grant funding set to decline and the impact inflationary costs could have on these projects into the future, could leave a shortfall in the funding available to meet this demand. The Department for Education's current stated position is that Basic Need grant is a supplement to housing developer contributions via S106 or CIL, rather than a replacement.

As previously stated, Norfolk County Council is scrutinising its borrowing obligations across all capital programmes whilst the cost of borrowing remains high. New school infrastructure is

generally developed at a later phase of a new housing development to reflect need and whilst housing development has slowed this has allowed Norfolk County Council to delay expenditure for some school investment.

Those developments where sites have been earmarked, appear to be making progress following challenges with Nutrient Neutrality and we could expect development to progress at some pace at a time when financial pressures exist to deliver the capital priorities for Norfolk County Council. Other options to utilise school transport, to enable access to school places, would need to be discounted on the basis this budget presents an existing strain on the LA financial health. Any additional requirement not mitigated by sustainable development would not be seen as a suitable alternative.

Table 2 – Short term pipeline projects

District	School Area	Project	Range of years for Delivery	Current expected budget requirement
Broadland	GT11/Smee Lane	New school	2027-2030	£11m-£12.5m
Broadland	Rackheath	Rackheath New Primary #1	2027-2030	£11m-£12.5m
Broadland	Beeston	Beeston New Primary #1	2027-2030	£11m-£12.5m

Area Overview:

Schools across the wide geographical area are managing additional demand as the pace of housing delivery has slowed, in year demand for new school places is predominantly for higher year groups in schools, where families with older children are moving into the new homes. This brings some challenge to the existing schools because the places are not in the right year groups and in some cases, not in the most sustainable locations for transport. Parental preference rules mean that we cannot safeguard space for local children in schools where there is planned housing development. In the early phases of these larger developments, it will be important to assess the timescales for school delivery and ensure the triggers for primary and secondary provision are at an earlier stage in order to reduce the significant impact on transport, if new school sites cannot come forward.

Table 3 medium term developments

District	School Area	Project	Range of years for Delivery	Current expected budget requirement
Broadland	Rackheath	New high school	2028-2035	£50.0m-£70.0m
Broadland	Taverham	Taverham New Primary	2028-2035	£11m-£12.5m
Broadland	Hellesdon	Hellesdon New Primary	2028-2035	£11m-£12.5m

Area Overview:

High school provision will be a key strategic element of infrastructure to meet demand from within the significant site across Rackheath, and also the impact of Beeston Park. It will be very important delivery meets demand as the development establishes and trends settle in this localised area.

Taverham local provision currently has a level of capacity to meet early stages of demand, but the full extent of this development will determine a new primary school could be required to match the potential child yield after utilising capacity in the existing local schools.

Hellesdon schools currently have a level of capacity to meet the first phases of housing delivery with a further six phases to come forward with discussion currently under way to determine the exact number of homes in those final phases. Any decision that may reduce the number of homes will mean some additional monitoring and scrutiny will be needed to understand the delivery timescales for a primary school in this area.

Table 4 longer term/less certain developments

District	School Area	Project	Range of years for Delivery	Current expected budget requirement
Broadland	Aylsham	Aylsham New Primary	2029-2036	£11m-£12.5m
Broadland	Rackheath	Rackheath New Primary #2	2029-2036	£11m-£12.5m
South Norfolk	Long Stratton	Long Stratton New Primary	2029-2036	£11m-£12.5m
South Norfolk	Easton	Easton Primary Extension	2029-2036	£6m-7m
Norwich	Bowthorpe	Bowthorpe Infant and Junior Expansion	2029-2036	£4m-£6m
Norwich	East Norwich	East Norwich New Primary	2029-2036	TBC

Area Overview:

Aylsham experiences demand for places from parents outside the area expressing a preference. This presents some challenge to the number of places available to respond to the local developments, as the space cannot be reserved for new families coming into those homes. A new school site has been secured as part of the Local Plan policy which will provide additional places if increased demand is experienced from the local area.

A second Rackheath primary school is safeguarded so as the large-scale development is built out, there is provision for local children to be offered a school place. This reduces need for Home to School Transport and meets the LA aspiration of school places in sustainable locations. Continued assessment and monitoring of need and capacity will occur in order to assess timescales for delivery.

Long Stratton Strategic Urban Extension allows expansion of both the east and west of the existing settlement. Current schools are predominantly on the west side and the early pupil pressure is expected to be met in these existing schools. The proposed new school site will support pupil pressure from later phases of housing development on the east side.

The two expansion projects of Easton and Bowthorpe for existing schools are longer term plans, plans can be enacted when needed and will be monitored closely in the context of the wider development and level of demands in schools locally.

The East Norwich proposal includes provision for a new urban primary school which is aligned to the levels of homes anticipated across the wider project area. LA officers will continue to engage with the project group as any progress is made on this development.

Financial Overview

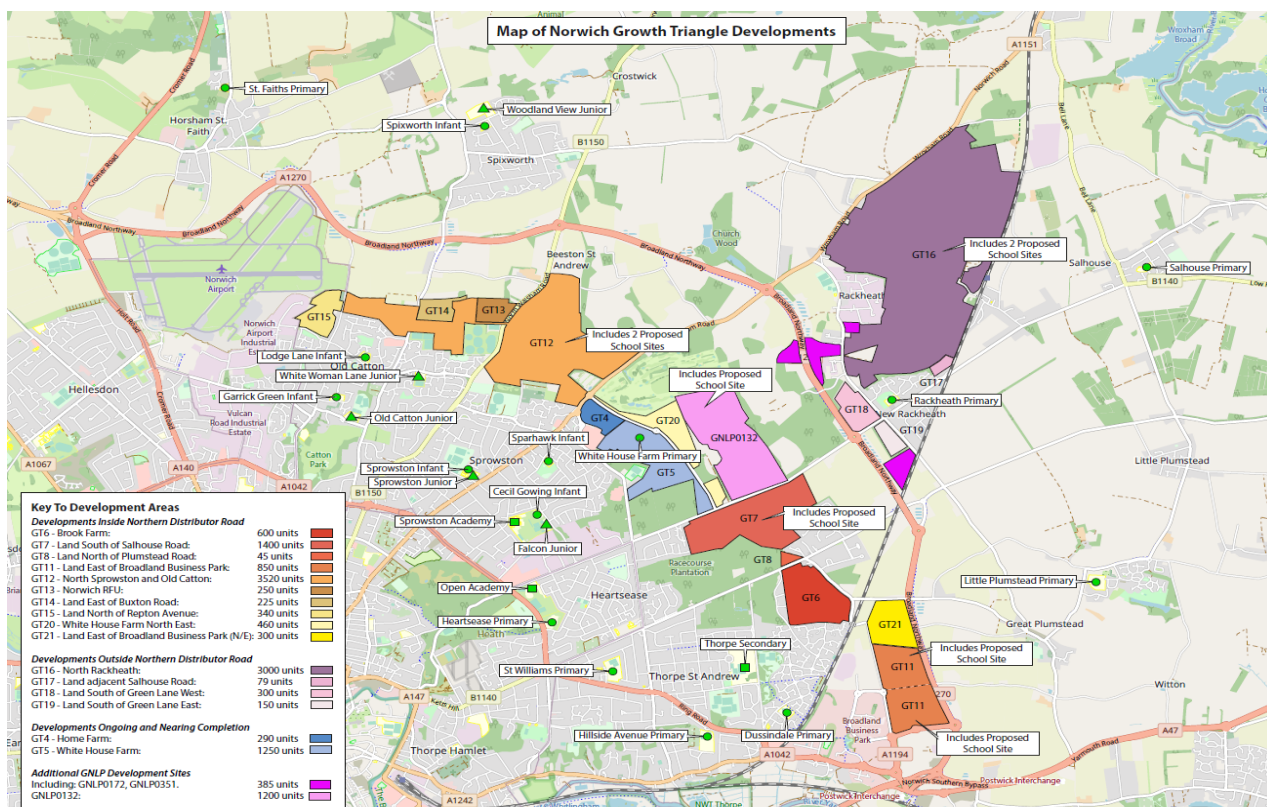
£2.5m as a contribution for schools' capital infrastructure was previously agreed to reflect inflation from its previous amount of £2m. In addition, the GNGB has supported Norfolk County Council's request for flexibility on the use of its education contribution to support borrowing were it to be needed. So far, it has not been needed to use this borrowing capacity. The combined income from the DFE Basic Need grant, S106 education contributions, and annual CIL allocations has been sufficient. Careful oversight of capital spending has also helped keep the Greater Norwich schools' programme affordable within this budget.

All financial adjustments are approved by NCC Cabinet, or by the Executive Director of Children's Services with delegated powers from Cabinet.

Not all individual project budgets are fully approved at present, and most specifically those further in the delivery pipeline. A full list of current forecast projects for the next ten years is set out in the GNIP. This will be amended with future projects as they arise and are added to the forward programme in response to new developments.

Future Need

Demand over the next five years.



The map outlines the vast development area for the North East Growth Triangle. It demonstrates the spread of housing with sites earmarked for education delivery, dependant on demand and capacity in the sector, as well as financial health of the capital programme. 750 homes broadly generate enough pupils to trigger new school demand at primary phase, this number increases to 1,000 homes for secondary provision.

There are an expected 13,000 homes anticipated to be delivered across the North East Growth Triangle leading to additional requirement for both Primary (including early years) & Secondary schools. There are a total number of nine schools' sites safeguarded as part of both Local Plan policy and agreed terms of Section 106 agreements. There are two potential sites for secondary education and seven sites for primary, with some options for relocation and expansion of existing schools which will be determined as part of the assessment stage.

The site to the eastern edge of the growth area, known as Smee Lane (GT11) has two safeguarded primary school sites. The development is making good progress on the southern site which could lead to a school demand in a location with limited connectivity at the current time into the Thorpe St Andrew area of Norwich. To make this development sustainable we fully expect demand for a primary school to come forward here in the next five years.

Delivery costs for those schools listed in the five-year infrastructure fund are significantly increasing from costs anticipated three to four years ago. We anticipate costs to be in the region of £11m-£12.5m by the time some of the primary phase schools are required and with secondary school delivery this could be expected to be £50-70m based on recent regional benchmarking. The delivery of primary phase schools could lead to demand for five schools at a combined cost of £55m-£62.5m over the period and with secondary school costs this could be a total spend in the area of over £100m.

Scrupulous planning of educational projects is being carried out to assess the pace and demand of schools in this area against the development timescales. We are particularly mindful that this is offset in some areas of the county experiencing demographic decline, although we know Rackheath is already seeing higher numbers than the school can accommodate and the next nearest school White House Farm is beginning to be full in all year groups, which suggests numbers are growing. The pace of housing delivery and economic factors impacting families moving house are also being monitored with developers and district colleagues to ensure our decisions are made to spend funding at the most appropriate time.

North East Norwich High School

As part of the school sufficiency plan, we have recognized the necessity for a new 900-place secondary school within the North East Growth Triangle to accommodate the 3,000 new homes in Beeston Park and the 4,000 in the Rackheath developments. Although full costs have not yet been determined, national benchmarks suggest the expenditure will be between £50-70 million. A site for the new secondary school has been earmarked in the Local Plan in Rackheath. This secondary school site holds strategic importance as a vital piece of educational infrastructure and will be the first new secondary school opened by the County Council in Norfolk in quite some time. It aims to provide secondary phase education in an area where many students currently travel to outer Norwich schools or more rural locations such as Broadland.

Given the anticipated ongoing decrease in basic need grants for mainstream places, specifically, due to declining birth rates, and the current methodology for capital funding, the comprehensive financial strategy for this project is in development. It is currently expected that capital costs will need to be covered through a mix of grant funding, borrowing, and income from the GNGB Infrastructure Fund.

To support the timely development of this vital education infrastructure project we would like to propose undertaking an initial phase of work with the Greater Norwich project team over the next year to develop an application for major infrastructure funding, aiming to secure agreement to earmark some funding for the high school in future years.

Recommendations

- The GNGB are asked to note the delivery update on the existing growth programme projects.
- NCC Children's Services will continue to work with the Greater Norwich Project Team (GNPT) to develop the reporting of their capital programme.
- There is no financial request from the Infrastructure Investment Fund (IIF) in 2025/2026, instead NCC Children's Services will work with the GNPT to develop a Major Infrastructure bid towards a new high school in North East Norwich. This will return to the GNGB for a decision at a later date.

Issues and Risks to the Capital Programme

Key risks are the costs of delivering capital to a carbon zero in use specification and the rising cost of borrowing.

There are wider risks relating to the speed of housing delivery due to Nutrient Neutrality, unpredictable nature of the economy and the impact this has on need for school places.

Legal Implications

No Legal implications

Equality

This GNIP schools' capital programme has been assessed to ensure that it has no adverse impact on young people including those with disabilities, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnerships, pregnancy/maternity, race, religious belief, sex, or sexual orientation where appropriate, as it aims to secure a good place of education for every child. In particular, it seeks to ensure that every school has sufficient capacity for strong leadership and governance to safeguard a good education for all.

Environment Implications

Carbon net zero targets are assumed in the delivery of the new school buildings from 2024 onwards, with the DFE output specification amended in late 2021 as the expected standard to reflect this national target.

NCC Climate Strategy sets the expectation for any new building, schools included.

Officer contacts

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**Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy
Progress Update**

Wendy Brooks, Head of Environment, Norfolk County Council

Summary

This report provides an update to the Greater Norwich Growth Board, of work completed to date to progress delivery of the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan (the strategy), following appointment of CBA Consultants in March 2024.

Recommendations

- i) The Greater Norwich Growth Board are asked to note progress of delivering the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery plan and the proposed next steps.
- ii) GNGB to note that due to the 6 weeks pre-election period, the original planned programme had to be extended to accommodate the required rescheduling of the GI Strategy Stakeholder Workshop. The resultant impact of this meant that the final strategy could not meet the deadline for reporting to the GNGB meeting on 28 November 2024, instead the report will be tabled at the following meeting on 11 March 2025.

Report

1 Background

- 1.1 At their meeting on 02 December 2021 the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) approved delivery of the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan (the Strategy), with delegated authority granted to the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Delivery Board (IDB) to manage its programme. The strategy commenced in August 2022.
- 1.2 The Strategy will provide an agreed strategic approach to the protection, enhancement, and creation of Green Infrastructure to support sustainable growth in Greater Norwich.
- 1.3 Its aim is to promote a network of linked multifunctional green spaces across Greater Norwich to deliver:
 - **Health & wellbeing benefits** – through provision of accessible green spaces/corridors for outdoor recreation, play & active travel for all
 - **Nature recovery benefits** – through the creation, restoration and enhancement of habitats and wildlife corridors
 - **Climate change resilience benefits** – through adoption of nature-based solutions for mitigating and adapting to the effects of changing climate

The associated Strategic Delivery Plan will show how the Strategy can be implemented through practical Green Infrastructure projects, to support growth over the next five

years. This will help in the allocation of resources and assist in consideration of Green Infrastructure requirements for planning applications.

- 1.4 In March 2024, CBA Consulting Limited were appointed to progress development of the Strategy on the basis of a 9-month programme, completing the strategy by December 2024 in accordance with the agreed Project Plan. Their remit was to build on work already completed by Norfolk County Council's Natural Norfolk Team who developed the evidence base and mapped data of Green Infrastructure assets across the Greater Norwich area for the Strategy.
- 1.5 The Natural Norfolk team also delivered a public consultation which ran between May – June 2023. Over 1000 respondents (stakeholders and residents) were given an opportunity to share their views on what good Green Infrastructure is and should provide. To confirm which green spaces they use and why, to report on the quality of their local green spaces, and ways to improve accessibility. The data gathered was used to inform and validate the evidence base.
- 1.6 Following the announcement of a general election to be held in July 2024, the programme and key deadlines of the Strategy had to be revised, with timescales adjusted to accommodate the various decision-making stages within the governance structure for the Strategy.
- 1.7 Integral to this, was ensuring that the planned Stakeholder Engagement Workshop 1 could be delivered. Its aim, to gain input from a wide range of internal and external stakeholders to inform the Strategy.
- 1.8 The delays to the programme meant that the final strategy could not meet the deadline of the GNGB meeting in November, at which it was programmed to be reported for sign off. Instead, the report will be tabled at the following meeting on 11 March 2025, with an anticipated launch in Spring 2025. This rescheduling has led to a delay in the programme of 3 months.
- 1.9 The emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which commenced after the GI Strategy, is programmed to be drafted by December 2024. The delay to signing off the GI Strategy allows better alignment between these two strategies.

2 Progress to Date

- 2.1 CBA are making good progress in line with the revised programme. They have seamlessly integrated into the Strategy team and have become a key part of the Delivery Group. They have provided a clear brief for each stage of the strategy, engaged with officers and other internal stakeholders, and each output delivered to date has been reviewed and signed off by the Steering Group and the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Delivery Board.
- 2.2 To date, CBA have delivered four of the seven milestones agreed within the project plan. The main outputs of these have been the Evidence and Opportunities Supplementary Analysis Report, Workshop 1 and Workshop 2.

- 2.3 **Evidence & Opportunities Supplementary Analysis** – prior to issuing the tender for an Invitation to Quote, colleagues at the University of East Anglia (UEA) undertook an assessment to identify gaps in the available data that would need to be completed to support the outcomes of the strategy. Natural Capital Solutions (NCS) who are part of the CBA Consultant team, have undertaken a modelling and mapping exercise, to complement the existing data, based on the UEA report. The findings of this work will be used in conjunction with the original Evidence and Opportunities Report completed by the Natural Norfolk Team, to inform the Strategy.
- 2.4 **Stakeholder Engagement Workshop 1** – this was the first of two workshops designed to engage with a broad range of key stakeholders at an early stage, to ensure that the outcomes of the Strategy fully reflect the current and future aspirations of Greater Norwich. Participants explored three questions based on the GI Prospectus, which was circulated to attendees prior to the event.
- Is the proposed GI definition appropriate for the GI Strategy? If not, how can it be strengthened?
 - Is the proposed GI vision appropriate for the GI Strategy? If not, how can it be strengthened?
 - Are the proposed GI themes/objectives appropriate for the GI Strategy? If not, how can they be developed?
- 2.5 Around 130 local stakeholder organisations from across the public, private and voluntary sectors were invited to contribute.
- 2.6 95 delegates attended the event, representing 35 organisations including members and officers from the GNGB partner authorities. Others who could not be present engaged with the workshop by submitting comments to the XLeap portal which remained open for a further week. A list of organisations represented across the two workshops is provided as **Appendix 1**.
- 2.7 Feedback received has been used to refine key elements of the draft strategy, which will be presented to the GNGB’s November meeting.
- 2.8 **Stakeholder Engagement Workshop 2** – the second workshop was held on 11 September 2024. It engaged stakeholders in shaping **how** the GI Vision and Objectives can be delivered. Participants were invited to consider and feedback on three questions, based on a primer document circulated prior to the event;
- Guiding principles for Green Infrastructure delivery
 - Strategic Green Infrastructure priorities/initiatives as set out in the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan (GNIP) 2024
 - Approach to Green Infrastructure delivery (including funding, prioritising projects and ongoing monitoring)
- 2.9 63 individuals representing 23 organisations attended the workshop, including members and officers from the GNGB partner authorities. As with the first workshop, the XLeap portal remained open for a further week to enable additional feedback.
- 2.10 The outcomes of the workshop will help inform the delivery plan and approach to implementation.

3 Next Steps and Revised Project Timeline

Milestones	Dates
1. GI Delivery Stakeholder Workshop 2	11 Sep 2024
2. Draft GI Strategy Document Submission	7 Oct 2024
• Present draft to Steering Group Meeting	22 Oct 2024
• Present draft to GNIDB Meeting	8 Nov 2024
• Present draft to GNGB Meeting for input	28 Nov 2024
3. Final GI Strategy Document Submission	16 Dec 2024
• Present final document to Steering Group Meeting for sign-off	14 Jan 2024
4. Interactive Maps Submission	31 Jan 2025
• Present final outputs to GNIDB Meeting for sign-off	7 Feb 2025
• Present final outputs to GNGB Meeting for sign-off	11 Mar 2025
• <i>GI Strategy Launch (after the pre-election period)</i>	<i>Spring/Summer 2025 (tbc)</i>

4 Recommendations

- i) The Greater Norwich Growth Board are asked to note progress of delivering the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery plan and the proposed next steps.
- ii) GNGB to note that due to the 6 weeks pre-election period, the original planned programme had to be extended to accommodate the required rescheduling of the GI Strategy Stakeholder Workshop. The resultant impact of this meant that the final strategy could not meet the deadline for reporting to the GNGB meeting on 28 November 2024, instead the report will be tabled at the following meeting on 11 March 2025.

5 Issues and Risks

a. Resource implications

- i. Development of the strategy and its ongoing future monitoring will be supported by existing staff resource within the Greater Norwich governance structure.
- ii. Identification of resource for implementation of the delivery plans is not within the scope of the strategy and will be determined at a later stage.

b. Legal Implications

- i. The information within the GI Strategy is to be used as an evidence base only. It is not a legal document.

c. Human Rights Implications

Not applicable

d. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- i. The strategy and its supporting documents will be compliant with digital accessibility legislation, specifically: Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
- ii. The public consultation has been delivered and residents with protected characteristics are well represented within this consultation.
- iii. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been conducted and the Equality team at Norfolk County Council have been consulted.
- iv. To implement any actions drawn from this strategy, individual partner authorities may need to conduct their own EQIA's based on their organisation's policies.

e. Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA)

- i. A DPIA has been completed. The consultant team are required to adhere to it and will be responsible for ensuring it continues to be updated for the duration of the project.

f. Health and Safety Implications

Not Applicable

g. Sustainability Implications

- i. The strategy by its very nature will be considering the environmental implications of growth within the Greater Norwich area. Delivery of any projects resulting from the strategy will be the responsibility of the project sponsor to consider their specific impact.

h. Any Other Implications

None Identified

i. Risk Implications/Assessment

- i. The risk of increased cost has been managed by agreeing a fixed price to develop the strategy and delivery plans. The cross-authority Greater Norwich governance arrangements will safeguard against delivery risks by allowing them to be identified early therefore enabling corrective action to be taken.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper, please get in touch with:

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Appendix 1 – Organisations represented across the workshops

Active Norfolk
Age UK Norwich
Bergh Apton Conservation Trust
Beryl Bikes
Broadland Tree Warden Network
Broads Authority
Brown Co
Cycling UK
Environment Agency
Equal Lives
Federation of Small Businesses
First Bus
Friends of the Earth
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)
Food Enterprise Park
Greater Anglia
Lanpro Services
National Farmers Union
Natural England
Norfolk and Waveney Mind
Norfolk Association of Local Councils
Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
Norfolk County Council – Members and Officers (Public Health, Natural Norfolk, Landscape, Transport, Planning)
Norfolk County Council Youth Advisory Board
Norfolk Older People's Strategy
Norfolk Wildlife Trust
Norwich BID
Norwich City Council – Members and Officers (Planning, Environment, Landscape, Community Enabling)
Norwich Cycling Campaign
Norwich Living Streets
Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum
Norwich Society
Pathmaker Charity
Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association (RNAA)
Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)
South Norfolk and Broadland District Council – Members and Officers (Planning, Environment, Landscape, Public Health, Community)
University of East Anglia
Water Resources East
Whitlingham Country Park
Wild East
Yare Valley Society

CBA Consultant Team

CBA – www.cbastudios.com

Wellbeing Planner – www.wellbeingplanner.co.uk

Natural Capital Solutions – www.naturalcapitalsolutions.co.uk