

Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) Statement of  
Common Ground (SoCG)

Between

Broadland District Council, South Norfolk Council,  
Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council

and

Homes England



# Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP)

## Introduction

This Statement of Common Ground sets out Homes England's engagement in the East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area.

## Homes England's Purpose & Mission

Homes England is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities which exists to accelerate the delivery of housing and regeneration across England, except in London where much of this role is devolved.

Homes England's role is to ensure more people in England have access to better homes in the right places by intervening in the market to get more homes built where they are needed, accelerating delivery, tackling market failure where it occurs and helping to shape a more resilient and diverse housing market. Homes England's mission is to help more people in England to access better homes in the right places by:

- Unlocking land – to unlock public and private land where the market will not, in order to get more homes built where they are needed.
- Unlocking investment – to ensure a range of investment products are available to support housebuilding and infrastructure, including more affordable housing and homes for rent, where the market is not acting.
- Increasing productivity – to improve construction productivity.
- Driving market resilience – to create a more resilient and competitive market by supporting smaller builders and new entrants, and promoting better design and higher quality homes.
- Supporting local areas – to offer expert support for priority locations, helping to create and deliver more ambitious plans to get more homes built.
- Delivering home ownership products – to effectively deliver home ownership products, providing an industry standard service to consumers.

Homes England has considerable expertise in major housing-led regeneration projects and new settlements, and works with Local Authorities and other partners across England to deliver their ambitions where they align with Government priorities and Homes England's mission and strategic plan.

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## The Norwich City Council approach

Homes England notes the following:

- Strong political leadership of the East Norwich Partnership;
- Broad consensus from public sector partners about the criticality of deliverability and the active participation of all relevant organisations in the partnership;
- Impressive levels of engagement from all the land owners in the area with all contributing to the costs of development the masterplan; and
- Willingness of local authorities to take direct action to ensure delivery (including recognition in the Town investment Plan approved by the, then, MHCLG and it becoming the largest of the eight projects approved through the towns deal fund to enable the City Council not only to drive forward the masterplanning exercise but also to purchase the Carrow House site).

## Levelling Up White Paper 2022

Norfolk has been identified as a County Deal authority in the White Paper which reflects a considerable shift in priorities and a far greater focus on regeneration and delivery of sites such as East Norwich. Part of Homes England's activity will increasingly be to:

- Play a wider role in forming partnerships with local leaders to support places' ambitions for new affordable housing and regeneration;
- Use its statutory powers, funding and expertise to support delivery of regeneration schemes, with a focus on unlocking barriers that are preventing private sector investment;
- Work with partners to enable the pooling of funding to maximise the impact of schemes;
- Tailor opportunities to be attractive to institutional investors and deliver long term change; and,
- Establish delivery vehicles that will give local leaders and communities a voice, and create confidence in long-term plans.

This remit aligns very closely with Homes England's engagement in this transformational people-focused, place-based regeneration project. The ENSRA is understood to be the biggest and most significant development opportunity in the East of England. The ENSRA potentially represents long-term levelling-up investment across infrastructure, skills, health, education and more, and will truly help to transform communities and lives in Norwich.

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## The East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area (ENSRA).

The Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) allocates the four brownfield regeneration sites by the rivers Wensum and Yare that comprise the East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area (ENSRA). These four sites are:

- a) Land at the Deal Ground, Bracondale and Trowse Pumping Station in Norwich and the former May Gurney site at Trowse in South Norfolk (approx. 21.35 ha)
- b) Land at Carrow Works, Norwich (approx. 19.91 ha)
- c) Utilities Site, Norwich (approx. 6.92 ha)
- d) Land in front of ATB Lawrence Scott (0.39 ha)

Following the announcement in 2018 by Britvic/Unilever to vacate the Carrow Works site, Norwich City Council commissioned a study, 'A Vision for East Norwich' (5th Studio, 2018), to understand the possibilities for regenerating these key brownfield sites.

The 2018 Vision document highlights the transformational regeneration potential of East Norwich: 'Each of these sites, in their current isolation, face challenging barriers to development, but taken together the potential exists to address these issues strategically and to create a new productive quarter for the future growth of the city.' It goes on to outline the potential quantum of development: '...supported by the right infrastructure, this quarter of Norwich could support up to 4,000 new homes and 100,000m<sup>2</sup> of employment space, located in a diverse range of spaces from re-used historic buildings through to bespoke new structures'.

The GNLP acknowledges the scale of this opportunity and notes that the East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area has the potential 'to create a new sustainable urban quarter for Norwich, to act as a catalyst for additional regeneration in neighbouring urban areas and to contribute significantly to the growth of the Greater Norwich economy.'

Homes England supports this vision. The scale of the vision and ambition requires Government engagement and brokerage. The sustainable location of East Norwich is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which requires local authorities' planning policies to identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability. Homes England therefore supports the policies relating to East Norwich and is committed to working with partners to unlock the potential of this significant opportunity.

In 2020, the East Norwich Partnership Board (ENPB) was established, which brings together key public and private sector partners to oversee East Norwich's regeneration.

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Currently, the ENPB is overseeing a masterplanning process, which began in March 2021, and is being led by consultants Avison Young. The consultants were procured from Homes England's Delivery Partner Panel and Homes England advised on the project brief and selection.

## **The involvement of Homes England to date in the masterplanning of the ENSRA**

Homes England is actively involved in the ENSRA. It is a member of both the ENPB and the Steering Group. The ENPB meets approximately every two months. Its role is to provide strategic oversight of the regeneration of East Norwich and production of the masterplan, and to work together in delivering a masterplan that will drive the regeneration of East Norwich, inform policy in the GNLP and form the basis of a supplementary planning document capable of adoption by the relevant planning authorities.

As a member of the ENPB Homes England has signalled support for the ambitions behind this project. To date Homes England has contributed £116,000 to the masterplanning commission and supporting technical work, and will continue to work closely with partners in the evolution and delivery of the project through deploying its skills and expertise, and exploring use of its powers and interventions including investment, where appropriate, to unlock land and housing to realise the potential of this opportunity.

Homes England also sits on the Steering Group which meets monthly and consists of funding partners, both public and private sector, whose members fund the costs of producing the masterplan and project management of the process. Its role is to steer the preparation of the masterplan, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and monitoring/management of risks.

## **Homes England's intentions to engage in the future with the delivery of key elements of the masterplan to secure the regeneration of East Norwich**

Homes England has considerable expertise and experience in supporting the delivery of long term complex urban renewal schemes. Homes England is accelerating delivery of many complex housing and regeneration schemes across England and delivers the Government's new settlements programme. Comparable current sites where the Agency is heavily involved include York Central and Bristol Temple Quarter.

Homes England regards itself as a long-term stakeholder in the East Norwich Partnership. The future role of Homes England in East Norwich will be worked through as the project progresses in alignment with Government policy and the Agency's mission, bringing the full range of powers and tools into play to support successful delivery. The ENSRA will, subject to further approvals, be considered for the release of further funds to allow the business cases to be prepared for capital investment

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programmes in the future as the scheme progresses. By way of example, Homes England has to date supported projects at Bristol Temple Quarter and York Central, schemes with similar vision and ambition. The investment in York to date has been land acquisitions of circa £20m and the allocation of £77m of Housing Infrastructure Grant. Potential capital investment in Bristol is under consideration but not yet approved.

**Figure 1**, below, shows the sustainable location of ENSRA close to the City Centre, the scale and extent of the brown field land, the opportunity it presents to create transformational regeneration and comprehensive place-making, and the barrier it creates in its current state to movement between the City Centre and The Broads.

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**NORWICH**  
City Council



Working with  
 **Norfolk** County Council

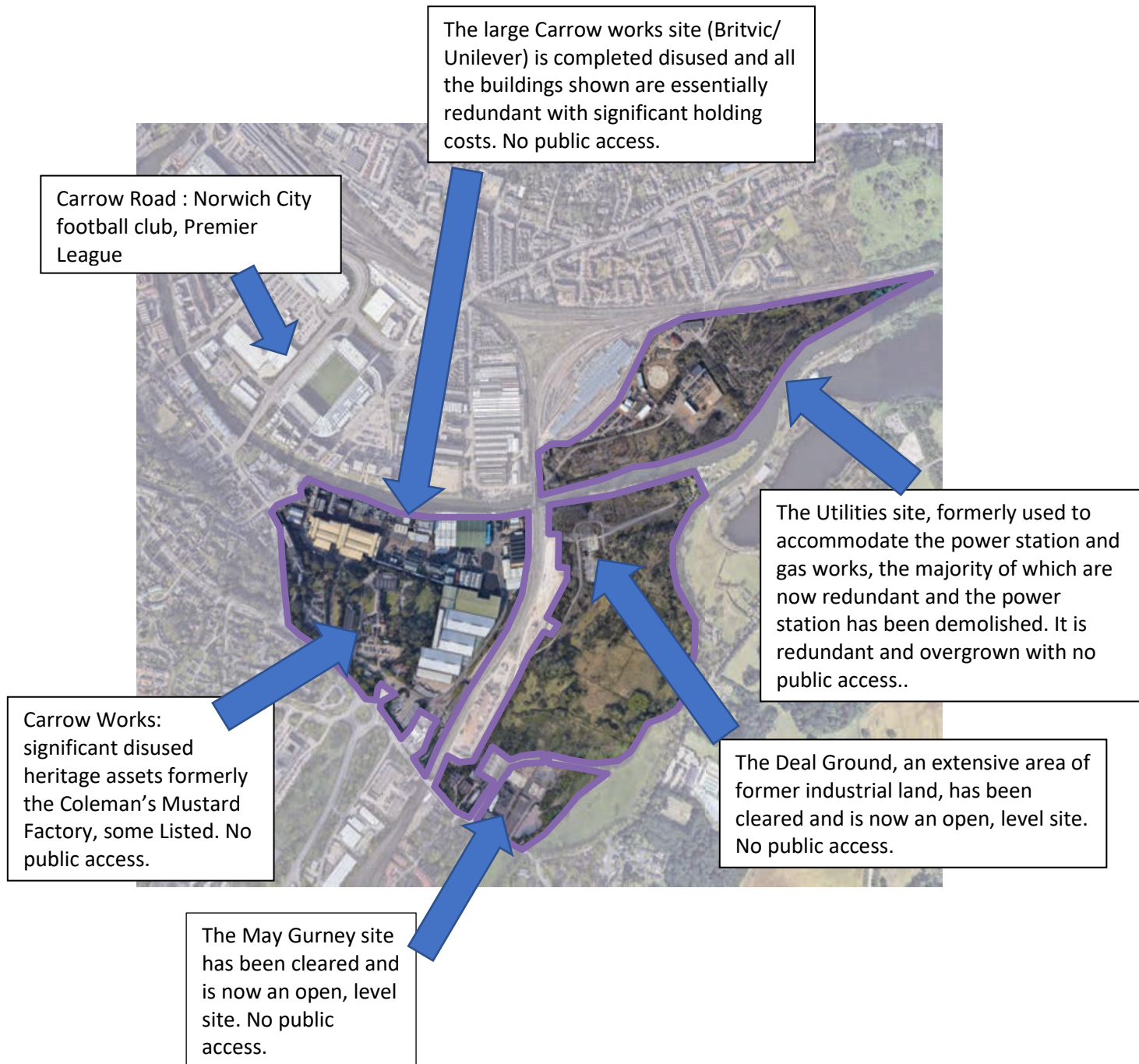
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**Fig 1: East Norwich area and status of land**

Please note the proximity to the City Central and the restricted connectivity between the City Centre and the Broads.



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