

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

East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area



18 March 2022

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Introduction

1. This Statement of Common Ground sets out Homes England's engagement in the East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Area (ENSRA), supplementing the statement submitted earlier in February 2022.

Homes England's Purpose & Mission

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

The significance of ENSRA

5. ENSRA is a project of regional and national significance. This land area of approximately 50 hectares is within a 15 minute walk from the train station and Broads. Such a set of contiguous central brown-field and redundant sites is a rare opportunity for a city to address and it is critical that the strategic opportunity is grasped to allow the outcome to be greater than the sum of the parts – a comprehensive urban transformation that sets the agenda for the twenty-first century, establishing Norwich firmly as one of the UK's most forward-thinking cities.

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

6. 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. Comparable current sites where the Agency is heavily involved include York Central and Bristol Temple Quarter.
7. 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. The Agency will seek to bring the full range of its powers and tools into play to support successful delivery. The ENSRA will, subject to further approvals, be considered for the release of funds to allow the business cases to be prepared for capital investment programmes in the future as the scheme progresses.
8. The Agency has created a specific internal team of experts in long term development and regeneration, masterplanning, quality and design, and property financing and investment to work on its contribution to the ENSRA. This team will ensure the Agency plays its fullest possible part in supporting the delivery partners through timely advice and expertise, as well as exploring, if needed, the full range of capital interventions that the Agency has access to. These currently include: development and infrastructure finance, infrastructure grant, grant to underpin affordable housing delivery, land ownership / control and the ability to enter into equity type delivery partnerships. A workplan is actively being agreed between NCC and Homes England to provide key inputs to the next stage delivery work over coming weeks and months as part of the parallel workstreams to the GNLP timetable. In addition, the Agency looks to support the private sector more widely to facilitate high quality well designed and sustainable residential and commercial development.

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Homes England's objectives for ENSRA

9. The objectives and rationale for our engagement include:

- To secure a comprehensive adopted masterplan, Local Plan allocation and Supplementary Planning Document which will optimise development potential across all of the sites and inform planning applications, thereby obviating piece-meal development that could compromise excellent design and place-making.
- To support the project partners to test viability and develop delivery strategies and action plans.
- To refine and update the development viability appraisal over time and support business case development for public investment, in order to see these brownfield sites successfully brought into beneficial use for new homes and jobs much faster than would otherwise be possible, with optimal outcomes in respect of infrastructure delivery, design and place-making.
- To identify an appropriate delivery mechanism to ensure provision of the common infrastructure needed to unlock the full potential of the sites.

Homes England's role in ENSRA

10. In order to ensure the timely and effective delivery of the ENSRA private and public partners need to work together and have a shared understanding of viability and deliverability. The masterplan commission that all partners previously agreed includes a further stage 3 to facilitate the appropriate allocation of infrastructure costs across the various sites and allow for a coherent sequencing of a delivery strategy for both infrastructure and the build out of housing, commercial and other development between the various landowners. This is with a view to ensuring individual landowners and

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associated developers can recognise and plan for the timing of their site's development and ensure appropriate development finance is in place.

11. Homes England is working with Norwich City Council and the wider partnership on the funding for that commission. An emerging brief identifies the following outputs:

- Demonstrate the viability and deliverability of each of the sites, individually and collectively. Initial cost and market evidence exists and this will need to be reviewed, critically appraised and firmed up as part of the commission.
- Bring together the results of land-owner/ stakeholder engagement to review the viability position on a consistent basis across all related sites and to assure the assumptions are robust and reasonable.
- Understand the viability of the project and what each of the sites may be able to contribute by bringing together a consolidated cashflow for the project, including the level of affordable housing and other planning obligations.
- Specify the full breadth of potential planning obligations and the impact of these upon development viability and delivery.
- Demonstrate the impact of changes in cost and value parameters upon the viability of the comprehensive development and individual schemes.
- Inform the appropriate type and level of public intervention (if any) required to unlock and accelerate housing. If public intervention is required, to provide the necessary information to underpin the production of an HMT (Treasury) compliant five case business case model.
- Provide a tool to quantify the impacts of development variables and project risks through sensitivity and scenario testing.
- Provide advice on the delivery options and optimal strategy.



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12. The emerging programme for a Stage 3 Delivery Plan for the ENSRA is to procure consultants in early summer 2022, subject to final confirmation of Homes England's 2022-23 budget. This Stage 3 work will establish a more detailed baseline for the preparation of Business Cases for potential future funding. It should be noted that the opportunities arising from regeneration of the ENSRA sites, and the objectives from such redevelopment, sit well with Government objectives for brownfield, sustainable regeneration, and therefore are likely to align with criteria for Government funding sources.

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