

Minutes
Greater Norwich Development Partnership Board

Date: Wednesday, 1 October 2025

Time: 11.00pm

Venue: Upper Yare Room - Horizon Centre, Peachman Way, Norwich, NR7 0WF

Present:

Board Members:

Broadland District Council

Cllr Susan Holland

Cllr Jan Davis

South Norfolk Council

Cllr Daniel Elmer (chair, following election)

Cllr Lisa Neal

Norwich City Council

Cllr Carli Harper

Cllr Adam Giles

Norfolk County Council:

Broads Authority

Tim Jickells

Greater Norwich Development Partnership

In attendance:

Grace Burke – Greater Norwich Programme Manager

Ellie Leeper – Greater Norwich Project Officer

Officers:

Adam Banham

Phil Courtier

Mike Burrell

Sarah Ashurst

Matt Tracey

Paul Harris

Ruth Sainsbury

Georgie Day



NORWICH
City Council



Norfolk County Council



Broads Authority
The Broads - a member of the
National Park family

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs, M Booth, K Mason-Billig, D Roper, M Stonnard and J Woolliscroft.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

3. QUESTIONS

There were no questions received from members of the public.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

5. EARLY WORKSTREAMS, STRATEGIC DIRECTION, NATIONAL POLICY ALIGNMENT, AND THE CALL FOR SITES

In introducing the report Mike Burrell informed members that the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) Review would extend the Plan to 2045 and potentially to 2060 and would aim to meet increased housing needs of at least 2,600 homes annually. The review would also consider the potential for new settlements.

Early workstreams included a Call for Sites, and consideration of alignment with the National Development Management Policies, as well as updates to the National Planning Policy Framework. Strategic growth planning would focus on infrastructure-first development, environmental assessments, and sustainable spatial strategies, with an emphasis on sectors such as clean energy, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing.

Infrastructure delivery would be coordinated through the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan 2025, with upgrades to transport, utilities, and community facilities, supported by collaboration with Homes England and other stakeholders.

A Member Workshop would be held in March 2026 and would be an opportunity to focus on strategic approaches to growth, and existing GNLP policies.

It was confirmed that the Call for Sites would represent a renewed invitation for the submission of land for a variety of development uses. Sites already allocated would not require resubmission unless the landowner intended to revise their original proposal.

It was emphasised that site allocation policies would require developers to sign a formal commitment to infrastructure delivery. In allocating sites, close collaboration

would be undertaken with major utility providers to ensure that appropriate infrastructure was in place to support development.

It was noted that South Norfolk's site submission for a new settlement to the New Towns Taskforce had not been successful. However, it was confirmed that proposals for new settlements could still be brought forward through the Local Plan process.

In light of the anticipated changes arising from Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation, members were advised that work undertaken through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework would align strategic growth proposals with the emerging Spatial Development Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk, which would subsequently fall under the remit of the elected Mayor of both Counties.

In relation to the consultant's findings on forthcoming consents within the current Plan affecting Whitlingham Wastewater Recycling Centre, members were advised that the necessary upgrades to the facility were scheduled for completion by 2030 at the latest. It was noted that the number of homes likely to be occupied prior to the upgrades represented only around one per cent of the Centre's total sewage throughput, resulting in a minimal environmental impact. The upgrades were considered sufficient to accommodate the level of growth anticipated in the emerging Local Plan. Regular meetings were being held with both the consultants and Anglian Water, and the report was in its final stages, with publication anticipated in November.

Members were advised that extensive engagement had taken place with water companies and other stakeholders to ensure that the necessary water infrastructure was in place to support planned housing growth. It was also noted that the Government was considering the implementation of recommendations from the Independent Review of the Water Sector.

In response to a query regarding water resources and the capacity to support development, Sarah Ashurst informed members that she was contributing to one of the devolution workstreams focused on sustainability. One of the key recommendations for the proposed combined authority was to undertake a comprehensive review of water-related issues, including the strategic location of infrastructure and collaboration with suppliers to assess both existing and future capacity. This would include the proposed desalination plant at Bacton.

Regarding the timescales for development on allocated land and concerns about potential land banking by developers, members were informed that the review process includes an assessment of whether site allocations were progressing in a timely manner. It was noted that there was some divergence of opinion between developers and the Government on this issue, and it was anticipated that the Government might introduce more stringent measures to address these concerns in the future.

In response to concerns regarding inadequate maintenance of open spaces within new developments, members were advised that while this was recognised as a significant issue, it might be challenging to restrict the involvement of management

companies in overseeing these areas.

With regard to the East Norwich development, it was noted that there were challenges around deliverability, and the allocated housing numbers might need to be reviewed going forward.

The Chairman suggested it would be helpful for members to be informed of any significant site allocations where developers had withdrawn and requested that this be recorded as an **Action Point** for the next meeting.

With regard to the Member Workshop, which was proposed to be open to all members, the Chairman recommended that an informal meeting be convened beforehand involving the senior political leadership and officers from each authority, to allow for the exchange of initial views. This proposal was agreed and appended to the following resolution.

RESOLVED

That the GNDP endorses the following approach to initial work on the GNLP Review.

Dependent on the timing of the required legislation, regulations and guidance on plan-making being provided by Government:

- Proceed with the GNLP review in line with the Interim LDSs and assess whether LDS revisions are required once government announcements have been made.
- Launch and actively promote the Call for Sites, with the initial call beginning as soon as possible after supporting information on the new plan-making system is made available by government, most likely in early 2026.
- Develop evidence to explore the allocation of land for a new settlement or settlements.
- Ensure that all reasonable growth strategies are assessed for environmental impact, viability and deliverability.
- Budget, for evidence collection, including the appointment of consultants for specialised evidence.
- Align strategic growth proposals with the emerging Spatial Development Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk.
- Align all policies with NDMPs and the revised NPPF.
- Prepare for initial GNLP Review consultation in 2026.
- That an informal meeting be convened involving the senior political leadership and officers from each authority, to allow for the exchange of initial views prior to holding the Members Workshop.

6. GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN REVIEW DIGITALISATION

Mike Burrell introduced the report which explained that digitalisation would be essential for delivering the Local Plan within 30 months, by improving efficiency and the consultation experience and plan quality, whilst reducing repetitive tasks.

Members were advised that Norwich City Council had secured £50,000 from the Digital Planning Improvement Fund, which will be used with funding previously secured by Broadland and South Norfolk. Together, this will provide a total of £130,000 to support digital planning, including a Digital Maturity Assessment and publication of key datasets.

The Digitalisation Report would act as to guide software procurement and had identified three potential providers. It was estimated that annual costs would be between £12,000 and £50,000, but this would be offset by significant resource savings.

Challenges were noted such as data ownership, resource demands, alignment with planning reforms, and the need to assess AI use rigorously.

A new GNDP Digital Project Officer role was proposed to lead digital system development, coordinate efforts, manage suppliers, and support wider administrative tasks, with rollout and training planned for 2026.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that the software was primarily intended to support the drafting of the Local Plan. However, if its functionality proved suitable for broader planning applications, its wider use could be considered as part of future procurement discussions.

It was also confirmed that non-digital channels would be made available to ensure residents who were not digitally literate could participate in consultations.

The Chair sought clarification on how value for money would be demonstrated in relation to any new software procured to support plan-making. It was confirmed that a value for money assessment would form part of the procurement process

The report was noted.

7. GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS AND RESOURCING

Mike Burrell introduced the report which set out the pre-project preparations initiated for the GNLP Review, including a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise partnership arrangements and reflect the GNDP's continued strength.

It was explained that governance arrangements mirrored historic structures, with the GNDP Board making recommendations for district sign-off, and that there was interest in expanding its decision-making role to support timely delivery.

A dedicated Team had been assembled, led by Mike Burrell as GNLP Manager and

supported by permanent and contingent staff from district partners, with Ben Burgess appointed as Project Sponsor.

District partners were expected to budget £200,000 annually to support staffing and resources, with Norfolk County Council contributing IT equipment and 1FTE, and some study costs potentially shared county-wide.

The Team planned to rotate across partner authority offices to strengthen collaboration with local planning teams and support project preparations. Core working days would be based at Norfolk County Council, with additional days allocated to offices of partner authorities on a rotational basis.

RESOLVED

To recommend that Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council and Norfolk County Council sign the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) Review Memorandum of Understanding.

(The meeting ended at 12.01pm.)