

Minutes
Greater Norwich Development Partnership Board

Date: Wednesday, 11 June 2025

Time: 1.30pm

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

Present:

Board Members:

Broadland District Council

Cllr Susan Holland

Cllr Dan Roper

Cllr Martin Booth

South Norfolk Council:

Cllr Daniel Elmer (chair, following election)

Cllr Lisa Neal

Norwich City Council

Cllr Mike Stonard

Cllr Carli Harper

Cllr Adam Giles

Norfolk County Council:

Cllr Kay Mason Billig

Cllr Chris Dawson

Broads Authority

Tim Jickells

Officers:

Ben Burgess

Adam Banham

Mike Burrell

Matt Tracey

Paul Harris

Marie-Pierre Tighe

Greater Norwich Development Partnership

Georgie Day

In attendance:

Grace Burke – Greater Norwich Programme Manager



NORWICH
City Council



Norfolk County Council



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

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference were taken as the first item, as it had been informally agreed prior to the meeting that as South Norfolk had not completed its full term for chairing the meeting, the post would remain with the South Norfolk Council for a further year.

It was,

RESOLVED

To agree the Board's Terms of Reference, as amended.

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

It was,

RESOLVED

to appoint Cllr Daniel Elmer as Chairman, in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Greater Norwich Development Partnership Board.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Cllrs: Graham Plant and Josh Woolliscroft.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

5. QUESTIONS

There were no questions received from members of the public.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

6. UPDATE ON GNDP WORKSTREAMS

The Board was advised of the following workstreams:

Monitoring: The 2023/24 Annual Monitoring Report was complete, with work underway on the 2024/25 version, which would fully align with the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). Improvements included interactive GIS mapping, Power BI visualisations, and streamlined data collection via SharePoint.

Publication: The website had been launched in a user-friendly format, with an interactive map providing information on all site allocations in the Local Plan and the Area Action Plan. The second phase of this work would include progress reports for sites.

Digitalisation: The plan-making period had been shortened to 30 months, which would mean that utilising digital tools would be essential. A report looking at digitalisation opportunities for the Local Plan was being prepared and a workshop would be held at the end of the month, and the findings brought to the next Board meeting.

Awards: The GNLP had been shortlisted for the Plan Making category at the Planning Awards 2025. The winner would be announced at an awards ceremony this evening.

The GNLP had also been shortlisted for the Best Plan category at the RTPI East of England Awards for Planning Excellence 2025 Awards. The results would be announced at the ceremony on Wednesday 18 June 2025.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs): Several SPDs and advice notes were in development or at the consultation stages, covering topics such as sustainable communities, environmental protection, student accommodation, affordable housing, and self/custom build housing. These aimed to support GNLP policies and improve planning guidance.

Green Infrastructure and Design Initiatives: The updated Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy, adopted in March 2025, would be progressed as an SPD. Design codes were also being developed for South Norfolk and Broadland, with the Broads Authority having adopted its own design guide.

Anglian Water: Had advised that Whitlingham Wastewater Recycling Centre was at capacity and, therefore, no more planning permissions should be granted without restrictions. Funding was available to undertake upgrade works at the site, and, therefore, this was understood to be an interim position.

Environment Agency modelling demonstrated there was unlikely to be a class deterioration (e.g. Moderate to Poor) in Water Framework Directive status because of proposed development. To balance the risk of additional flows against the significant benefits of additional housing, consultants Sweco had been commissioned to produce an evidence study, with the final report expected in mid-July. A position statement had been drafted and was being used by Development Management officers in the meantime.

New Settlements: In response to the New Towns Taskforce call for evidence, South Norfolk had submitted a representation. A new development corporation could be set up to deliver a local new town. Any new settlement would be integral to a GNLP Review.

Design Codes: The South Norfolk and Broadland Design Code was being produced by the consultant Tibbalds, consultation on the Code began on 12 May 2025. The Broads Authority adopted Design Guide and Code for the Broads SPD in March 2025.

Community Infrastructure Levy Review: The Government did not support the roll out of the new Infrastructure Levy, as proposed by the previous Government, a decision would, therefore, need to be made on progressing a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Green Infrastructure Recreation Avoidance Mitigation Strategy: The county-wide Norfolk Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy Action Plan had been produced and approved to provide an updated position on this issue.

Health Protocol: A revised protocol has been taken through councils in Norfolk and East Suffolk.

In response to a query about class deterioration in Water Framework Directive status, Ben Burgess advised the Board that Anglian Water were proposing that a condition be placed on planning applications that limited the occupation of the development until upgrade works at Whitlingham had been completed. The three Greater Norwich Planning Authorities had jointly published a position statement acknowledging this issue, but confirming they would not impose the requested condition, which was considered flawed. Instead, officers would assess each application against the risk to the environment and would weigh this against the benefits of the development in the planning balance.

It was emphasised that the condition proposed by Anglian Water contained no information about what the actual impact on the environment could be, and it was the opinion of officers that the economic benefits would far outweigh the potential harm that could be caused to the environment. It was anticipated that the Sweco evidence study would back this view.

It was acknowledged that there was a risk that planning applications could be challenged without this condition, but it was seen as a risk worth taking.

It was noted that any challenges could slow development, but that Anglian Water would be aware of their responsibilities in meeting the Government growth agenda. It was further noted that it was for the Government to hold Anglian Water to account in respect of water contaminants.

The Chairman noted that although purpose-built student accommodation was predominantly an issue for the City, Colney might also be considered for this type of development. It was confirmed that this issue would be picked up following the meeting.

It was,

RESOLVED

To note the Workstreams Update.

7. GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Mike Burrell informed the Board that the GNLP, adopted in March 2024, needed to be reviewed due to a 34 percent increase in local housing need following changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024. Government policy now expected local plans to be updated promptly to reflect such significant changes.

Broadland, Norwich, and South Norfolk Councils were, therefore, advised to proceed with a joint review of the GNLP, starting with scoping work in October 2025 and aiming for adoption by March 2029, as outlined in their Indicative Local Development Schemes (LDSs).

The Councils were also recommended to collaborate on the development of a future Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for Norfolk and Suffolk, which would provide a strategic framework for local plans and might be required under potential devolution arrangements.

A joint review of the GNLP was recommended, as being more efficient and cost effective than separate plans and not reviewing the Plan would be non-compliant with legislation and risk Government intervention. Moreover, a timely GNLP review would ensure planned housing growth was supported by infrastructure, avoid unplanned development, and maintain local control.

The Government had placed an emphasis on digitalisation to streamline plan-making and this would help balance resources between the GNLP review and development of the SDS.

It was confirmed that it had recently been agreed at the Norfolk Strategic Planning Forum to scope out SDS development requirements ahead of the potential establishment of the Mayoral Strategic Authority.

In answer to a query, the Board was informed that although no details had been made available from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government about the phased rollout of local plans, it was likely that a joint approach would help to access funding from Government for plan-making.

In response to a question about how Local Government Reorganisation would affect plan-making, it was confirmed that through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Forum all the Norfolk planning authorities were working together on coordinating local plans and were close to finalising the latest Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework. This work allowed Norfolk to be very well placed to respond to whichever configuration resulted from Local Government Reorganisation. As referred to above, digitalisation would also help significantly with this.

It was confirmed that an estimate of producing the Local Plan separately and the cost of producing the current Local Plan could be provided following the meeting.

It was confirmed that a report on digitalisation would be brought to the next meeting on 1 October 2025, as well as an initial look at the scoping work for the review of the Local Plan.

It was,

RESOLVED

1. That Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk Councils be recommended to progress the review of the GNLP in line with the timetables already submitted to government in the Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk Indicative Local Development Schemes.
2. That Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk Councils be recommended to engage in collaborative work to inform and influence future production of a Spatial Development Strategy.

(The meeting ended at 2.15pm)

