

GNDP Board

Date: Wednesday 1st October 2025
Time: 11.00 to 13.00
Location: Upper Yare Room, Horizon Centre, Broadland Business Park

Board members	Officers
<i>Broadland District Council</i>	
Cllr Susan Holland	Phil Courtier
Cllr Dan Roper	Ben Burgess
Cllr Martin Booth	Adam Banham
<i>Norwich City Council</i>	
Cllr Mike Stonnard	Sarah Ashurst
Cllr Carli Harper	Mike Burrell
Cllr Adam Giles	
<i>South Norfolk Council</i>	
Cllr Daniel Elmer	Phil Courtier
Cllr Lisa Neal	Ben Burgess
Cllr Josh Woolliscroft	Adam Banham
<i>Norfolk County Council</i>	
Cllr Kay Mason Billig	Matt Tracey
Cllr Chris Dawson	Paul Harris
Cllr Graham Plant	
<i>Broads Authority</i>	
Tim Jickells	Ruth Sainsbury
<i>GNDP</i>	
	Georgie Day

Agenda

		Pg.
1	Apologies To receive Apologies for Absence.	
2	Declarations of Interest To receive declarations of interest. <i>(Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting).</i>	
3	Questions To consider any questions received from members of the public in accordance with the Board's Terms of Reference.	
4	Minutes To agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 11/06/2025.	4
5	Early Workstreams, Strategic Direction, National Policy Alignment, and the Call for Sites Lead: Mike Burrell, Planning Policy Team Leader, Norwich City Council	10
6	Greater Norwich Local Plan Review Digitalisation Lead: Georgie Day, GNDP Project Manager	24
7	Greater Norwich Local Plan Review Arrangements and Resourcing Lead: Georgie Day, GNDP Project Manager	55

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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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)

ITEM 5

**Greater Norwich Local Plan Review (2025–2045/2060)
Early Workstreams, Strategic Direction, National Policy
Alignment, and the Call for Sites**

Summary

1. This report sets out the strategic direction for the review of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), extending its planning horizon to 2045 and potentially to 2060 if a new settlement or settlements are included. The review will need to incorporate at least a 34% increase in housing provision.

2. The report outlines the early workstreams required to support this process. With the timing dependent on forthcoming announcements from the Government, the key early components of the plan review that are currently anticipated include the launch of a Call for Sites and work on alignment with both the new National Development Management Policies (NDMPs), and with recent and forthcoming revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Recommendations

It is recommended that the GNLP endorses the following approach to initial work on the GNLP Review.

Contact officers

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1. Drivers for Review

1.1 As set out in the [report](#) supported by the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) on June 11 2025, there are several issues which mean that it is necessary to review the GNLP at pace. In brief, these are:

- **Statutory Duty:** A review of the GNLP's policies must take place within five years of its adoption in March 2024.
- **Housing Need:** The revised methodology in the December 2024 NPPF increases the annual housing need in Greater Norwich from just over 2,000 to nearly 2,600 homes per year and across Norfolk from around 4,000 to 6,000 homes per year.
- **National Planning Policy:** Successive governments have set out that preparing and maintaining up-to-date local plans should be a priority, including providing for enough homes to meet needs and aligning growth with infrastructure delivery.
- **Plan-Making Reform:** The new system introduces a 30-month plan cycle and requires digital-first plan formats.
- **NDMPs:** The National Development Management Policies which are due to be introduced under the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 will carry equal statutory weight and override local plans in the event of a conflict. There will be a need to consider existing GNLP policies in the light of NDMPs when the latter are consulted on (likely this Autumn) and then finalised.

1.2 Furthermore, since the June 2025 report was considered by the GNDP, land supply has increased in importance as an issue as the newly published Greater Norwich five-year housing land supply now stands at 4.85 years.

2. Early Workstreams

2.1 Paragraphs 6 and 7 of the June 2025 GNDP report explained that whilst the Government has committed to a faster and more focussed plan-making system, it has not yet produced the secondary legislation, regulations, guidance and templates to enable formal plan-making

under the new system to begin. For that reason, and to meet the Government's requirement that plan-making timetables must be updated, the partners submitted Interim Local Development Schemes (LDSs) in March 2025 making it clear that the timetable for GNLP Review was largely dependent on the progress the Government makes.

- 2.2 A recent conversation between policy officers and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) civil servants has established that forthcoming announcements from the Government will:
- clarify plan review timescales,
 - provide information on supporting material on plan-making which will be hosted on the Create or Update a Local Plan ([Calp](#)) website,
 - consult on further proposed amendments to the NPPF and
 - consult on the new NDMPs.
- 2.3 Supporting information for plan-making will be published by the Government on the Calp website in tranches, with the initial information on the early stages referenced in this report available shortly.
- 2.4 Although not definitively stated, there appears to remain a possibility, as consulted on by the previous government, that there will be a phased roll out of the new plan-making system so that the Greater Norwich partners could be informed by the Government when plan-making should commence.
- 2.5 MHCLG civil servants offered to engage further and provide support for council officers from Norfolk progressing local plan reviews, i.e. those from the GNLP team and from Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.
- 2.6 The Chief Planner's timely August 2025 [newsletter](#) makes it clear that local planning authorities (LPAs) at our stage of plan-making cannot carry out an early statutory consultation under the existing system followed by pre-submission statutory consultation under the new system. Therefore, we will have to wait until the new legislation,

regulations and early-stage advice are in place before formal plan-making can begin.

- 2.7 In line with advice officers gave on this matter in the last GNDP report, the Chief Planner goes on to set out early non-statutory activities that can be undertaken in advance of formally progressing a plan under the new system. Ahead of the government announcements highlighted in paragraph 5 above, this needs to be “*low regrets*” work which we are as certain as we can be that will be required whatever changes are made to the plan-making system.
- 2.8 Taking account of the Chief Planner’s advice, discussions with MHCLG and an officer team workshop in mid-September, the following non-statutory tasks have been identified. In some cases, as explained below, these are already being progressed.
- **Baseline data:** update our spatial profile and supporting baseline data. Initial work has started on this.
 - **Land availability:** Identify the opportunities and constraints on land in the area. The first stage of this is to hold a “Call for Sites”. This will be followed by an initial high-level assessment of the relative merits of submitted sites for discussion with members. Following this, it is anticipated that a digitised Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) will be undertaken in early/mid 2026. This may be done using a new methodology developed with Kings Lynn and West Norfolk or any using any equivalent methodology the government might introduce. Initial work has begun on collating materials for the Call for Sites (see appendix 1 for further information). Since MHCLG has stated that a template will be available for undertaking a Call for Sites, this non-statutory stage of plan-making will be progressed as soon as possible after integrating any additional information from the national template into the draft Call for Sites materials in appendix 1.
 - **Site Deliverability Assessment:** Identify the deliverability of existing site allocations and explore whether other deliverable alternatives are available, or whether dedicated policy approaches, especially

for brownfield sites, may be necessary to ensure delivery. Initial work has started on this.

- **Evidence Updates:** Review evidence gaps and commission updated Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA), infrastructure capacity studies, climate resilience evaluations, and environmental assessments as necessary. The need for specific evidence on the viability of housing development in Norwich has been identified, as has evidence for a review of the settlement hierarchy. Other locally specific evidence requirements may also be identified. Initial scoping work is taking place, but this work will benefit from clear government advice on evidence base requirements for all local plans as they are likely to be streamlined and templates will be provided.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Initiate early dialogue with elected members, communities, other statutory consultees and the development industry, including emails and web coverage referencing this report and outlining the early stages of plan-making. This will include developing a new engagement strategy with Communications officers to ensure early meaningful input into plan-making.
- **Policy Audit:** Review and revise GNLP policies to avoid duplication or conflict in line with forthcoming national policy changes. This work cannot be progressed in detail until we have sight of the draft NMDPs and the revised NPPF, both of which we anticipate will be consulted on in the Autumn. The result is very likely to be a refocus of GNLP review content primarily on the spatial strategy and site allocations. It will also be important to determine how best to reflect recent and likely forthcoming changes to the NPPF which place a greater focus on development in 'growth driving' sectors nationally which are all already important parts of the Greater Norwich economy: advanced manufacturing, creative industries, clean energy industries, digital technologies, professional and business services, life sciences and financial services.

- **Project planning** for the early stages of plan-making is already taking place, as referred to in the GNDP Resourcing and Arrangements paper on this agenda. Once more information is available from MHCLG, future work will be possible to align with the 30-month timetable and gateway assessments that will be required for local plans.
- **Cross-Boundary Coordination:** Maintain effective sub-regional coordination through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework/Forum (NSPF) and contribute to the development of the emerging Norfolk and Suffolk Spatial Development Strategy (SDS). As set out in the June 11 GNDP report, the SDS will cover the amount and distribution of housing and infrastructure across the two counties but will not include site allocations. It is possible that the SDS will redistribute growth across Norfolk in comparison with the recent methodology developed for calculating housing need. It is also possible that neighbouring authorities could ask the GNLP Review to provide for their unmet housing needs. Ambitious initial timescales from government seek to have a Norfolk and Suffolk SDS adopted by 2029. Thus, it is very likely that development of the GNLP Review and the Norfolk and Suffolk SDS will be a mutually iterative process.
- **Digital Capacity Building:** The transition to GIS-based mapping and structured data formats to support digital plan-making is being progressed. These will need to be in place in early 2026 to progress the GNLP Review. For further detail, see the GNLP Review Digitalisation board paper on this agenda.
- **Monitoring and Governance:** Work on strengthening Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) processes and internal governance to support agile decision-making is in progress.
- **Establishing the GNLP Review officer team:** Mike Burrell has recently been reappointed as the GNLP Manager and will start work full time in early November 2025. As stated in the June GNDP report, a Project Manager (Georgie Day) began work in November 2024. The recruitment process is ongoing for a GNDP Digital Project Officer.

Contingent staff contribution will be made up of one and a half Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) from Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council, and one FTE from Norwich City Council. Norfolk County Council will also endeavour to contribute 1FTE in staff resource.

Additional resource will be added as required by the plan-making process and signed off by Directors. A working pattern is being developed which will enable the GNLP Review team to remain embedded within district structures. The dedicated team will commence full time work when government announcements allow.

3. Strategic Growth Overview

- 3.1 Strategic growth is essential to deliver the scale of development required to meet the revised housing targets, which include at least a 34% increase in local housing need. This growth must be supported by infrastructure first planning, ensuring that transport, utilities, education and healthcare services are delivered in tandem with new housing. Furthermore, strategic growth provides an opportunity to embed climate resilience, biodiversity net gain and high-quality placemaking principles from the outset.
- 3.2 In a time of rapid change in plan-making and local government reorganisation, the GNLP Review presents a critical opportunity to shape the long-term spatial development of Greater Norwich, thus leaving a strong legacy for future administrations to build on. The review will consider intensification and expansion of the existing Norwich urban area, the role of towns and villages in supporting sustainable growth, and the potential allocation of a new settlement or settlements which may accommodate a large proportion of long-term growth.
- 3.3 Key considerations in defining a spatial strategy will include:
 - **Urban intensification** – considering the potential to maximise development within Norwich and its urban fringe through higher-density housing, mixed-use regeneration and brownfield redevelopment.

- **Urban extensions** – assessing the need and potential locations for extending the Norwich urban area.
- **Expansion of main towns and key service centres** - assessing the opportunities for sustainable growth in main towns and key service centres where infrastructure capacity and accessibility are favourable.
- **New settlements**: considering the extent to which allocating land for a new community or communities can deliver long-term housing and employment growth in a coordinated and sustainable manner.
- **Village Clusters** – identifying the role which villages should play in supporting sustainable growth.

4. Potential for a New Settlement or Settlements

- 4.1 Paragraph 164 of the GNLP states that *“This plan identifies enough sustainable sites within and on the edge of settlements to meet currently assessed need for the plan period. A review of the local plan will need to assess options for longer term growth, including the potential for a sustainable new settlement or settlements”*.
- 4.2 In early 2025, South Norfolk Council submitted a site to the New Towns Taskforce for consideration for a new settlement. This could accommodate up to ten thousand homes, along with supporting infrastructure and employment. Subject to announcements by government, which seem likely to be made in late September and should clarify whether the housing numbers contributed by new towns should count toward authorities’ local housing need figures, a new settlement or settlements could play a key long-term role in the GNLP review.
- 4.3 Paragraph 22 of the NPPF states that *“Strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption”*. It further states that *“Where larger scale developments such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns form part of the strategy for the area, policies should be set within a vision that looks further ahead (at least 30 years), to take into account the likely timescale for delivery”*.

4.4 Thus, depending on the choices made through plan review, there may be a need to both allocate sites to deliver homes within the 15-year timeframe from anticipated GNLP Review adoption in 2030, in conjunction with the longer-term delivery of a new settlement or settlements.

4.5 As a result, the current officer view is that the GNLP Review should extend its planning horizon to 2045 and to 2060 if a new settlement or settlements are included. The current officer view is that the base date for plan-making should be 2025. These points will be clarified through the plan-making process.

5. Infrastructure and Delivery

5.1 Strategic growth will be underpinned by a refreshed Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), coordinated with the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan (GNIP) 2025 and updates to the GNLP Infrastructure appendix. Key infrastructure priorities include:

- Ongoing upgrades to the A47 and A11 corridors
- Expansion of public transport and active travel networks
- Investment in water, energy, and digital infrastructure
- Provision of new schools, healthcare facilities and community amenities.

5.2 Officers will engage with Homes England, utility providers and local stakeholders to secure funding and delivery mechanisms, including the potential use of development corporations for large-scale settlements.

6. Workshop

6.1 It is proposed that a member/officer workshop should be held with a range of questions to elicit views on strategic approaches to growth, the approach to the existing GNLP policies 2 to 6 given the introduction of the NDMPs, and the Vision and Objectives for the plan review. The workshop will inform initial consultation materials for the GNLP Review. It is proposed that this workshop will be held after the Call for Sites has been completed and when the draft NDMPs have been published to assist focussed discussions.

Recommendations

It is recommended 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.

Appendix 1A Call for Sites Overview

As the Call for Sites is not a statutory element of the plan-making process and to allow plan-making progress to be made as quickly as possible, the following initial draft documentation has been developed on the Call for Sites. This will be reviewed if a national template for undertaking a Call for Sites is published in the Autumn. The intention is to digitalise the Call for Sites where possible to streamline the submission and analysis of sites.

Purpose and Scope

The Call for Sites invites submissions for land that may be suitable for:

- Housing (including affordable housing, specialist housing and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation)
- Employment and commercial uses
- Mixed-use development
- Renewable energy
- Biodiversity net gain, green infrastructure and Nutrient Neutrality mitigation
- Community and leisure facilities

Geographic Scope

The Call for Sites covers all of Greater Norwich, excluding the Broads Authority area.

Timeline

The Call for Sites will be open for eight weeks. Dependent on government announcements, it is likely to be launched early in 2026.

Submission Process

Submissions will be made via an online form on the GNLP website. Required information includes:

- A site boundary map
- Ownership details
- Proposed land use
- Constraints and deliverability information

Assessment

It is currently considered likely that all submitted sites will be subject to an initial high-level assessment and then assessed in more detail for suitability, availability, and deliverability. Inclusion in the Call for Sites or subsequently through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), or any equivalent following the production of national guidance, does not guarantee allocation in the Local Plan.

Communications and Engagement Strategy

- **Channels:** GNLP website, press releases, social media, email bulletins and potentially a “How to submit a site” video.
- **Target Audiences:** Landowners, developers, planning agents, parish councils, and community groups.
- **Key Messages:**
 - The purpose and scope of the Call for Sites
 - How to submit a site
 - Submission deadlines and next steps
- **Support:** Drop-in sessions, webinars, and dedicated contact points for queries.

Member Engagement

Members are encouraged to:

- Attend a workshop/webinar on the Call for Sites
- Promote awareness and encourage participation in the Call for Sites.
- Clarify that site submissions do not imply endorsement or guarantee allocation.
- Support transparency and inclusivity throughout the plan-making process.

Appendix 1B Call for Sites – Member Briefing Note

Date: TBC

Prepared by: GNLP Review Team

Purpose of this Briefing

This note provides an overview of the forthcoming Call for Sites exercise as part of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) Review. It outlines the purpose, process and implications for Members.

Background

The GNLP Review (2025–2045) is a statutory requirement to ensure that planning policies remain up-to-date, responsive to local needs and aligned with national policy. A key early step is the Call for Sites, which invites landowners, developers and other stakeholders to submit land that may be suitable for future development or other strategic uses.

Objectives of the Call for Sites

Identify land that may be available for:

- Housing (including affordable, specialist housing and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation)
- Employment and commercial development
- Mixed-use schemes
- Renewable energy infrastructure
- Biodiversity net gain, green infrastructure and Nutrient Neutrality mitigation
- Community and leisure facilities

Sites submitted through the Call for Sites will help to build a comprehensive evidence base to inform site assessments and spatial strategy options. The Call for Sites will also help to ensure transparency and inclusivity in the plan-making process.

Process and Timeline

- Launch Date: [Insert Launch Date – most likely January 2026]
- Duration: 8 weeks
- Submission Method: Online form and supporting documents via the GNLP website

- **Assessment:** After the Call for Sites is complete, high level assessment will take place to inform a member workshop. Submitted sites will subsequently be assessed in greater detail for suitability, availability, and deliverability. This will feed into the initial consultation on the GNLP Review (2025-45) and subsequent plan stages.

Role of Members

Members can play a key role in the success of the Call for Sites by:

- **Supporting public awareness:** Encouraging constituents, parish councils and community groups to engage with the process.
- **Helping the public to understand the implications of the Call for Sites:** Site submissions do not imply endorsement or guarantee allocation. All sites will be subject to rigorous assessment and public consultation.

Next Steps

- Officers will provide updates on the volume and nature of submissions and brief Members ahead of key decision points.
- Communications will be issued via the GNLP website, social media and stakeholder mailing lists.
- A dedicated guidance note and submission form will be made available.
- Officers will be available to respond to queries and provide support throughout the process.

ITEM 6

Greater Norwich Local Plan Review Digitalisation

Summary

This report covers the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP)'s progression of the digitalisation workstream.

Digitalisation presents opportunities to automate processes saving resource and money, making other processes more efficient, and in other areas, improving the quality of plan-making. A report has been prepared outlining this opportunity and is appended to this report.

The GNDP is in the process of recruiting a Digital Project Officer to support the Local Plan Review and has also been successful in securing funding from Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government's Digital Planning Improvement Fund.

Recommendations

No recommendations. For information only.

Contact officers

Georgie Day, GNDP Project Manager

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Background docs

None

Appendices

GNDP Digitalisation Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The GNDP has agreed to recommend to their respective district Cabinets to progress a GNLP Review. In light of the NPPF requirement to produce a Local Plan in 30 months, digitalisation opportunities will be critical.
- 1.2 Digitalisation presents opportunities to automate processes saving resource and money, make other processes more efficient, and in other areas, improving the quality of plan-making.

2. Background Research

- 2.1 A report has been prepared looking into initial options for software to support the Local Plan. It has been appended to this report.
- 2.2 This is an area of significant interest for the government, and so contextual background has been provided as part of this report. It includes information on the key providers of Local Plan software and provides initial thoughts on how to progress digitalisation for a GNLP Review.
- 2.3 Initial research identifies three leading providers – Urban Intelligence, Objective Key Plan and JDi, our current provider.
- 2.4 Existing software commitments are forecast to be £17,000 for the financial year 2026/27.
- 2.5 New software is anticipated to cost between £12,000 and £50,000 depending on provider and level of service. It is anticipated that this cost will be offset by the significant resource savings. As part of the procurement exercise, it is proposed to conduct an estimate of likely cost saving created by the reduced time frame and resource burden, against the costs of procuring software.

3. Programme for procurement

- 3.1 Research and procurement 6-8 weeks, and there could be a further 4-6 weeks involved in developing the platform before it is ready to be used.
- 3.2 Work has begun engaging suppliers.
- 3.3 The next steps are:
 - a) Mapping of Local Plan process including identification of the key resource intensive tasks where software would be most impactful

b) Meeting with software providers. *Urban Intelligence, Objective KeyPlan* and *JDi* . Additionally, it may be worth a conversation with *CoPlug SiDM* – this team have additional functionality, which would be useful to explore.

c) Cost analysis

Assessment of software costs for each provider against likely staff resource saving.

d) Undertake procurement exercise

- Investigate procurement routes – it is likely we will use Norwich's procurement team and processes. If this is the case, 3 quotes will be required for contracts of under £100k. Conversations will be held with the procurement case officer to understand if there are any special requirements for an on-going subscription.
- Invitation to Tender
- Conduct Tender analysis and selection

e) Work with chosen provider to set up software. This could take a number of weeks, as it will involve setting up the software as we intend to use it going forward.

4. Digital Planning Improvement Fund

- 4.1 The Planning Digital Improvement Fund (DPIF) is a national initiative run by the Ministry for Housing and Local Government designed to support local planning authorities in modernising their planning services through digital innovation. The fund encourages collaboration, open data standards, and the adoption of new technologies to help local authorities meet evolving policy requirements and housing targets.
- 4.2 Norwich City Council, on behalf of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP), has been successful in a bid to support the digitalisation of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP).
- 4.3 As a successful applicant, the GNDP will receive £50,000 of funding, as well as support and training and access to peer learning through the national Open Planning Digital network. In return, Norwich City Council will be required to publish four key planning datasets in line with national standards. The datasets— Conservation Areas, Article 4 Directions, Listed Buildings, and Tree Preservation Orders—are already

held in GIS format by Norwich City Council and we have estimated that it will be relatively straightforward to provide this data.

- 4.4 The team will also be required to conduct a Digital Maturity Assessment (DMA) and develop a Digital Action Plan to guide future transformation of GNLP processes.
- 4.5 The GNDP will also be able to assimilate the residual funding held by South Norfolk and Broadland Councils who have previously been successful with the DPIF programme. This will bring the total to approximately £130,000 of funding for the GNDP (ring-fenced for digitalisation activity).
- 4.6 The team will be on-boarded to the programme in January, which is intended to align with the recruitment of the Digital Project Officer who will lead this workstream going forward. In the meantime, Mike Burrell and Georgie Day will be representing the GNDP at the Open Planning Digital National event to be held in Kent later in October.

5. Recruitment of a Digital Project Officer

- 5.1 The GNLP Digital Project Officer is a newly created permanent post, funded jointly by the GNDP. It is currently being recruited to.
- 5.2 The role is designed to:
 - Lead the technical development of the GNLP digital system.
 - Act as the central contact for digital workstreams across partner authorities.
 - Provide training, support, and guidance to officers.
 - Manage supplier relationships and ensure value for money.
 - Oversee user testing and system refinement.
 - Maintain the GNLP website and ensure compliance with accessibility and data protection standards.
- 5.3 The need for the post directly reflects the importance that the government has placed on the digitalisation of plan-making. The role will not only focus on digitalisation, but also on supporting broader GNDP administrative functions. This is to avoid hiring someone too narrowly specialised and to ensure flexibility in team support.

Recommendations

No recommendations. For information only.

Digitalisation Opportunities for the Greater Norwich Local Plan

October 2025

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Planning digitalisation agenda
3. The Potential of digitalisation
4. Benefits and challenges of digitalisation
5. Understanding the Local Plan making process
6. Other considerations
7. Existing commitments
8. Software options
 - 8.1 *Existing software package*
 - 8.2 *Integrated Local Plan software*
 - 8.3 *Additional software options*
9. Requirement checklist
10. Timeline

1. Introduction

Background

The GNDP has recommended to progress a GNLP Review. In light of the NPPF requirement to produce a Local Plan in 30 months, digitalisation opportunities will be critical.

Digitalisation presents opportunities to automate processes saving resource and money, make processes more efficient, and in other areas, improve the quality of plan-making.

This is an area of significant interest for the government given the development agenda, and so contextual background has been provided as part of this report. It includes information on the key providers of Local Plan software and provides initial thoughts on how to progress digitalisation for a GNLP Review.

2. Planning Digitalisation Agenda

This section looks at programmes, funding and support offered to help LPA's with their digitalisation journey. Since this is key to the government's delivery agenda, a number of opportunities might be available to the GNDP. Others have been included for context.

MHCLG Digital Planning Platform

Digital Planning is a dedicated programme within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The programme is on-going and is considered a key part of the governments drive to speed up the development process.

Ambition	Activities/outputs
Better access to planning data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data platform
Faster and more efficient planning decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open Digital Planning - A community of forward-thinking LPAs, digital agencies, and government partners working towards a data-driven planning system.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ PlanX: Public interface for guidance and submission of planning applications.○ Back office planning system (BOPS): Application for managing planning documents.○ Digital Planning Register: Tool for public engagement in planning applications.

Ambition	Activities/outputs
Improved community engagement and supporting the PropTech sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PropTech Innovation Fund – funding for the following programme • Digital Planning Directory - Resource listing over 100 digital planning service providers.
Simpler, faster, more accessible plan making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home for plan-making resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clear, concise guidance for LPAs. ○ New tools that will help reduce some of the current administration burdens that fall on LPAs. This includes automation tools like a free Microsoft 365 add-on to process and organise consultation responses, speeding up the consultation process. ○ Standards for policy maps. Consistent standards for policy mapping and visualization.
Digital Planning Policy and Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning data powers (Section 84-88) in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act. Our powers will improve the current planning system by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consistent planning data standards. ○ Open publication of planning data. ○ Use of approved planning software.
Digital Planning Case Studies	

Digital Planning Improvement Fund 2025/2026

The Digital Planning Improvement Fund provides LPAs with the funding and support to adopt modern planning practices within planning data, digital capabilities and development management software. Hosted by Open Planning Digital.

Eligibility: Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in England.

Funding available: £50,000 per LPA.

PropTech Innovation Challenge

Who: Geovation

When: Launching early July. Will end February 2026.

MHCLG launched the PropTech Innovation Fund in August 2021 to support the development and adoption of innovative technologies that drive efficiencies within built environment processes. The Digital Planning team at MHCLG are now working in collaboration with Geovation, an Ordnance Survey initiative, to launch a new PropTech Innovation Challenge.

The Challenge aims to find new digital and scalable solutions to help accelerate the delivery of 1.5 million new homes. It will provide up to 12 PropTech projects with a share of £1.2 million in funding.

Three problem statements:

1. How might we transform currently siloed and proprietary land ownership data into an open and interoperable resource that accelerates the conversion of potential development sites into tangible housing projects?
2. How might we increase the attractiveness of small sites for SME developers and other new market entrants through streamlining the processes involved in small site development?
3. How might we de-risk housing projects and unlock a surge in developer activity by giving developers and local planning authorities absolute certainty and radical transparency regarding existing and future infrastructure capacity?

Digital Taskforce for Planning

The Digital Task Force for Planning is registered as a not-for-profit Social Enterprise in October 2022. Our mission is to create a **digital 'National Trust'** for the long-term benefit of future generations by promoting valuable knowledge sharing as assets for the public good.

- Directory of Digital Planning – seed-funded by MHCLG
- [Digital Taskforce Report](#) (2022)

3. The potential of digitalisation

Digital Opportunity	Benefits	Examples/Tools	GNDP Status
Mapping	Overlaying of different data sets	ArcGIS	Already using
Consultation	Wider engagement, real-time feedback	JDi Opus Commonplace	Already using
Collaborative report writing	Multi-stakeholder input, version control	SharePoint (Word)	Already using
Digital plan publishing	Improved accessibility and UI	JDi Drupal	Already using
Automated data analysis	Speeding up/automating analysis of responses	AI tools within consultation platforms	Not yet using
Automated report generating	Generating reports from pre-written content	Objective KeyPlan	Not yet using
Automated report writing	Using AI	In development (JDi?)	Not yet using
Spatial analysis	Capacity for growth, infrastructure availability and requirements	Urban Intelligence, sidM Housing (Module 3)	Not yet using
Sites identification	Potential sites according to criteria	Urban Intelligence	Not yet using
Sites assessment	Sites upload and initial screening	Urban Intelligence	Not yet using
Monitoring	Digitalised sites monitoring	sidM	Not yet using
Integrated end-to-end Local Plan software	Streamline local plan making processes	Urban Intelligence, JDi, Objective Key Plan	Not yet using

4. Benefits and challenges of digitalisation

Benefits

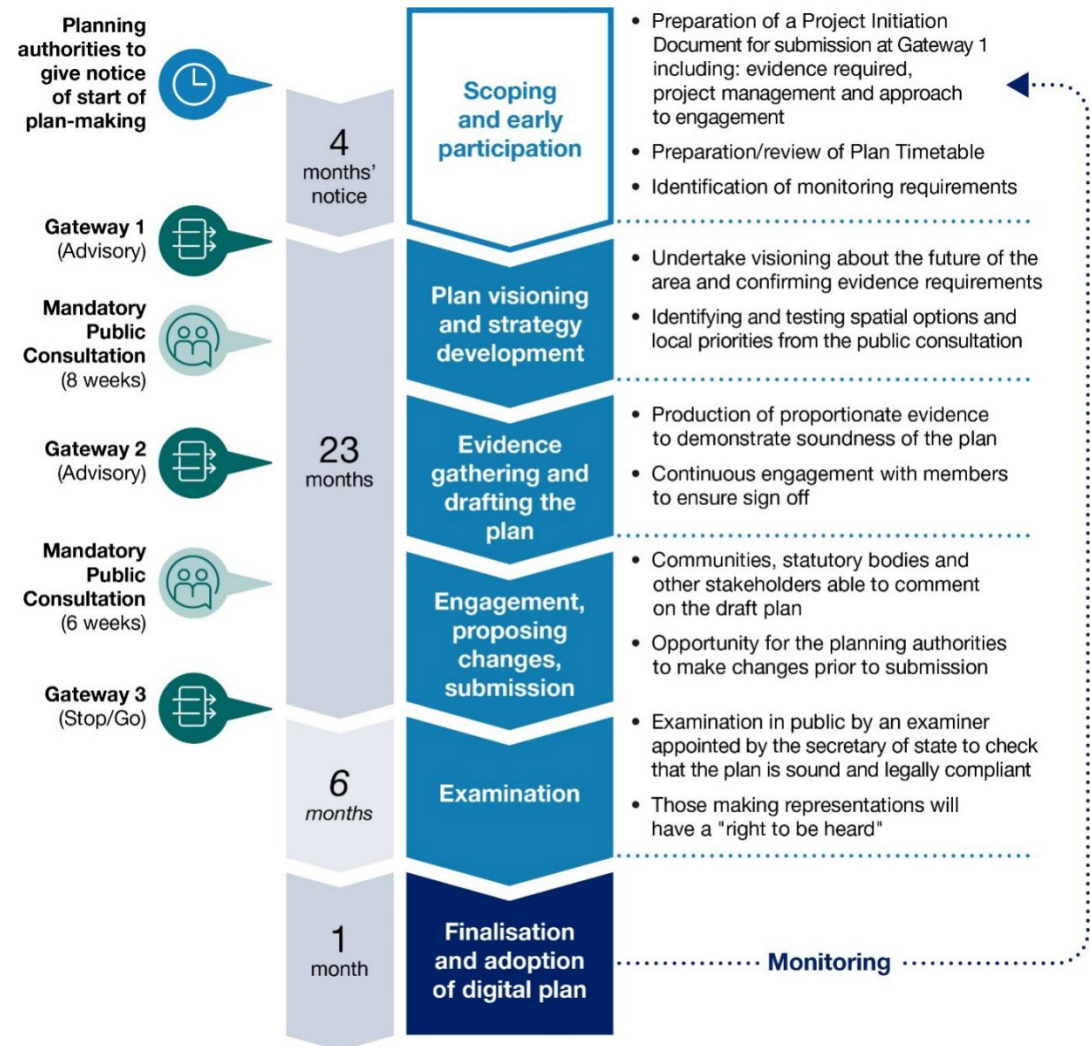
- Reduced cost to producing a Local Plan
- Reduced time to produce a Local Plan
- Reduced staff resource involved in producing a Local Plan (?)
- Replacement of repetitive tasks
- Improved experience for consultees
- *What other parts of the plan could be done better, because of stream-lining processes and freeing up expertise?*
- *Can digitalisation improve experience for the developer?*

Challenges

- Choosing the right platform
- LGR – how to manage contracts and data, given boundaries may change
- Resource involved in setting up the platform properly
- Alignment with wider changes – the space is changing a lot, how to ensure we back a winner?
- Alignment with DM software

5. Understanding the local plan making process

In order to understand where software will benefit, detailed mapping of the local plan making process and associated resource pressures needs to be undertaken. The diagram opposite illustrates the plan making processes the government has previously consulted on, which is likely to be reflected in new guidance due to be issued.



6. Other considerations

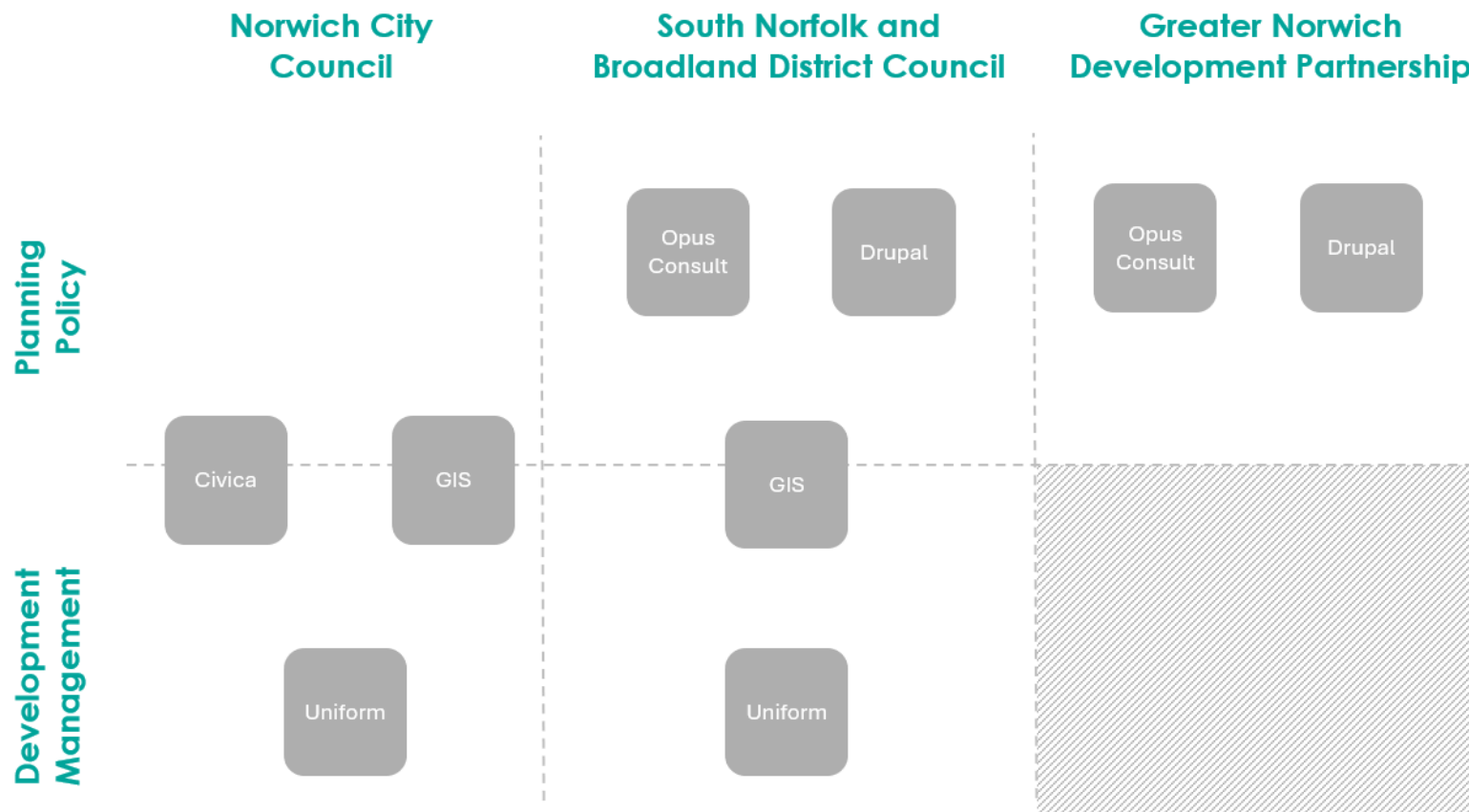
- Ownership of data
- Alignment to corporate digital agenda
- On-going costs – ease of undertaking edits, maintenance
- Integration with other software/platforms
- How platforms will change over the next 30 months – things are moving fast, so will need to choose a platform which will evolve (and where updates are added to existing licenses?)

Digital skills

- Anticipated that specialist GIS will not be required within the team, providing access remains to corporate GIS officers
- Staff to be trained on bespoke skills to use chosen software
- Importance of on-going investment in the Teams general digital skills (Power BI, CoPilot)
- Recruitment of a GNLP Project assistant should specify digital skills
- Members of the GNLP Review team should be asked if they would like to be the digitalisation lead/lead on chosen software?

7. Existing commitments

Existing software commitments have been mapped to ensure that new purchased software does not duplicate existing functionality.



8. Software options

There are a number of options for moving forward, which have been considered below:

Option	Benefits	Drawbacks	Options considered
No action <i>(retain current provider)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheapest option 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miss out on opportunities to improve and streamline processes 	
New integrated Local Plan software package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seamless interface – User Interface Potential for additional tools for the team, such as scenario testing for spatial approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive Potentially do not get sufficient additional functionality for the additional cost Significant start-up investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Objective Keyplan</i> <i>Urban Intelligence</i>
Additional software to bolt onto existing provider package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve areas where additional benefit can be gained, e.g. Call for Sites, consultation or local data sets Existing provider is known quantity, and client relationship is strong Cheaper than full software package 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miss out on potential additional tools which integrated packages may have, which may improve plan-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opus Maps Consultation software: <i>Inovem, Common Place, Citizen Space</i> Other software: <i>Community Needs Reports, SiDM Housing</i>

The following section looks at the different software options for the above approaches. Detailed conversations with each of the suppliers are still required. There may be additional providers worth considering.

8.1 Existing software package

Company	JDI (Blue Fox Technology)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation platform with evolving functionality • Local Plan specialist • New tools: AI consultation response analysis, PropTech project – Alternate Form for statutory consultees and Workflow management, auto-report generation with University of Liverpool, virtual consultation rooms • Opus Maps – auto-calculate site area and developable area. • Site assessment query functions / templated forms
Product	Opus Consult, Opus Maps, Web Hosting Drupal	
Cost	Circa £15k pa	
Licence details	<i>Flat list price for software. No limit on number of users. 1 or 3 year contract option.</i>	

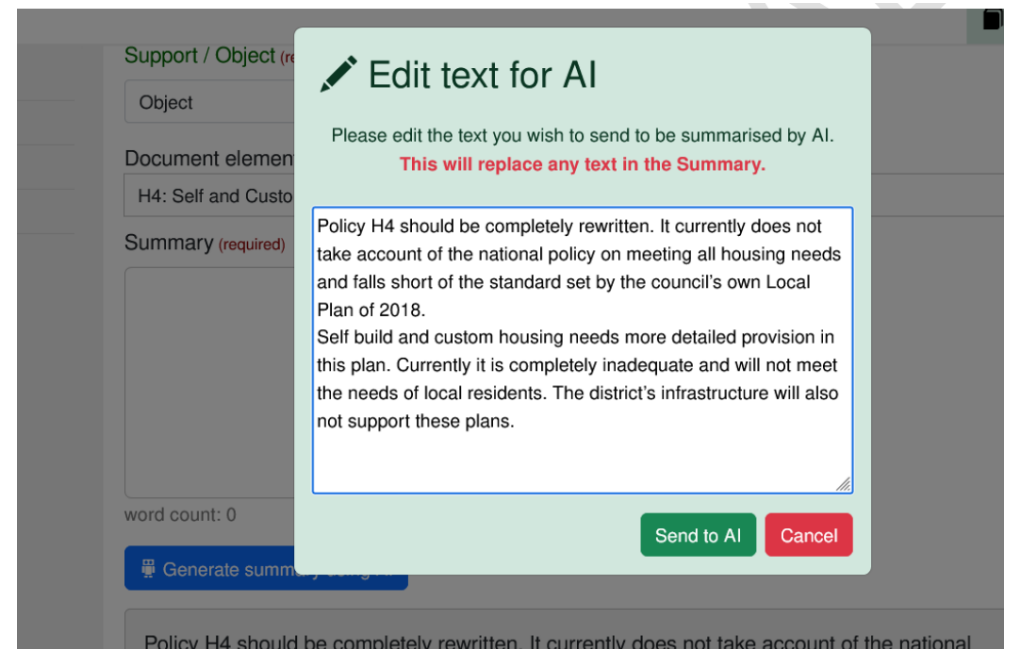
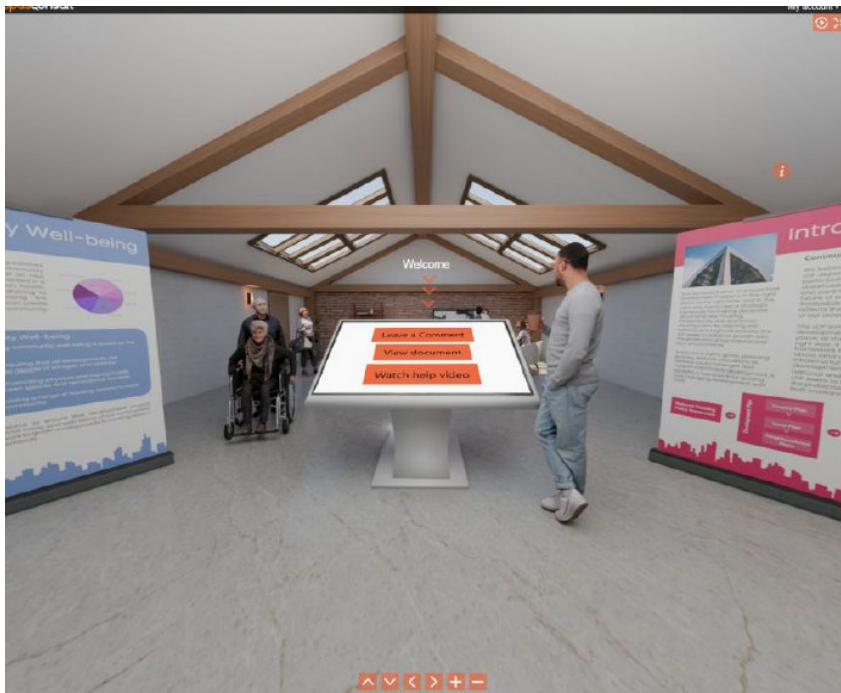
Strengths

- Cost – it is cheaper than comparable packages
- Known quantity, staff have knowledge of software, data already held in platform
- Customer service – user-centric business model
- Most bespoke offer? – platform/web hosting is fully customisable
- Pipeline of improvements - continuous release


Weaknesses

- Not an end-to-end Local Plan software – capability areas are limited (no auto-publishing, no spatial analysis)
- Site assessment is limited/manual, and no auto-site identification, or spatial analysis

[Watch video here](#)




Candidate Site Register

 If you are having trouble using the system, please try our [help guide](#).

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Barry

	<p>Site ID No/Rhif Adnabod y Safle: 371</p> <p>Site Name / Enw'r Safle Walters Farm/Tlwm Walter</p> <p>Settlement / Setliad Barry/Y Barri</p> <p>Gross Site Area (Ha) / Arwynebedd Gros y Safle (Ha) 8.6</p> <p>Existing Use Category / Categori Defnydd Presennol Agricultural Land/Tir Amaethyddol</p> <p>Proposed Use Category / Categori Defnydd Arfaethedig Housing / Tai</p> <p>Area / Ardal Barry / Y Barri</p>
	<p>Site ID No/Rhif Adnabod y Safle: 384</p> <p>Site Name / Enw'r Safle Hayes Lane</p> <p>Settlement / Setliad Barry/Y Barri</p> <p>Gross Site Area (Ha) / Arwynebedd Gros y Safle (Ha) 1.92</p> <p>Existing Use Category / Categori Defnydd Presennol Vacant / Gwag</p> <p>Proposed Use Category / Categori Defnydd Arfaethedig Housing / Tai</p> <p>Area / Ardal Barry / Y Barri</p>

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Chapter 1 - Introduction



What is the Local Plan?

This Local Plan is a statutory planning document prepared by Rutland County Council. It sets out the strategic vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the County, as well as the planning policies which will help to determine the future location, scale, type and design of new development in Rutland. It seeks to ensure local development is built in accordance with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Plan also includes site allocations to meet the vision and objectives of the Plan.

The Local Plan, together with any Neighbourhood Plans prepared by town and parish Councils or other appropriate bodies, make up the "Statutory Development Plan" which has important status in determining future planning applications in the area.

The Local Plan in Rutland currently comprises three separate "Development Plan Documents".

Why is the Local Plan important?

Why is the Local Plan being reviewed?

8.2 Integrated Local Plan software options

Option 1

Company	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• End-to-end solution for planning policy processes: consultation/engagement, collaborative authoring, one-click publishing, collated GIS information and call for sites (public to draw polygons)• Integrates with existing GIS software• Publish into branded digital and web-based documents (examples here - Birmingham / Wiltshire)• Awaiting conversation with Wiltshire/Nottingham LPA
Product	Key Plan	
Cost	Circa £30-40k pa	
Licence details	<i>Cost based on population size. Licenses can be for length required. No limit to users. Customisable package.</i>	

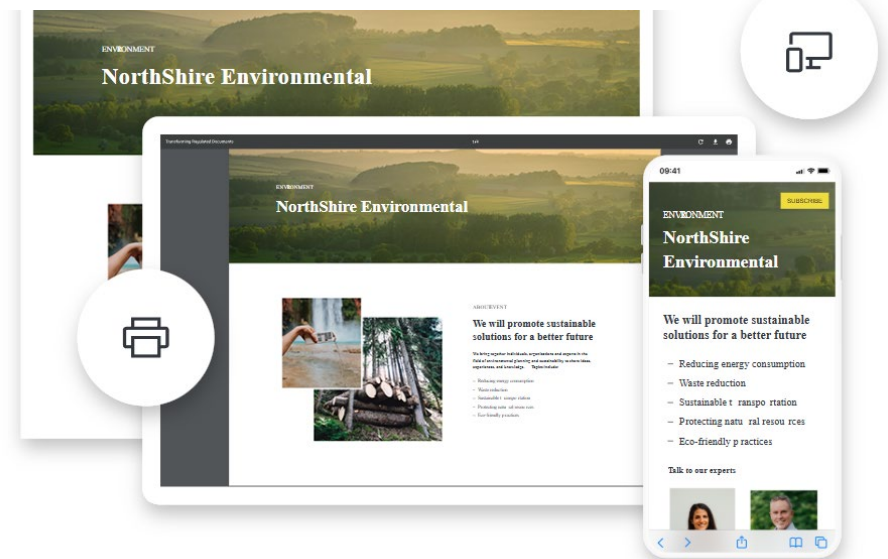
Strengths

- Can be used for other planning policy documents, e.g. SPDs, on the same license (license is corporate)
- AI analyses consultation representations, auto-generates a summary, and conducts sentiment analysis
- Reduce additional costs of graphic designers and web-based hosting

Weaknesses

- Spatial analysis functionality is limited
- How adaptable is the publishing interface? Can it be customised?

[Watch video here](#)



Option 2

Company	Urban Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engagement, site assessment and identification tool• Find, organise and assess sites directly within the software• 77% Faster average rep processing time for Hounslow using PlaceMaker• Example of live consultation event is here• Awaiting conversation with Milton Keynes LPA
Product	PlaceMaker	
Cost	<i>Circa £50k/annum</i>	
Licence details	<i>Priced by population. Available on 1, 2, 3 year contracts.</i>	

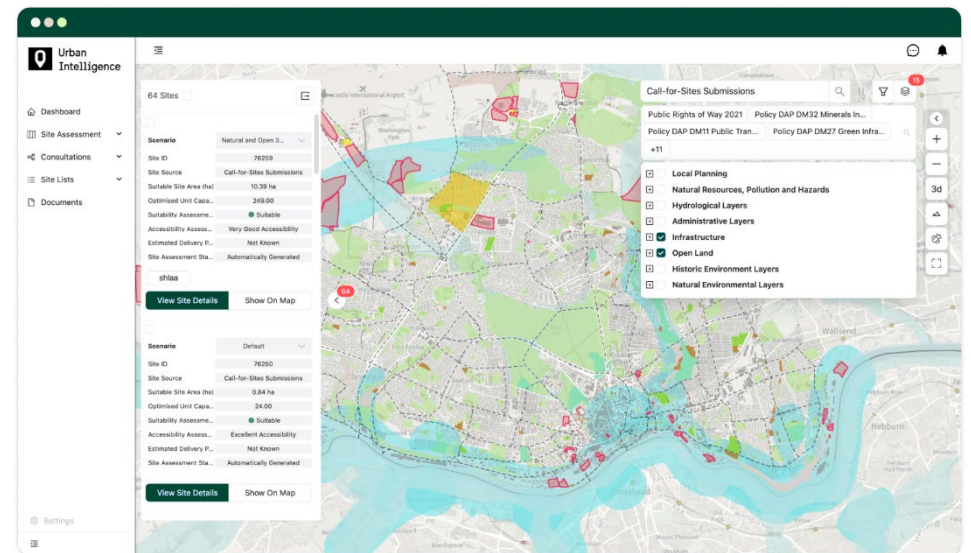
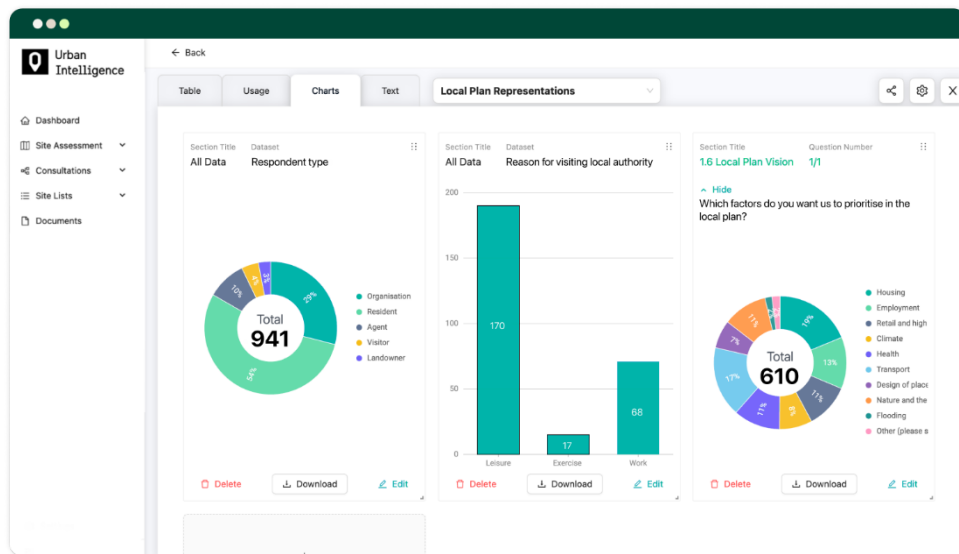
Strengths

- Most developed spatial analysis tool on the market?
- Slick interface – utility of use
- Significantly improve and speed-up site assessment
- Integration - There is a plan to integrate all the new national DM policies
- Other partnerships are using the software (Plymouth, South Devon)
- Data would be able to be split/parcelled-up with any changes resulting from LGR.

Weaknesses

- Most expensive software
- Significant resource commitment to set up
- No report writing automation
- No AI consultation response analysis (yet)

[Watch video here](#)



8.3 Additional software options

Consultation

- [Inovem](#)

Planning consultation software solution includes facilities to help project manage and collaborate on the development and publication of local plans and supporting document content.

- [Common Place](#)

Reach, engage, analyse, collaborate. Integrated consultation software. Consultation tool for all types of consultation (with templates for Local Plan consultation).

- [Citizen Space](#)

Citizen Space is a comprehensive online citizen engagement platform trusted by central governments and local authorities worldwide. For public consultation, community engagement, spatial planning, calls for evidence and more.

Other software

- **Community Needs Reports**

(Not available yet, but have subscribed for pre-release)

- The Community Needs Report delivers hyperlocal community insights to help identify key opportunities and challenges, supporting smarter, evidence-based proposals. With granular, data-led AI intelligence, these reports help reduce uncertainty, strengthen planning applications and improve community engagement.
- **Data-driven insights** – Leverages over 100M data points
- **Smoother approvals** – Provides clear, evidence-based insights to help reduce objections and shape proposals for long-term success.
- **Stronger community engagement** – Builds better community trust
- **Sustainability & compliance** – Improves alignment with planning policies
- **Place-specific reporting**

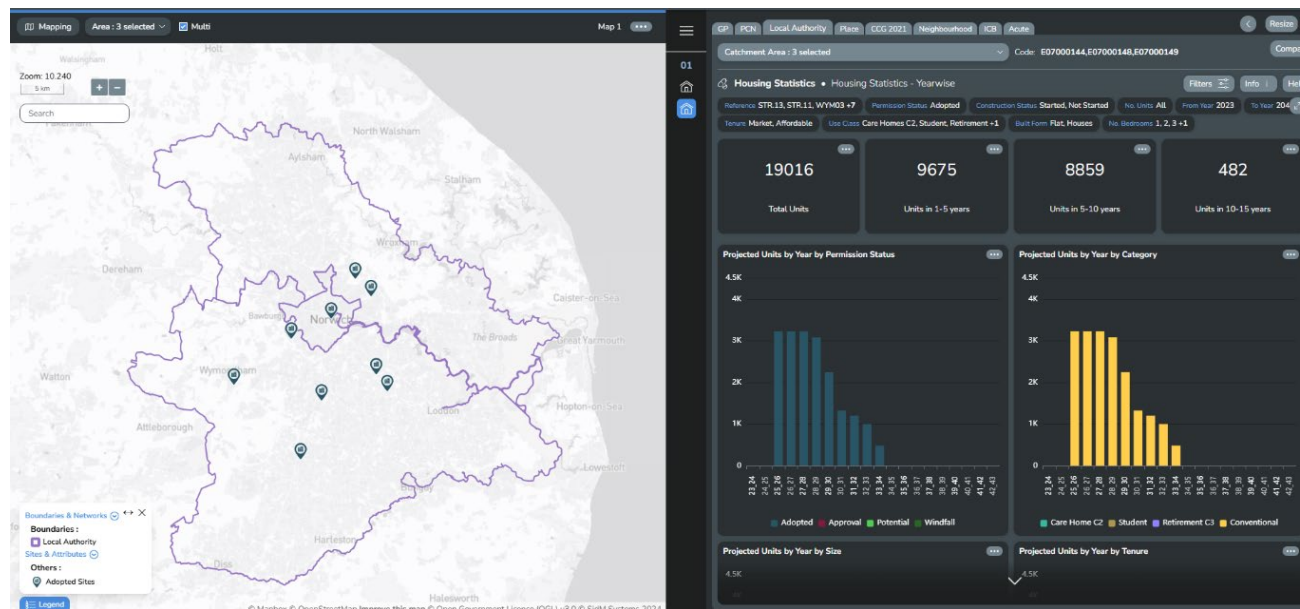
- [Kepler.gl](https://kepler.gl/):

Open source geospatial analysis tool for large-scale data sets. Allows users to create quick and easy heat maps of housing growth by inputting spreadsheet data. This is intended as a tool people with no knowledge of mapping/GIS can use easily.

- [sidM Housing](#)

Provides analysis, statistics and mapping of emerging plans and multiple spatial layers highlighting areas of need, growth and change at a strategic and neighbourhood level. Supports Plan-Making and Monitoring:

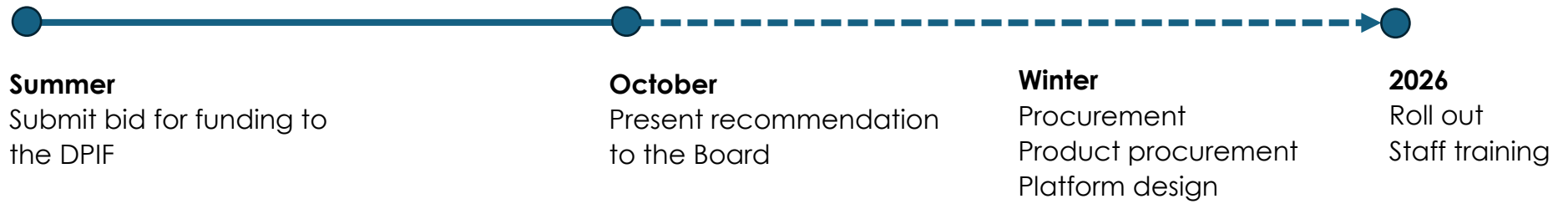
- Interactive spatial mapping
- Spatial distribution of growth
- Custom area analysis
- Monitoring Local Plan



9. Requirement checklist

Digital Capability	Y/N	Comment
Mapping		
Consultation		
Collaborative report writing		
Digital plan publishing		
Automated data analysis (consultation responses)		
One-click report generation		
Automated report writing		
Spatial analysis		
Sites identification		
Sites assessment		
Monitoring		
Integrated end-to-end Local Plan software		

10. Timeline



ITEM 7

Greater Norwich Local Plan Review Arrangements and Resourcing

Summary	This report covers the proposed arrangements and resourcing for Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) partners undertaking a review of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). The arrangements have been formalised in a Memorandum of Understanding which it is proposed that partners sign.
Recommendations	1. That the Board recommends to Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council and Norfolk County Council to sign the GNLP Review Memorandum of Understanding.
Contact officers	Georgie Day, GNDP Project Manager georgie.day@norfolk.gov.uk 01603 222886
Background docs	None
Appendices	<i>Greater Norwich Local Plan Review Arrangements: Memorandum of Understanding</i>

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) Review was initially outlined in the Local Development Strategies, which received approval from the respective district cabinets on the following dates:
- Broadland District Council – Tuesday, 11 February 2025
 - South Norfolk Council – Monday, 10 February 2025
 - Norwich City Council – Wednesday 5 March 2025
- 1.2 The commitment to the Local Plan Review was subsequently reaffirmed under item 8 of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership public meeting held on 11 June 2025.

2. Memorandum of Understanding for GNLP Review joint working arrangements

- 2.1 A Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared which outlines the partners' commitment to joint working to deliver the GNLP Review and associated commitments.
- 2.2 It is proposed that this document is signed by all partners and will underpin the commitment to continued partnership working.
- 2.3 The document reflects the continued strength of the Partnership, and deepening trust as the GNLP moves into the GNLP Review – now the third plan-making period in its history.
- 2.4 The particulars set out in the document are the outcome of detailed discussions between directors, which have been occurring bi-weekly in preceding months, reflecting the desire to see this workstream progress at pace.

3. Summary of Greater Norwich Local Plan Review Arrangements

- 3.1 Governance will mirror the historic structure, whereby the GNLP Board make recommendations, that are returned to district governance structures for sign off.
- 3.2 There is a desire to increase the decision-making function of the GNLP Board, at appropriate points of the plan-making process. This would improve the timeliness and efficiency of local plan production, and may also be necessary in practical terms to ensure the production of the GNLP is able to meet the significantly more challenging milestones expected under new local plans system. It is recognised that this is a

potentially complex exercise, involving changes to the constitutions of GNDP Partners and with a need to ensure there remains appropriate democratic oversight of and buy-in to the process. This should however be kept under review and step should be taken to ensure decision making processes can be aligned to the demands of the new system.

- 3.3 The GNLP Review will have a Project Sponsor. GNDP Directors have elected Ben Burgess Assistant Planning Director at South Norfolk and Broadland District Council, to this role.
- 3.4 The GNLP Manager has been recruited, with a job description advertised internally. Mike Burrell has been appointed and will formally start in post from Monday 3rd November. The post will be fully funded through the GNDP budget, although Mike Burrell will remain employed by Norwich City Council.
- 3.5 The GNDP Project Manager is a permanent role funded by the GNDP and employed by Norfolk County Council. This role will continue. Recruitment is being progressed for an additional support role, the GNDP Digital Project Officer. This post will also be funded by the GNDP and employed by Norfolk County Council.
- 3.6 The staffing arrangements for GNLP Review planning policy officers mirror those of the previous GNLP by creating a contingent team from district staff. There will be a core team of allocated GNLP Review staff to create stability and continuity. Additional contingent staff will be able to join on an informal basis, giving the team flexibility to expand and contract as required at different stages of plan-making, and to benefit from the most relevant skill sets at any given point. This process will be managed by district Planning Policy Managers, and sign-off by Directors.
- 3.7 Directors had a desire to see the team better embedded within the existing district planning teams than previously, and as such, the GNLP Review team will rotate around the offices of GNDP partners. Remote working infrastructure enables such an approach to be possible. The GNDP Project Manager and Greater Norwich Projects Team already operate in this way to varying degrees, providing proof of concept.
- 3.8 It is thought that this will benefit the district planning teams, retaining better links with policy teams and also Development Management. It is thought that this arrangement will contribute to staff welfare, since seconded staff will retain social and pastoral links with host authorities.
- 3.9 Norfolk County Council will continue to support the GNDP and its work. Norfolk County Council continue to play an active role in Directors' meetings, and at the GNDP Board.

- 3.11 Norfolk County Council will host the new GNDP Digital Project Officer, although this role will be funded by the districts via the GNDP. Along with the GNDP Project Manager, these roles will be line managed by Grace Burke the Greater Norwich Programme Manager and be part of the Greater Norwich Projects Team, to continue the useful adjacency of GNDP and Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) workstreams.
- 3.12 Norfolk County Council will provide IT Infrastructure for the GNLP Review team as under the previous arrangements. Norfolk County Council will host the team as part of the standing rotation across the different partnership offices.

4. Funding

- 4.1 The following table summarises historic contributions to the GNLP (excluding staff costs):

2016/17	50,000
2017/18	95,000
2018/19	65,000
2019/20	65,000
2020/21	65,000
2021/22	144,500
2022/23	70,000
2023/24	60,000
2024/25	10,000
Total	624,500
Mean annual spend	69,389

- 4.2 For the up-coming GNLP Review, it has been estimated that the GNDP district partners will need to budget approximately £200,00 per annum reflecting the condensed timeframes of the new plan-making regime, and price inflation. These figures include staff costs only for the GNLP Review Manager, GNDP Project Manager and GNDP Digital Project Officer and exclude other contingent staff.
- 4.3 As a result, and due to the large number of outstanding unknowns, this contribution may go up or down depending on emerging government guidance and the requirements of the plan-making process.

- 4.4 Some of the costs for studies and evidence may be able to be shared county-wide, since there will be an overlap with the evidence base required for the forthcoming Spatial Development Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk. Economies will also be sought through employing digital processes where possible.
- 4.5 It is anticipated that the condensed timeframes for delivering a local plan will generate savings, because of staff being committed to the project for approximately half the timeframe required previously. This will depend upon the requirements of the plan-making system.

5. Emerging Programme

- 5.1 Detailed government guidance on plan-making was anticipated in the summer but has been delayed until the autumn, meaning that it is only possible to progress cautiously.
- 5.2 However, there remains a desire to progress at pace, and so the groundwork is being laid so the team are ready to start once government guidance is available. More detail on this is in the report which is Item 5 on this agenda.
- 5.3 Recruitment processes have been galvanised to keep pace:
- The GNLP Manager will be in post at the start of November.
 - The GNLP Digital Project Officer is expected to be in post by the new year, and earlier if possible.
- 5.4 Norwich and South Norfolk and Broadland are making preparations to make the remainder of the GNLP Review team available to commence preparatory work in the coming months.

Recommendations

1. The Board recommends 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.

GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

Memorandum of Understanding

1. Background

The Greater Norwich Local Plan Review was initially outlined in the Local Development Strategy, which received approval from the respective district cabinets on the following dates:

- Broadland District Council – Tuesday, 11 February 2025
- South Norfolk Council – Monday, 10 February 2025
- Norwich City Council – Wednesday 5 March 2025

The commitment to the Local Plan Review was subsequently reaffirmed under item 8 of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership public meeting held on 11 June 2025.

2. Partners

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is entered into by Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council, and Norfolk County Council

3. Purpose

The purpose of this MoU is to formalise the parties' joint commitment to delivering the Greater Norwich Local Plan Review.

The MoU is not intended to create legal or binding obligations and will not be enforceable. It solely describes the understanding between the parties for the appointment, funding and management of the Digital Project Officer post.

4. Duration

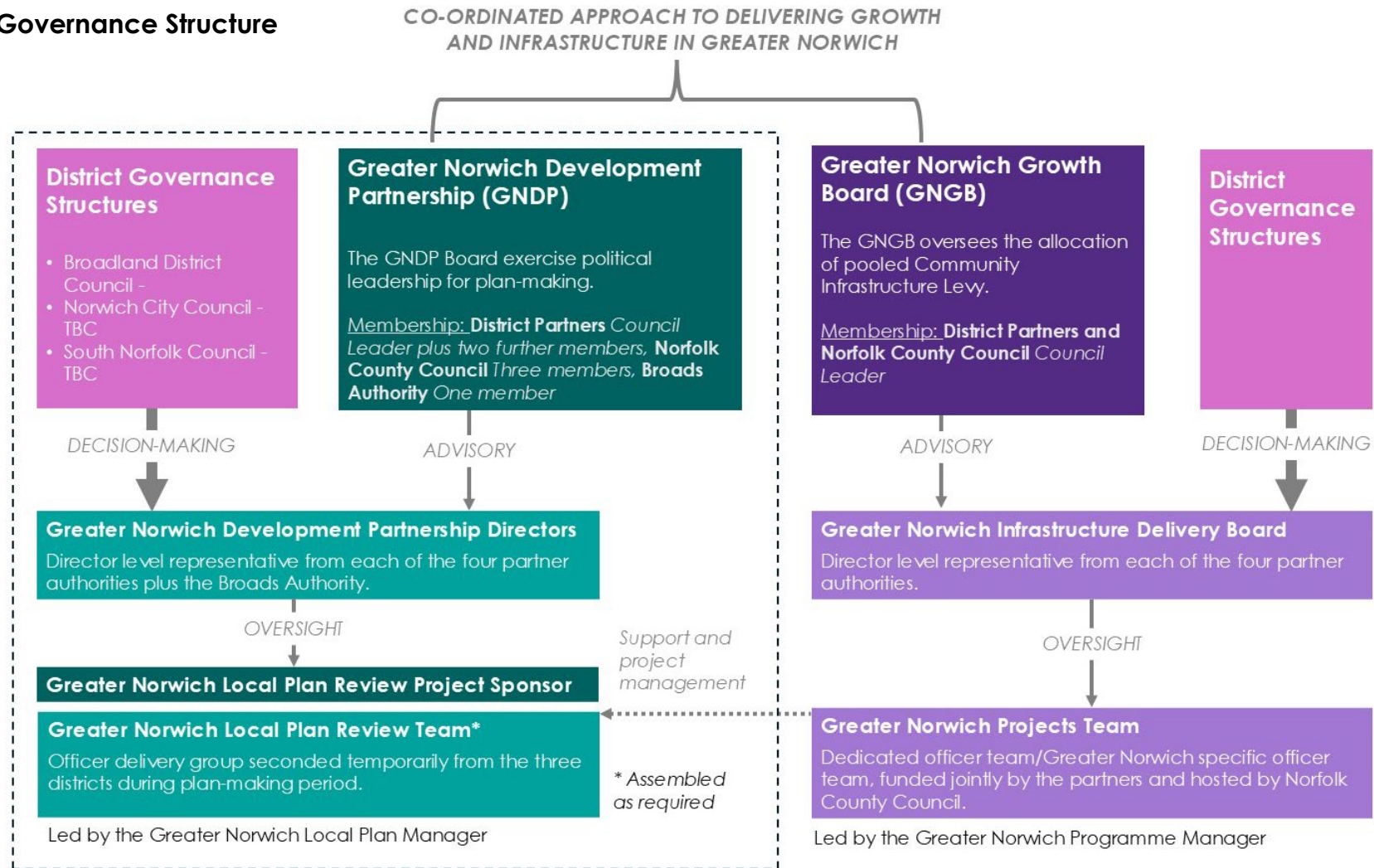
This MoU will be valid until it is terminated by the above parties. It will be reviewed and updated only where any of the signatories deem it necessary.

It is anticipated the MoU will be required for the full duration of the GNLP Review.

5. Funding

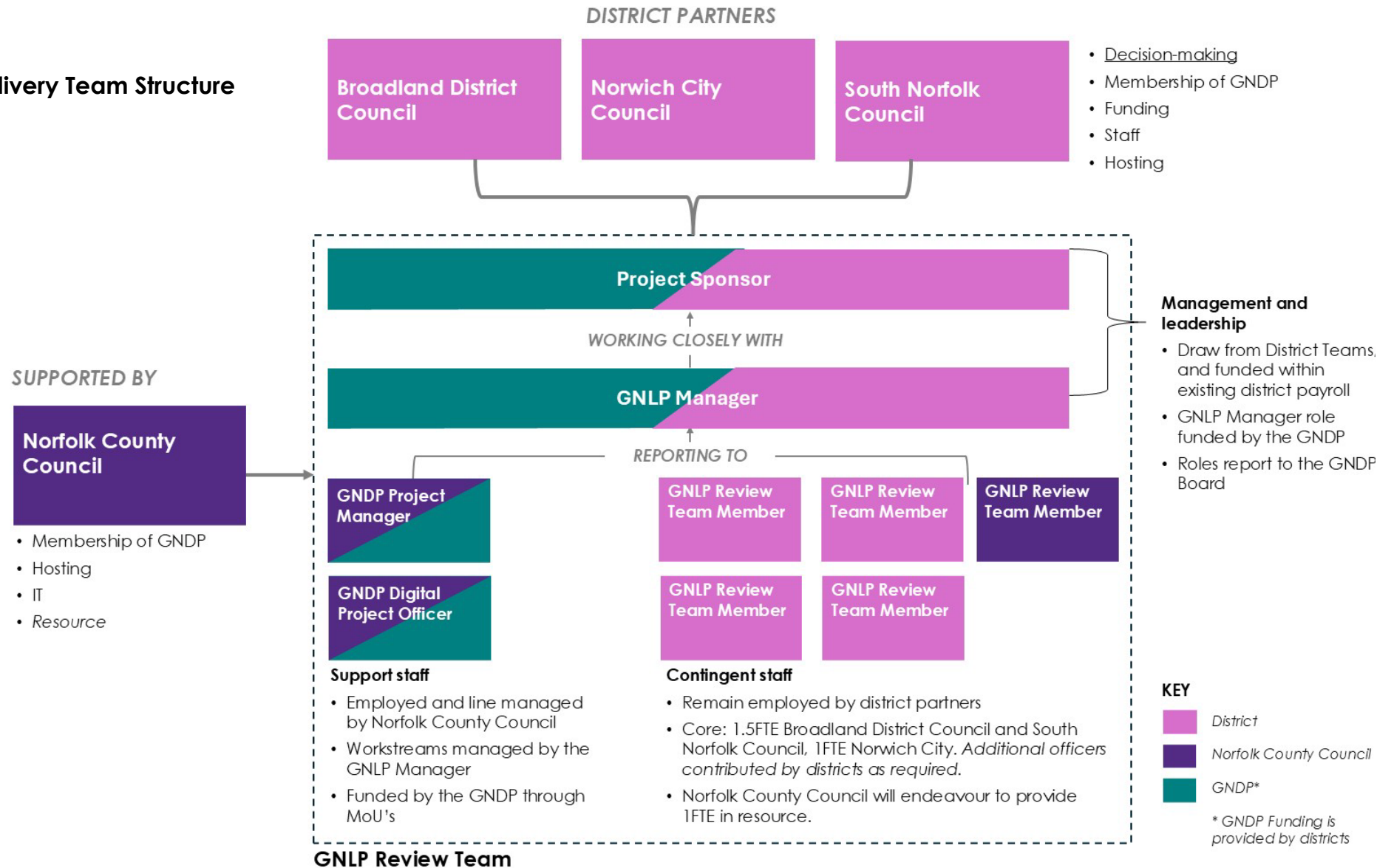
Based on historic contributions, it is anticipated that the three District GNDP partners will contribute an average of £200,000 per annum. The amount may vary depending on plan-making requirements. This excludes contingent staff costs, which will be contributed in-kind.

6. Governance Structure



Governance structure for the GNLP Review

7. Delivery Team Structure



8. Project Sponsor

- The role will be appointed internally.
- There is no additional funding or arrangements associated with the role.
- The Project Sponsor will be responsible to and report to the GNDP Board.

Responsibilities of the role are:

- Political liaison across GNDP Partners
- Championing the work of the GNLP Review at senior level
- Strategic oversight of GNLP Review
- LGR/devolution coordination

9. Staffing: Contingent Staff

GNLP Manager

- The role will be recruited internally.
- The role will be paid for by the GNDP, split evenly between the three partner authorities. The GNLP Manager will continue to be employed by the relevant district.
- The GNLP Manager will be responsible to and report to the GNDP Board and each of the constituent Local Planning Authorities.
- Backfill will be the responsibility of the relevant District.
- The GNDP Project Manager and GNDP Digital Project Officer will report directly to the GNLP Manager with local arrangements agreed to ensure all Norfolk County Council required HR responsibilities are adhered to.
- GNLP Manager will hold budget responsibility with local arrangements agreed to ensure all Norfolk County Council required budget responsibilities are adhered to.

GNLP Review Team Member

- Planning Policy staff will be assigned to the project as relevant by the constituent Local Planning Authorities.
- Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council will commit 1.5 FTE of staff resource and Norwich City Council will commit 1 FTE of staff resource to the core team. There is no requirement about the Grade expectations for these roles. Additional contingent staff will be added as required by the plan-making process, and as agreed by Directors.
- Norfolk County Council will endeavour to contribute 1FTE in staff resource.
- To retain flexibility, this team may change to reflect the changing resourcing requirements of the GNLP Review. Planning Policy Managers will oversee this, with sign-off decisions about staffing taken by GNDP Directors.

10. Staffing: Permanent roles

These support roles are required to support the delivery of the GNLP Review and the operation of the GNDP. The roles are permanent, since the duration of the plan-making period exceeds the maximum length of a temporary contract.

GNDP Project Manager

- Employed and line managed by Norfolk County Council. The role is located within the Greater Norwich Projects team within Strategy and Transformation.
- Workstreams managed by the GNLP Manager.
- Funded by the GNDP. There is a separate MoU to cover the arrangements of this role.

GNDP Digital Project Officer

- Employed and line managed by Norfolk County Council. The role is located within the Greater Norwich Projects team within Strategy and Transformation.
- Workstreams managed by the GNLP Manager.
- Funded by the GNDP. There is a separate MoU to cover the arrangements of this role.

11. Location

The GNLP Team will be based on core days at Norfolk County Council however will rotate across the offices of the three district partners on a monthly basis. This will enable the connection to be retained between the GNLP team and planning teams within the partner authorities.

The GNDP Project Manager and GNDP Digital Project Officer will arrange the timetable for this between host authorities and staff members and will be responsible for ensuring that there is a forward plan which will enable staff to plan their time accordingly.

12. IT

Norfolk County Council will provide laptops and basic software to the GNLP Review team. This will include resources for the GNLP Manager, the GNDP Project Manager, the GNDP Digital Project officer, plus up to four contingent district staff. If possible, without impacting work productivity, seconded staff will continue to use district laptops accessing Local Plan work via cloud-based software.

GNLP staff using Norfolk County Council will be required to undertake relevant training and adhere to Norfolk County Council regulations around use of IT.

Specialist software must be procured by the GNDP.

13. Signatories

Ben Burgess, Assistant Director – Planning
On behalf of Broadland District Council

Sarah Ashurst, Head of Planning and Regulatory
Services

On behalf of Norwich City Council

Ben Burgess, Assistant Director – Planning
On behalf of South Norfolk Council

Chris Starkie, Director of Growth and Investment

On behalf of Norfolk County Council
