

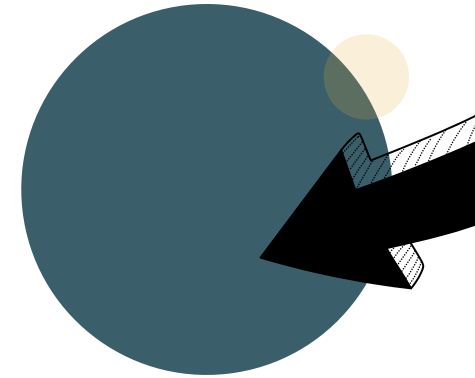
We are Norwich

A community-led plan
2024-2029



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1 Message from the leader



When talking about what the next five years hold for Norwich, we asked people what they love about this place. Consistently, there were shared feelings that resonated deeply with me, especially the profound feeling of home. Norwich offers all the advantages of city living while nurturing a genuine and unique sense of belonging. It's where my roots are, and where I've chosen to call home.

I hope everyone shares this bond with Norwich, however I am acutely aware many among us live markedly different lives. Too many residents are grappling with making ends meet, managing their health and feeling connected within our community, and are sometimes therefore missing out on what Norwich has on offer. It is within our collective ability to transform Norwich into the best possible place for everyone.

Our five-year plan has been designed with you, reflecting your hopes, your ideas, and your joint commitment to making Norwich a great place. By committing to your priorities, we are agreeing on a singular path forward towards a future Norwich where everyone belongs, and everyone benefits.

We hope you will join with us in this effort. Together we can make Norwich a place that everyone can thrive in.

Cllr Mike Stonard,
leader of Norwich City Council



It is our collective responsibility to transform Norwich into the best possible place for everyone.



2 What we did and what we heard

What we did

This plan has been developed by engaging with the people of Norwich through street conversations, public and employee surveys, in-depth interviews and focus groups.

Over 900 individuals and organisations were consulted across the city including Norwich residents and tenants' groups, community organisations, the voluntary sector, local businesses and Norwich city councillors and officers.

By listening and learning from the feedback received through the consultation and by working in partnership, we have a very real opportunity to build a plan that unlocks the city's true potential and delivers against the priorities we share.

What we heard

We have a collective pride and passion for our city, but we recognise there are significant challenges that need to be addressed now, and in the future.

Norwich's welcoming and quirky spirit, independent shops, cultural and creative scene, open natural spaces, and compact size are all things we value and want to preserve. But we must work to improve the city's transport offer, the quality and quantity of local housing across all types and to suit all household incomes.

Issues arising from the cost of living faced by residents, businesses and partners and concerns about the look and feel of neighbourhoods outside the city's centre were also identified as areas to focus on.

Your feedback also told us that solutions need to be in place so that we can better respond to our residents and wider service users when they get in touch with us.

At the heart of this is the need for the council to work with the people of Norwich to create solutions together, and for the council to use its influence, enabling and convening powers to deliver change in areas that sit outside of its specific and direct responsibilities.

We recognise that we are one organisation within the city, where everyone has a role to play. This plan helps us have a shared vision and goals and sets out what we will do and our ambitions for Norwich in the future.



3 Our vision and shared priorities

Our vision
for Norwich:

A fair and
thriving
city, full of
ambition

Our five priorities:

- An open and modern council
- A prosperous Norwich
- A fairer Norwich
- A climate responsive Norwich
- A future-proof Norwich

4 How we chose our priorities

To ensure we are clear about how we spend our time, effort, and money, we have developed five priorities that we believe are the areas we should focus on to achieve our vision.

Our priorities are chosen based on what you told us during the consultation but also consider existing local, regional, and national plans and strategies. We are Norwich is our most broad strategic document, so the priorities are top-level.

We are Norwich contains ambitions that may be within our direct delivery and ability

to change, and in some areas, we will use our ability to lead, influence and work in partnership with others in order to try and drive the right outcomes for our city. Our priorities will inform the more detailed development of a council business plan, which will describe what actions we will undertake to achieve our priorities.

We will measure our progress and success so that you can see how we are doing. This will be delivered through a new performance framework, which will include clear measures of success as well as milestones against priorities.



5 Message from the chief executive

The creation of this five-year plan signalled a totally new way of working for the city council. For the first time, we went out to the whole city to ask them what was important to them and what our priorities should be.

Hundreds of conversations have helped to mould the plan. This allowed us to take all the incredible feedback and distil it into something that I hope speaks to everyone who reads it.

Our all-embracing approach to pulling this plan together is something I'm very proud of and is what we need to do more of at the city council.

I want us to inspire our residents to talk with us and have open conversations about the role of the council so we can clearly hear, and respond to, all of the voices across our communities.

Being an open and modern council is central to unlocking all that we want for our amazing city: a prosperous Norwich, a fairer Norwich, a climate-responsive Norwich, a future-proof Norwich. It is only by becoming an open and modern organisation that we will be able to adapt to the changing needs of our residents, communities and businesses.

I really hope our new plan captures the essence of shared aspirations for Norwich.

Lou Rawsthorne,
chief executive of Norwich City Council



6 Our priorities

An open and modern council

Why this is one of our priorities

Becoming a modern council – one that is responsive to what matters to our city and an enabler for progress, inclusion and sustainability – will be based on developing a rich and ongoing conversation between the council and residents. This conversation will flow into and underpin all our priorities – a city council where you shape our services. We will use data to design and deliver services that are high quality, value for money, accessible and are responsive to the needs of our residents.

To be this kind of council we will need to create the right structures, invest in our people, provide fulfilling careers, and equip them with the skills, tools and workplace they need to provide truly 21st century services for Norwich. We will consider equality in all that we do so we can grow the diversity of our workforce, to better reflect the city.

Above all: we will work with, and for, Norwich.

What you told us and how it links to this priority

Some of the challenges you highlighted looked at how we engage with our residents and service users, noting areas that need to improve such as our complaint handling and the general quality of how we respond – especially so with tenants. But using the data and insight we hold was seen as a positive way for us to use that information to better engage with our residents and understand their needs.

“Norwich is like a colourful cultural tapestry, that keeps evolving, for a better community.”



Eunice Kokrasset,
chair of Norfolk
Black History Month



What we are aiming for:

★ A collaborative council

This is how it could look...

Our council is regarded as open and transparent. We have high levels of involvement across our voluntary and community sectors, and we share our skills and knowledge across private and public sectors to achieve common goals. We have taken a partnership approach to city leadership, building a coordinated approach and deliberate response to city challenges. We have played a critical role in developing a strong sense of community in local neighbourhoods and city-wide.

★ A council delivering excellence

This is how it could look...

Listening to feedback has helped us to create user-friendly services which are linked up and targeted – because we are open to finding different solutions and we have encouraged people to influence change in the way we deliver services. Delivering excellence has contributed to the council being financially stable.

★ A council invested in its people

This is how it could look...

The council has a skilled and talented workforce that can tackle the complex challenges the city faces. People enjoy working for the city council because it offers good career opportunities and our workforce reflects the diversity of the city, this helps retain and develop the talented people needed to achieve the aspirations set out in this plan for the city and its residents.

★ A data and insight driven and people focused council

This is how it could look...

More people access our digital services, but we continue to provide face-to-face contact to those who most need it. We see improved cost-effectiveness which leads to better targeted services and improved relationships with service users. We make good decisions because we use data and insight to support us and we are people focused and are always keen to learn and improve. This helps to give us the tools we need to have a well-run council.

“Norwich has become more diverse, has exciting opportunities and continuous growth. It’s important the council proactively plans for the future of the city and its residents and engages with the community.”



Janete Stowers,
executive assistant,
Norwich City Council

Our priorities

Why this is one of our priorities

We want to put jobs, opportunity and growth at the forefront of our work. Working with businesses, we will enable a thriving, successful economy that is creative, innovative, inclusive and sustainable. We will make Norwich a great place to live, work, learn, and visit, where everyone shares in its success.

We will maintain our status as a Living Wage city, growing the number of businesses and jobs paying the real living wage. We will work with partners to diversify our economy to deliver good jobs for all, seeking to raise household incomes. We want to ensure everyone can gain the right skills for a changing economy and we will protect commercial spaces to support diverse sectors, entrepreneurialism, and job creation.

We want to make the city centre more accessible, connected to more of our residents and make it a place that meets the needs and aspirations of the whole city.

A prosperous Norwich

What you told us and how it links to this priority

Many of you love the city centre, its vibrancy and culture scene, but not everyone can easily access it.

There is also concern about how the city will change in the future, affecting the ways we live, and there is a desire to make sure that local neighbourhood centres are improved.

There is also concern that reaching Norwich from elsewhere is difficult, which might affect tourism and business investment. You are concerned that Norwich is a low wage economy, making it harder for everyone in Norwich to have a good job and affecting our ability to keep good workers here. There are other barriers to work too, like social and health factors, which may limit people's chances to access good jobs. Net zero and the link to Norwich as an innovative city is viewed as a definite opportunity for our economy.

“ Strategies are so important. The cycle of planning, reviewing and updating gives momentum and ensures focus. ”



Helen Mitchell,
chair, Friends
of Eaton Park



What we are aiming for:

★ Norwich is a great place to live, work, learn and visit

This is how it could look...

The city has grown and developed in sustainable ways and is renowned as a culture and creative leader maximising its tourism offer. Opportunities for regeneration and development are grasped and they provide equitable opportunities to housing and jobs. The city's young people have a better and more equal chance of educational success.

★ Business in Norwich thrives in an inclusive, resilient economy

This is how it could look...

We have a modern, inclusive, successful economy, which supports local and independent business to thrive and grow, graduate entrepreneurs and business start-ups are encouraged. Our economy is more diverse, and our businesses and communities enjoy the benefits of great partnership working which supports people to develop skills they need, and we see skills better matched to work opportunities.

★ Everyone has access and opportunity to great jobs

This is how it could look...

There is a wider range of job opportunities and a broader range of thriving industries. Collaborative working across the city has encouraged a higher skilled and more diverse workforce, supported by more apprenticeship opportunities at the council and its trading companies. People feel they have the support they need when navigating the job market or accessing work.

★ Better incomes for people in Norwich

This is how it could look...

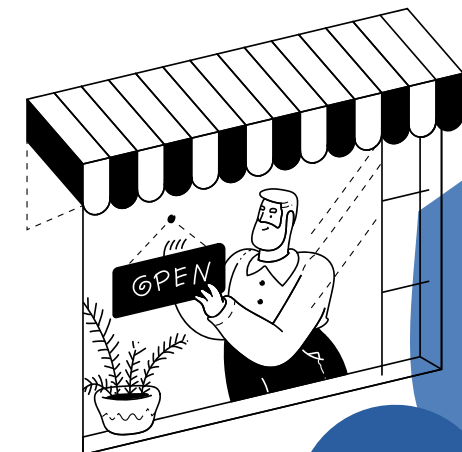
Incomes have risen and people have better standards of living. The Real Living Wage has become the norm not the exception, more people receive the benefits they are entitled to, and there is a greater number of high-quality unionised jobs. The economy is more inclusive and there is support for people into work, particularly in our most disadvantaged communities. We are moving towards a greener economy, and Norwich has become a city which sees increased spending and economic growth in green sectors.



I'm particularly keen to see the city's economic development create more opportunity for everyone - from whatever background - to participate and create value for themselves and the city.



Tom Wood,
Akcela, startup
business incubator



Our priorities

Why this is one of our priorities

We want to prioritise health and wellbeing for all. Be a place where we can live in vibrant, diverse, safe neighbourhoods where everyone feels connected and valued and part of a caring community – in the city and in our local neighbourhoods.

We aim to deliver growth and regeneration for our less wealthy areas, building more homes, especially more affordable homes for those people and families who need them. We will act to ensure homes are good quality, fit for the future, warm and in good repair. We will continue to regenerate our council homes, improving estates and reducing energy costs.

We will work to support and empower people and families, so they are more able to face economic, social, and environmental challenges. This includes reducing inequality and tackling poverty by enabling growth and jobs in more neighbourhoods, raising life and healthy life expectancy, improving education levels and health outcomes. We want to make sure nobody is left behind.

A fairer Norwich

What you told us and how it links to this priority

You told us that there is significant and long-term poverty and that it's getting harder to escape poverty. The cost-of-living crisis has made this worse and many people are having to make impossible decisions between basic needs, such as eating or being warm.

You felt that our council housing is an asset but that we need to keep up with maintenance and enhance how our estates feel, and that improvements to the private rented sector are important too. There is concern around the availability of housing overall and increased homelessness. You said that support from Norwich's community and voluntary organisations is valued but is unable to reach everyone. You recognised that the council and partners focusing on targeting work to our most deprived areas was a good approach and should continue.



What we are aiming for:

- ★ **People have better health outcomes and longer life expectancy**

This is how it could look...

Levels of poverty and inequality fall across the city and there is a reduced gap in life expectancy between communities with longer life expectancy for all. Services and partnership networks are better targeted and there is increased access to services that are based on need.

- ★ **Our city and local neighbourhoods are safe, diverse and vibrant**

This is how it could look...

We have diverse and vibrant neighbourhoods where our streets are clean and safe. Growing numbers of people enjoy creative and culture events. We have safe and welcoming public spaces that celebrate diversity and we're proud of throughout all our neighbourhoods.

- ★ **Good quality homes for all**

This is how it could look...

There are more affordable homes, and we encourage that new homes – across all tenures – are built to low or zero carbon standards. Our tenants benefit from high quality repairs and maintenance services, and we have a deliverable retrofitting programme. Homes across the city are warm and in good repair – supporting better health and specific needs. Partnership working, tackling underlying causes, continues to reduce and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.

- ★ **Tackle the root causes of disadvantage**

This is how it could look...

People and organisations are working in a joined-up way across the city and in our local neighbourhoods, tackling long standing challenges and inequalities which lead to poverty and disadvantage. More people are digitally included, and people can access advice and support to deal with debt. There is more equality of opportunity.



There needs to be barriers broken down so the profound and multiple learning disabled community can participate in the creative and cultural life of the city.



Lucy Garland,
co-artistic director,
Frozen Light

Our priorities

Why this is one of our priorities

We must continue to tackle the climate emergency by reducing our own carbon emissions to become a net zero council by 2030 and working collectively with city partners for a net-zero Norwich by 2045. This may take longer across our council homes, but we will make a start.

We will work to ensure all decisions made by the council consider and mitigate the impact on the climate and the biodiversity crisis. We will protect and enhance our outstanding parks, green and blue spaces and our natural environment, so they are vibrant and accessible to everyone, and places where wildlife thrives.

We will work with our partners, including the county council, to work towards a city where transport is cleaner and better connected, linking communities to communities and people to opportunity. We will work together to help make Norwich an exemplar city for digital connectivity and inclusivity.

A climate responsive Norwich

What you told us and how it links to this priority

You really like Norwich being a compact and walkable city with its rivers and natural areas seen as a huge asset. You also told us about a number of challenges including issues with the city's transport system, old and poorly insulated council homes in need of modernisation and how we need to get people to make the necessary changes to make the city and the county climate efficient.

Linked to these challenges were possible opportunities – because the city council owns a large number of council homes it is seen as well placed to catalyse improvement programmes, benefiting from economies of scale. Norwich Climate Commission was seen as being in a good place to begin conversations about the low carbon roadmap it has set out.



What we are aiming for:

★ A net-zero council by 2030

This is how it could look...

Our council services have a reduced carbon footprint, and environmentally conscious suppliers are supported by increased council investment and spending. Our businesses drive a low emission agenda, our recycle rates are increased across the city and our air quality is improved. These help us to achieve our net zero target.

★ Aiming for net-zero for Norwich by 2045

This is how it could look...

Norwich is known for being a leader in the green economy and enjoys being a low-carbon city with a growing green economy. We see an increase in the use of public transport and active travel, and we take pride in our partnership work to lower emissions across the city. A lower proportion of household income is being spent on energy.

★ Vibrant parks and open spaces for all

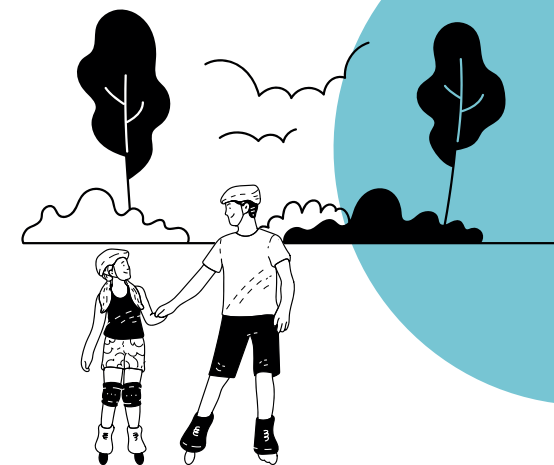
This is how it could look...

Our parks and green spaces have increased usage across all communities, with improved recreation, sport and leisure opportunities, evidenced by a higher take up in sport and physical activity, contributing to better mental and physical wellbeing. The biodiversity value of our open spaces is increased and supports thriving wildlife.

★ Growing our capacity to adapt to climate change

This is how it could look...

We take advantage of world class research based in Norwich to help us to adapt to climate change. There is increased awareness and understanding of climate change across all our communities, so that people can change behaviours and continue to thrive despite the challenges posed by climate change. We encourage and work to pursue ecological recovery, greater diversity and abundance across insects, plant life, animals and many other species which live in our city.



I would like to see our beautiful place further enhanced by an enlarged city centre population, living and working in zero-carbon new and existing homes and workplaces, with pollution free transport and nature buzzing in streets and plains.



Anthony Hudson,
co-chair and commissioner,
Norwich Climate Commission

Our priorities

Why this is one of our priorities

We want to put Norwich at the forefront of the journey to zero carbon, harnessing the city's innovative nature, bringing forward the jobs of the future and leading on the just transition to a green economy.

We will face the increasing challenges of heat, rising tides and flooding, along with other future shocks, by collaborating to deliver a Norwich 'City Resilience Plan', that will future proof us for decades to come.

We want to bring the city's partners and communities together to shape a city approach to a sustainable future, jointly meeting our challenges and co-designing our future aspirations and plans.

A future-proof Norwich

What you told us and how it links to this priority

You feel there is a real opportunity for a comprehensive zero carbon development programme – something that could provide opportunities for young people to develop future-facing employment skills. Poor educational attainment was highlighted as a challenge, along with a lack of opportunities and low salaries.

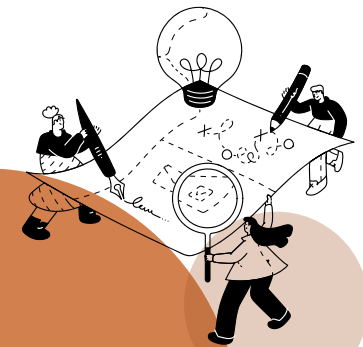
You noted that the council has a strong foundation working with the voluntary and community sector, needing to build on this to reduce barriers and ensure this foundation translates into strongly empowered communities. The city vision partnership was also seen as having an established platform which can be used to continue conversations with partners who can collectively work towards shared goals for the benefit of all.



I value the experience of living in the city. I would like a focus on cleaner streets, fly-tipping and dangerous parking creating access problems. The wider challenges include boosting business and tourism to bring in more investment."



Peter Warren-Ward,
chair of the Tenant
Involvement Panel



What we are aiming for:

★ Empowered communities

This is how it could look...

Our communities are active and strong, they are empowered to act locally to achieve the best local solutions. We partner and work with the public sector, business, voluntary and community organisations to support communities and help lead change.

★ A city ready for change

This is how it could look...

Our streets are vibrant and busy and have the right facilities for our communities. We ensure that new homes are built in sustainable locations close to jobs and amenities and the city's long-term future is secure based on planned investment projects, which take advantage of funding opportunities when they arise.

★ Being equipped for new ways of working

This is how it could look...

We enjoy digital equality and embrace being data-driven to help make joined up decisions. We encourage economic development in our city, have a talent pool matched to need and have better connected communities and businesses.

★ Being prepared for future challenges

This is how it could look...

With partners we lead the development of a citywide resilience plan which prepares our city into the future. Our communities are all more resilient and are better prepared to navigate threats and change – strengthening the city's reputation for being a safe place to live and do business.



“ I would like to see more investment into tourism, growing the visitor economy through innovation will help generate more funds that can be reinvested back into our communities. ”

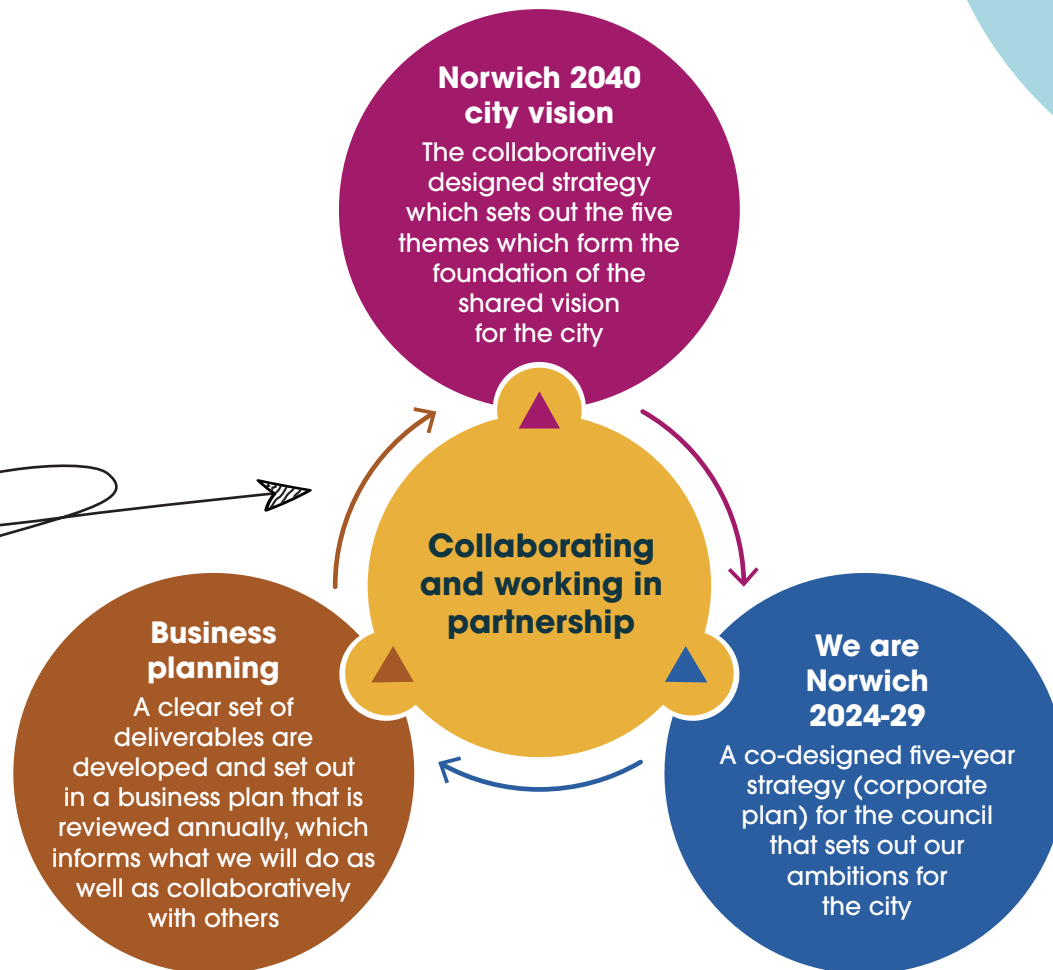


Tom Gaskin,
chief executive,
The Shoebox
Enterprises CIC

7 How we will work

We have a few guiding principles that inform everything we do. They underpin all our priorities and are central to the way we must work to get the best outcomes for our city.

- Be unashamedly ambitious for Norwich
- Do the basics well on the services we provide
- Listen to the city
- Focus on the climate in all that we do
- Put equality and inclusion front and centre of all our thinking
- Use evidence to inform the services we provide
- Work in partnership



Finally... a very big thank you!

The best way to respect your contributions to this plan, and to express our thanks, is to engage with our partners and the local community and deliver it.

Thank you for your support.
We look forward to working with you.

Thank you to all the contributors who are photographed on the front cover of our community-led plan.

Left to right (top row), Peter Warren-Ward, chair of the Tenant Involvement Panel; Helen Mitchell, Friends of Eaton Park; Janete Stowers, executive assistant, Norwich City Council; Roger Lim, income and rents team leader; Louise Griffiths, LTC Green Spaces. (Middle row), Eunice Kokrasset, chair of Norfolk Black History Month; Steve Davidson, chair, FIG (Financial Industry Group); Stuart Wright, operations net zero delivery director, Aviva; Sue Roe, volunteer, City Hall gardeners; Suzanne Parkinson, environment projects co-ordinator. (Bottom row), Tom Gaskin, chief executive, The Shoebox Enterprises CIC; Tom Wood, Akcela, startup business incubator; Lucy Garland, co-artistic director, Frozen Light; Anthony Hudson, co-chair and commissioner, Norwich Climate Commission.



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