



# Norwich City Council Heritage investment strategy

March 2014



**NORWICH**  
City Council

# **NORWICH CITY COUNCIL HERITAGE INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

**March 2014**

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## **1. FOREWORD**

The reputation of Norwich as 'A fine city' is based in part on its rich and diverse built heritage. The city council owns and has responsibility for a significant proportion of the heritage assets of Norwich.

The benefits of this inheritance are numerous: economically, a driver for tourism and the benefits of an attractive urban environment as a stimulus to business location and investment.

The council's heritage portfolio has an important financial dimension: as a source of rental income; reinvestment of capital receipts from sales, as well as a programme of maintenance and repairs to sustain our heritage legacy into the future.

To successfully manage our heritage assets, particularly at a time of deep cuts in local authority budgets, the council needs a coherent and effective investment strategy. This document is a response to that challenge. I would like to thank the heritage organisations in the city, (as well as fellow councillors and council officers), for giving freely of their time in shaping a strategy, that I am confident will help to safeguard the heritage of Norwich for future generations.

**Councillor Alan Waters, Deputy Leader, Portfolio holder for Resources.**

## 2. PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

Norwich has a fine built heritage and the city council owns a large part of it. Given the increasing financial constraints of local authorities it is important that proper consideration is given to the manner in which these significant assets are managed.

This heritage investment strategy will introduce a better approach to making decisions about the management, maintenance and ownership of the council's heritage assets. It seeks to identify ways of raising income and allowing greater public access at the same time as ensuring the assets are conserved. The strategy will strengthen our ability to secure grant funding and will inform applications.

The strategy will help to:

- 1) Recognise how the conservation and promotion of the council's historic assets can improve the quality of life of Norwich's citizens, promote business investment, boost tourism and benefit the environment.
- 2) Find the optimal viable use for heritage assets that maximises financial returns from asset management while having due regard to responsible conservation practice.
- 3) Find new uses for unused or underused assets.
- 4) Secure external investment in the city's heritage assets.
- 5) Promote community participation in the development and delivery of heritage projects, raise awareness of these projects and provide educational opportunities for members of the community.

The strategy treats heritage assets as being scheduled ancient monuments, statutorily listed buildings, locally listed buildings, conservation areas, sculpture in public spaces, registered parks and gardens and landscape elements that define the historic character of the city. Collections of art or artefacts (e.g. civic portraits and regalia) are not included.

This document is not a comprehensive strategy for the management of Norwich's heritage but rather concentrates on those parts that the council owns.

### The structure of the document

**Chapter 3** describes the city's historic environment assets, the benefit the city derives from its historic environment, the contribution of groups who care for the city's heritage and the legislative structure within which we work.

**Chapter 4** explains the resource implications of the strategy in the context of the continuing need to save money and raise revenue. It examines the various budgets that fund works to heritage assets, the income and liabilities relating to the council's heritage assets.

**Chapter 5** explains why the Council owns such a large portfolio, the reasons why heritage assets require different treatment to the rest of the portfolio, the implications of stewardship status and a set of policies that will govern the management of the council's heritage assets.

**Chapter 6** presents some projects that the council plans to start in the next two years that will improve its heritage assets for the benefit of the city.

### 3. CONTEXT

#### The city's heritage

Norwich is a dynamic city that is blessed with a rich legacy of historic buildings and spaces. It has retained a high proportion of its historic buildings, structures and places and the special character of the whole city centre is recognised by its designation as a conservation area. The city's historic buildings contribute significantly to the city's character, sense of place, quality of life for residents, tourism industry and economic health.

It has been said that 'Norwich has everything – a cathedral, a major castle on a mound right in the middle, walls and towers, an admittedly disturbed medieval centre with winding streets and alleys, thirty-five medieval parish churches, and a river'.<sup>1</sup> The most notable point about this statement is that most of those buildings mentioned belong to the council.

The city council's area contains:

- more than 1,500 listed buildings
- 2,600 locally listed buildings in the conservation areas
- 24 scheduled ancient monuments
- 17 conservation areas covering approximately 230 hectares
- the largest surviving medieval walled city in the country with a largely medieval street-pattern contained within the remaining 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century walls
- 31 pre-Reformation churches surviving within the walled city
- one of the finest Romanesque Anglican cathedrals and the largest cathedral close in England, as well as the imposing Roman Catholic Cathedral
- St Andrews and Blackfriars Halls form the most intact English friary complex and have been publicly-owned by the council since the dissolution
- many highly significant religious meeting houses (for example, the Friends Meeting House, the Octagon Chapel and the Old Meeting House) and the first non-denominational municipal cemetery in England - the Rosary Cemetery
- country's largest collection of medieval vaulted undercrofts (most of which are grade II\* listed).

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<sup>1</sup> Pevsner, Nikolaus and Wilson, Bill *The Buildings of England – Norfolk 1: Norwich and the North-East*, 1997, 179

- 20th century Mile Cross estate conservation area was one of the country's first planned council estates and was based on Garden City principles
- 10 historic parks and gardens including those planned by Captain Sandys-Winsch in the 1920s and 1930s (Eaton Park, Heigham Park, Waterloo Park and Wensum Park); they contain many listed structures
- important civic buildings such as the largest surviving medieval Guildhall and a City Hall dating from 1938, which is said to be the 'foremost English public building of between the wars'<sup>2</sup>
- long tradition of mercantile activity resulted in some particularly important medieval merchants' houses, such as Dragon Hall, Stranger's Hall and the Music House (at Wensum Lodge).

### **The benefits of the historic environment**

The historic environment offers many and varied benefits that need to be taken into account alongside direct financial considerations such as income from rents, capital receipts from sales and repair costs during decision-making processes in relation to heritage assets.

According to English Heritage, heritage can help the UK economy grow faster. Further to this it is a key driving factor for international tourism to the UK and therefore benefiting from the expanding international tourism market.<sup>3</sup>

On a local level people spend more in their local economy after investment in the Historic environment. In a survey of 1000 people in areas that had received investment in the historic environment, 1 in 5 visitors stated they spent more in an area after investment and 1 in 4 businesses stated that investment had directly led to an increase in business revenue.<sup>4</sup>

Conservation led development demonstrates what can be achieved with enthusiasm, creativity and confidence; the passion to take on historic assets, the creativity to find solutions to what can at first sight seem to be intractable problems and the confidence of knowing that there will be support for innovative schemes that protect and enhance the significance of a building or place.

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<sup>2</sup> Pevsner, Nikolaus and Wilson, Bill *The Buildings of England – Norfolk 1: Norwich and the North-East*, 1997, 262

<sup>3</sup> English Heritage – *Heritage and Growth*, 2011, 3

<sup>4</sup> English Heritage – *Heritage and Growth*, 2011, 4

## Quality of life

The historic environment makes citizens feel proud of their city. In a survey of Norwich residents, 89 per cent said iconic historic buildings were important in making them feel good about their local area, 88 per cent said "attractive townscapes" and 84 per cent said "other historic buildings".<sup>5</sup> This pride benefits the city through citizens' increased loyalty, their eagerness to promote the city to others and their willingness to care for and respect the city. This is reflected in the number of volunteers involved in the city's heritage.

In 1662 Thomas Fuller described Norwich as a 'city in an orchard' and today the city continues to benefit from its pleasant townscapes and numerous parks. 91% of people feel that parks and open spaces improve their quality of life, while evidence has shown that access to well-maintained parks provides health benefits, increases social cohesion in the community and encourages environmental stewardship.<sup>6</sup>

95% of respondents considered that the regeneration of historic areas improved social interaction with new spaces for meeting, living, socialising and working created. It was also felt to improve perceptions of safety, particularly at night.<sup>7</sup>

## Business investment

Historic areas are more likely to attract unique and independent businesses. These businesses are often seen to have a more 'premium' offer. The higher ratio of smaller, cheaper accommodation is attractive to independent businesses, social enterprises and creative industries<sup>8</sup>. Norwich is in the top ten shopping destinations in the UK<sup>9</sup> with a strong mix of independent shops and high street names, as well as two city centre malls. This enhances the shopping experience and it has also been noted that a historic environment tends to create an ambience that people want to stay and enjoy.<sup>10</sup>

The historic environment is an important factor for people in deciding where to live and work.<sup>11</sup> Businesses report that it is as important for their location decision as road access.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Norfolk Citizens Panel / BMG Research *Research Report – Norfolk Citizen's Panel – Wave 18 – Norwich Data*, 2009, 7-8

<sup>6</sup> GreenLink, *Blue Sky Green Space: Understanding the Importance of Retaining Good Quality Parks and Green Spaces, and the Contribution They Make to People's Lives*, 2010

<sup>7</sup> Amion Consulting / Locum Consulting *The Impact of Historic Environment Regeneration*, 2010, 5-6

<sup>8</sup> Amion Consulting / Locum Consulting, *The Impact of Historic Environment Regeneration*, 2010, 3 and English Heritage, *Heritage Counts 2010*, 5

<sup>9</sup> VENUESCORE, 2011 survey

<sup>10</sup> English Heritage, *Heritage Counts 2010*, 5-6

<sup>11</sup> English Heritage, *Heritage Counts 2010*, 4.

<sup>12</sup> English Heritage, *Heritage Counts 2010*, 2

## Tourism

Norwich has a burgeoning tourist industry and the total value of tourism is thought to be around £432m a year.<sup>13</sup> However, given the extent of its heritage offer it does not have the prestige of York or Bath, especially among the overseas markets. Norwich is a popular short stay destination and attracts a large number of day visitors. (around 4.7m each year). There is a limited amount of self catering accommodation in the city and many families and longer staying visitors will be staying outside the city.<sup>14</sup> It is also clear that given the wealth of historic assets and cultural venues throughout the city there is great potential for the city to increase its tourism economy with further investment and promotion, especially given that heritage tourism is one of the most significant draws for inbound visitors to the UK,<sup>15</sup> and that the number of visitors to heritage attractions nationally has increased by 28% in the last 10 years.<sup>16</sup> Norwich City Council works closely with VisitNorwich Ltd to increase visitor numbers and grow the visitor economy.

One of the strongest incentives for investing in the historic environment is its importance in affecting perceptions of how attractive a place is to visit. It would also appear that the further people live from a city, the more likely they are to be influenced to visit it by the nature and the quality of its heritage assets; a report concluded that "there is a strong direct link between the number of listed buildings and their popularity as a destination for a day out".<sup>17</sup> Given Norwich's large number of high quality heritage assets, its attractive townscape and expansive hinterland, it is not therefore surprising that it is a popular destination for day trips. An increasing number of short breaks are being taken by more affluent and / or older people, with the city's heritage attractions being a key reason for these visits.

On average half of the jobs created by historic visitor attractions are not on the site but in the wider economy.<sup>18</sup> Approximately 14% of jobs in the city are supported by tourism.<sup>19</sup> The highest proportion of spend in Norfolk by visitors was in the urban area rather than rural areas.

Many of the historic parks are used for popular events, such as the Lord Mayor's Celebration, Openstages and the Norfolk and Norwich Festival. These events bring a huge number of people into the city, including tourists and visitors from the wider region, as well as city residents, bringing a huge economic boost to local businesses and promoting the city.

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<sup>13</sup> Tourism South East, *Economic Impact of Tourism: Norwich City 2010 Results*, 1

<sup>14</sup> Figures from Tourism South East, *Economic Impact of Tourism: Norwich City 2010 Results*, 1

<sup>15</sup> English Heritage, *Heritage Counts 2010*, 10

<sup>16</sup> English Heritage *Heritage Counts 2012*, 40

<sup>17</sup> Amion Consulting / Locum Consulting *The Impact of Historic Environment Regeneration*, 2010, 3 and English Heritage, *Heritage Counts 2010*, 4

<sup>18</sup> English Heritage, *Heritage Counts 2010*, 11

<sup>19</sup> Tourism South East, *Economic Impact of Tourism: Norwich City 2010 Results*

## Environment

The re-use of historic buildings is inherently sustainable. A significant amount of embodied energy contained within a historic building is lost when it is replaced. Research has found that on average a new energy efficient home takes between 35-50 years to recover the carbon expended in its construction.<sup>20</sup> In many instances a historic building's performance is naturally good or can be relatively easily upgraded, without resulting in significant harm to its character.

The re-use of historic buildings can be substantially cheaper than starting from scratch, with the repair of a Victorian terrace house being between 40-60% cheaper than replacing it with a new home.<sup>21</sup>

Norwich benefits from a large number of registered parks and gardens which act as a habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, thereby encouraging biodiversity. The plants and trees found within our parks improve air quality, reducing the effects of pollution and improving water and flood management.<sup>22</sup>

## **Partner organisations**

There are a wide-range of organisations, companies, charities and individuals involved in maintaining, repairing, developing and managing the city's heritage assets. A large number of these organisations rely on volunteers and the contribution of these individuals who give up their time and energy to protect and promote the city's heritage is worth celebrating.

Where buildings are owned by the Council, there are often leaseholds or partnerships in place where the buildings are managed and maintained by others. The most significant of these are with the following organisations:

### The Norwich Historic Churches Trust

The trust is a charity established in 1973 in order to look after those churches made redundant in the Diocesan review which reported in 1969. The Trust was created to try to find new uses for the churches. The freeholds of 18 medieval churches have been passed to the city council which in turn lets them to the trust on 99 year leases. The trust is responsible for the repair, management and maintenance of the buildings and has a responsibility to find new uses for the buildings, particularly for civic, public or educational uses. The uses include: a puppet theatre, an arts centre, artists' studios, a music school, a martial arts centre, a dance school and places of worship. The trust is currently running a fundraising campaign, with the funds being used to improve services (such as providing water supplies, lighting, WCs and kitchenettes) in four of the churches. There is also a wider scheme incorporating a strategic action plan to implement as part of a bid to secure

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<sup>20</sup> Empty Homes Agency and the Building and Social Housing Foundation, *New Tricks with Old Bricks: How Reusing Old Buildings can cut Carbon Emissions*, 12.

<sup>21</sup> English Heritage, *Heritage Counts*, 2003

<sup>22</sup> GreenLink, *Blue Sky Green Space: Understanding the Importance of Retaining Good Quality Parks and Green Spaces, and the Contribution They Make to People's Lives*, 2010

Heritage Lottery Funding. The council maintains the many of churchyards under the closed churchyards legislation.

### The county council

The city council owns many of the city's museum buildings, for example, the Castle, the Bridewell Museum and Stranger's Hall. The county council (Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service) have agreements with the city council regarding these buildings and there are split maintenance responsibilities where the city normally maintains the exterior and the county the interior. In order to ensure the relationship runs smoothly, there is a jointly operated buildings group involving both city and county officers. The county has recently completed an HLF-funded refurbishment and reorganisation of the Bridewell Museum and is currently developing plans for changes to the way the castle is presented. Wensum Lodge is owned by the City Council but run by the County Council

### The Norwich Preservation Trust

The trust was established in 1966. It was set up to preserve, restore and maintain architecturally and historically important buildings in Norwich and takes on commercially non-viable projects. It holds long leases on council-owned property such as Augustine Steward House (restored by them in 1992-1996 and used as offices and an antiques centre), properties at 2 - 4 St Andrew's Hill (restored 1991-1992) and more recently the Briton's Arms on Elm Hill, a coffee shop and flat where repairs (primarily funded by English Heritage) and works to conserve and restore the property are well underway and nearing completion. The council liaises regularly with the trust in relation to individual projects and Buildings at Risk.

### The Norfolk and Norwich Heritage Trust

The trust is a registered charity set up in 1987 to care for and conserve Dragon Hall, a medieval merchant's hall owned by the city council, and to promote it as an educational resource. The building is open as a museum, as well as holding public and private events.

### The Mousehold Conservators

Mousehold Heath is a unique 88 hectare site made up of heathland, forest and recreational areas in the north-east of Norwich. Although it is not designated as a heritage asset in its own right, the heath has historically played an important role in the life of the city, with residents using it to graze animals and to collect bedding / feed for livestock and fuel for winter. It provided the base for Robert Kett's camp during the rebellion he led in 1549, as well as a vantage point of the city which has resulted in many famous paintings. An Act of Parliament in 1880 required the city council to manage the heath on behalf of its residents and in 1884 the Mousehold Conservators were established to manage the heath for the council. The Conservators hold the budget for the heath and carry out work such as heathland reclamation. There are a couple of designated heritage assets on the heath, such as the remains of St William's Chapel which is a scheduled ancient monument and the former pavilion (now Zak's restaurant) which is a locally listed building.

As well as these organisations that help to manage the council's buildings, there are other stakeholders that we work closely with on a regular basis on heritage matters. These are:

### The Norwich Society

The Norwich Society is a civic society that was established in 1923 with the following aims:

- A. To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Norwich
- B. To stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the city and its surroundings.
- C. To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest.
- D. To pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications and other forms of instruction and publicity, by co-operation with the local Authorities and other bodies, and promotion of schemes of a charitable nature.

It has a large local membership. Recent projects include the extension of the local list<sup>23</sup> and an on-going project to increase promotion of the city walls (also with HEART).

### Norwich HEART (Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust)

HEART was established in 2003/04 as an umbrella organisation to help develop and promote Norwich's heritage offer and is a private charitable company. The organisation has been successful in running several grant-funded projects such as the Norwich 12; Shaping 24 and the Norwich Lanes, which have helped to promote and interpret the city's heritage assets and also commissioned conservation management plans for the 'Norwich 12' buildings. HEART also runs the very successful Heritage Open Days in September of each year and promotes heritage education.

### VisitNorwich

VisitNorwich is the official destination management organisation for the Norwich area and is a non-profit making private / public sector partnership, partly funded by Norwich City Council. It markets Norwich as a visitor destination throughout the world and produces information to promote the city and ensure that visitors make the most of their visits.

### Norwich Business Improvement District

Established in November 2012 the Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) is run for local businesses by local businesses. The BID covers a defined area of the city centre where businesses plan how to improve their trading environment, identifying additional projects

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<sup>23</sup> This Council / Norwich Society project was used as an exemplar in the recent English Heritage guidance, *Good Practice Guide for Local Heritage Listing*, May 2012.

and services that develop the city centre and trade. Investment in the BID area aims to enhance and promote the local environment for businesses, employees and customers.

### **The Legislative Background**

The council has to work within a framework of legislation and policy when it does work to its historic assets. This framework is illustrated by the diagram below.

## POLICY LEGISLATION

**LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS**  
**Planning (Listed building and Conservation Act 1990)**  
Defines listed buildings & conservation areas.  
Explains when permission is required for work to listed buildings.  
Duty to produce proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

**MONUMENTS**  
**Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979**  
Changes to scheduled monuments controlled by provisions within this legislation.

**HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS**  
**National Heritage Act 1983**  
Gave English Heritage responsibility for producing Register of Historic parks and Gardens.

**TREES**  
**Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) Regs 2012**  
Rules covering protection of trees within tree preservation order (TPO)  
**Town and Country Planning 1990**  
Rules protection of trees within conservation areas.

### NATIONAL

### NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

### LOCAL

## POLICY

**JOINT CORE STRATEGY 2011**  
Strategic planning policies for Greater Norwich area

**CITY OF NORWICH LOCAL PLAN 2004**  
To be replaced by Development Management Policies Plan & Site Allocations Plan submitted In 2014.

HERITAGE INTERPRETATION SPD

HERITAGE INVESTMENT STRATEGY

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS



#### 4. RESOURCES

Money will be required to deliver the strategy, particularly to cover staff time and repair costs but like all local authorities Norwich City Council has for several years faced funding cuts and been under increasing pressure to make savings. The council has saved £14.6 million from its general fund over the last three years (equivalent to a 40% reduction in gross controllable general fund revenue costs). These measures have had implications for the management of the council's assets; for example, constraining the council's ability to undertake condition surveys and act upon them.

The main source of capital receipts is currently from the sale of property, including historic buildings. The on-going programme of asset reviews determines which properties are retained and which are sold.

At present, the council's heritage assets can benefit from three different funding sources depending on the type of asset and the work proposed. The **non-housing capital programme** is set annually and based on the submitted bids for capital projects. NPS Norwich and Citywide Services are allocated **revenue budgets** from the general fund to maintain heritage assets. They then allocate the budgets for repairs and maintenance of all the assets they are responsible for according to corporately agreed their own scoring systems. The **housing revenue account** is a separate funding pot specifically for housing and cannot be mixed with the general fund.

The current repairs liability relating to the council's heritage assets is not known as there are few current condition surveys. However it is likely to be a very large sum. Given the council's financial constraints and many other calls on its resources this is daunting. The council's heritage assets are expensive to maintain and operate. This is offset by income from many of the heritage assets.

An aim of the Heritage Investment Strategy is to reduce the repair liability, which would be likely to mean heavy investment in the assets in order to reduce the longer term costs associated with them. At present this level of funding is unlikely to be available and as a result the benefits will be reached over a longer period of time and will also partially be achieved through the reduction in the number of assets, whilst seeking to maintain the level of funds available for repair and maintenance.

Many of the measures proposed in the next section (for example, regular condition surveys and applying for and managing grants) have cost implications but equally there is the potential to generate an income, especially over the longer term (for example, ensuring dilapidation surveys are acted upon; or carrying out repairs / refurbishment of an asset to bring it back into a viable use and allowing it to be let). Business cases will be used as a tool to determine what investments to make.

The sale of some heritage assets can bring benefits to the council in terms of income generation and a reduced longer term maintenance and repair liability, as well as bringing benefits to the assets themselves. Funds raised through asset sales improve the financial position of the council and thus increase the ability to invest in the remaining assets.

It is important to value the contribution that stakeholders, such as the Norwich Historic Churches Trust (NHCT) and the Norwich Preservation Trust (NPT), who hold long leases on council properties, can bring to this process. They manage effectively, maintain and enhance council-owned assets, many of which are often highly significant. Their good work reduces the financial liability to the council.

It will be increasingly important that external funding is sought for projects. This strategy demonstrates to grant-giving bodies the council's plans to manage its significant heritage portfolio in a better way. The council needs to be alert to potential funding sources. The process of seeking and applying for grant aid and subsequently managing and promoting our own projects will require the allocation of staff resources for the preparation of bids and the management of subsequent grants.

Where capital funding has been allocated to a project a maintenance budget will be a particular requirement to ensure the long-term sustainability of the scheme and to ensure any benefits are not short-lived. This will be especially important where external grants have contributed to the scheme as on-going maintenance is often a contractual requirement.

## 5. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A recent research report stated that most local authorities own between six and twenty listed buildings, although it is noted that larger unitary authorities and county councils tend to own more.<sup>24</sup> Despite its relatively tightly drawn boundaries, the council owns more than 195 listed buildings and scheduled monuments plus numerous locally listed buildings and nine registered parks and gardens. The properties range from high status buildings such as the castle, museums and churches, to Georgian town houses, council housing, statues and bridges. All the assets (including locally listed buildings and registered parks and gardens are listed in appendix 1 and their location shown on the maps in appendix 2. This impressive portfolio is of great benefit to the city but a financial liability to the council.

Most of the historic assets are owned or managed for one or more of the following reasons:

1. For stewardship reasons (frequently where very significant historic assets may have been gifted to the council to own permanently).
2. To provide housing for people who might not otherwise be able to house themselves on the open market.
3. To provide for the financial or strategic benefit of the council (the council holds a large commercial property portfolio for investment purposes.
4. As they are needed to deliver council services (e.g. City Hall, parks and cemeteries).

The council's corporate plan reflects the importance of the historic environment to the citizens of Norwich and the importance of the assets it has responsibility for. The table below lists the objectives in the corporate plan and how the heritage investment strategy relates to them.

<b>NORWICH CITY COUNCIL CORPORATE OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>HOW THE HERITAGE INVESTMENT STRATEGY MEETS THE OBJECTIVE</b>
A safe and clean city	The re-use and regeneration of disused and dilapidated historic buildings and areas promotes safety in the city.
A prosperous city	The strategy will help secure funding for historic environment regeneration schemes, thereby creating new jobs, homes and commercial accommodation. Improvements to the built environment should encourage tourists, visitors and others to visit the city, thereby increasing its prosperity.

<sup>24</sup> Green Balance with Grover Lewis Associates Ltd, *Local Authority Heritage Assets: Current Issues and Opportunities*, March 2012, para 4.3 and para 7.1.

Decent housing for all	The re-use of empty buildings and the refurbishment of existing homes can provide new housing.
City of character and culture	Regeneration schemes relating to the historic environment, including parks and open spaces, as well as improvements to the management of Council-owned heritage assets, will help to promote the city as a place of character and culture.
Value for Money Services	The strategy should ensure that value for money services are provided by introducing new ways of managing the Council's heritage assets.

The council's political commitment is reinforced by the representation of councillors on the boards of some of the local heritage organisations and inclusion of the role of Design and Historic Environment Champion in the list of responsibilities of the Cabinet member for Environment, Development and Transport.

The council has many different roles when it comes to protecting, managing and promoting the city's heritage assets and there are different parts of the council involved in fulfilling these various functions (see the diagram below). In most instances, our heritage assets are managed through joint working across council service areas resulting in a number of successful projects in recent years, including the refurbishment of part of City Hall; the repair of the Guildhall tower; the repair and revitalisation of the War Memorial Gardens; works within Chapelfield Gardens and Waterloo Park and streetscape enhancements around St Andrew's Plain and St Augustine's Street.

## COUNCIL AND NPS ROLES RELATING TO THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

### NON-COUNCIL AND COUNCIL OWNED HERITAGE ASSETS

#### PLANNING - PRIMARILY CONSERVATION AND DESIGN OFFICERS

Statutory role: dealing with planning permissions, listed building consents and conservation area consents, as well as enhancements to conservation areas

Advisory role: Advice and liaison with building owners / external organisations / Council colleagues on legislation, repairs, maintenance and alterations to heritage assets. Also advice on the public realm within conservation areas.

#### NPS NORWICH LTD

Asset Management: Acting as landlord for city-owned assets and carrying out Asset Reviews which can include investigating potential changes to the assets and their use.

Property Services (General Fund): Manage the budgets for repairs and maintenance and oversee the resulting works.

Property Services (HRA): Manage the budgets for repairs and maintenance and oversee the resulting works to housing (including heritage) assets. This includes carrying out Asset Reviews and condition surveys.

#### PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Registered Parks and Gardens (RPG): Responsible for the management and maintenance of RPG and any listed structures within them, as well as changes and projects to enhance the RPGs.

Parks and open spaces within conservation areas: Responsible for the management and maintenance of parks, as well as changes and projects to enhance these parks.

#### CITYWIDE SERVICES

Cemeteries designated as Registered Parks and Gardens (RPG): Responsible for the management and maintenance of cemeteries designated as RPG and any listed structures within them, as well as changes and projects to enhance the RPGs.

Churchyards relating to listed churches and within conservation areas: Responsible for the management and maintenance of churchyards within conservation areas and relating to listed buildings.

#### CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Responsible for managing St Andrews and Blackfriars Halls, communications regarding heritage assets and tourism

#### HIGHWAYS

Public realm within conservation areas: For example, ensuring historic surfaces are re-instated and that highways schemes and signage enhance the conservation areas (under an agency agreement with Norfolk County Council).

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Responsible for managing Moushold Heath

### COUNCIL OWNED HERITAGE ASSETS

The council has recently set up a joint venture with NPS called NPS Norwich Ltd. The council's estates management and property teams have transferred to the new company and continue to provide various services relating to council-owned assets, of which heritage assets form a part. This includes their repair and management.

The council has a highways agency agreement with the County Council so it is responsible for managing the highway network. Although not explicitly identified as a heritage asset in its own right, it should be acknowledged that the highway network and associated public realm (especially within the area of the walled city) is of immense historical significance and surface treatments, signage and lighting can contribute significantly to the enhancement of historic assets. The council's traffic engineers and landscape architects work on streetscape projects including 'streets for all'.

All of the council's property assets are managed according to the *Corporate Asset Management Strategy 2011/2016*, which was published in July 2011 [<http://www.norwich.gov.uk/YourCouncil/KeyDocuments/CouncilPoliciesAndStrategies/Documents/CorporateAssetManagementStrategy1.pdf>]. This document sets out the how the council manages its property assets. Heritage assets are a core component of the portfolio and the strategy recognises the challenges associated with their maintenance.

There is an on-going programme of review relating to all Council-owned assets which sometimes results in their sale. With regard to non-stewardship properties it is considered this approach remains appropriate. English Heritage guidance states: 'The disposal of heritage assets, especially those that are straight-forward to adapt to alternative uses, may provide the best solution for such property. Government guidance urges local authorities only to continue to hold property assets if they fit the authority's current requirements in terms of achieving its objectives, including financial. In the current climate, there needs to be good reason to retain council property.'<sup>25</sup>

Our asset reviews are in line with good practice, but more careful consideration is required of the asset<sup>26</sup>. In statutory terms, when looking at the long-term viability of an asset, either through sale or alternative uses, the goal should be the optimum viable use which protects its significance. This may not necessarily be the most commercially lucrative.

The council's heritage assets need special treatment because:

- Private owners are expected to maintain and treat their listed buildings in accordance with legislation. The council should therefore be doing the same.
- Legislation requires heritage assets to be treated differently in certain respects.
- Repairs are more urgent and maintenance is more cost-effective than repair. A downpipe left leaking on a 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed building could lead to extensive and costly repairs being required.

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<sup>25</sup> English Heritage, *Pillars of the community: The transfer of local authority Heritage assets*, January 2011

<sup>26</sup> English Heritage, the OCG and the DCMS, *The Disposal of Heritage Assets: Guidance Note for Government Departments and Non-departmental Public Bodies*, 20

- Many of the assets are nationally important and the council has a duty to take this responsibility seriously.
- The heritage assets owned by the council contribute greatly to the city in terms of its economy; environment and civic pride of its residents as well as enabling us to deliver other services (e.g. the provision of parks, cemeteries).

Some of the council's heritage assets need especially careful treatment. A class of asset called stewardship properties has been developed and these properties are listed in appendix 1. These normally have the following characteristics:

- Derive part of their value from their enduring civic function (e.g. City Hall, St Andrews and Blackfriars Halls).
- Offer particularly high levels of cultural and architectural benefit to the city (e.g. Castle, Bridewell).
- Are publicly-accessible (e.g. Strangers Hall, Suckling House and Hall).
- Form part of the public spaces which the Council has a responsibility to preserve and enhance (e.g. statue of Sir Thomas Browne in Hay Hill).

They are unlikely to:

- Generate (or have the potential to generate) a commercial return or have a substantial residual value;
- Include housing heritage assets, as they would generate an income, have a residual value and normally be for private domestic use.

The council recognises that there is a long term responsibility to ensure that stewardship properties are maintained and managed to protect and maximise their heritage value. Stewardship properties would only be sold in special circumstances, such as extreme financial need. Typically any sale would be accompanied by a conservation management plan and selection of buyer based on a combined evaluation of price and sensitivity of conservation approach following purchase. Very often a long lease would be preferable to sale of the freehold.

Many of the stewardship properties are a financial liability and a burden to a small council like Norwich City. By making a long term commitment to these particular assets we plan to maximise our ability to secure external funding towards projects that seek to conserve them and increase access to the public. This will help to secure their future in public ownership, avoiding pressure for disposal. Several of the projects in section six relate to stewardship properties.

The council maintains a *Buildings at Risk Register*, which lists all buildings considered to be 'at risk' within the city. The conservation team work with building owners to find ways to remove the buildings from the register. There are currently six council-owned buildings on the register which are currently being worked on and will be removed from the register once complete.

The policies and procedures set out below are best practice that will be followed by all council and NPS Norwich staff and consultants or contractors when they work with council-owned heritage assets. It is recognised that given the current resource constraints, not all of the new policies and procedures can be introduced immediately. A timescale for their introduction is given.

#### By March 2015

1. A group of officers will be established to implement the strategy, including promoting the projects identified in section six. It will ensure that community involvement and educational outreach are a key component in projects relating to heritage assets.
2. The strategy will have an internal launch that includes training for staff and contractors who deal with the council's heritage assets.
3. The strategy and list of council-owned assets will be provided to all staff that work with them. The list of assets will be updated at least annually by a nominated officer.
4. All asset registers held by the council will be clearly marked to indicate whether an asset is considered to be a heritage asset and if it has stewardship status. A 'pop-up' will be added to Academy (software used by housing) to notify users of a designation as a heritage asset.
5. All staff dealing with heritage assets will be made aware of how to access detailed information on them (e.g. through the listed buildings module of Uniform; LocalView; ArcView GIS; the council's website; the conservation team).
6. Managers will be given responsibility for ensuring that all staff, contractors and consultants dealing with heritage assets are aware of their responsibilities and liabilities (e.g. that it is a criminal offence to carry out unauthorised works to listed buildings, inside and outside) and should be suitably qualified to carry out their work.
7. The council will seek to allocate sufficient budget to repairs and maintenance of the portfolio of historic assets to ensure that the overall repairs liability on the buildings for which condition surveys exist is reduced. When applying for external funding sufficient maintenance money will be allocated to look after those assets.
8. When buildings become vacant swift decisions will be made to ensure they are reoccupied to avoid neglect and vandalism (see [www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/vacanthistoricbuildings/acc-vacant-historic-buildings.pdf](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/vacanthistoricbuildings/acc-vacant-historic-buildings.pdf)).

9. Clear information will be provided to potential purchasers during the marketing of all heritage assets, which should include a description of the heritage significance of the asset. Where, in exceptional circumstances, Stewardship properties are being marketed for sale or long lease, this should be accompanied by a conservation management plan.
10. The sale of a freehold or leasehold interest in grade 1 and 2\* listed buildings and stewardship properties by unrestricted auction is unlikely to be acceptable because it risks bidders paying too high but then being unable to afford unanticipated high repair costs or the high quality work required for any alterations. This can lead to council staff being involved in protracted and adversarial negotiations. Other forms of sale (informal tender or sale by private treaty) will be more appropriate. The bidder's plans for the buildings and evidence of the availability of sufficient funds to carry them out will be required. The criteria that the council will use for the assessment of bids will be clearly set out and give sufficient weight to quality of approach as well as price to avoid such pitfalls. Long leaseholds and inviting the involvement of a building preservation trust will always be considered.
11. Consultation with local heritage groups and English Heritage will take place during the asset review process for stewardship properties.
12. The Council is under no obligation to accept the highest offer for disposals of historic assets although price is likely to be the main factor in selecting successful bidders other than for stewardship properties and grade 1 and 2\* listed properties.
13. Regular rent reviews will be undertaken to ensure that market rents are being derived from each asset and opportunities for increasing returns through improving the condition of a building or changing its use will be explored.

#### By March 2018

14. The council will aim to have thorough condition and dilapidation surveys in place for every listed building and scheduled monument and update them at least every five years. They will inform budget allocation, repairs and maintenance work programmes and asset reviews.
15. Brief statements of significance will be produced for each heritage asset at the same time as the surveys, which should then be used to inform any work to the asset or review of its ownership status.
16. A review of this strategy should be produced to ensure it is being effectively implemented.

#### Ongoing

17. Public realm improvement within conservation areas will be pursued alongside traffic management schemes and in the context of master plans that seek to provide a better setting for historic buildings.

18. Sufficient in house conservation expertise will be retained in Planning Services and NPS Norwich to ensure that these policies and procedures are implemented along with the normal regulatory function of the council.

## **6. PROJECTS**

This section identifies potential projects relating to the council's heritage assets, candidate partner organisations and funding sources. The projects in this section are being treated as a priority. It is intended that they should start before April 2015. The priority projects will be reviewed on an annual basis at the same time as the capital programme for the following year is developed.

Projects have been identified as a priority because of one or more of the following factors: a) money is available; b) the opportunity is only available for a short-time; c) there are urgent problems to remedy.

An important component of all the projects will be to work with local interest groups and ensure that opportunities for education and community participation are included in them. The extent of this involvement and the type of education will depend on the site and the project. Statements of significance will be deposited with the Norfolk Historic Environment Record adding to this important publicly-accessible resource.

### **City Centre**

#### **1. Castle Gardens and lodges**

The castle gardens are designated as a scheduled monument and the lodges to the castle bridge are also listed. The lodges are unused and in need of repair and this scheme would consider uses for these lodges as well as the restoration and enhancement of the Victorian gardens. A small amount of Section 106 funding is currently available, which will be used for developing a scheme for which additional funding can then be sought.

#### **2. Chapelfield Gardens**

Works to improve entrances, lighting and paths within the Gardens have been designed and are currently being implemented. A collateral benefit will be the provision of an alternative pedestrian route to facilitate the St Stephens and Chapel Field North project.

#### **3. Magpie' Printers site and City Walls**

This site at an important gateway into the city centre conservation area became vacant following the demolition of the former Magpie Printer's building due to its structural instability. The medieval city walls, which are a scheduled monument, run through the centre of the site. The city wall and has been repaired and there are now plans to landscape the area in front of the walls facing Magpie road.

#### **4. Ninham's Court, Bethel Street**

This is a grade II\* listed house in the city centre. It is highly significant with parts of it dating back to the medieval period. The building was gifted to the council and as such must remain in our ownership. It has been empty for a number of years. The Council has been developing

a scheme with a building preservation trust called the Vivat Trust who may take on a lease of the building and carry out repairs for use as a holiday home, using their own sources of funding. They have recently produced an option/viability appraisal.

#### 5. St Andrews and Blackfriars Halls

The St Andrews and Blackfriars Halls is a large monastic complex in the centre of the city that has been owned by the council since the dissolution of the monasteries. It is grade I listed as well as being a scheduled monument. The Halls are currently a significant drain on Council resources and have a back-log of repairs. A feasibility study is required to establish the role of the Halls in the future, the extent of repairs required and potential future projects that would improve the effectiveness of the Halls and enhance their appearance and the spaces around them. This should be combined with work already completed as part of previous assessment.

#### 6. War Memorial Gardens undercroft

This grade II listed structure was recently repaired but the undercroft remains empty and only occasionally used. The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts has proposed using the space as an art gallery. This would bring it into beneficial use, provide an arts facility in the city centre and generate an income for the council.

#### 7. Tombland Toilets

The concrete underground toilets in Tombland were closed in April 2012 due to anti social behaviour that took place there, the difficulty of providing good access and the cost of keeping them open. They are an unattractive feature in a critically important historic public space. The structure should be removed and the space paved and returned to open space.

### **Outside city centre**

#### 8. Mile Cross Gardens and pavilions

This is a Registered Park and Garden within the Mile Cross Conservation Area. Improvements are required to the area given that it is currently on the *Heritage at Risk Register*. The park and its pavilions are under-used and some of the historic structures such as the colonnade are damaged. It has the potential to provide an attractive facility for residents in a relatively deprived part of the city. There is some Section 106 funding available for the scheme.

#### 9. Mousehold Heath

Higher Level Stewardship funding has been awarded by Natural England to the Mousehold Conservators for the heath and one of the main aims is the restoration of the heathland. This grant aid is available for the next 10 years and there is also some capital funding from

the council available. This is an ongoing project. It will also complement one of the key projects that will be funded through the cycle city ambition grant.

The remains of St Williams Chapel on the Heath are a scheduled monument and although few above-ground remnants are evident this is an important site, dedicated to St William, the saint and martyr who is thought to have been murdered on there in 1144.

#### 10. Waterloo Park Pavillion

The pavilion is empty and there have been problems with roof leakage. It has potential to be used as a social space for weddings and other gatherings. The lack of adequate car parking is considered to discourage this type of use. A business case is being developed to repair and upgrade the facilities associated with promotion of the pavilion for suitable events and additional car parking.