

River Wensum Strategy: Draft strategy for consultation

July 2017



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Appendices are included in a separate Annex:

- **Appendix 1: Roles and responsibilities**
- **Appendix 2: Policies and other guidance**
- **Appendix 3: Possible future action plan projects**
- **Appendix 4: Glossary**

Executive summary

About the River Wensum

The River Wensum runs through the heart of Norwich and was once the centre of city life and industry. However as the city has changed the focus of activity has moved away from the river. Now very little activity is currently evident on the river itself or on the open spaces beside it.

But the river is now cleaner and greener than in the past. It now enjoys much improved public access, with 11km of riverside walk created since the 1970s and three new bridges built since 2001. It is a short walk from one of the most vibrant city centres in the country, and adjacent to Norwich University of the Arts. It runs through the most historic part of the city centre with many nearby notable landmarks including Norwich Cathedral, The Halls, Fye Bridge and Bishop's Bridge.

A thriving riverside environment with improved access and a high quality public realm has the potential to greatly benefit the city and wider Norwich area. The River Wensum Strategy is a long-term strategy aimed at facilitating change and regeneration in the river corridor by helping to change perceptions of the city as a visitor destination, improving the quality of life, and acting as an economic driver to attract external investment and contribute to Norwich's regeneration.

About the River Wensum Strategy Partnership

A new partnership has been established to develop a strategy to revitalise the River Wensum. The River Wensum Strategy Partnership (RWSP) is led by Norwich City Council working alongside the Broads Authority, Norfolk County Council, the Environment Agency, and the Wensum River Parkway Partnership.

The RWSP has consulted with other stakeholders and the public to help it shape a 10 year strategy and a 3 year action plan. This is the consultation on the draft strategy, and it is anticipated that a final strategy will be adopted by the RWSP members in late 2017 – early 2018.

The strategy vision

The strategy covers the River Wensum corridor from the city council boundary at Hellesdon in the west to Whitlingham Country Park in the east. The vision is to: ***'Breathe new life into the river by enhancing it for the benefit of all and increasing access to, and greater use of, this important asset. The river will once again play an important part in the growth and vitality of the city, strengthening the visitor economy and helping to give the city a competitive advantage in attracting inward investment'***.

The objectives are for delivering the vision are:

- improving the management of the river corridor and its surroundings for the benefit of the city, residents of the wider Norwich area, and visitors;
- increasing access to, and use of, the area by all, including enhanced connectivity with the Norfolk Trails network;
- enhancing the natural environment and green infrastructure;
- enhancing the city's environmental, cultural and historic offer in a manner which maximises the attractiveness of the area as a location to do business;
- enhancing heritage, making the most of the unique historic environment within the river corridor;
- addressing social deprivation and inequalities;
- maximising the efficiency of public expenditure in the river corridor, where possible reducing the pressure on stretched public sector budgets; and
- identifying and exploiting external funding opportunities including private sector investment.

The draft strategy proposals:

Management

A well-managed river corridor, with effective joint working between partners, is a pre-requisite for the regeneration of the river corridor and to maximise benefits to the city and wider area. Management proposals (set out in section three) include:

- Clarification of Partners' roles and responsibilities to make it easier for stakeholders and the public to know who to contact.
- Establishment of delivery arrangements including a delivery board to oversee day-to-day management of the river, and a strategic board to oversee implementation and monitoring, involving joint working with key delivery partners.
- Working with local stakeholder groups and those who live and work in the vicinity of the river to help deliver the strategy.
- Ensuring that ongoing maintenance is addressed fully for all projects and proposals to make sure that they do not add to ongoing public maintenance expenditure.

Access and leisure

A key strategy theme is increasing access to the river corridor, including enhancing connectivity with the Norfolk Trails network (section four), and encouraging greater leisure and commercial use of the river itself (section five). Proposed access measures will encourage increased use of the river corridor by commuters and leisure users, and help to create the conditions for local businesses to thrive through increased footfall and activity including event and festivals, whilst supporting health initiatives which encourage activity.

Proposals include:

- Completion of the riverside walk between New Mills and Trowse Swing Bridge, including construction of key 'missing links' of the Riverside Walk between Duke's Palace and St George's Street and between Fye Bridge and Whitefriar's Bridge
- Improvements to the accessibility of the Riverside Walk downstream of New Mills making it accessible for people of all ages and abilities, and enhanced signage between the river and key tourist and visitor locations including the city centre
- An improved cycle crossing of the Barn Road roundabout to encourage greater commuting and leisure usage of the Marriotts Way and the Riverside Walk
- Enhanced links with the Broads network at Whitlingham Country Park in the longer term
- Enhancement of existing, and creation of new, river infrastructure. This includes an improved slipway at Friar's Quay and enhanced moorings at the Yacht station. New short-stay visitor moorings are proposed in a number of locations including Quayside and between Carrow Bridge and Lady Julian Bridge. The strategy also encourages improved canoeing infrastructure including new canoe access points at New Mills
- Enhancement of angling access and fish habitat
- Promotion of river events and trails including a proposed river festival.

Environment

The strategy aims to improve the natural environment, the public realm and open spaces near to the river (section six). The river is a wildlife corridor and its sensitive enhancement has the potential to improve ecology and biodiversity in the heart of the city. Proposals include:

- Improvements to water quality in specific stretches of the river including a proposal to reduce the levels of oils and fats entering the river from food related businesses in the Magdalen Street/Fye Bridge Street area
- Protection and enhancement of biodiversity of the river and riverbanks including proposals for floating vegetation platforms; a biodiversity enhancement and non-invasive species management plan to manage non-native species; and an eel pass at New Mills to assist with migration of this protected species (which has now been installed)
- Improvements to open spaces adjacent to the river to maximise their use for leisure and recreation as well as enhancing biodiversity and heritage features where appropriate.

Ideas for the future

The strategy also identifies some potential projects as opportunities for the future (section seven), which may be developed in the strategy lifetime as opportunities arise. These include the historic New Mills pumping house, the medieval Boom Towers and city walls/wooded ridge in east Norwich, Mary Chapman Court riverside

site in the northern city centre, and Wensum Park. These potential opportunities require detailed investigation in order to establish feasibility and costings.

Action plan and funding

The strategy aims to facilitate regeneration of the river corridor in the longer term, but includes an action plan with a number of projects considered capable of delivery in the short to medium term (approximately three years) to kickstart the process of positive change. The strategy proposes working with external partners to attract funding to the river corridor. Potential sources of project funding for action plan projects include Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Anglian Water, and the Water Mills and Marshes Landscape Partnership. Other sources of funding will be applied for as projects develop.

Strategy benefits

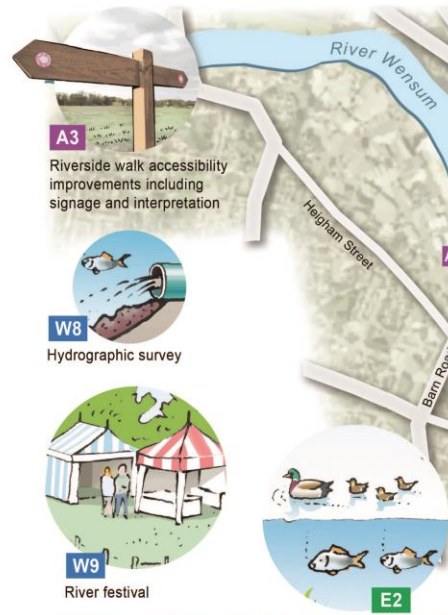
The strategy will have a range of economic, social, environmental and heritage benefits including:

- Increased access to the river corridor and an enhanced public realm for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors
- Boosting the local economy by providing an environment conducive to the establishment and growth of various creative businesses and by attracting tourists and visitors with benefits to Norwich's shopping, heritage and visitor attractions
- Improved green infrastructure to support the delivery of major housing growth planned for the city centre and east Norwich areas
- Providing health and recreational benefits for the existing communities adjacent to the river, some of which suffer from high levels of deprivation and health inequalities
- Improved natural environment and biodiversity in the river corridor, acting as a green lung in the heart of the city
- Identification of funding opportunities and potential for private sector investment, through focused attention on the river.

Comments on the strategy

Your views are sought on the draft strategy by 15 September 2017. See section nine for how to comment.

Action Plan Projects



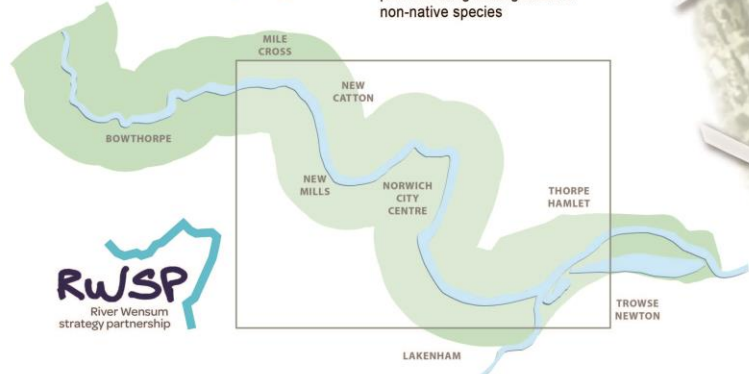
A3
Riverside walk accessibility improvements including signage and interpretation

W8
Hydrographic survey

W9
River festival

E2
Biodiversity enhancement plan including management of non-native species

Area wide projects



Site specific projects

- Walking and Cycling Access**
 - A1** Missing link in Riverside Walk - Duke St and St George's Bridge
 - A2** Missing link in Riverside Walk - Fye Bridge and Whitefriars
 - A4** Marriott's Way - Barn Road Gateway
- Waterways Access & Leisure**
 - W1** Friar's Quay Slipway enhancement
 - W2** Yacht Station expansion
 - W3** New Mills canoe portage
 - W4** Quayside short stay moorings
 - W5** Boom Towers repiling and mooring
 - W6** New short stay moorings between Carrow Bridge and Lady Julian Bridge
 - W7** New short stay visitor and demasting mooring at NR1 development
- Environment**
 - E1** FOG (Fats, Oils and Grease) project
 - E3** Floating vegetation platforms in key locations
 - E4** Boom Towers - enhancement scheme to Devil's Tower



1 The need for a strategy

1.1 The River Wensum flows from its source in north-west Norfolk through the Greater Norwich area, to its confluence with the River Yare at Whitlingham to the east of the city. This strategy focuses on the section of the river within the city boundary and also includes the Whitlingham area.

1.2 The River Wensum has had a major influence on the development of Norwich over the centuries. As the city's oldest and most important highway, industry grew up on its banks and influenced the city's early development. Despite its location close to the attractions of this historic city the River Wensum generates little in the way of river-based businesses and leisure activity.

1.3 Over recent decades Norwich City Council has sought to maximise the potential of the river corridor for residents and tourists, resulting in the creation of over 11km of riverside walk through its planning policies, and the development of three new bridges since 2001 – the Novi Sad Friendship Bridge, Lady Julian Bridge and the Jarrold Bridge. The River Wensum is within the Broads National Park (up to the head of navigation at New Mills), and the Broads Authority has also had a key role in securing these bridges and improving public access to the river. In recent decades the city council has also encouraged major retail, residential and leisure developments on both sides of the river, with developments designed to face the river to encourage its attractiveness and leisure potential.

1.4 Despite recent achievements, much remains to be done to make the most of this key but under-utilised asset, both in terms of its management and through physical enhancements.

Opportunities

1.5 The Greater Norwich area is the main focus in the east of England for growth, for new homes and jobs, leisure, cultural and educational development. The development of a strategy for the River Wensum is an opportunity to consider how the river can better contribute to and support the regeneration of the city centre and the Greater Norwich area, by maximising its potential for leisure, environmental, cultural and business opportunities for the benefit of all – residents, businesses and visitors. In particular, a revitalised river corridor with improved access to both the river and the Broads will complement the city's heritage and cultural offer, giving it a competitive advantage in attracting inward investment, and help to create an environment which attracts and retains creative, highly skilled and entrepreneurial workforce. The strategy will also help inform the development of new planning and other policy in the Norwich area including the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

1.6 Key opportunities include:

- addressing the complex range of statutory roles and responsibilities and ownership issues for the river to encourage a more integrated approach to its management, with greater coordination between the RWSP partners in delivering their statutory responsibilities, and development of a shared approach to a range of river issues
- working with external partners, including the Business Improvement District (BID) which is proposing to expand to include part of the River Wensum, and institutions like Norwich University of the Arts (NUA), as well as the wide range of stakeholder groups with an interest in the river
- enhanced green infrastructure and public realm in the river corridor, through improvements to the riverside walk, better signage and interpretation, and public art where appropriate, and by linking out to Whitlingham Country Park which is now a major leisure destination
- boosting the local economy by providing an environment conducive to the establishment and growth of various creative businesses and by attracting tourists and visitors with benefits to Norwich's shopping, heritage and visitor attractions,
- encouraging greater use of the river, through new and enhanced river infrastructure, to encourage a vibrant and thriving waterfront and help drive longer-term commercial activity
- encouraging greater activity through imaginative and sustainable new developments in the river corridor
- enhanced biodiversity in the heart of the city, and increased awareness of biodiversity issues
- the river also flows through some areas with high levels of social deprivation, so there are opportunities to address health inequalities and deprivation in the strategy
- attracting substantial additional investment: development of a set of projects for implementation in the short to medium term will form the basis for funding bids. Identification of projects in the draft strategy has already led to several funding bids.

The River Wensum Strategy Partnership

1.7 This draft strategy has been produced by the River Wensum Strategy Partnership (RWSP) which is led and project managed by Norwich City Council, working in partnership with the Broads Authority, Norfolk County Council (also representing the Greater Norwich Growth Board - GNGB), the Environment Agency, and the Wensum River Parkway Partnership (WRPP – a voluntary body also representing the Norwich Society and key river stakeholders). Most of the partners have statutory responsibilities for different aspects of the river and its environs, whilst

the WRPP has been instrumental in highlighting river issues since its formation in 2007¹.

1.8 The RWSP has consulted with the public and stakeholders to help it shape the strategy document. The details of the Issues and Options consultation are available on the city council's website, and the comments made through the consultation have helped to inform the development of the strategy².

The strategy document

1.9 The strategy will run for a 10 year period from adoption (to approximately 2027-28) and includes policies and proposals in a number of themed sections (management, access, environment etc), each of which also refer to cross-cutting issues such as heritage, and boosting the local economy. The strategy policies do not have the status of statutory planning policies but they do represent the aspirations of the RWSP and will help inform the content of future planning and other policy. The proposals are site-specific and many address more than one theme.

1.10 The strategy is accompanied by an Action Plan containing proposals considered capable of implementation in the short to medium term (approximately 3 years) subject to feasibility and funding. The intention is to review the Action Plan regularly as proposals are implemented and new ones developed. The strategy itself will be monitored and may be reviewed within its 10 year lifetime if appropriate.

1.11 Your views are sought on this consultation document and policies and proposals set out within it. The deadline is 15 September 2017. See section 9 for details of how to comment.

¹ The WRPP published an aspirational study 'Regenerating Norwich as a River City' in 2007.

²Issues and Options consultation: report of public consultation (published October 2015): https://www.norwich.gov.uk/downloads/file/2841/report_summarising_the_consultation_responses

2 Vision and scope

2.1 From the start of the strategy development process, the partnership was keen to ensure public and stakeholder agreement on the basic scope of the strategy: its vision for the future, key objectives, and boundary. The public and stakeholder consultation in summer 2015 sought comments on the scope of the strategy and on issues and potential opportunities. Comments were overwhelmingly supportive of the proposed strategy scope. Some minor amendments have been made to the vision and objectives as a result of these comments, but the boundary remains unchanged.

2.2 The updated vision and objectives are set out below.

Vision

2.3 The strategy aims to breathe new life into the river corridor by enhancing it for the benefit of all and increasing access to, and greater use of, this important asset. The river will once again play an important role in the growth and vitality of the city, strengthening the visitor economy and helping to give the city a competitive advantage in attracting inward investment.

Objectives

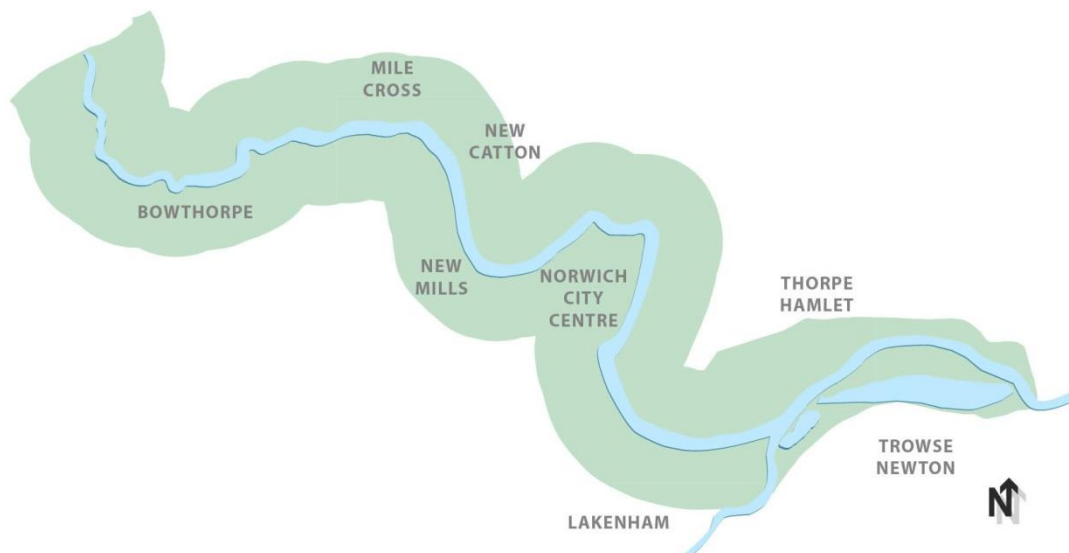
2.4 The following objectives are the broad underlying aims of the strategy, which the Partnership will seek to achieve through the proposed actions and projects set out in this document.

- Improving the management of the river corridor and its surroundings for the benefit of the city, residents of the wider Norwich area, and visitors;
- Increasing access to, and use of, the area by all, including enhanced connectivity with wider Norfolk Trails network;
- Enhancing the natural environment and green infrastructure;
- Enhancing the river corridor's environmental, cultural and historic offer, in a manner which maximises the attractiveness of the area as a location to do business;
- Enhancing heritage, making the most of the unique historic environment within the river corridor;
- Addressing social deprivation and inequalities;
- maximising the efficiency of public expenditure in the river corridor, where possible reducing the pressure on stretched public sector budgets; and
- Identifying and exploiting external funding opportunities, including private sector investment.

Boundary of strategy area

2.5 The strategy area includes the whole of the River Wensum in the city council area, starting at Hellesdon Mill in the west, and extending out to include Whitlingham Broad in the east, given Whitlingham's importance as a leisure destination for residents of and visitors to the wider Norwich area. The main focus of the strategy is on the city centre and east Norwich given the level of activity and potential opportunities in those areas. The part of the strategy area outside the city council boundary falls within the administrative areas of Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council, and is within the Broads Authority's area of responsibility for planning matters.

Map 1: strategy area



3 Management and Partnership Working

3.1 The development of a partnership strategy for the river presents a great opportunity to improve the management of the river corridor by clarifying roles and streamlining processes, encouraging more effective joint working between partners and other organisations on a range of river issues. The issues discussed in this section were identified through public and stakeholder consultation. Some management and maintenance issues are also addressed in other parts of the strategy, including section 4 (for example, maintenance of the Riverside Walk) and section 5 (for example, mooring and navigation).

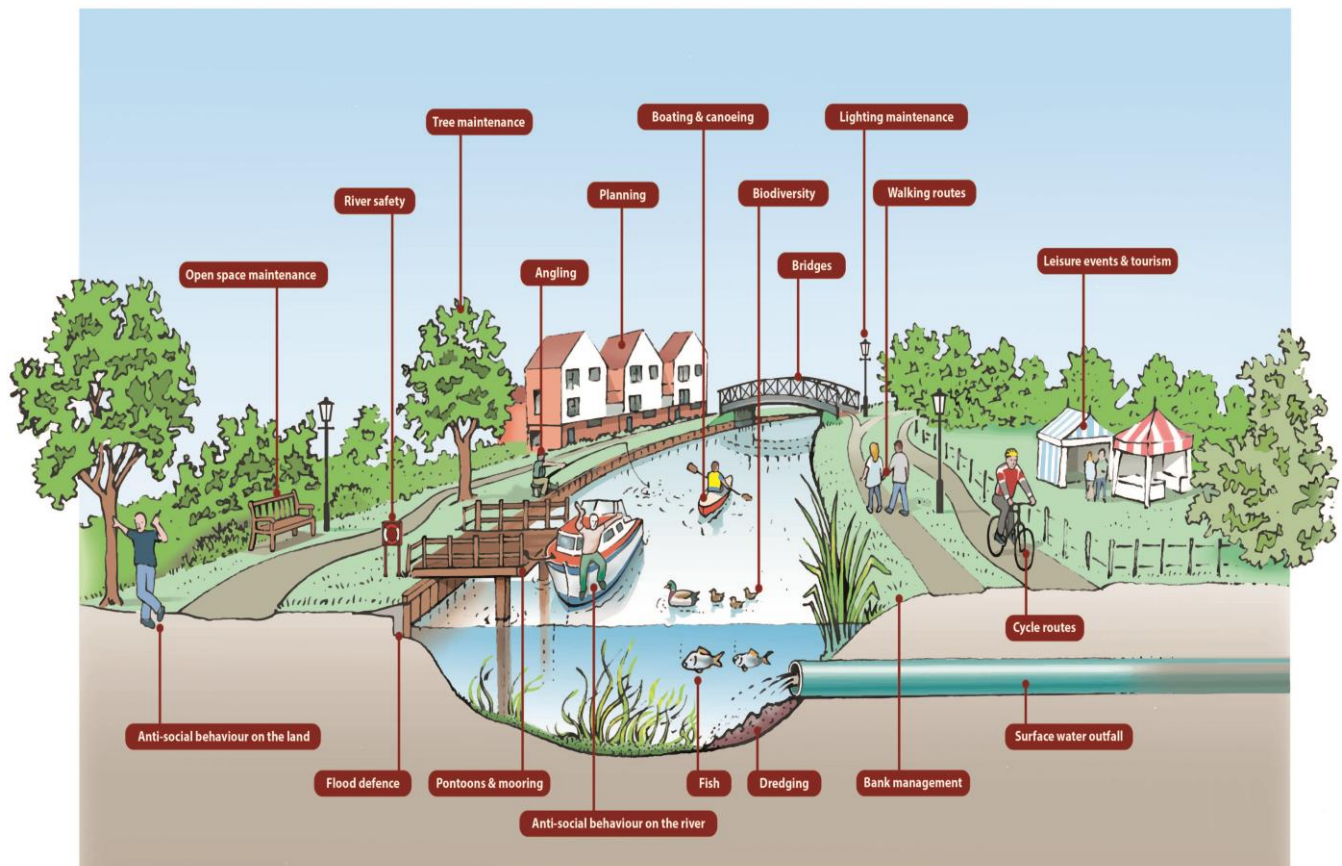
Roles and responsibilities

3.2 One of the key barriers to change and regeneration of the river corridor, as identified through the previous consultation, is the complexity of roles and statutory responsibilities within the partner organisations for different aspects of the river and a consequent lack of clarity about who does what on a day-to-day basis. This is not only frustrating for the public and local authority staff but has the potential to lead to inefficiencies in service delivery. The key roles and responsibilities of partner organisations are summarised below, with further information in appendix 1.

3.3 **Norwich City Council** is the city's local authority which operates a wide range of functions. It is the local planning authority, except for the river itself for which the Broads Authority is the relevant planning authority. It also owns and maintains a number of property assets, including the riverbed of the River Wensum downstream of New Mills, stretches of riverside walk, open space adjacent to the river, New Mills yard and Norwich Yacht Station. The **Broads Authority** is a Harbour Authority and Navigation authority, with a duty to maintain the Norwich Navigation providing access to the Port of Norwich for commercial craft. The Authority's duties and responsibilities apply to the River Wensum downstream of New Mills. It is also planning authority for development proposed for the river and its banks. **Norfolk County Council** is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for Norfolk and is responsible for managing local flood risk and advising on the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) proposed as part of new development. The county's bridge team has a duty to maintain bridge structures (apart from the surface of adopted highway bridges which remain the responsibility of the city council). The **Environment Agency's** responsibilities include regulating major industry and waste, treatment of contaminated land, water quality and resources, fisheries, and conservation and ecology. It is also responsible for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea and supports flood and environmental incidents. (In addition, there are other organisations with relevant responsibilities within the river corridor including, for example, Norfolk Constabulary which has responsibility for enforcement).

3.4 Figure 1 illustrates some of the key areas of responsibility of partner authorities for the river (see Appendix 1 for a summary of who does what) and helps to illustrate the level of complexity when it comes to either managing or bringing about change in the river corridor.

Figure 1: Key areas of responsibility for the river corridor



3.5 Appendix 1 includes a detailed summary of key roles and responsibilities, with hyperlinks to relevant websites for further information. This aims to clarify these complex roles and make it clear which organisation is responsible for what activity, including maintenance, and includes information on partners' legal responsibilities.

3.6 In addition it is proposed to develop a gazetteer on the RWSP website, to be in place by the time of adoption of the strategy, containing contact details within the partner authorities for all key areas of responsibility for the river corridor.

Day-to-day management and maintenance

3.7 Closer working arrangements have been developed between partners during the process of developing the strategy, particularly between Norwich City Council and Broads Authority who have many responsibilities between them for the day-to-day-management of the river. For example a joint (internal) protocol has been developed by the Norwich City Council and Broads Authority to ensure an agreed approach to key management and enforcement issues including illegal mooring and sunken boats. This should lead to a more streamlined and effective approach to such issues in the future. Section 8 also proposes establishment of a delivery board to ensure effective joint working on management issues, and effective communication and coordination on a range of management issues.

3.8 Appendix 1 shows that the primary responsibility for maintenance within the river corridor falls upon the city council. Its maintenance responsibilities include grounds maintenance, maintenance of trees on public land, of open spaces and of the riverside walk, maintenance of river structures (eg pontoons, moorings), litterpicking, and lighting maintenance. Given recent reductions in the income of councils, funding for ongoing maintenance is constrained and represents a challenge to successful regeneration of the river corridor. In response, the strategy seeks opportunities to maximise volunteer and community input into maintenance and environmental improvements, and to explore potential for sponsorship for some ongoing maintenance where appropriate. The development of individual proposals must also fully address maintenance costs and identify how this will be funded so as not to add to existing council maintenance liabilities.

Clarification of existing policy framework and relevant guidance

3.9 Appendix 2 includes a summary of, and links to, relevant policy and guidance notes and best practice relating to the river. This includes relevant planning policy (for Norwich City Council and the Broads authority – the BA executive area includes parts of Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council for planning purposes); relevant conservation area appraisal documents; biodiversity guidance; and BA guidance on moorings and other matters. This information will be uploaded to the

RWSP webpage once the strategy is adopted which will enable it to be further developed and updated as policy and guidance changes.

Health and Safety

3.10 The general approach taken to health and safety barriers by the City Council and Broads Authority is to locate barriers to the river in locations where there have been or are considered to be particular safety issues, most notably along Riverside. However a balance needs to be struck between the important aim of maximising safety adjacent to the river and the wish to maintain and improve accessibility to the river. The RWSP proposes that the need for new safety barriers will be considered on a case-by-case basis, balancing the need to address safety against the need to maintain or improve access.

Partnership working

3.11 There is potential for joint working with relevant external organisations whose objectives complement those of the strategy partnership to develop projects and initiatives that can maximise benefits for the river corridor. This includes not only provision of better physical links to the river from the city, and from the river to the wider countryside both up- and downstream, but also the need for more 'joined up thinking' in the approach to issues like health and well-being, including mental health issues, and economic development.

3.12 More effective joint working with key partners may also help identify additional sources of project funding, and it is recognised that funding bids are more likely to be successful when supported by a range of partner organisations.

3.13 Current and potential partners will depend on the nature of the projects delivered in the strategy. They include the following (not an exhaustive list): the Greater Norwich Growth Board which agrees Community Infrastructure Levy spending; Norfolk Trails in relation to access related projects, in particular making connections between the riverside walk and Norfolk Trails network; Natural England where consent is required for specific projects; Wild Anglia in relation to delivery of environment projects; Norwich Fringe in relation to the delivery of environment and access projects; Visit Norwich in relation to delivery of leisure and tourism projects or activities; Norwich BID in relation to business development and promotion; Norfolk Wildlife Trust in relation to biodiversity related projects; Anglian Water and the Environment Agency in relation to water quality; Active Norfolk and Healthy Norfolk in relation to encouraging greater levels of activity and wellbeing; and Heritage Lottery Fund in relation to projects with heritage potential. The RWSP has already worked with some of these bodies in developing the strategy and will continue to work with key partners and organisations where this can add value to the strategy.

Community and stakeholder participation

3.14 There is also potential to work with local stakeholder groups and those who live and work in the vicinity of the river to help deliver the strategy. Norwich City Council's 'Get Involved' programme coordinates community participation to address local issues, which can include litter reduction and environmental improvements for example. Such community activity can have multiple benefits, including improved health and wellbeing and community development for example, in addition to enhancing the local environment. The process of community participation also encourages local communities to identify important local assets, such as open spaces and heritage features, which can then be improved through targeted action. The RWSP will work with the council's Community Enabling Team to help focus such activity on the river corridor where possible, and to maximise the use of local volunteers with an interest in improving the river.

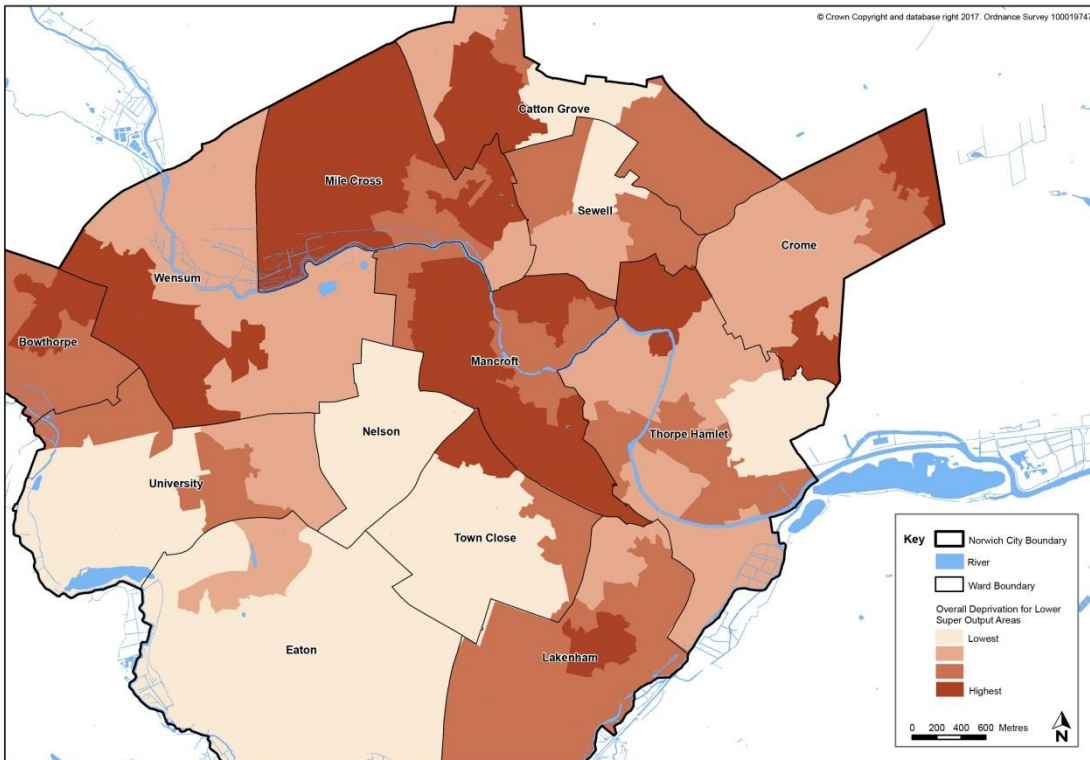
Social and health inequalities

Policy 1: The design of individual projects and implementation of the strategy will address health and social inequalities of local communities adjacent to the river where appropriate and feasible.

3.15 Norwich City Council's Corporate Plan³ highlights the importance of addressing the needs of the city's disadvantaged communities, and includes priorities to reduce social inequalities and promote health and wellbeing. It notes for example that in the most deprived areas the average life expectancy of men is nine years shorter than in the least deprived areas. The River Wensum flows through some of the most disadvantaged communities in the city. It is therefore important that the development and implementation of individual projects addresses social and health inequality issues in these communities, where appropriate and feasible.

³ Norwich City Council Corporate Plan 2015-20: Refresh 2017-18

Map 2: Deprivation map based on Indices of Multiple Deprivation data



4 Walking and cycling access

4.1 The River Wensum corridor is an important piece of green infrastructure in the heart of the city and links to the strategic footpath and cycling network. The strategy presents an opportunity to improve the infrastructure for walking and cycling within the Wensum River corridor, both alongside the river itself ('the Riverside Walk') and links to and from the riverside path from the wider hinterland. This should help ensure greater connectivity between the city and surrounding countryside and support greater activity on the river itself, resulting in recreational and health benefits, whilst also enhancing the green infrastructure network which will help to support growth in Greater Norwich. Additional footfall and activity will also benefit local businesses and help to stimulate the local economy.

4.2 The Riverside Walk was originally envisaged by Norwich City Council over 40 years ago, with the objective of stretching from Hellesdon Mill to Carrow Bridge, and it has been delivered as opportunities have arisen through the planning system in accordance with local planning documents. The city council's aim is for a publicly accessible walkway on both sides of the river where practicable and feasible, and is also reflected in the Broads Local Plan⁴. Most of the Riverside Walk within the city centre is on both sides of the river but upstream of New Mills the walkway is generally on one side of the river at any one point.

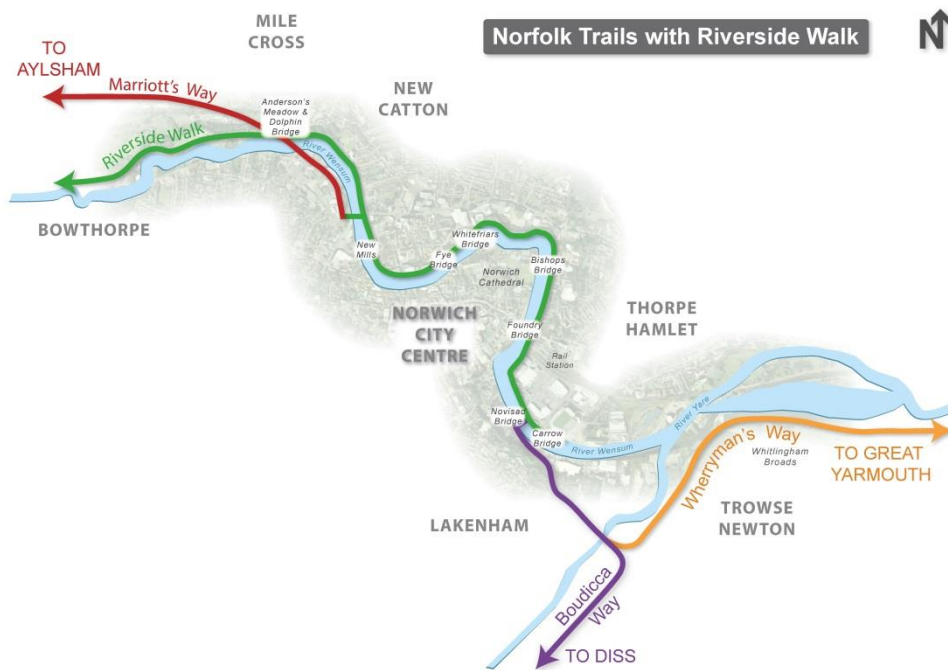
4.3 The Riverside Walk does not exist in isolation. It is a strategic access route, linking to the wider Norfolk Trails network including the Marriott's Way, Wherryman's Way and Boudicca Way. The Norfolk Trails network brings together over 1200 miles of walks, cycle and bridle routes throughout the county. The Riverside Walk also links with the Norwich cycle network (or [Pedalways](#)) at a number of key points including Dolphin Bridge, Barn Road, Fye Bridge, Foundry Bridge and Carrow Bridge. The Pedalways cycle network is a £14m investment in sustainable transport and accessibility in Norwich and it is im-



⁴ Policy DM28 in Norwich Development Management Policies Plan (2014) seeks to complete key missing stretches of the Riverside Walk through new development. The Broads Local Plan (2014) also requires riverside walk provision as part of the development of the Utilities site (policy NOR1).

portant that links between it and the Riverside Walk are maximised and enhanced where appropriate.

Map 3: The Riverside Walk and Norfolk Trails network



New connections: completing the Riverside Walk

Policy 2: Key missing sections of the Riverside Walk between New Mills and Trowse Swing Bridge will be completed during the strategy period (by 2027). Opportunities will also be taken to complete the missing section of Riverside Walk out to Whitlingham Country Park, and the missing section upstream of New Mills during the strategy period, where practicable and feasible.

4.4 Despite significant progress being made since the establishment of the Riverside Walk in the late 1960s, it is not yet complete, and there are sections where it is not possible to walk alongside the river. Most has been achieved to date in the stretch of walkway from New Mills to Carrow Bridge, where pedestrian access is possible on at least one side of the river with the exception of one key 'missing link' between Duke Street and St George's Bridge. More recently the Riverside Walk has been extended beyond Carrow Bridge, as a result of new development in the vicinity of Norwich City Football Club and planning consent is in place for the section of walkway up to Trowse Swing Bridge.

4.5 In recent times the vision for the Riverside Walk has expanded and it is the aim of the River Wensum Strategy Partnership, and that of the Greater Norwich Growth Board, to connect the walk out to Whitlingham Country Park. Although this is a strategically important link, its delivery timescale is less certain as it is dependent on major infrastructure investment. Norwich City Council is exploring funding and delivery options for this key link.

4.6 The Riverside Walk from the city centre out to east Norwich is the busiest part of the walkway within the city boundary. There is potential to provide greater benefit to residents and visitors in this area through linking to the Norfolk Trails network more effectively, which could in turn enhance the local green infrastructure network and support population growth. The completion of missing stretches of Riverside Walk from New Mills to Trowse Swing Bridge is therefore a key objective of the strategy reflected in policy 2, and is considered to be deliverable within the strategy period. Completion of another missing section of Riverside Walk upstream of New Mills, near Sweetbriar Road, is also highlighted below; this may be deliverable in the strategy period subject to feasibility. Given its strategic importance the policy also refers to the aspiration to facilitate the connection to Whitlingham Country Park.

Duke's Palace Bridge to St George's Bridge

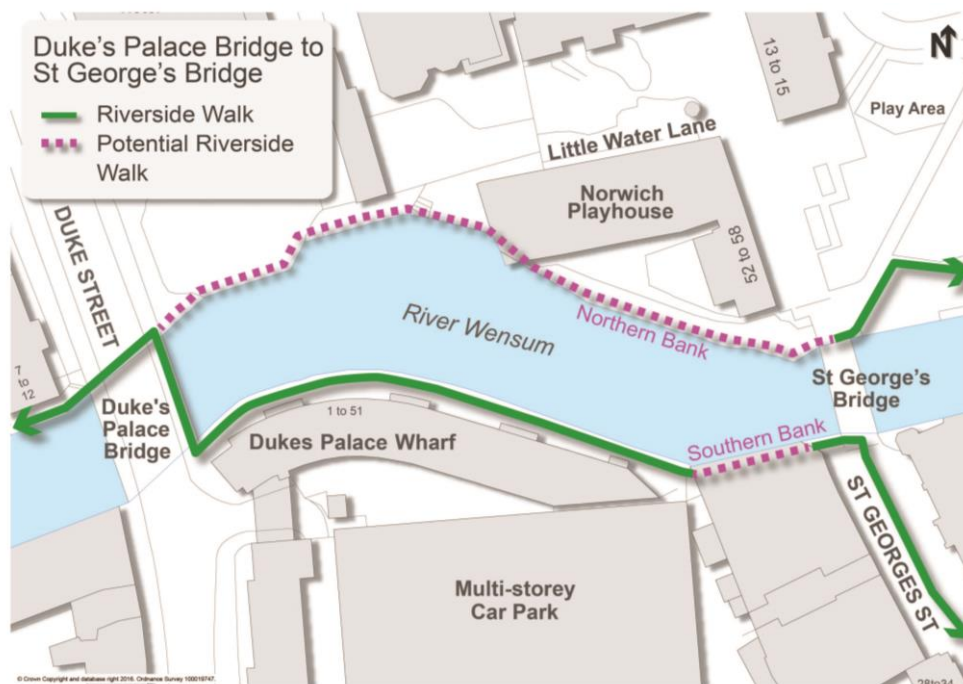
4.7 There is currently no direct access to the river on either bank between Duke's Palace Bridge and St George's Bridge, and a detour away from the river is necessary. Completion of this section of walkway is a priority for delivery given that it is the one 'missing link' of the Riverside Walk between New Mills and Carrow Bridge. This is a critical section in the heart of the historical centre of the city, the absence of which compromises the opportunities of the Riverside Walk to fully realise its potential benefits to visitors and residents, and its many opportunities for business and leisure. In 2010, Norwich Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust (HEART) commissioned a study by Hudson Architects to look at the issue on behalf of a range of partners⁵ including Norwich City Council, the Broads Authority and the Wensum River Parkway Partnership. For a number of reasons, including potential impacts on navigation, the project was not progressed any further. A recent review of options for this section of Riverside Walk has indicated that a new section of Riverside Walk may be deliverable on the southern bank of the river. The ideal scenario would be to complete the Riverside Walk on both sides of the river in this location in the longer term, however both options require detailed feasibility in order to determine their relative deliverability.

4.8 The action plan at section 9 includes a proposal (**A1**) to deliver this significant element of infrastructure. Funding is likely to be sought primarily from the pooled

⁵Partners also included the Norwich Society, Norwich Theatre Royal, Norwich University College of the Arts (now Norwich University of the Arts), and the Greater Norwich Development Partnership.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), however if opportunities arise to seek developer contributions these will be explored. The completion of this stretch of Riverside Walk is a high priority for CIL funding by Greater Norwich Growth Board partners⁶ given its potential to benefit public access to green infrastructure (GI) from the city centre. If this bid is successful, and subject to further feasibility work, it is anticipated that this section of Riverside Walk could be completed in 2019/20. Completing the Riverside Walk in one of the busiest locations along the river will help support the current and expanding population of the city centre as well as help to fulfil the publicly accessible GI requirements of proposed growth in wider Norwich. This is a sensitive site in the heart of the historic city so the design of the proposed walkway must respect and enhance the character of this part of the city centre, and limit its impact on the historic townscape and riverscape.

Map 4: Duke's Palace Bridge to St George's Bridge missing link (Action plan project A1)



Fye Bridge to Whitefriars Bridge

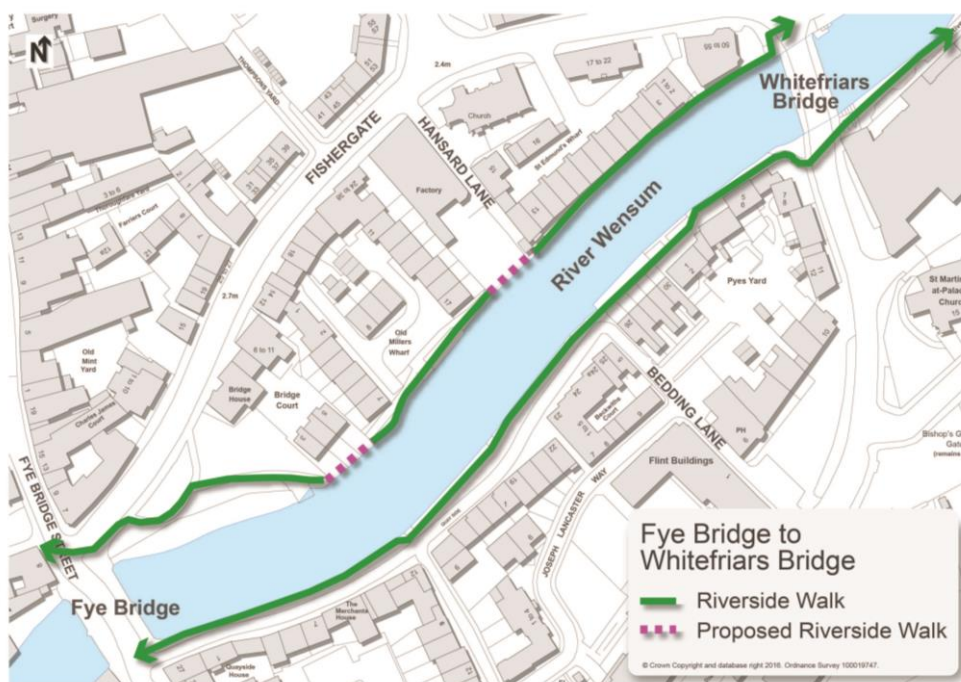
4.9 Within the city centre the ambition to create a continuous walk on the northern bank between Fye Bridge and Whitefriars Bridge, delivered through development, has yet to be fully realised. This would have connectivity benefits for local residents, businesses and visitors, providing an attractive route linking the busy shopping area of Magdalen Street with the businesses and organisations located in the vicinity of Whitefriars, including Dragonfly House and Kingfisher House. Some sections of this stretch of Riverside Walk have already been completed, namely sections through

⁶ GNGB partners are Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council, Broadland District Council, Norfolk County Council, and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

Old Miller’s Wharf and St Edmund’s Wharf developments. In addition, the permission for three properties within Bridges Court development carries a covenant that states a strip of land 12ft wide can be used by Norwich City Council to construct and maintain a section of the Riverside Walk. However, a gap remains in the route where access has yet to be secured, at Hansard Lane. Opportunities to complete this section of the Riverside Walk on the northern bank have therefore been explored through development of the strategy.

4.10 It is anticipated that delivery of this link will be achieved through provision of a short stretch of new walkway as part of the redevelopment of a site at Hansard Lane, dependant on the nature of that scheme, and through CIL funding for the section of route exercising the covenant through gardens of the Bridges Court development. This project will unlock the remaining section between Fye Bridge and Whitefriars Bridge on the north bank, providing more options for pedestrian movement in this area and enhancing access to strategic GI in the city centre. It is important that the new Riverside Walk in this location is managed to reduce and not exacerbate any potential negative effects on residents who live along this section of the river.

Map 5: Fye Bridge to Whitefriars Bridge (Action plan project A2)



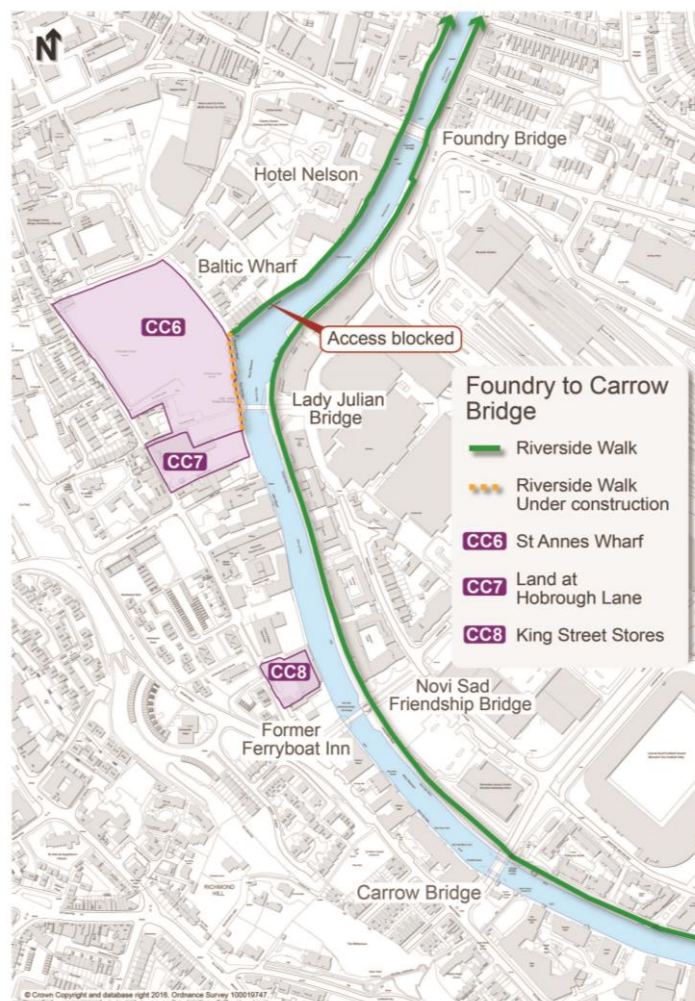
Foundry Bridge to Carrow Bridge

4.11 The section of path from Foundry Bridge (the Hotel Nelson, Prince of Wales Road) to St Anne’s Wharf/Lady Julian Swing Bridge (St Ann’s Lane) on the western side of the river will be completed as development comes forward. Sections of Riverside Walk are already in place alongside both the Hotel Nelson and Baltic Wharf, however access is currently blocked between these sections of walk. Opportunities

should be taken to link these sections and connect them with the new section of Riverside Walk currently under construction as part of the St Anne's Wharf development. In addition the Norwich local plan identifies a section of Riverside Walk as being required in site allocation CC7: Land at Hobrough Lane, King Street which will be delivered through new development as it comes forward. Feasibility work may be required to include impact on the navigation of the river at this point.

4.12 The Norwich local plan policies map does not identify proposed Riverside Walk beyond site allocation CC7, although it allocates a site further south on King Street (CC8: King Street Stores) which includes a requirement for Riverside Walk which will link with another new section to be provided in front of the Ferryboat Inn, anticipated to be delivered within the next couple of years. This section of waterfront between sites CC7 and CC8 has a special historic character with many listed and locally listed buildings adjacent to the river. Access to the river is via historic narrow lanes, and as a result there is little potential for provision of Riverside Walk that would be in keeping with its special character (as detailed in the City Centre Conservation Area Statement: King Street character area).

Map 6: Foundry Bridge to Carrow Bridge



Carrow Bridge to Whitlingham

4.13 Connection of the Riverside Walk through the city downstream to Whitlingham Country Park is a strategic priority. Whitlingham Country Park is a popular attraction for informal recreation and watersport activities, delivered through former gravel extractions, with over 500,000 visitors per annum. Although very close to the city centre, pedestrian and cycling access is far from easy; currently pedestrian and cycling access (including National Cycle Route 1) to the Country Park from the city centre is along Bracondale towards Trowse and then along Whitlingham Lane. This is not a direct route and includes several difficult road crossings. In the future it is hoped that a more direct route will be possible via a number of development sites including the Deal Ground and Utilities sites in east Norwich and will enable the re-routing of National Cycle Route 1.

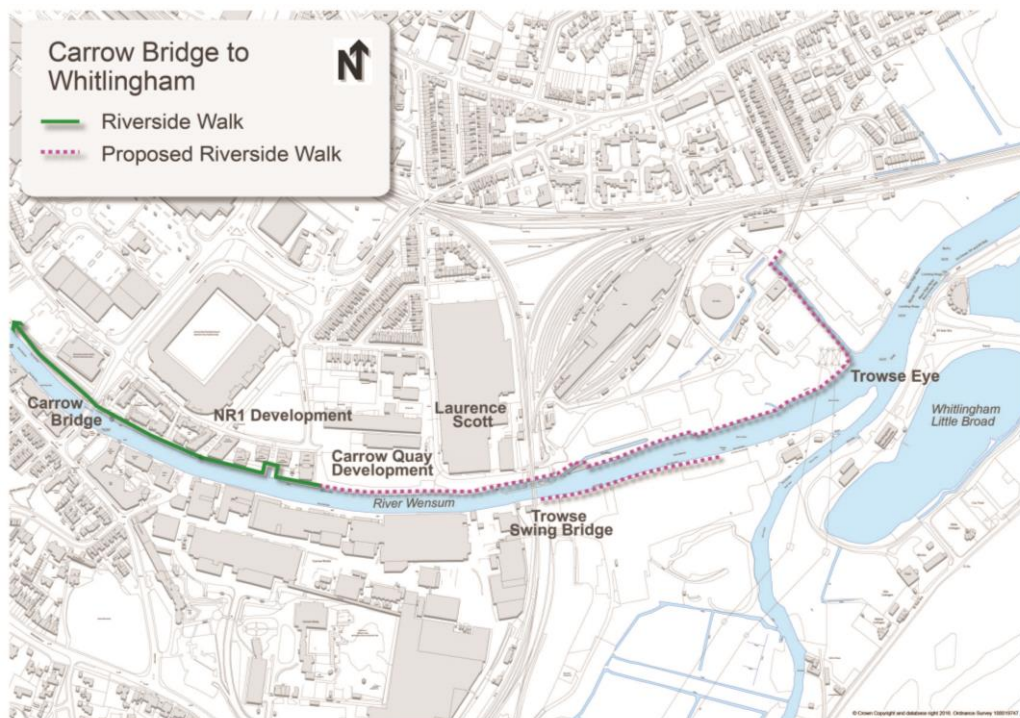
4.14 The continuation of the Riverside Walk from Carrow Bridge to Trowse (railway) Swing Bridge is being delivered through development south of the football ground with funding support from Sustrans and the Community Infrastructure Levy⁷.

4.15 The next sections of the route may be delivered through new development at the Utilities site and/or the Deal ground site as proposals come forward including a new bridge over the River Wensum between the Deal Ground and the Utilities site as required by the Norwich Local Plan policy for these sites (CC10 and CC11). However, even if this bridge is delivered, there will still be a need for a bridge link over the River Yare from the Deal Ground at the confluence of the Rivers Wensum and Yare, connecting to the Country Park at the back of the Little Broad at Whitlingham, which will require funding. This bridge continues to be a high priority for GI in Greater Norwich, having been originally identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy⁸. The bridge will form a crucial link between the city and major recreation area to the south, however its delivery is dependent on the development of the Utilities sites and Deal Ground. It therefore does not appear in the action plan for this strategy, but partners will continue to work with the Greater Norwich Growth Board to keep this as a high priority for CIL funding and to bring forward this key piece of infrastructure when appropriate.

⁷ The Riverside Walk adjacent to NR1 development is in place; the section at Carrow Quay will be delivered through new development; and the section in front of Laurence Scott is expected to be delivered by Norwich City Council using Sustrans/Community Infrastructure Levy funding already in place.

⁸ Greater Norwich Development Partnership: Green Infrastructure Strategy (Chris Blandford Associates, 2007)

Map 7: Carrow Bridge to Whitlingham Broad



Sweet Briar Road Bridge to Hellesdon Bridge

4.16 There is currently no access to the river's edge between the road bridge at Sweet Briar Road, and the public open space adjacent to The Gatehouse Public House on Hellesdon Road. Instead, users have to join the footway alongside Sweet Briar Road, cross the ring-road roundabout and follow the Dereham Road onto Hellesdon Road before being able to re-join the river. A new section of Riverside Walk is identified for this area in the Norwich Local plan (Policies Map North, 2014). There is currently no identified funding for this stretch of walkway therefore a project is not included in the Action plan, however opportunities will be sought to attract funding to deliver this missing link.

Accessibility improvements

4.17 This section of the strategy considers what **infrastructure improvements** are required to ensure that the Riverside Walk is accessible to all, the **signage improvements** needed to support and encourage greater accessibility, and the **connectivity improvements** required to ensure that the Riverside Walk links effectively to the wider walking and cycling network.

Infrastructure improvements

Policy 3: New sections of Riverside Walk will be accessible for people of all ages and abilities. The same standard will also apply to the enhancement of existing sections of the Riverside Walk, where practicable.

4.18 A number of issues and opportunities have been identified, through consultation and other work, relating to the physical infrastructure of the existing Riverside Walk for pedestrians and cyclists and for disabled access. Improvements are needed on several sections of the Riverside Walk, particularly to make the walk accessible by all, including those with mobility difficulties.

4.19 Some sections of the existing Riverside Walk are accessible for cyclists. Opportunities should be sought to enable cycle access on more of the route, including the removal of barriers to bike access (such as steps), enhanced surfacing, and segregated sections for pedestrians and cyclists. A particular opportunity concerns realigning the Red Pedalway – which is also National Cycle Route 1 (NCR1) – alongside the north bank of the river to Whitlingham, rather than its current route along busy trafficked sections of King Street and Bracondale. When a bridge link to Whitlingham is delivered, NCR1 would pass through Whitlingham Country Park and continue along the river to Norwich Railway Station.

4.20 An audit of the Riverside Walk from Hellesdon Road to Carrow Road was completed by Norfolk County Council in early 2016 as part of the work of the River Wensum Strategy Partnership⁹. This identifies the need for site specific improvements along the Riverside Walk to make it accessible for all. The audit identifies the need for path surface improvements in a number of locations, provision of dropped kerbs, and provision of steps and ramps.

4.21 An action plan project (reference A3) proposes to make improvements to accessibility of the Riverside Walk downstream of New Mills (ie between it and east Norwich). It also includes signage and branding proposals and is referred to in the Signage Improvements section, at paragraph 4.28 below.

4.22 Funding for accessibility improvements to the Riverside Walk upstream of New Mills will be sought in the future from CIL. Particular issues raised for that area in consultation and in the audit include: drainage issues on the Riverside Walk; signage improvements to/from Marriott's Way; to/from New Mills/Barns Road roundabout; improvements to lighting on Dolphin Path and the southern section of Marriott's Way; and the need for improvements to signage and maintenance of the Riverside Walk (see appendix 3: possible future action plan projects).

⁹ River Wensum Strategy Riverside Walk Audit (Foo T. 2016)

Signage Improvements

Policy 4: New signage provided in the vicinity of the river will conform to the River Wensum signage strategy once developed.

4.23 The Riverside Walk provides an easy, quiet and safe route through the city centre passing many cafes, shops and points of historical and natural interest. However, the presence of the Riverside Walk and the points from which it can be accessed from commercial and tourist areas are not clearly signed; and signage along the Riverside Walk also needs improvement in a number of locations. Improved and coherent signposting of the Riverside Walk from attractions, commercial and day-time leisure areas, and transport hubs is likely to help deliver economic as well as social and cultural benefits. Access to the natural environment has been found to bring health and well-being benefits, and the Public Health agenda requires actions to encourage greater activity, thus improving access to the river is also likely to contribute to a healthier society. There is also an opportunity to improve signage along the river to make clear where particular activities are authorised or deemed appropriate, for example mooring and angling, which will reinforce effective management of the river and riverbanks.



4.24 The need for improved legibility has been identified through the public consultation and the Riverside Walk audit. This identifies a need for signage between the river and the commercial, day-time leisure and transport hubs including the Cathedral complex / Tombland, Riverside, the Lanes, the Forum, Norfolk Trails, Whitlingham Country Park, the railway station and bus station; and signposting of historical features in the vicinity of the river including the Cathedral, Boom Towers, Blackfriars Hall / Elm Hill, Cow Tower, New Mills, Pulls Ferry, the Great Hospital and St James' Mill. The consultation also identified the need for better signposting of the Riverside Walk itself in several locations where the route is not obvious including:

- Ribs of Beef / Fye Bridge Street where the path is not obvious from the bridge;
- At Whitefriars Bridge where access to the Riverside Walk on the north side of the river, by St James' Mill, is not obvious;
- From/to Tombland to Pulls Ferry through the Cathedral precinct;
- To/from the Marriott's Way at St Crispin's Road/Barns Road roundabout (see Action plan project A4 below).

4.25 Having evolved over many years, it is unsurprising that the Riverside Walk is considered by some to be lacking a clear identity, partly due to the range of signage

used. The Riverside Walk would therefore benefit from having its own identity with specific signage, including a logo and a coherent sign-posting system.

4.26 A signing strategy should be considered in combination with infrastructure improvements, as improved signage should direct people to a route that is easily accessible for all users, and therefore the delivery of both signage and infrastructure improvements ideally should occur in parallel. This is addressed below in Action Plan project A3.

4.27 New directional signage could tie in with existing wayfinding signage either through utilising existing infrastructure, or transference of existing design features into new signage. For example, Norwich City Council has an existing integrated sign system which comprises finger posts and monoliths designed to reflect the different areas of the city. The finger posts feature alternate finials; an ornate design, taken from the city's historic architecture which differentiates from the historic "Lanes" area where a simple design with a natural copper finish is used. It is recommended that a similar approach is taken with regards to directions to/from the Riverside Walk.

4.28 The action plan includes a project (A3) to address the key accessibility issues of physical infrastructure and signage improvements. The project will involve development of a branding and identity for the whole Riverside Walk, and implement a series of infrastructure improvements to the Riverside Walk in the city centre (downstream of New Mills), based on the audit referred to above. This project has been awarded CIL funding and will be delivered over a 2 year period (2017/18 - 2018/19). Delivery of the project will address the issues raised above. Through improved signage, branding, and by making key parts of the route more easily accessible, the potential wider social and economic benefits of the Riverside Walk can be realised.

Connectivity Improvements

Policy 5: Connectivity between the Riverside Walk and other Norfolk Trails will be enhanced, to encourage greater usage of all the trails / walks by leisure users and commuters of all ages and abilities.

4.29 The Riverside Walk links with the wider Norfolk Trails network as referred to above. The Marriott's Way is a 26 mile pedestrian and cycle path which starts immediately upstream of the Barn Road roundabout linking Norwich to Aylsham. The first section of the Marriott's Way runs parallel to the River Wensum, effectively a continuation of the Wensum Riverside Walk. The gateway to the Marriott's Way is not sign-posted from the Wensum Riverside Walk and the crossing of St Crispin's Road includes a traffic island which can be difficult for cyclists to use.

4.30 Downstream, two of the Norfolk Trails, the Wherryman's Way (Norwich to Great Yarmouth) and the Boudicca Way (Norwich to Diss) are concurrent with the

River Wensum Walk between Norwich Railway Station, the start point for both these routes, and Carrow Road Bridge. Opportunities for interpretation boards and additional signage would be desirable, and signage at Norwich Railway Station or other locations along the river should be further explored as part of Action Plan project A3.

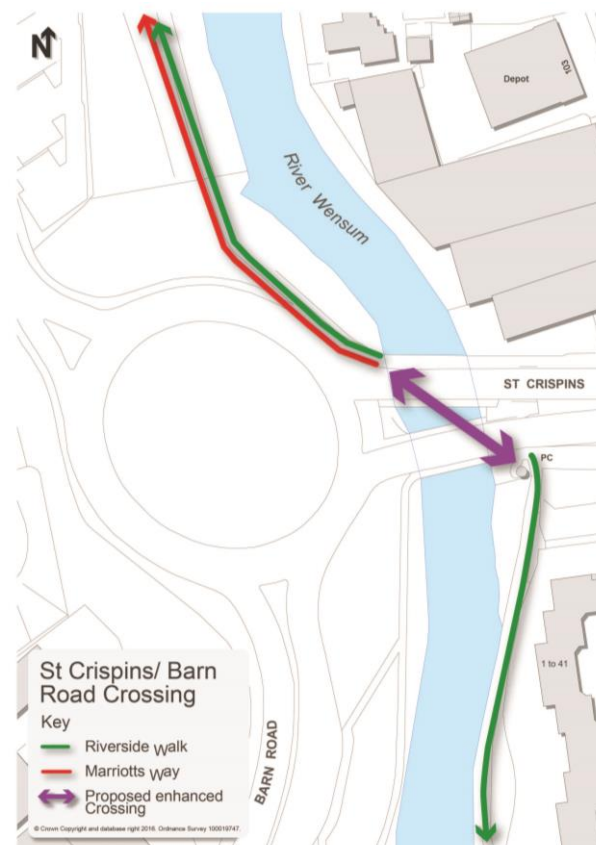
4.31 In combination, the Wherryman's Way and the Marriott's Way form part of the Cross-Norfolk Trail from Kings Lynn to Great Yarmouth of which the Wensum Riverside Walk through the city is an integral part. Overall, the connectivity to the Norfolk Trails network from the Riverside Walk is in need of improvement, both in terms of physical infrastructure and signage.

4.32 There are a number of opportunities to improve linkages between the Norfolk Trails network and the Riverside Walk (see Appendix 3 for some potential projects). Improvements through better and co-ordinated way-marking, improvements to some sections of Riverside Walk, and provision of formalised linking routes between the Riverside Walk and Norfolk Trails have been mentioned in this strategy already. Another means of improving these linkages is the celebration of gateways and the meetings of the Riverside Walk and Norfolk Trails.

4.33 Improvements are also proposed to the Marriott's Way link with the Riverside Walk at Barn Road. The crossing of St Crispin's Road presents some challenges, particularly for cyclists, and the fact that the Riverside Walk can be continued north or south of Barn Road is not obvious and inhibits its use. The planned improvements include enhancing the 'gateway' to Marriott's Way with signage, paving, removal of vegetation to improve visibility, and improving the crossing of the inner ring road linking Marriott's Way with the Riverside Walk in the city centre. This project has been developed by the Marriott's Way Green Infrastructure Group¹⁰ with input from the River Wensum Strategy Partnership. It will be delivered in phases with CIL and Heritage Lottery funding, with initial works to enhance the gateway anticipated to commence in 2017/18 followed by commencement of works to the inner ring road the following year. The project will not only improve connectivity between the Riverside Walk and Marriott's Way, with recreational, health and sustainable transport benefits, but will also enhance a key gateway site with heritage interest, and will complement / enhance the potential future project to enhance the existing circular walk at Train Wood referred to in Appendix 3.

¹⁰The Marriott's Way Green Infrastructure Group is part of the Greater Norwich Growth Board and consists of representatives from Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council, Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council.

Map 8: Marriott's Way – Barn Road Gateway (Action Plan project A4)



4.34 The Marriott's Way Green Infrastructure Group has recently produced an updated Vision and Implementation Plan for the Marriott's Way (NCC, August 2015). Liaison with the Marriott's Way group will be necessary to ensure coordination of plans and projects in the River Wensum Strategy and there is potential for several of the proposals relating to the area upstream of New Mills to be delivered through or with the Marriott's Way Group.

Riverside Walk status

4.35 Norwich's Riverside Walk is not a dedicated Public Right of Way. Although much of the Riverside Walk through the main urban area is contained within designated Public Open Space and some is highway land, some sections have no formal public right or status. This lack of clarity about the Walk's status may have implications in some cases for providing certainty of public access in perpetuity. There may be benefits from formal dedication as a Public Right of Way (for example, footpath, bridleway, and shared use cycle and footway) in terms of promotion, including publication of routes on Ordnance Survey maps, and subsequently the internet and other publications, therefore making any route accessible to a wider audience.

4.36 Given the Riverside Walk's links to the strategic walking and cycling network, the RWSP is currently working with Norfolk County Council to explore whether the

Riverside Walk could be dedicated as part of the Norfolk Trails network, albeit it with its own unique identity and branding. This would significantly raise the Walk's profile through greater promotion, and provide a valuable publicised link between it and the existing Trails, helping to highlight access to the city's tourist and leisure attractions, encouraging sustainable transport and supporting healthy lifestyles for example. It could also enable greater coordination between the Riverside Walk and the other Norfolk Trails in terms of management, for example linking into the Norfolk Trails' established volunteer network for litter picks and for reporting maintenance issues.

4.37 The initial exploratory work will include identifying any existing status and landownership for the Riverside Walk, and to understand the implications of Norfolk Trails status, prior to any change on its status being formally proposed. If Norfolk Trails status is sought and achieved, this will have implications for Action Plan project A3, which includes signage proposals.

5 Waterways access and leisure

5.1 The strategy aims to breathe new life into the river corridor, and to increase access to, and greater use of, the river. This section's key focus is on enhancing access to the river for recreational purposes, including encouraging greater activity on the river by a variety of small craft, but it also addresses wider opportunities for attracting visitors and tourists to the river corridor.

5.2 The development of a strategy has the potential to contribute significantly to the vitality of the city centre and the local economy than is presently the case. Increased activity will also bring a range of benefits including health and recreational benefits, will provide opportunities for small leisure businesses, and help to reconnect communities to the River Wensum.

5.3 The public and stakeholder consultation identified a number of issues including the need for provision of new or improved slipways and launch facilities for small craft, provision of new canoeing infrastructure and moorings, the opportunity to encourage new business development connected to the river, the need for more effective management and maintenance of the river, and the opportunity to develop the river as a location for events and trails.

Enhanced waterways infrastructure

Policy 6: New river infrastructure will be provided, and existing river infrastructure enhanced where appropriate, to encourage greater recreational use of the River Wensum.

5.4 The strategy aim of bringing new life to the river can be achieved by improving providing new, and enhancing existing, waterways infrastructure, including slipways, canoe launches, and moorings provision. A number of action plan projects are proposed below (summarised in section 8) which when delivered will significantly enhance existing provision. Funding opportunities are currently being explored for these projects.

Provision of launching points/slipways for small craft and River Taxi/Bus infrastructure

5.5 The lack of slipways and other launching facilities on the river limits the ability for people to launch small craft and consequently restricts business opportunities for boat hire in the City. With the canalised nature of the river corridor and the majority of the banks in the City being either concrete or steel sheet piled there are limited sites available for constructing new slipways. The availability of road access and car parking nearby is essential for slipway development as boat trailers have to be

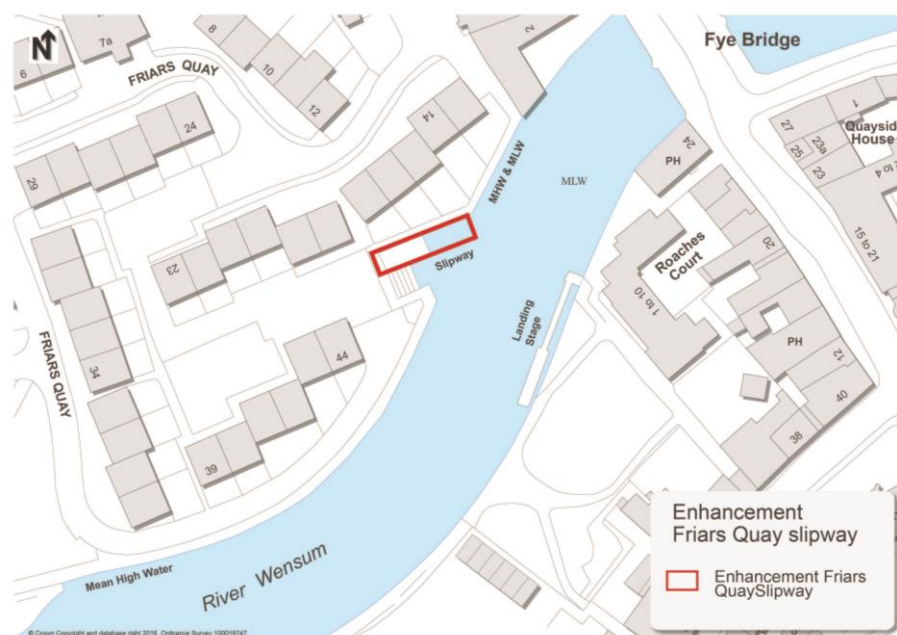
parked in close proximity to launch sites. There is an existing slipway at Friar's Quay and several comments were received about this site suggesting that it should be adapted to improve its incline and safety. A project to improve the Friar's Quay slipway would also have the benefit of providing a launch facility for Broads Authority maintenance vessels and the emergency services.

5.6 There are a number of sites which have potential for the development of launching facilities such as at the Yacht Station. The removal of the timber jetty and public access at the upstream end of the Yacht Station presents an opportunity to redesign the frontage including the installation of pontoon mooring and launching facilities. This would also potentially provide a location to operate a small electric hire boat business. Equally there are sites in the project area where slipways could be constructed both in the Broads Authority's Executive area and upstream of New Mills but this would require feasibility work to be carried out and discussions with adjacent landowners.

5.7 Further opportunities for additional river access may arise as and when development comes forward, for example at the Utilities site and the Deal Ground.

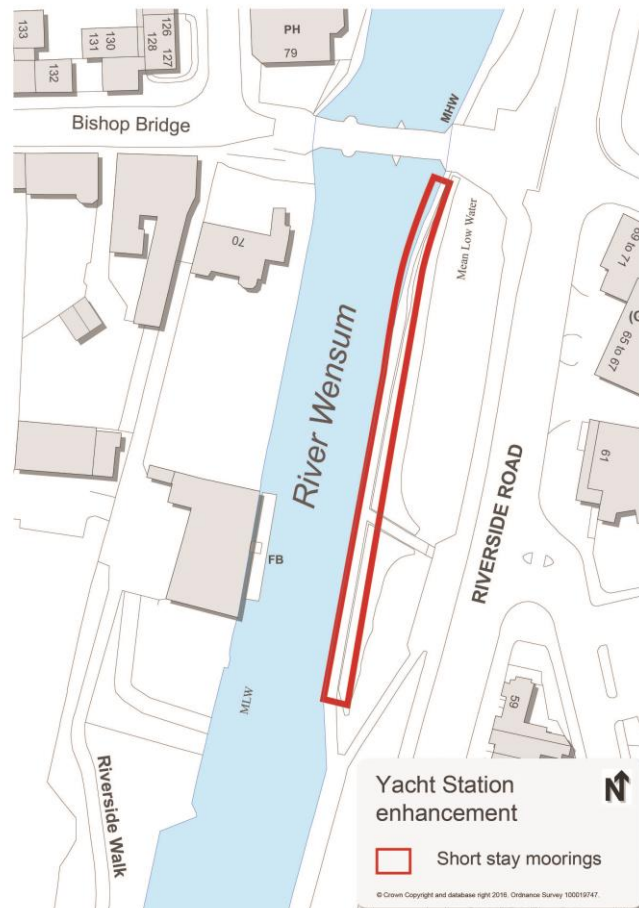
5.8 The strategy proposes an action plan project to upgrade the existing slipway at Friar's Quay to slacken its slope and make it suitable for the safe launching of small boats on trailers and canoes. This will involve installing new sheet piling to extend the length of the slipway and enable the concrete slope to be re-profiled. Signage will also be installed to give advice on considerate use of the slipway and where to park nearby. This proposal will help maximise the use of an existing piece of waterways infrastructure which is currently under-utilised.

Map 9: Friar's Quay Slipway upgrade (Action Plan project W1)



5.9 It has recently been necessary to remove a dilapidated timber jetty at the upstream end of the Norwich Yacht Station and this presents an opportunity to redesign the mooring facilities in this location. The action plan includes a project to install pontoons to replace the jetty which will increase opportunities for mooring and launching of small craft, and provide the scope for a small electric hire boat business to operate from the site. Again this proposal aims to enhance an existing facility to help extend its use.

Map 10: Yacht station enhancement (Action Plan project W2)



Canoeing infrastructure

Policy 7: Canoeing infrastructure will be enhanced in appropriate locations on the River Wensum.

5.10 By far the largest number of comments received during the consultation process about a specific waterways issue related to canoeing. These included comments about the need for the strategy to provide more canoe access points or improve existing ones, improve the information available about canoeing opportunities, encourage canoe hire at various sites and also to link the Broads navigation to the Wensum upstream of New Mills Yard.

5.11 Canoeing is becoming increasingly popular in the Broads with a 60% increase in the number of canoes using the Broads navigation area over the

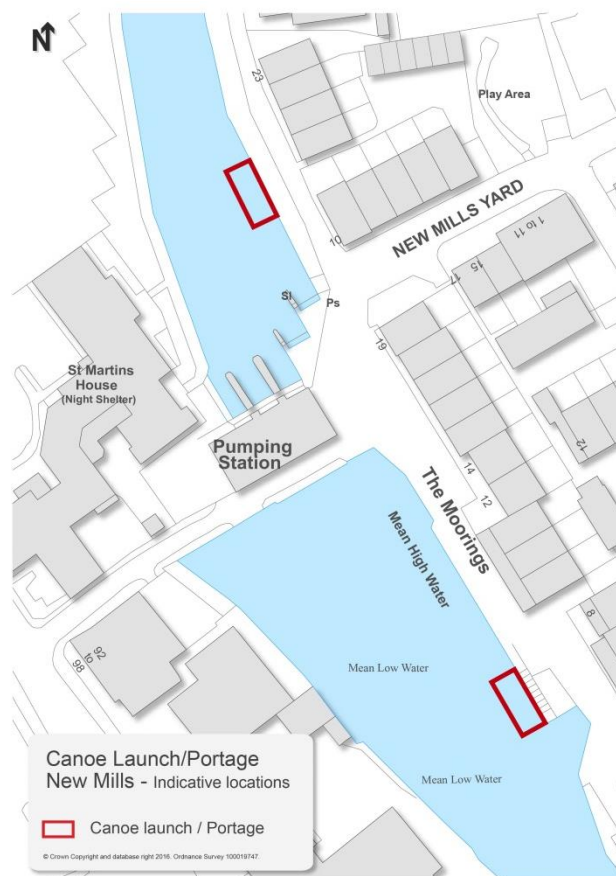


period 2010 to 2014¹¹. The Broads Authority has responded to this trend by working closely with British Canoeing¹² to promote the Broads as one of the UK's premier family friendly canoeing destinations and has recently published a range of canoe trails throughout the Broads including a trail for the City of Norwich.

5.12 A number of sites for new canoe launching facilities were suggested through the public consultation, and project partners have also identified a number of sites where new facilities could be installed or existing structures upgraded to provide improved access. Factors that need to be considered include the proximity of car parking facilities to the proposed launch site, existing bank structure and height above mean low water level and the potential for conflict with other river users. Particular consideration has been given to linking the Broads to the upper Wensum across New Mills, providing canoe access points at the upstream and downstream extent of the strategy area and the provision of city centre launch sites.

5.13 The action plan includes a project to install low freeboard pontoon canoe access points upstream and downstream of New Mills. This will enable canoeists to move between the upper and lower reaches of the River Wensum and will greatly increase the opportunities for recreational enjoyment of the river.

Map 11: New Mills Canoe portage (Action Plan project W3)



¹¹ Broads Authority: 2014 Boat Census

¹² British Canoeing is the national governing body for canoeing in the UK.

5.14 There may be other opportunities for canoe launches including adapting and extending the existing pontoons at Elm Hill Quay for canoe launching, and by enhancing provision upstream of New Mills, including at Wensum Park and Anderson's Meadow. In order to promote and develop recreational paddling and provide business opportunities for canoe hire in Norwich, there is a need to increase the number of safe launching facilities available in the project area, and where possible to improve existing facilities. Such opportunities will be explored and may require feasibility work to enable them to be progressed.

Provision of moorings (marinas, short stay, permanent, demasting and residential)

5.15 If there is to be a resurgence of boating activity on the Wensum there is a need for the provision of new mooring facilities in the strategy area. A number of factors have to be taken into account when considering developing new mooring facilities. These include the available river width and depth, the height of the existing banks, the current use of banks and how the bank opposite the proposed mooring site is being used. The design of new moorings facilities should address safety and management issues (including minimising the risk of associated anti-social behaviour, for example in various recognised problem locations such as at Cow Tower and Quayside).

5.16 On a number of sites mooring provision has already been assessed as being feasible, and several new moorings are proposed below. Further, there is scope for continued discussion with developers and landowners regarding the potential for marina development in east Norwich.

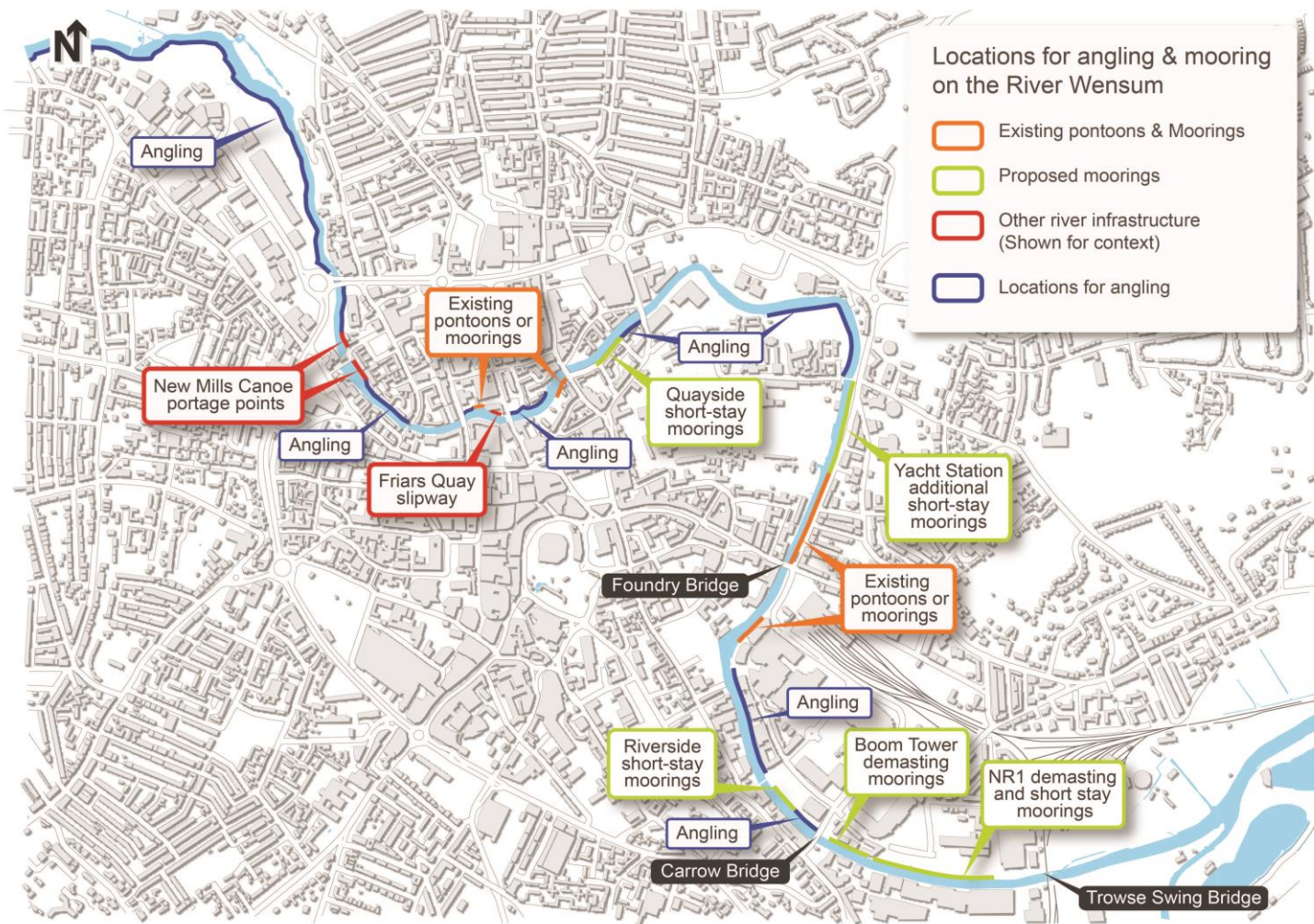
5.17 Provision of residential moorings (permanent moorings for houseboats) on the Wensum could deliver a range of benefits and thus represents an opportunity for the Strategy. Permanent houseboat sites with proper on-site facilities would bring life back to the riverbanks in the form of revenue-generating affordable housing in a pleasant environment, contribute to meeting housing need, and benefit the local economy. Houseboat communities will also have a personal and financial stake in keeping the river free from anti-social behaviour, both bankside and waterborne. The tidal Wensum lacks the marinas and basins that would make it relatively easy to set up residential moorings, and opportunities to encourage may be greatest on the edge of the city, in east Norwich, potentially through new development. The strategy seeks to encourage marinas and residential mooring where appropriate. The Broads Authority's current policy (DP25) seeks to locate residential moorings in marinas, basins and boatyards, which would preclude their location in appropriate locations within the city council area. The RWSP aims to influence the emerging Broads Local Plan to allow for residential moorings in other locations so long as they meet the basic criteria for such provision set out in existing policy DP25. Any proposals for

residential moorings will require planning permission and will need to be accompanied by a full Flood Risk Assessment and other supporting documentation (see Appendix 2: Relevant policies and guidance).

5.18 The Broads Authority has an ambition to see de-masting moorings provided at all four quadrants of bridges that span the navigation, which will encourage unpowered vessels to use the river. However the requirements for specific bridge sites vary, given their location on the river and the nature of their design. The RWSP priorities for provision of de-masting moorings are at Trowse Railway Bridge and Carrow Bridge and are shown on Map 12.

5.19 Map 12 also identifies existing moorings and proposed new moorings. One of the benefits of adopting the approach of formalising mooring activity at recognised sites is that it presents an opportunity for better management of the sites that are identified, and allows for enforcement of unauthorised mooring at those sites. This could have a positive effect on managing unauthorised overstaying by vessels and dealing with antisocial behaviour.

Map 12



5.20 Any mooring development (private or public) should adhere to accepted design standards and provide safety features in accordance with current best practice (see appendix 2). Additionally, shared use of sites should be encouraged in order to maximise public benefit from new developments.

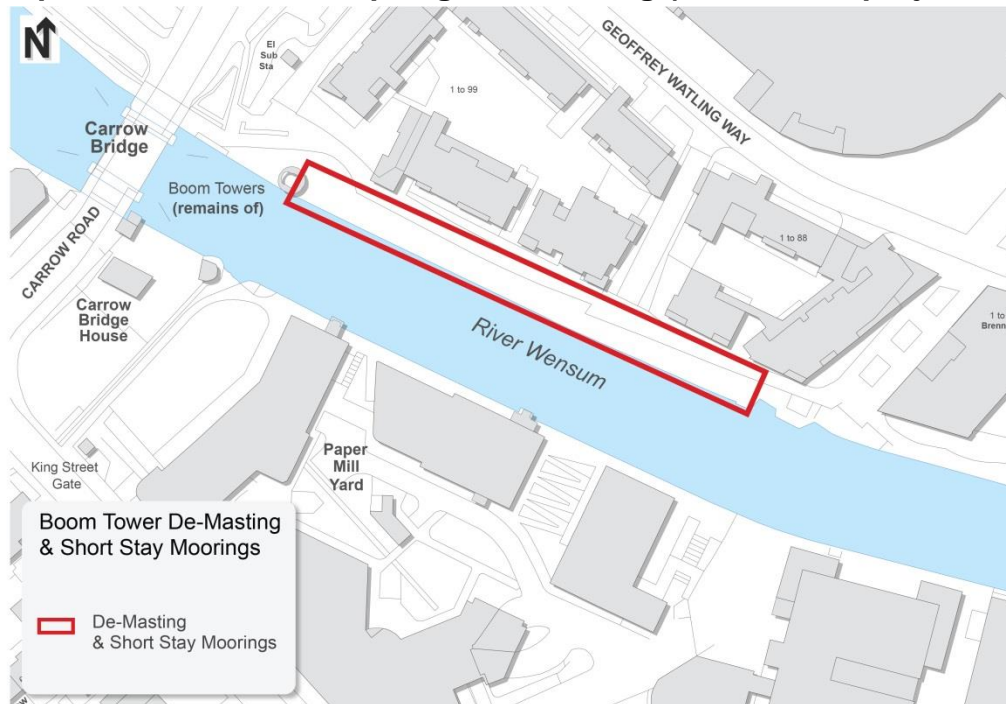
5.21 The action plan includes a project to develop a short stay visitor mooring at Quayside, managed by the Broads Authority, to encourage small craft to visit the city centre. This would involve the installation of pontoons along the frontage which would be accessed by ramps to the existing steps through the Quayside wall. Residents in this area have experienced anti-social behaviour in the past arising from boat users in the river and from unauthorised mooring. The fact that the proposed moorings will be managed will reduce the potential for anti-social behaviour, which should be beneficial to both local residents and visitors.

Map13: Quayside short-stay moorings (Action Plan project W4)



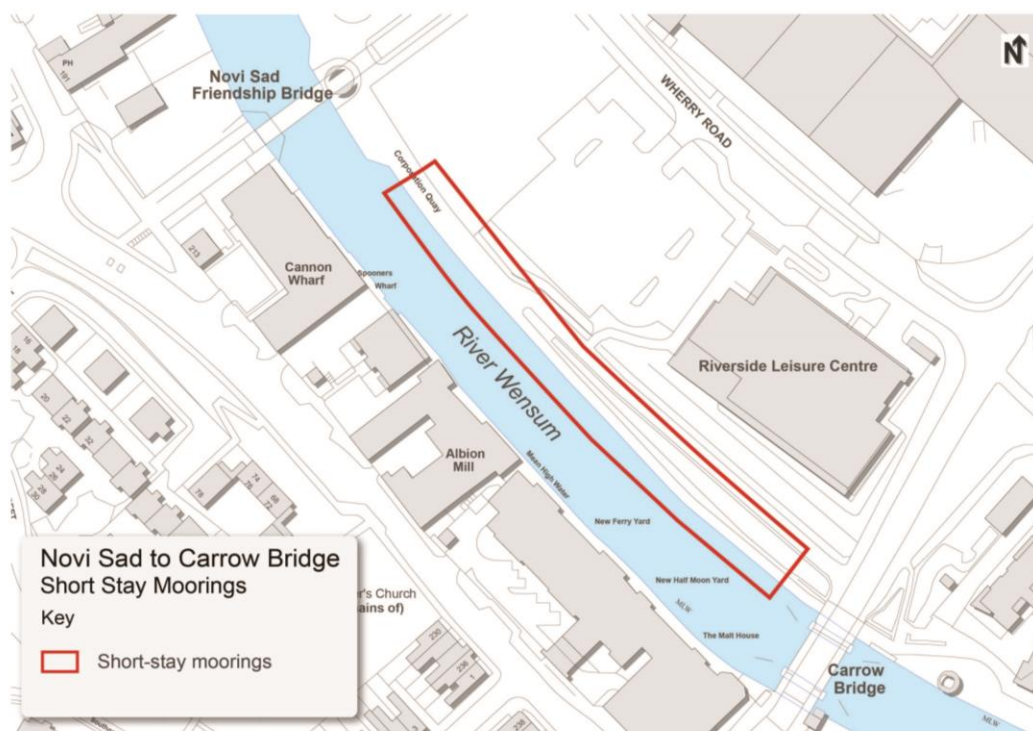
5.22 The action plan also includes a project to develop a short stay visitor mooring at the Boom Towers site immediately downstream of Carrow Bridge, and will also involve repiling of the riverbank in this location which is currently failing. This project will have a number of benefits including encouraging greater visitor activity in this historic gateway site, renewing river infrastructure that has become degraded, and complementing action plan project E4 (enhancement of the historic Boom Tower – see section 6). It also has the potential to link in the longer term to the opportunity to enhance the green infrastructure link between this part of the river to the city walls and Ber Street (see section 7).

Map 14: Boom Towers repiling and mooring (Action Plan project W5)



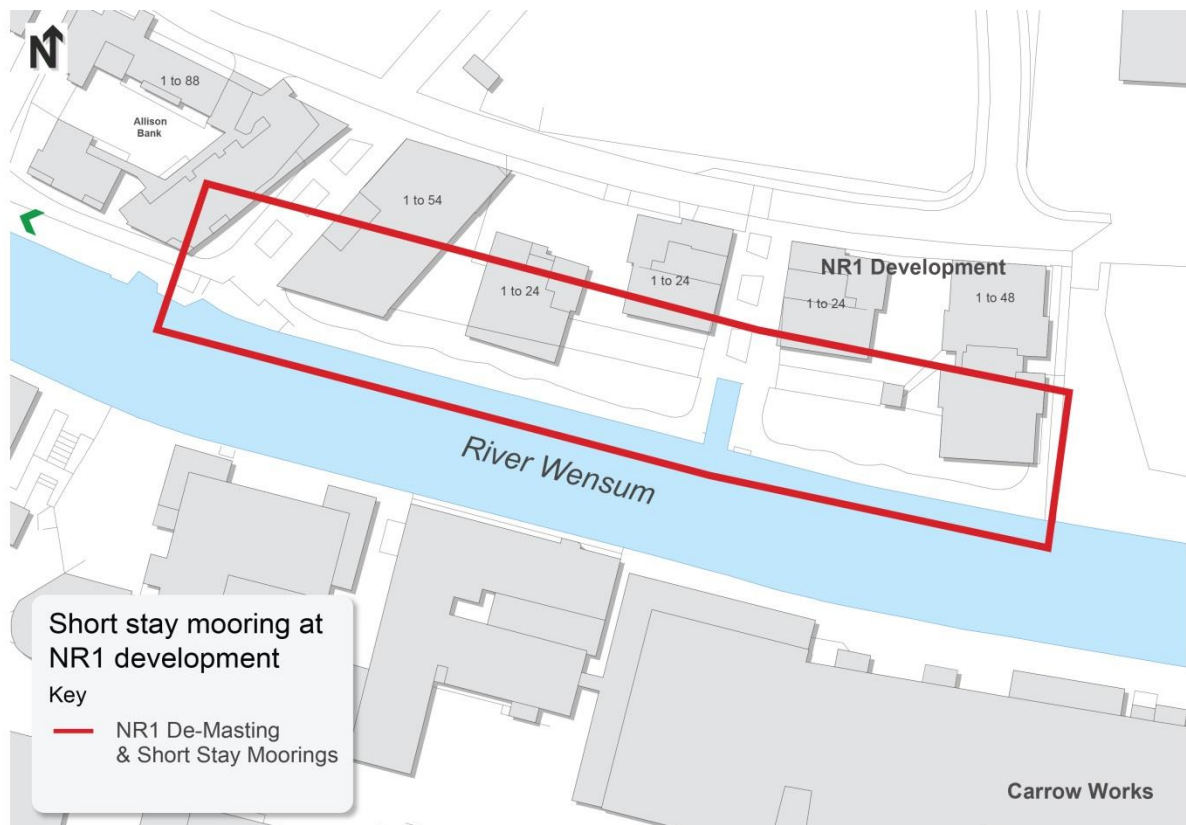
5.23 It is proposed to develop a formal visitor mooring between Carrow Bridge and Lady Julian Bridge on the east bank of the river (ie adjacent to the Bridge development) in order to provide access for boaters to the Riverside Retail Park. This will require minimal work and has been assessed taking into consideration requirements for angling in this part of the city.

Map 15: New moorings between Carrow Bridge and Lady Julian Bridge (Action Plan project W6)



5.24 New short-stay visitor moorings and de-masting moorings are required through a Section 106 Agreement with Norwich City Football Club connected to the NR1 development. These are to be provided by the developer on the north bank of the river adjacent to the NR1 development, between Trowse Swing Bridge and Carrow Bridge.

Map 16: New short stay visitor and de-masting mooring at the NR1 Development (Action Plan project W7)



Angling

Policy 8: Angling access and fish habitat will be enhanced at appropriate locations along the River Wensum.

5.25 The River Wensum through Norwich forms part of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads, one of the most famous freshwater fisheries in the country. The small open sections of riverbank through the city reaches provide important opportunities for anglers to fish in an urban environment where there is easy access.

5.26 The city reaches also provide important habitat for fish. This is an important natural resource for both wildlife and people. The quality and diversity of fishing on offer in the Broads attracts anglers from far and wide and this in turn means angling plays a hugely significant part in the local economy, with anglers estimated to influence expenditure worth in excess of £100 million every year¹³. The importance of the Broads fishery, including the Wensum through Norwich, ensures a close working relationship between the Environment Agency, Broads Angling Strategy Group (BASG), Broads Authority and the Angling Trust in order to manage fish stocks and fishing.



5.27 The River Wensum Strategy recognises the importance of angling as a recreational activity in Norwich. The urban fishery provides leisure opportunities for residents and visitors alike and the strategy therefore seeks to ensure that angling activity can take place alongside boating and other leisure activity throughout the project area where appropriate (some areas may not be suitable for access, for health and safety and other reasons) as shown on Map 12. Much of the river downstream of New Mills is already accessible to anglers from the banks and in boats but there are significant opportunities for improving access for anglers upstream of New Mills where the river is quieter and more natural. The Strategy partnership will therefore work with the BASG, local angling clubs, landowners and community groups to identify opportunities for improving fish habitat and angling access in the strategy area.

Opportunities for business development

Policy 9: Greater commercial activity will be encouraged in the river corridor, including the establishment of new businesses where appropriate, and the commercial use of existing river infrastructure will be maximised where feasible.

5.28 The river supports many businesses, both directly and indirectly. The attractive riverside environment already benefits the tourism and leisure industry

¹³ Environment Agency: The Value of Angling in Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk (May 2015)

(hotels, pubs, cafes, fishing, and pleasure craft for example), is home to a number of small digital and creative media companies (in St James's Mill and on St George's Street for example), and is the location for Norwich University of the Arts. An enhanced riverside area, with a high quality public realm, attractive open spaces and high quality heritage, provides great potential to further enhance the local economic benefits of the river corridor and to contribute to the city's regeneration. Digital and creative media companies in particular are attracted by a characterful, high quality environment with spaces to meet, rather than more conventional office accommodation, so the strategy provides an opportunity to stimulate this form of activity in the river corridor.

5.29 The strategy's policies and proposals to increase access to the river corridor, encourage greater use of the river itself, and enhance the riverside environment, will encourage increased use of the river corridor by commuters and leisure users, as well as help to create the conditions for local businesses to thrive through increased footfall and activity.

5.30 It will be important to work with partners, existing businesses and community organisations, on project development and delivery. For example, by working with pubs and restaurants that are close to launch sites or moorings it may be possible to negotiate access to car parks for users and at the same time provide additional custom for the businesses on the river. There may also be opportunities to work with the BID on river-based events, investigation of project sponsorship, and to develop a business partnership focused on the river.

5.31 Where appropriate the strategy will encourage greater commercial activity in the river corridor including floating restaurants, hotels and other suitable leisure uses.

5.32 Proposals to provide new and enhanced river infrastructure (moorings, slipways and canoe launches as mentioned above) will help to support rowing boat, punt or canoe hire businesses and could encourage guided river tours to operate both in the City and upstream of New Mills Yard.

5.33 The City Council owns several key pieces of river infrastructure, including the pontoons at Elm Hill Quay and Riverside, which have the potential to encourage greater activity on the river. Although these have experienced periods of vacancy in recent years, the strategy aims to ensure that they are fully utilised in the future so that they can contribute to a more active waterfront whilst also providing a commercial return to the council.

5.34 This will be assisted through closer working arrangements between Norwich City Council and Broads Authority and could involve pro-actively seeking out commercial opportunities to maximise the use of river infrastructure, as well as responding to proposals from the business community. Provision of additional

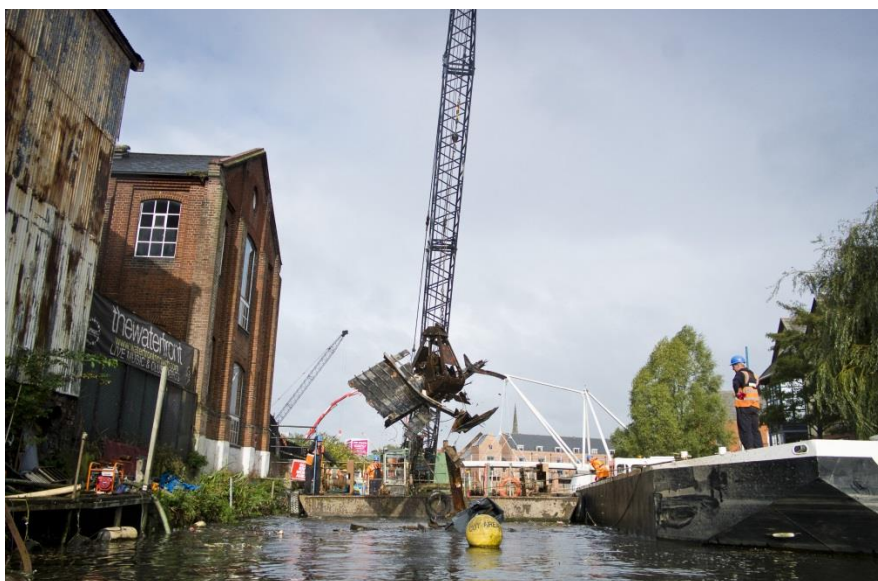
moorings and launch facilities will help to deliver the RWS objective to encourage greater activity on the river, by creating the right conditions to support and generate additional demand for the future use of these key pieces of infrastructure.

River management and maintenance

5.35 Some river management and maintenance issues have already been referred to in section 3 of the strategy. This section (supplemented by Appendix 1) addresses other specific management and maintenance issues including dredging, conflicting river uses, and navigation.

- Maintenance of banks is generally the responsibility of landowners. The BA has the power available to serve notice on landowners to require them to carry out repairs. Further advice is provided in Appendix 1.
- Dredging of the river is the responsibility of the BA; dredging operations are informed by the BA's Sediment Management Strategy (SMS) which contains a waterway specification for the river, defining the depth and bed profile required for recreational navigation. The Action Plan in section 8 includes a proposal (ref W8) for a hydrographic survey of the river to assess current dredging requirements and carry out a dredging operation to ensure compliance with the waterway specification set out in the SMS. This will be funded and undertaken by the Broads Authority, in 2017-18.
- The BA also has powers to serve notice on the owners of sunken or abandoned vessels and works with boat owners to ensure wrecks and hazards are removed. In Norwich the removal of sunken vessels can be complicated and expensive because of the need to move large plant and equipment by river into the city. As referred to in Section 3, the City Council and the BA have developed a joint protocol relating to matters of river management which includes a joint approach to the removal of sunken boats.

Removal of sunken boat in the River Wensum 2016



- The issue of conflict between river users is one that is best managed by ensuring appropriate provision is made for the various user groups, for example by allocating adequate bank space for angling when new mooring sites are developed. Angling access can also be improved by the provision of platforms and pads which may also give protection for natural banks particularly upstream of New Mills. In addition there is a need for good signage to make it clear where various activities are authorised or deemed to be appropriate; this should be addressed in the signage proposals as part of Action Plan project A3, referred to in section 4. Map 12 provides clarification about the location of particular uses along the river, including moorings and angling provision. This will help to address potential conflicts of interest and should therefore assist with management of the river corridor.
- There is a public right of navigation in the Broads navigation area which includes the River Wensum up to New Mills. The BA has a legal duty to maintain the navigation and to take such steps to improve and develop it as it thinks fit (see Appendix 1 for further detail). Any development adjacent to or within the navigation area must therefore be assessed as regards its potential impact on the navigation. As part of the development of the strategy, the BA has produced an [Advice Note](#) to summarise its approach to assessing proposals for development in or adjacent to the navigation area.

Events and trails

Policy 10: The River Wensum will be promoted as a venue for events and trails to maximise its potential for tourism and the local economy.

5.36 Although Norwich has a thriving tourist industry and is a popular short stay destination, the tourism potential of the River Wensum is largely untapped. Given the wealth of historic properties and cultural venues in the city there is great potential for the city to increase its tourism economy with further investment and promotion, particularly as heritage tourism is one of the most significant draws for inbound visitors to the UK. There is also an opportunity to encourage visitors to the Broads to venture into Norwich.

5.37 Recognition of the river as an asset for tourism and leisure is an integral part of this strategy, and its promotion will complement the other policies and proposals in the strategy with benefits for the local economy, residents and visitors. It is important that the river's promotion addresses the needs of all residents of the city and the Greater Norwich area, for example by ensuring that any events and/or trails are accessible to those living in areas with high social deprivation, and those suffering from health inequalities.

5.38 A Norwich River Festival should be considered as a means of raising the profile of the Wensum. This would provide an excellent means of showing how the river could enhance the life, health and well-being of residents, visitors and the City itself. There is also the potential to develop trails linked to historic buildings /structures, and other features of interest in the vicinity of the river. The River Wensum Strategy Partnership will work with its partners in relevant tourism and heritage bodies to facilitate the development of such events and trails.

Olympic torch event, 2012



5.39 The action plan includes a proposal (W9) for a river festival in Norwich, and an initial funding bid has already been submitted by the RWSP to the Broad's Authority's Water Mills and Marshes Landscape Partnership. In 2015 the Broads Authority successfully bid for Heritage Lottery Funding under the HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme for a total of £2.6m (with match funding this will rise to around £4.5m). The Water Mills and Marshes Landscape Partnership Scheme aims to further conserve and enhance the built and natural heritage of the area between Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Acle and Loddon following the course of the rivers Yare, Bure and Waveney, also including the River Wensum within the city as a key gateway to the Broads landscape. The proposed river festival aims to reconnect the city to the river through a range of water based activities, encouraging local involvement through drama and art events. If the funding bid is successful it will result in a river festival being held within the next couple of years, potentially in 2018 at earliest, focused on the River Wensum in the city centre. This would be an

important first step in promoting the river as a leisure and tourism destination and will also raise the profile of the River Wensum Strategy.

6 Environment

6.1 This section deals with issues related to the environment of the River Wensum through Norwich. In this strategy the term ‘environment’ covers a broad range of topics including biodiversity, the physical and chemical condition of the river water, visual appearance and open space.

6.2 The character of the river corridor is highly varied with Whitlingham Country Park to the East, a historic urban core, and a suburban setting to the west. There is a wide variety of uses and natural processes that take place on and around the river, with many opportunities for enhancement as well as some conflicting interests with leisure, development and business uses. Balancing these issues for wildlife and people is a complex challenge and the end result must also protect those natural processes that maintain the health of the river.

Water quality

Policy 11: A good quality of water will be maintained and where possible enhanced in the River Wensum.

6.3 The water quality of the River Wensum through Norwich has been identified by both the partner organisations and responses from the public consultation as a key issue. Water quality is monitored by the Environment Agency. The River Wensum’s water quality is generally good¹⁴, and has significantly improved in recent years partly due to cessation of industrial activities in its vicinity and improved sewage treatment, and also to specific initiatives by the EA and other agencies. We want to see clean water flowing through Norwich as this supports a diverse and healthy ecology, including fish. We want to ensure that drainage waters entering the river within and upstream of Norwich are as clean and free of pollutants as possible. We also want to



¹⁴ Good water quality is that which meets the needs of the plants and animals that should thrive in a lowland river that flows through our city. It will be free of significant uncontrolled pollution events and meet the expected environmental quality targets for a river of this type (which are monitored and reported by the Environment Agency).

improve the habitat within the river itself to better support a thriving ecology where this does not conflict with current uses of the river.

6.4 The greatest risks to the quality of the river water through Norwich come from:

- Foul water/ surface water sewers misconnections, which can then outfall to the river;
- Pollution, including substances wrongly emptied into drains, from businesses and homes as well as road and impermeable paving run-off draining to surface water sewers;
- Pollution from craft on the water;
- Sediment run-off upstream of Norwich; and
- Uncontrolled litter and bankside vegetation on the water surface.

6.5 The Environment Agency, Anglian Water and Norwich City Council have a range of approaches to ensure polluted water cannot enter the river and will enforce unlawful breaches where necessary (see appendix 1), and planning policies address surface water run-off and flooding issues (see appendix 2).

6.6 It is also important to consider what happens upstream of Norwich, since this has an impact on the quality of the river through the city. There are a number of initiatives currently underway to ensure this quality is safeguarded. These include a programme investment by Anglian Water in phosphorus removal from a number of their water recycling centres on the Wensum. Anglian Water is also working to ensure sustainable water abstraction for Norwich by upgrading the Heigham Water Treatment Works allowing environmental improvement further upstream at Costessey. Natural England is undertaking work through the Catchment Sensitive Farming initiative to support farmers to reduce the chance of diffuse pollution from their activities. The upper Wensum is host to one of three DEFRA demonstration test catchments conducting farm trials to assess whether it is possible to cost-effectively reduce the impact of agricultural diffuse water pollution on ecology while maintaining food security. All these measures aim to ensure the quality of river water flowing through Norwich is as good as possible.

6.7 The River Wensum Restoration Strategy has been developed by Natural England, in partnership with the Environment Agency and the Water Management Alliance, to restore the physical functioning of the river in order that it can sustain the wildlife and fisheries characteristic of a Norfolk chalk river. Working in partnership with landowners, the Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board, fishing clubs and other interested groups, 12 kilometres of the River Wensum have so far been restored, including major restoration schemes at Bintree, Great Ryburgh Common, Ryburgh End, Swanton Morley, Tatterford and Sculthorpe.

6.8 The River Wensum upstream of Norwich is designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), in recognition of its environmental value, and feeds into the many designated sites of the Norfolk Broads downstream of Norwich. Whilst the river through Norwich is not designated, it is a vital link within the larger river system and remains sensitive to environment pollution.

6.9 Surface water runoff drains to the river at numerous points through Norwich. The city centre still has a combined sewer system in many places, including parts of a Victorian system from the 19th century, which cannot separate surface water from foul water flows. During emergency situations when the system's capacity is reached, for example during heavy rainfall or when foul water pipes become blocked, these combined surface overflows are designed to discharge foul and surface waters into the river to prevent flooding of homes, businesses and streets.

6.10 Certain areas of Norwich have a high number of restaurants and take-away businesses that have an associated risk of discharging fats, oils and grease (FOG) into sewer systems. Once congealed, these substances can block pipes causing discharges to the river. This has been evident in past years with incidents of foul water in the River Wensum, although Anglian Water has a jetting regime and routinely jets the system around Magdalen Street. FOG and foul water discharges have an obvious visual impact on river water, but also introduce nutrients and solids which have an environmental impact on the river's ecology. There are also potential health impacts for recreational users of the river in Norwich with the potential to affect tourism revenue.

6.11 The Action Plan includes a proposal (E1) to improve water quality in the River Wensum by reducing the levels of fats oils and grease (FOG) entering the river in the Magdalen Street / Fye Bridge area. This will be achieved by a focused campaign targeted at all food establishments along Magdalen Street and Tombland to increase awareness of the issues of FOG on their local environment, which should lead to a reduction in the required frequency of sewer maintenance and improved water quality. The project will be delivered by Anglian Water, anticipated in 2017/18.

Map 17: Fats Oils and Grease project (Action Plan project E1)



6.12 There are other ways to enhance and maintain water quality, including monitoring, and keeping the river clean and free from litter. These are management issues and it is proposed that they can best be addressed through the proposed Delivery Board, referred to in Section 8. This could also involve working in partnership with relevant organisations and agencies to investigate the potential for future enhancements to water quality.

Biodiversity and habitat

Policy 12: The biodiversity value of the River Wensum corridor will be protected and enhanced, and opportunities will be taken to improve its habitat.

6.13 The changes that have been made to the river's quality and physical shape over the centuries have greatly affected the habitats and species found today. The river does not benefit from any specific designations through the city but it still supports a wide variety of species and habitat, as well as areas for nesting and spawning.

6.14 Enhancing the biodiversity of the river is valuable to people in many ways; it generally has a positive effect on property values, it supports many strategies for health and wellbeing and provides a draw for tourism, in the same way cultural and historical assets can. There is also the potential to enhance the habitat of the river corridor through a number of specific measures.



6.15 A Biodiversity Action Plan was produced by Norwich City Council in 2002 which identified a series of actions to protect and enhance biodiversity in the city. There is a need to address biodiversity issues in the river corridor which could be achieved through a targeted biodiversity enhancement plan. This is addressed through project E2 in the action plan which proposes a Biodiversity Enhancement and Non-native Species Management Plan. This would draw upon the 2002 document but it is proposed to have a broader remit, to include the management of non-native species which has become a significant issue in recent years.

6.16 Due to the urban nature of the River Wensum through Norwich, the multiple interests within this part of the river and this being a time of economic restraint, it is not considered appropriate to develop a full biodiversity programme for a non-designated part of the river. Instead, the focus for this project is to develop a plan that will maximise biodiversity along the whole river corridor through intervention at critical points, and manage and/ or eradicate non-beneficial, non-native species.

6.17 The biodiversity plan should complement, not repeat, existing plans that provide guidance on biodiversity in Norwich and should set deliverable targets for biodiversity enhancement and non-native species reduction that can be monitored over time. The plan will focus on specific intervention sites to deliver high value-added outcomes along the whole river corridor through Norwich, identify key species and habitats to deliver biodiversity gain, develop a non-native species management plan for management and/ or eradication of identified species, and include a monitoring plan to ensure the effectiveness and feedback improvements for future delivery by partners. It is anticipated that the Biodiversity Enhancement and Non-Native Species Management Plan will be led by Wild Anglia working in partnership with other organisations as appropriate, including conservation bodies.

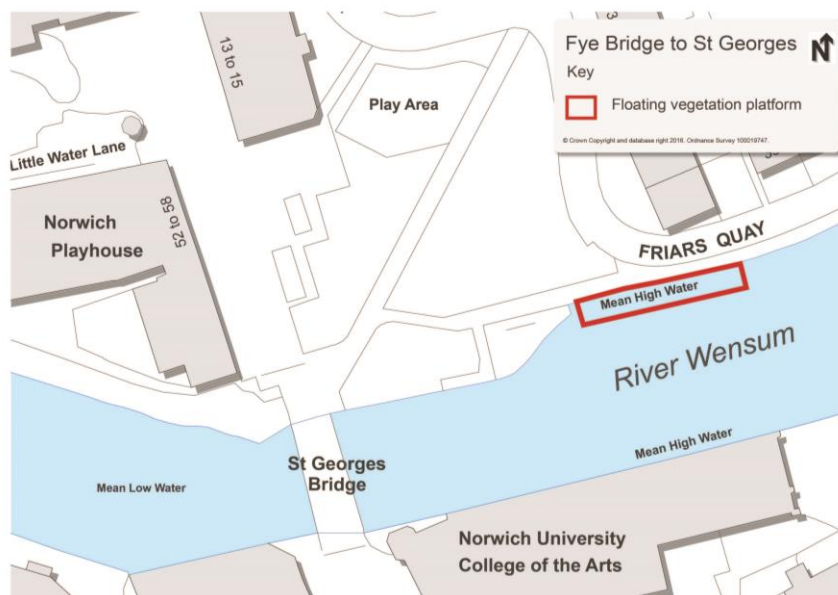
6.18 The action plan proposes two specific projects to address habitat enhancement issues, set out below. Other potential habitat improvements have also been identified through the public consultation and through discussion with partners, which will require feasibility work and identification of funding (see appendix 3 for further details of potential projects).

Floating vegetation platforms

6.19 The River Wensum through Norwich is heavily modified for the identified purposes of flood protection, navigation and recreation. These essential uses mean that the form and function of the river are constrained by artificial features, in particular sheet piling. Such features give the river, particularly through the central core and Riverside areas, a unique appearance but also constrain ecological potential and visual interest. Certain sections of river have little or no bank-side vegetation due to the vertical piled walls, which cannot support healthy populations of fish and other biology. They are also less aesthetically pleasing to water/ riverside users and property developers. The poor condition of plant communities and predominance of hard engineered banks has been identified as a particular obstacle in meeting the Water Framework Directive (WFD) for the Wensum.

6.20 Project E3 is a pilot project to install a floating vegetation platform in the section of river between Fye Bridge and St George's Bridge. This will be funded by the Environment Agency with implementation likely in the current financial year (2017/18).

Map 18: floating vegetation platform between Fye Bridge and St George's Bridge (action plan policy E3)



6.21 It is proposed in the longer term to identify other locations for floating vegetation platforms: existing pontoons and piled river banks are likely to be the main focus. These platforms would be installed as part of a rolling programme to improve existing stretches of low environmental value infrastructure. The feasibility of these locations will be investigated, and options for funding and maintenance explored, including business sponsorship and new development where appropriate. Floating vegetation platforms are supported by Norwich City Council's recently adopted Landscape and Trees Supplementary Planning Document (June 2016), which was informed by the emerging River Wensum Strategy. It states (at paragraph 2.5.4):

"...Sites that have boundaries with rivers or other water courses also present opportunities for habitat enhancement. This could include for example provision of floating vegetation platforms, where appropriate, which will increase and diversify vegetation along the river, and include native and high yield pollination species."

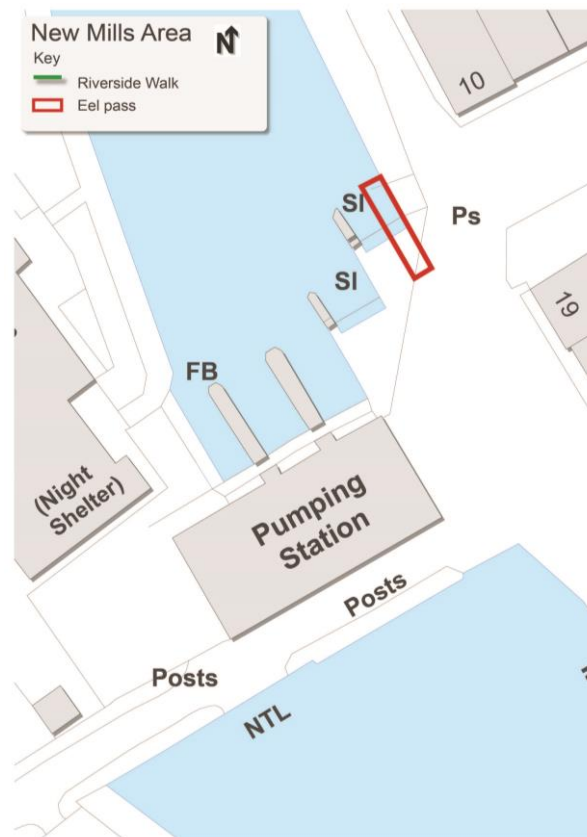
Eel pass

6.22 During the development of the draft River Wensum Strategy a project was proposed to enhance the habitat for the river's eel population and to address the decline in eel stocks which is a matter of international concern. Eels are a protected species; the "Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009" gives the EA powers to protect eels and require improvements in passage to assist their migration over barriers and weirs.

6.23 New Mills Yard is the tidal limit of the Wensum and was identified as a critical barrier to fish movement, being totally impassable for any fish species present in the catchment, including migratory salmonids (sea trout) and eel.

6.24 The project proposed installation of a single eel pass over the gate on the 'true left' (east) bank of the river, to replace a small primitive elver trap which was insufficient in scale for the number of elver suspected to be present, and the installation of an automatic monitoring system to count eels as they pass through the structure.

6.25 Installation of the eel pass was funded by the Environment Agency and carried out in spring 2017. The EA is responsible for ongoing maintenance of the eel pass and will continue to monitor the numbers of elver passing through the structure. The eel pass enables eel to access 4.6 km to Hellesdon sluice and then on into the Wensum and Tud, with benefits for biodiversity and ecology



Map 19: New Mills Eel Pass

Flood risk reduction

Policy 13: Opportunities will be taken, where practicable and feasible, to re-naturalise the profile of the River Wensum and to create additional floodwater storage along river banks.

6.26 The River Wensum through Norwich is an urban river that has been modified many times during the history of the city. In some places, particularly downstream of New Mills, it has been widened and straightened to aid the passage of boats, support industry and help control flooding. In the 21st Century most industrial uses of the river, together with its role as a port, have diminished or stopped entirely. As a result there is an opportunity to consider again how the shape of the river (its profile) and its banks can best support the city, its people and the natural environment. In

particular there is an opportunity to use the development and infrastructure that is planned for Norwich to reduce the risk of flooding and to maximise habitat for key plants and animals.

6.27 Potential opportunities include ensuring that the design of new development and infrastructure along the river encourages creation of new features by changing the shape of the banks (its profile) where appropriate, and encourages good practice by existing riverside property owners. New Mills has been identified as a location where changing the river's profile could provide benefits in terms of reducing flood risk reduction and improving habitat and biodiversity, however there are no plans to undertake changes to the structure at this time.

6.28 Specific flood risk reduction measures would vary in scale and purpose and could be delivered through new strategic-scale initiatives or individual project proposals, such as building on the recent £10m programme led by Norfolk County Council to resolve surface water drainage identified within the Norwich Surface Water Management Plan to provide new multifunctional spaces to existing areas of poor or over-capacity drainage; or they might be smaller and delivered by individual projects such as continuing to ensure that appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are provided by developers through new development (as required by Norwich Local Plan policy DM5 for example). Using the latest flood risk modelling from the Environment Agency and Anglian Water to explore how the river profile can help further mitigate the risk from flooding provides an opportunity to consider how new and existing open areas along the river corridor are used to maximise the storage they provide during times of flooding. Creation of additional storage along river banks when they are to be repaired or developed, especially if they are currently piled, will be encouraged.

Renewable Energy

Policy 14: The use of renewable forms of energy generation, in particular water source heat pumps, will be encouraged for new development in the river corridor, where practicable and feasible.

6.29 The strategy seeks to encourage renewable energy generation in the river corridor, including water source heat pumps (WSHPs). This is in line with the planning policies of both Norwich City Council (policy DM4) and the Broads Authority (DP8), although WSHPs are not specifically referred to in either policy. The city council recently commissioned a study examining the technical and financial feasibility of WSHPs for the River Wensum. The study concludes that this technology is likely to be feasible compared to some of the more conventional forms of energy generation, and that it has potential for application in the river corridor.

Open Spaces and Development that supports the River

Policy 15: Opportunities will be sought to enhance and increase green infrastructure and areas of open space within the river corridor.

6.30 The River Wensum provides the largest area of continuous open space within the city. Responses to the public consultation indicate that retaining, enhancing and celebrating the natural and cultural value of the river is important to people.

6.31 A key aspect of this strategy is to provide greater connectivity with the river, which is likely to result in greater direct use. At the same time the strategy also sets out to protect important environmental and heritage assets. This will be achieved by ensuring a balance between natural spaces and greater river infrastructure, whilst ensuring that riverside development is designed to be sympathetic to its surroundings.

6.32 A longer term opportunity has been identified through the strategy to enhance the existing open space between Bishops Bridge and Whitefriars. This aims to maximise biodiversity potential, improve recreational access and develop the tourism offer for this part of the River Wensum and is discussed further in section 7. Upstream of New Mills, there is also potential to enhance access to the river from Wensum Park which again is referred to in section 7.

6.33 There are other areas in the city centre, for example along Riverside, where there may be opportunities to seek to enhance open space provision adjacent to the river which will help to meet the recreational needs of the existing and growing population in the city centre and east Norwich. Opportunities should be taken where possible to maximise such open spaces and ensure that they are designed to complement and enhance the river frontage.

6.34 The river already possesses several areas that afford quiet and more naturalised spaces, such as along the Marriott's Way approaching Hellesdon Mill, Anderson's Meadow and around the Cow Tower. Whitlingham Country Park and the historic Wensum Park also provide open space along the river corridor. As many of these areas are designated as County Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves or public parks they represent the best opportunities to develop a recognised series of long term open spaces that support wildlife and peoples use of the river.

Cow Tower



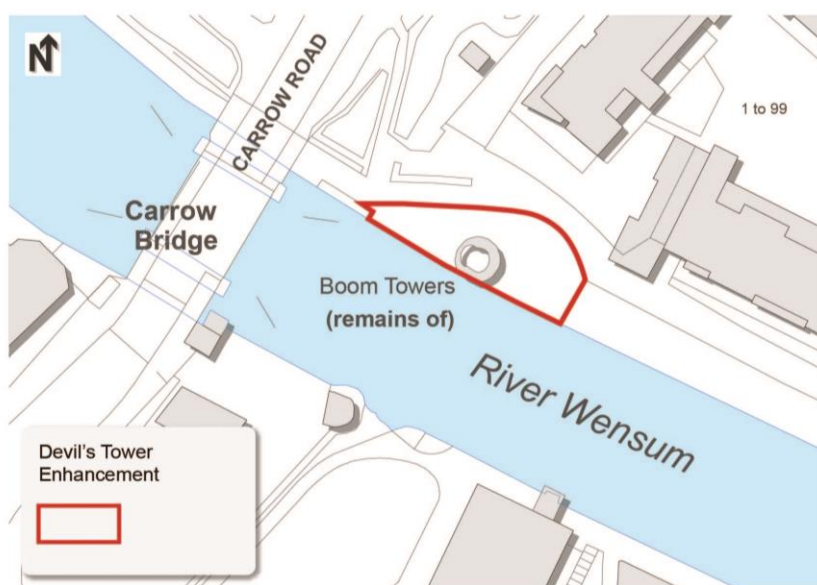
Boom Towers enhancement

6.35 The action plan includes a project (E4) to enhance the setting of the one of the Boom Towers, adjacent to Carrow Bridge. The Boom Towers are unique heritage assets adjacent to the River Wensum and riverside walk and form part of the historic city walls. This area was historically a gateway to the city of Norwich. Despite this, there is no heritage interpretation of these structures and no sense of their historic significance and gateway function. The Devil's Tower on the south bank of the river is a scheduled ancient monument. It is located close to recently developed flats adjacent to the river and has the potential for an enhanced public open space, which will benefit the rapidly expanding residential population in this area as well as tourists and visitors.

6.36 The proposed project comprises enhancement to the setting of the Devil's Tower through landscaping (including cutting back of trees obscuring the structure), biodiversity enhancements, seating, interpretation, signage, and by some minor repairs to the structure itself. This will result in an enhanced open space beside new development and the river, contributing to the better enjoyment of this heritage asset and the river corridor. This is also an important gateway to the city which will be emphasised by this enhancement scheme.

6.37 This project would also complement a longer term proposal (Boom Towers to Ber Street woodland park – see section 7) by effectively forming the starting point for a possible new urban woodland park, linking the river Wensum to the city centre along the city walls and Ber Street wooded ridge.

Map 20: Boom Towers enhancement project (Action Plan project E4)



6.38 There are a number of potential development sites in the vicinity of the River Wensum. Sites allocated in the Norwich Site Allocations Plan are set out in Appendix 2, some of which have already been referred earlier in this strategy document, for example the Deal and Utilities sites in east Norwich.

6.39 These site allocation policies seek to secure potential benefits to the river corridor, for example provision of Riverside Walk. However other sites which are not included in the local plan may come forward for development within the strategy period. These may include several sites that were allocated in the Northern City Centre Area Action Plan which expired in March 2016, for example Mary Chapman Court on Duke Street (referred to in section 7 – Longer term opportunities), and land at 123-161 Oak Street which is proposed for housing development with potential to include an extension to the riverside walk.

6.40 It is important that the opportunity is taken to ensure that new development in the vicinity of the river is sensitive to its riverside setting and will enhance the setting of the river where possible. Development should not only be in accordance with the policies and proposals in the relevant planning policy documents as referred to in Appendix 2, but should also be in accordance with the detailed design advice in the City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (relevant sub-areas include: Northern Riverside, Cathedral Close, Prince of Wales Road, and King Street). St Matthews Conservation Area Appraisal and Bracondale Conservation Area appraisal may also be relevant.

Quayside



7 Longer term opportunities

7.1 Several longer term opportunity sites have been identified during the development of the strategy which, if developed, could contribute greatly to the regeneration of the river corridor with many benefits for residents, businesses and visitors to the area. All would require investigation of feasibility and funding opportunities to be taken forward.

New Mills Pumping Station

7.2 New Mills Pumping Station is an impressive Grade II listed Victorian pumping house, owned by Norwich City Council, situated in a prominent position on the River Wensum north-west of the city centre. It stands on the site of medieval watermills and was first used for pumping a water supply in 1583. Inside the current building is a restored pneumatic ejection sewage pump, the only other example of which is in the Houses of Parliament. The building has been unused for many years, however in recent years there has been some interest in exploring the site's potential for power generation. The site is currently leased by the council to an operator (New Mills Energy Centre Limited) which is developing plans for a renewable energy project on the site with associated commercial uses, although no firm proposals have come forward to date.

7.3 The pumping station effectively partitions the Wensum: the upper reach of the river is a freshwater system, whilst the lower reach is tidally influenced. This has had a significant effect on the species and habitat found either of the pumping station. Neither boaters nor aquatic species can navigate past New Mills which is detrimental both to biodiversity and to recreational opportunities.

New Mills Pumping Station



7.4 Partner organisations and feedback from the public consultations indicate that there is a desire to see greater use of New Mills for leisure purposes and to enhance connectivity between the upper and lower reaches of the river. Although the site has a number of significant constraints which may affect its development viability, including its location in a conservation area, Grade II listed status, and its historic pumping equipment, it has a range of potential opportunities that could make it attractive to an investor. These including the potential for power generation, subject to further investigation, and the potential to act as a leisure hub linking the upper and lower reaches of the Wensum, which could involve equipment hire, and historic and environmental interpretation. There is a range of possible uses for the building which include leisure uses, educational / museum use, exhibition space, café and restaurant uses, business uses, and live-work units. There are currently no firm proposals for the pumping station site, however it is important that any future proposals address these considerations in order to maximise its potential to contribute to regeneration of this part of the River Wensum and the northern city centre area. An action plan project is proposed for New Mills which addresses some of the opportunities set out above: the proposed canoe portage point (W3) can be implemented in advance of a more comprehensive scheme for the site.

Boom Towers / wooded ridge

7.5 The Norwich Local Plan Policies map identifies a wooded ridge near Ber Street, linking the River Wensum with the city centre. This is also part of the green link network identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy (2007¹⁵). The wooded ridge links to the best preserved sections of the medieval city wall including the only surviving boom towers in England. Few people are aware of this asset due to the lack of visibility of the structures, lack of promotion and interpretation, and poor path conditions.

7.6 There is the potential to explore the feasibility of an urban woodland park in this location which would enhance and link the woodland walks that connect the Boom Towers next to Carrow Bridge to Ber Street via the best preserved sections of city wall and the wooded ridge overlooking the Wensum Valley. The project could include path surface improvements, new path connections to link up routes, a pedestrian crossing to enable safe access from King Street to the city wall, tree management on the wooded ridge to improve views and habitat, robust interpretation and wayfinding signage, and vegetation clearance to reveal the city wall. This is considered to be a longer term aspiration within the strategy's lifetime (to 2027) given the site constraints (including the need to cross third party land, and the cost of future maintenance) and is likely to be very expensive. However it could deliver great benefits for the city's green infrastructure network, helping to serve major anticipated housing growth in east Norwich and the city centre. Feasibility work is required to

¹⁵ GI Strategy 2007, Annex A, Figure 4.18 Access and Movement: Norwich Urban Area.

investigate the practicalities of creating this link, identify and address constraints, and estimate costings.

Bishops Bridge to Whitefriars Green Space enhancement

7.7 This is a potential multi-faceted enhancement project for the area of riverside walk and open space between Bishops Bridge and White Friars Bridge, centred on the open space around the Cow Tower. It has the potential to maximise biodiversity potential, improve recreational access and develop the tourism offer for this part of the River Wensum. Key elements are proposed to include:

- Biodiversity enhancements to improve the transition between land and water through greater diversity of planting, provision of floating vegetation platforms in suitable locations, and provision of additional landscaping and pond / inlet creation to provide a refuge for developing fish species;
- Heritage enhancements to maximise the area's heritage potential. This area played an important role in Kett's Rebellion of 1549. Connectivity between the Cow Tower and Kett's Heights in Thorpe Hamlet would also be considered to re-establish the relationship of these sites through environmental and interpretive enhancement.

7.8 These enhancements will help support greater recreational access to this green area. Additionally, there is a significant open space, Hospital Meadow, to the rear of the Cow Tower which forms part of the Great Hospital. This area is currently inaccessible but would provide valuable recreation space if it could be opened to the public on occasions for example for a river festival. Following consultation with the Great Hospital, the Master of the Great Hospital has indicated in-principle support for occasional use of the Hospital Meadow as part of a river festival or similar event, subject to further detailed discussions.

Mary Chapman Court redevelopment

7.9 The Mary Chapman Court site is owned by the Norwich City Council and currently leased to UEA for student accommodation. It was previously allocated for housing development in the now expired Northern City Centre Area Action Plan. Although it is not yet clear when this site will be redeveloped it is important that future development at this important riverside location maximises the site's contribution to the vitality of this part of the river through its design and range of appropriate uses. The development should be designed to relate closely with its river frontage, potentially facing the river at this point. The potential and range of uses on the river frontage could including a café or restaurant and open space. Provision of access to the river would also be beneficial.

Wensum Park

7.10 Wensum Park is a historic Grade 11 listed park which was designed to take advantage of its sloping site to the River Wensum. It is formally laid out with shrub

and flower beds, children's play areas and a paddling pool. The main entrance incorporates a viewing platform with long views down to the river. A decked walkway runs alongside the river's edge and there is some access to the river via concrete steps which used to lead to paddling pools within the river. An open-air swimming pool set back from the river was once a very popular recreational attraction, however this has been out of use for a long time and has been left to develop as a natural woodland area important for wildlife. There is potential to maximise the potential offered by Wensum Park's location by creating an access point to the river for canoes (although this may be restricted due to limited parking provision) and potentially by provision of mooring points. In the longer term there may be potential to open up the site for swimming, subject to water quality issues being addressed.

8 Implementation and Action Plan

8.1 The River Wensum Strategy is a long term strategy aimed at facilitating positive change in the river corridor, and has been developed against a backdrop of highly constrained local authority and other public body budgets. In the longer term it is anticipated that the strategy will deliver physical improvements and greater activity to the river corridor and will, in combination with other proposals and initiatives, help change perceptions of the river and the city as a visitor destination, and act as an economic driver to attract significant external investment into the river corridor. However in order to help ‘kick-start’ the regeneration process, the strategy has identified a number of individual proposals judged capable of delivery within an approximately 3 year period - the ‘action plan’.

8.2 The action plan projects have been informed by previous consultation and through discussion with partners and stakeholders where appropriate. The action plan identifies project lead partners where possible and anticipated timescales for delivery, and will form the basis for funding bids. Projects range across the key themes of the strategy, and when delivered will result in improved access for walking and cycling, improved access to the river itself, improved leisure opportunities, and an enhanced environment, and should help create the conditions needed to attract additional external investment to the river corridor. The action plan will be updated as projects are delivered and new projects are developed.

Action plan

Theme	Reference	Project	Anticipated delivery	Lead authority
Walking and Cycling Access	A1	Missing link in Riverside Walk between Duke St and St George’s Bridge	2019/20	Norwich City Council (NCC)
	A2	Missing link in Riverside Walk between Fye Bridge and Whitefriars (north bank)	2020/21	NCC
	A3	Riverside walk accessibility improvements including signage and interpretation	2017/18 – 2018/19	NCC
	A4	Marriott’s Way - Barn Road gateway	2017/18 – 2019/20	Norfolk County Council

Theme	Reference	Project	Anticipated delivery	Lead authority
Waterways Access and Leisure	W1	Friar's Quay slipway enhancement	2020/21	Broads Authority (BA)/NCC
	W2	Yacht station expansion	2020/21	BA/NCC
	W3	New Mills Canoe portage	2018/19	BA/NCC
	W4	Quayside short stay moorings	2019/20	BA/NCC
	W5	Boom towers repiling and mooring	2019/20	BA/NCC
	W6	New short-stay moorings between Carrow Bridge and Lady Julian Bridge	2018/19	BA/NCC
	W7	New short stay visitor and demasting mooring at the NR1 Development	2017/18	BA/NCC
	W8	Hydrographic survey for dredging	2017/18	BA
	W9	River festival	2018/19 (at earliest)	NCC
Environment	E1	FOG (Fats Oils and Grease) project	2018/19	Anglian Water
	E2	Biodiversity enhancement plan including management of non-native species	2020/21	Wild Anglia
	E3	Floating vegetation platforms in key locations (and as part of new development)	Pilot – 2017/18	Environment Agency
	E4	Boom Towers - enhancement scheme to Devil's Tower	2019/20	NCC

Funding

8.3 Funding is currently being explored for the projects in the action plan. Key potential sources of project funding include Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Anglian Water, and Heritage Lottery Funding (through the Water, Mills and Marshes Landscape Partnership); other sources of external funding are likely to arise as projects develop. Project partners will also contribute staff resources for project development and project management where appropriate.

8.4 Other sources of funding will also be explored, including civic crowdfunding initiatives where appropriate. The strategy also addresses funding for ongoing maintenance of some of its proposals, exploring sponsorship where appropriate (for example for floating vegetation platforms), and the development of a volunteer network of interested stakeholders and residents willing to get involved in delivering change to the river which could involve assisting with maintenance and enhancements to public spaces for example.

Management and delivery arrangements

8.5 It is important that the implementation of the strategy and individual projects is managed effectively. It is recommended that a Strategic Board is set up to oversee implementation of the strategy and monitoring of outcomes, to be chaired by Norwich City Council as lead partner and with a member from each of the partner organisations, plus representation from other key external partners as appropriate. Its proposed functions will include oversight of progress on individual projects, identifying future project and funding opportunities, identifying issues or risks to strategy delivery that may require action, monitoring progress, and providing progress updates to the relevant committees of each partner authority on an annual basis.

8.6 It is also recommended that a Delivery Board is established to ensure effective co-ordination and communication between key partners with management and delivery responsibilities on the day-to-day management of the river. Its proposed remit includes addressing enforcement issues such as anti-social behaviour and illegal moorings, and environmental issues such as litter reduction and water quality. Other organisations may be invited to attend the management board on occasion as appropriate, dependant on issues under discussion. The board will be chaired by Norwich City Council and the chair will report to the Strategic Board on a regular basis to ensure an effective link between strategic and operational issues.

9 How to comment

9.1 This draft strategy for the River Wensum is the product of collaborative working by the River Wensum Strategy Partnership, which was established with the aim of delivering a strategy to guide the regeneration of the river corridor. The policies and proposals set out in the strategy represent an integrated approach to maximising the river's potential for access and recreation, local economic development including leisure and tourism, green infrastructure, biodiversity and heritage. The strategy also aims to create the right conditions to enable businesses in the river corridor to flourish, to help improve and sustain a vibrant waterfront.

9.2 The public consultation period runs from 26 July to 15 September. Your views are sought on the draft strategy, in particular on the policies and projects included within it.

9.3 Please provide your comments by visiting the strategy webpage www.norwich.gov.uk/riverwensum and using the on-line form there. If you wish to have a paper copy of the consultation response form, please contact the Planning Policy team (tel: 01063 212529).

9.4 Following the consultation it is anticipated that a final version of the strategy will be produced in late 2017 – early 2018 for adoption by each of the partners.