



Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - Section 77
Town and Country Planning (Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules
2000

Proof of Evidence – Economic Development Matters

Site:	Anglia Square including land and buildings to the north and west
Applicant:	Weston Homes PLC and Columbia Threadneedle Investments
Local Planning Authority:	Norwich City Council
Name of witness:	Ellen Tilney
PINS reference:	APP/G2625/V/19/3225505
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is Ellen Tilney, I am Economic Development Manager at Norwich City Council and have been in post since August 2005.
- 1.2 The core objective of the economic development team, which I lead, is to harness the resources of the Council and its partners, businesses and public/private sector investors to deliver sustainable economic growth in Norwich. The team produces Norwich's Local Economic Assessment and Economic Strategy, using national datasets and commissioning research as required to form the evidence base and policy framework for economic growth.
- 1.3 The team operates at a strategic and policy level, supporting the Council's engagement in and influencing local, regional and national agendas, and enabling the Council to co-ordinate, lead and be seen to lead Norwich's economic development. It plans and influences the development of the economy for Greater Norwich and supports the wider development of Norwich through partnerships locally, regionally and nationally.
- 1.4 At operational level working the team works with other Council services primarily within the Council's Regeneration and Development Directorate, to address the growth, development, regeneration and management of the spatial and 'place shaping' aspects of Norwich, and with the Neighbourhood and Communities Directorate for the delivery of community economic development and regeneration.
- 1.5 Core business activities include:
 - (a) Positioning Norwich and the Council in response to the changing external environment and seeking to influence policy development, for example as a member of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Economic Strategy Delivery Board; helping to shape the New Anglia LEP Local Industrial Strategy and lobbying for Norwich's case in national and regional policy and investment decision-making, e.g. through the Fast Growth Cities and Key Cities groups.

- (b) Researching/analysing local economic needs and opportunities and ensuring shared understanding locally and with national and regional policy makers and funders. This includes Norwich Local Economic Assessment, project management of studies such as the Hatch/GVA economic assessment of the Norwich Policy Area; SQW Digital Sector research study; DJS research study into local employment practices and inputs into the Greater Norwich Local Plan and other collaborative LEP-wide studies.
- (c) Brokering and managing relationships with the business community and key stakeholders locally, sub-regionally, regionally and nationally, including partner engagement in and development of a shared economic vision, priorities and agenda for action for Norwich.
- (d) Securing partner and external funding resources to tackle socio-economic deprivation and to deliver a wide programme of community economic development, key sector development, skills and jobs growth.
- (e) Promotion of Norwich as a place to live, work and study and supporting inward investment.

1.6 Between 1998 and 2001, I worked for Business Link Limited (which was a government-funded business advice and guidance organisation) to design and manage their service offering to pre-start, start-up and BAME businesses on a sub-regional basis. I then went on to be Chief Executive of the Ipswich and Sudbury Enterprise Agency Limited which delivered business support and training and was also a provider of c. 100,000 sq. ft. of managed workspace facilities for small businesses across four locations (Ipswich, Hadleigh, Sudbury and Leiston).

- 1.7 During this time, I was also a non-executive director of several other business support organisations including the East Mentoring Forum and was a founding director of Foundation East, a Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI), which provides financial services to financially-excluded individuals wishing to start and run small businesses. As a founding board member I was involved in the establishment of a Community Land Trust in Halesworth (Miles Ward Court) which redeveloped a derelict site in the town centre to create 8 small BI class units varying in size between 15 and 60 square metres. The scheme was completed in 2008 but has since been extended to an adjoining building to create a shop and two flats for rent by local key workers.
- 1.8 I have also been a non-executive board member of several business support organisations both local and national including the Prince's Trust and the Women's Employment, Enterprise and Training Unit and have been a judge on the Shell Livewire business awards on two occasions. I am currently a board member for the Financial Industries Group (FIG) in Norwich and also sit on a number of strategic development groups such as the New Anglia LEP Inward Investment Group, Economic Strategy Delivery Board and the University of East Anglia's Gateway to Growth Board.
- 1.9 Before 1998 I worked for an organisation that was an awarding body for vocational qualifications. My work included external verification of delivery standards in various further education colleges and private training companies, and product development of new standards and qualifications in partnership with key stakeholders, employers, training providers and colleges.
- 1.10 I also have fifteen years private sector experience of working in the advertising/marketing and electronics sectors. Since 2015 I have been director of a small limited company in the media sector in partnership with my husband.

1.11 So far as the scheme before the inquiry is concerned, the economic development team has been involved in providing comments and feedback on the original planning application to inform the officers' report to the Planning applications committee. This included a general overview of the potential demand for the scheme and economic benefit of the project, alongside detailed examination of the anticipated job numbers etc. using industry standard multipliers to confirm the employment figures quoted by the applicant. In addition, we have had discussions with the applicant to assess suitable mechanisms for engaging local residents and businesses in employment and apprenticeship opportunities when activity on the site commences.

2 OVERVIEW OF THE NORWICH ECONOMY

2.1 Norwich is a major regional service centre; the Norwich Travel to Work Area¹ (TTWA) takes in most of Norfolk (Norwich, Broadland and South Norfolk local authorities plus parts of the local authority areas of North Norfolk, Breckland and Mid-Suffolk).

2.2 Its growing population has driven economic growth. The local authority area has seen population growth² of 10% in the ten years to 2018 – compared to 9% for the region and 7% nationally. Norwich also has much higher proportions of people aged 16-24 years and 25-49 years and a higher rate of long-term international inflow per 1,000 resident population compared to the East of England and nationally.

¹ Standard definition Office for National Statistics

² Population estimates - local authority based by single year of age (1991 to 2018)

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- 2.3 The local authority area is a locus for services such as health, retail and leisure. It acts as a major employment centre, providing almost two-thirds of the TTWA's jobs³; financial and business services have the largest share of the business base – followed by retail (understandably given Norwich's place at 13th in the UK retail centre rankings). Almost 40% of the business base is knowledge intensive firms⁴ – on a par with that seen nationally and regionally. Norwich has a smaller than the national average percentage of micro firms⁵ and higher than average proportion of large firms⁶. The largest sector⁷ in terms of the numbers of people employed is financial and business services, followed by retail and education.
- 2.4 The business start-up rate has improved greatly over the past five years and is now higher than the rate nationally⁸. At the other end of the scale, Norwich has a higher than average percentage of companies with a turnover greater than £10m⁹.
- 2.5 GVA (Gross Value Added) per job¹⁰ is lower in Norwich than at the national level (£36,100 against £50,430 but note that London skews national GVA per job). This suggests that productivity in Norwich is relatively low and is consistent with the relatively low workplace earnings and its position as a regional service centre, that is, the city acts as a locus for a large rural hinterland providing retail, health, education and leisure activities. However, GVA per job¹¹ increased by 72% between 2001 and 2016 giving a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.7% which is higher than the national rate over the same period (2.7% p.a.)

³ Business Register and Employment Survey 2018 NOMIS Crown copyright

⁴ UK Business Counts 2019 NOMIS Crown copyright

⁵ A micro firm employs 0-9 people

⁶ A large firm employs more than 250 people

⁷ Business Register and Employment Survey 2018 NOMIS Crown copyright

⁸ Business Demography 2018 Office for National Statistics

⁹ Business Demography 2018 Office for National Statistics

¹⁰ East of England Forecasting Model

¹¹ Centre for Cities datatool <https://www.centreforcities.org/data-tool/#graph=map>

- 2.6 Norwich is home to two universities, Norwich University of the Arts (NUA) and University of East Anglia (UEA). It is estimated¹² that 39% of 16-64 year olds hold a level 4 (degree level) qualification or higher; the same proportion as at the national level and higher than is seen regionally.
- 2.7 Job density¹³ (that is the ratio of jobs to working age residents), currently stands at 1:07. In 2007 jobs density in Norwich stood at 1:24 but by 2012 this had fallen to 1:06. This can be partly explained by the working age population increasing at a faster rate than jobs growth, but in addition an ongoing trend has been a movement of jobs away from the Norwich local authority area to the urban fringe which has led to some hollowing-out of the city centre, including the Anglia Square area.
- 2.8 Norwich has a relatively high level of disadvantaged communities within its boundaries according to indicators such as the Indices of Deprivation¹⁴. The overall level of deprivation is the “extent measure” which ranks Norwich as the most deprived local authority in the region. Norwich is ranked the fourth worst local authority in the country for deprivation in educational attainment, skills and training.
- 2.9 Claimant count unemployment¹⁵ has fallen dramatically over the period 2013-2018 - at a much stronger rate than seen regionally and nationally. However, in 2019 this has started to creep up again and is now above the national rate (Norwich 3.0%, Gt. Britain 2.8%).
- 2.10 Workplace median earnings¹⁶ are higher than resident earnings - probably caused by high levels of in-commuting from the rest of Norfolk and wider TTWA. Median earnings in Norwich stand at around 80% of national earnings.

¹² Annual Population Survey January to December 2018 NOMIS Crown copyright

¹³ Jobs density 2018 NOMIS Crown copyright

¹⁴ Indices of Deprivation 2019, Department of Communities and Local Government

¹⁵ Claimant count 2019 NOMIS Crown copyright

¹⁶ Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2019 NOMIS Crown copyright

- 2.11 House prices¹⁷ are well below the national average. Rental prices have increased for all property sizes since 2010/11 and demand exceeds supply. Norwich city centre has seen residential population growth of 54% - ranked 10th highest in UK. By 2037, the number of households is projected to grow by 21%.
- 2.12 To summarise then, Norwich's economic performance has been mediocre and it could be significantly improved. For the past decade Norwich has seen significant and sustained growth in its population, which is projected to continue for at least the next two decades. At the same time, the city has seen a steady reduction in jobs density because of slower employment growth. To address deprivation and to foster sustainable growth Norwich must support the growth of its business base and the increased economic participation and wellbeing of its residents. This will be achieved by increasing the number of jobs available and by delivering an appropriate modern housing offer and sufficient local amenities in vibrant city centre locations. Therefore, it must attract investment and businesses to redevelop redundant brownfield sites and buildings, revitalising the city centre and presenting an attractive and successful city in which to live, work and study.

3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE SITE IN ITS PRESENT FORM

- 3.1 In planning terms, Anglia Square, St Augustine's Street and Magdalen Street is designated as a Large District Centre; Norwich only has two such areas within its boundary. Currently employment associated with the site is predominantly in the retail and creative sectors.
- 3.2 The Large District Centre's current retail offer includes Boots, Greggs, Iceland, Poundland, QD Stores, Shoe Zone and Boots as well as several charity shops and betting shops. Anglia Square is also home to a disused cinema and nightclub.

¹⁷ HM Land Registry House Price Index 2019

- 3.3 Gildengate House, adjacent to the Square currently houses informal artist studios which provide temporary accommodation for up to 80 artists. The studios are supported by funding from the Arts Council and the National Lottery. Restrictions on eligibility for the studios preclude artists whose practice could be considered as operating as a commercial business¹⁸. Several jobs are also linked to the Surrey Chapel (primarily volunteer roles) and to the business premises off Pitt Street. These buildings are occupied by a number of businesses and social enterprises including Men's Shed, Farm Share, Print to the People and a car wash.
- 3.4 The current decline in Anglia Square's fortunes can be demonstrated by its recent history¹⁹. In 1981 around 2,400 people worked for Her Majesty's Stationary Office (HMSO) in Sovereign House. In assessing the impact of these jobs, we should take account of the effects on suppliers of the company (indirect jobs) and the effects on the economy due to an increase in the spending power of the employees. This can be undertaken using the appropriate multipliers²⁰. The induced employment effect multiplier takes account of an expected increase in household expenditure from people who have gained employment both directly and indirectly. Assuming a Type II induced employment multiplier of 1.7 (Public Admin & Defence), those 2,400 HMSO jobs would have supported a further 1,680 jobs ($2,400 \times 1.7 = 4,080$). Many of these jobs would have been based in the area around Anglia Square and added to the vibrancy of the local area.
- 3.5 By 1996²¹ the number of jobs at HMSO in Norwich had dropped to 1,105, implying an induced multiplier effect of just 774 jobs. So that fall in HMSO employment created a further loss of 904 jobs in total. In 2006 HMSO closed completely. Inevitably this was a major blow to local retailers, particularly those on Magdalen Street who had previously benefited from higher footfall and levels of direct, indirect and induced spend.

¹⁸ <http://www.norwichoutpost.org/studios>

¹⁹ Hansard 18.03.1996 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1996/mar/18/hmso-privatisation>

²⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/input-output-tables-multipliers>

²¹ <https://www.nao.org.uk/pubsarchive/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2018/11/Cabinet-Office-Office-of-Public-Service-The-Sale-of-The-Stationery-Office.pdf>

- 3.6 During the same period, Gildengate House was also occupied, by Cabinet Office agencies²². The job numbers are not recorded, however, this use ceased in 2003 and must have had similar impacts to the loss of employment activity at Sovereign House.
- 3.7 The existing commercial floorspace/ community floorspace amounts to 32,441sqm (Gross Internal Area)/34,063sqm (Gross External Area). The developer acknowledges that the proposed new development will reduce the current employment floorspace. However, this existing floorspace includes Sovereign House and Gildengate House, neither of which have been commercially let for at least twenty years because of their level of obsolescence and dilapidation, including asbestos and damage caused by water ingress and vandalism.
- 3.8 In addition, minimum requirements to bring sub-optimal (but structurally sound) buildings up to a lettable modern standard would include:
- (a) heating/cooling, glazing and lighting to meet current EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) standards;
 - (b) complete re-cabling/wiring to support IT/data systems, fibre optics, wireless, security, alarms and entry systems etc;
 - (c) modernised plumbing and water management;
 - (d) Disability Discrimination Act works to ensure full accessibility;
 - (e) cosmetic works (a cheaper option than internal redesign which would be the ideal solution to optimise income) to decoration, fixtures, fittings etc.
- 3.9 In my view, the lack of viability of bringing these two buildings into a habitable condition is demonstrated by the fact that no one has ever suggested this course of action.

²² Hansard <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199394/cmhansrd/1994-01-11/Writtens-15.html>

- 3.10 Overall therefore, although economic activity exists at Anglia Square at present, it is limited and the site does not come anywhere close to fulfilling its potential to contribute to the socio-economic life of the City.
- 3.11 It should be noted that the site in its present form certainly detracts from the image of the city. Anglia Square is highly visible to visitors to Norwich because of its position on the inner ring road and I am often asked what it is or what it was when hosting visits to the city. I have worked for Norwich City Council for fourteen years and have never encountered anyone during that time with anything positive to say about the development in its current state, it is most politely described as “ugly”, “neglected”, “run down”, “eyesore”, “blight”.
- 3.12 This is encapsulated by a survey commissioned by The Norwich Society in 2017²³ which investigated the challenges in attracting talented people to come to work in Norwich. When asked: What would you say is Norwich’s most negative feature? “City upkeep” was cited by 78% of respondents and the report notes (on page 13) specifically *“the visual appeal of specific sections of Norwich, notably Anglia Square”*.
- 3.13 Very few people outside the world of property development can understand why Anglia Square has not been redeveloped long ago. Investors remark about the viability challenge of demolition and rebuild on such a scale, everyone talks about what it could do for the wider area if someone invested in its redevelopment. When trying to promote the city as a business destination or an investment/development destination it is hard to justify why this site remains undeveloped; it sends out a signal that Norwich has its challenges. Surely a site so close to the rail station, city centre and airport must be an attractive place to live and work? Walking in and around the site (as opposed to driving past it) reinforces the sense of abandonment and decay. Many people ask me why no one can make this site work after so long and therefore what is wrong with Norwich? There is no doubt that the site sends the wrong message about Norwich, its residents and its workforce.

²³ Attracting Talented People to come to work in Norwich: The Challenge, The Norwich Society. 2017 (CD11.34)

- 3.14 Anglia Square has also become synonymous with failure, exemplified by mocking references by comedians such as the Nimmo Twins and Alan Partridge (Steve Coogan). Steve Coogan's film "Alpha Papa" portrays Norwich as a comedic rural backwater. For those who live and work in the area this has been distinctly unhelpful at best.
- 3.15 To summarise, Anglia Square in its present state does not fulfil the potential of the site, and, indeed, has a negative impact on surrounding areas. It is extremely challenging to the viability of almost any business to be in an area with such low footfall and poor image. The site in its current state has a negative impact across a much wider area; in this regard, it is significant in my view that the Magdalen Street Traders Association has welcomed the proposals for Anglia Square, in anticipation of increased footfall and the spending power of additional residents and shoppers, which will bring renewed vibrancy to the local area.

4 RELEVANT POLICY AND STRATEGY

- 4.1 The most relevant policies in the context of the Development Plan are given below.
- (a) JCS 5: The Economy, in accordance with the chapter 6 of the NPPF sets out a strategic vision for the local economy. The overriding objective of the policy is to support jobs and economic growth in a sustainable way, providing for a rising population and as an engine for the wider economy. The strategy includes the allocation and protection of employment, support for innovation, skills and training and recognition of the economic value of promoting tourism, leisure, environmental and cultural industries.

- (b) JCS 9: Strategy for growth in the Norwich Policy Area, sets out the strategy for employment growth within the Norwich Policy Area. The policy recognises the role of Norwich city centre and spatial planning objective that the city 'will continue to exert a powerful economic influence over the wider area and its growth will be further so that the centre remains one of the best in the country for retail and employment'. As such, it stated that employment development at strategic locations will include the significant expansion of office (a net increase of at least 100,000m²), retail and leisure provision within Norwich City Centre.
- (c) The 2017-2018 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) shows that some of the JCS economic indicators are not on target - particularly the net increase in office floorspace, and city centre retail floorspace is not growing as envisaged. In 2017/18, the city has experienced an increased net loss of office space, in comparison to 2016/17. This shows a continuation in a trend that from 2008 to 2018 has seen the overall net reduction in the office floor space of around 25.8%. In relation to retail, the trend evident since April 2008 is for a continued slow reduction in retail floor space within the city centre. Recent changes in policy have allowed more flexibility of uses in the city centre to encourage the development of uses such as cafes and restaurants although a reduction in retail floor space runs counter to the aim of the policy.

- (d) JCS 11: Norwich City Centre sets out the strategic policy for Norwich city centre and the policy context for Anglia Square until 2026, providing a framework for future development. The city centre is identified as the most sustainable location for major mixed-use development and it is stated that focusing growth here creates the potential for boosting agglomeration benefits. JCS 11 seeks an enhanced regional role for the city centre, as the main focus for retail, leisure and office development, with housing and educational development reinforcing its vibrancy. It is stated that the role of Norwich city centre will be enhanced through an integrated approach to economic, social and cultural regeneration to enable greater use of the city centre, including redevelopment of brownfield sites.
- (e) DM16: Supporting the needs of business, DM17: Supporting small businesses, DM19 Encouraging and promoting major office growth and DM 20 Promoting and supporting city centre shopping are all stem policies with the purpose of delivering the strategic economic objectives set out in the JCS. In particular, DM 20 seeks to support the long-term function of the city centre and Large District Centres (LDC) such as the Anglia Square and Magdalen Street LDC and DM19 seeks to provide and retain a central stock of high quality office space to support the employment function of Norwich as a regional centre.

4.2 The most relevant section of the Norwich Economic Strategy 2019-2024 (CD11.26) is given below.

- (a) 4.2.1 Raising the employability, skills levels and earnings potential of local residents is an integral part of the overall Norwich economic strategy as stated in Objective 2: Skills and employment which defines the following priorities with which the creation of construction jobs fits:
- Priority 2 – to support lifelong learning and skills provision that enables people to progress in the labour market and access new opportunities.

- Priority 3 – to build strong relationships with and between education and businesses to stimulate aspiration and performance.

5 IMPACT OF THE SCHEME

- 5.1 I will deal first with the employment aspects, starting with construction and then considering the operational phase.
- 5.2 The size of the development means that the construction phase will continue for around eight years, long enough to enable many full term apprenticeships to be completed. Norwich lost skilled construction workers in the recession, consequently current employment in the sector is much lower (3.2% of total employment) than that seen regionally (5.5%) and nationally (4.7%).
- 5.3 The developer has actively engaged with city council's economic development team and has agreed to develop mechanisms which will provide employment, skills and training opportunities to local residents. This is particularly important given the low skills base in the Local Impact Area and increasing levels of unemployment in the local authority area as a whole.
- 5.4 The developer will also engage with local schools to promote careers in the construction sector and to inspire children and young people living in what is a relatively disadvantaged area.
- (a) The proposed development of Anglia Square is expected to support ongoing construction employment – an estimated 8-10% increase in construction (direct) jobs in the local authority area over an 8-year period (250-300²⁴ additional jobs against a total of around 3,000²⁵ jobs in the sector).

²⁴ Environmental Statement Chapter 11: Socio-Economics, Icen Projects on behalf of Weston Homes Plc and Columbia Threadneedle, March 2018, page 44. (CD4.86 Volume2 (k))

²⁵ Business Register and Employment Survey 2018, Office for National Statistics

(b) The induced employment effect multiplier takes account of an expected increase in household expenditure from people who have gained employment both directly and indirectly. This is known as the induced effect and is calculated using type II multipliers. Multiplying the direct increase in jobs by the construction type II multiplier gives 250 (direct jobs) x 2.1 = 525 direct, indirect and induced jobs. This implies that an additional 275 FTE jobs may be created as part of this induced demand²⁶.

5.5 Turning to the operational phase of the scheme; the precise number of jobs created within the new district centre will depend on the end-users that occupy the scheme. However, long term benefits to the local economy are predicted through the creation of additional jobs generated by the new and improved retail, leisure and business facilities being built. The site currently supports approximately 200-250 jobs within the existing uses. The new development, including a hotel, retail, cafes, restaurants and bars, offices, leisure and community uses, provides scope for an increase in both the number and range of jobs opportunities. It is predicted²⁷ that from 536 to 693 full-time and part-time jobs could be supported by the development an uplift of between 286 – 563 jobs. This will make a sizeable, positive impact to long term local employment opportunities for residents living nearby and within Norwich as a whole. The increased vitality of the centre and increase in footfall has scope to generate a further 60-118 jobs in the shops, services and other businesses within the local area and wider district centre. This impact is quantified as long term, permanent and beneficial at both the local and city-wide levels. The redevelopment of the site will provide jobs in the retail, leisure, hospitality and sui generis use. These sectors are likely to provide jobs with a good fit to the current skills profile of the local population.

²⁶ Norwich City Council own calculations using <https://www.gov.scot/publications/input-output-tables-multipliers>

²⁷ Environmental Statement Chapter 11, page 47(CD4.86 Volume2 (k)).

- 5.6 In addition to the employment potential of the site, expenditure by residents should also be taken into account, It is estimated that the households of the 1,250 new residential units within the development could generate total gross spend²⁸ of £23.2m to £40.7m each year. This will include expenditure on convenience (food and drink), comparison goods (clothing and footwear and household goods), services (hairdressers, beauticians etc) as well as recreation and cultural activities. A significant proportion of this spending is likely to be retained in the Anglia Square, Magdalen Street and St Augustines Street Large District Centre and within Norwich city centre. On this basis it is predicted that this expenditure has the scope to have a long term moderate beneficial impact on the local economy. It should be noted that that Magdalen Street Area and Anglia Square Traders (MATA) have highlighted the importance of Anglia Square in drawing people to the area.
- 5.7 The development would enhance the quality and quantity of housing choice in Norwich and the 120 affordable dwellings will boost the supply of social rented accommodation in an area of the city where there is significant identified need. This is particularly important given the positive impact that having the appropriate housing mix can have on attracting new workers to take up jobs and residence in the city.
- 5.8 In addition to the benefits of the scheme described above, there are likely also to be wider effects. New jobs and leisure facilities, increased footfall and the investment in place would transform Anglia Square from its current shabby and neglected state into a vibrant place to live, work and play which is attractive to both existing residents and to a wider population. The impact upon people's aspirations, health and general sense of being valued which takes place when investment transforms an area is well recognised. This is particularly pertinent given that the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) in which Anglia Square is situated falls within the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country²⁹.

²⁸ Environmental Statement Chapter 11, page 49(CD4.86 Volume2 (k))

²⁹ Indices of Deprivation 2019, IBID

- 5.9 The redevelopment of this site on such a scale will be very high profile - the scale of the investment will put Norwich on the “investment map” and will likely act as a catalyst attracting further new investment into the city which could transform the myriad of stalled brownfield city sites which currently await redevelopment. This is particularly important given that the city does not have large swathes of development land other than brownfield. Norwich is eager for new businesses to relocate here and bring graduate level employment which will help retain graduates from Norwich’s two universities³⁰ and will also serve to attract highly skilled people from outside the area.
- 5.10 Successful cities around the world have demonstrated that being able to attract talent is also dependent on offering a good quality of life, a distinctive cultural offer and high-quality neighbourhoods with good levels of amenity. Crucially however in the knowledge economy proximity and critical mass are important. Those cities which can drive higher densities of knowledge firms in a vibrant city centre core underpinned by a distinctive food & drink and leisure offer are able to generate higher levels of talent and investment over the long-term. Mixed use redevelopment and regeneration can support regions in retaining and attracting graduates rather than losing them to London. Mixed use, housing or leisure led schemes can become the nucleus of start-up clusters and provide opportunities for skilled workers and students.

³⁰ The Great British Brain Drain – Norwich; Centre for Cities. April 2018 (CD11.27)

- 5.11 To summarise, the effect of the scheme - essentially the redevelopment of this large, urban mixed-use brownfield site will be good news for residents, visitors and local businesses. It has the potential to put Norwich on the map as an investment location which will attract further investment, knowledge businesses and high-skilled jobs. Well-paid workers in city centres increase footfall and customer spending power. This creates a market for retailers, bars and restaurants to sell to – which leads to a stronger retail, hospitality and leisure offer and a virtuous circle of job creation. This can impact positively on the career aspirations and life choices of Norwich’s young people, who currently face one of the lowest levels of social mobility in the country. Also, in the long run the redevelopment could result in increased levels of economic participation for the local population which would bolster inclusive economic growth.
- 5.12 In making my assessment I have taken into account the impact of the scheme on those who currently occupy the site. However, in my view the positive economic aspects of the scheme far outweigh any negative impacts.
- 5.13 I have noted that in their Statement of Case the Norwich Society suggest (paragraph 2.1) that the effect of the scheme will be negative because “[t]here is an array of international research that clearly demonstrates that the quality of place has an impact on the local economy.” I do not agree that the effect of the scheme will be negative. Not only will it improve the quality of place in Norwich by regenerating Anglia Square itself, but also the redevelopment will show the City’s acceptance of investment. Indeed, as set out in the next section, I think that for the scheme not to proceed would signal that Norwich is not a good place to invest.

6 CONSEQUENCES OF THE SCHEME NOT PROCEEDING

6.1 Put simply, if this redevelopment of Anglia Square does not take place it will signal to potential investors that Norwich is not “open for business”; indeed it is likely to signal a level of difficulty towards modern redevelopment projects which is likely to deter investors. Under these circumstances Norwich would be viewed as outdated and opposed to change rather than a modern, contemporary city which successfully fuses the old and the new. Anglia Square will be cited as a high-profile failure which sends a negative message about the city to owners/developers of other sites and to prospective purchasers. Semi-derelict, empty buildings and undeveloped brownfield sites send a message of neglect, under-investment and deprivation; they do not demonstrate a vibrant, successful city with a great lifestyle offer that will attract new businesses and talented workers. Progression of the proposed development will send the right signal to the investor market that Norwich is open for business, this is especially important given the number of brownfield sites currently awaiting redevelopment in the city. The proposed redevelopment of Anglia Square could supply a much-needed stimulus to rejuvenate other neglected or derelict sites.

- 6.2 It is also worth noting that for several years Norwich held a top ten position (5th in 2005 when the Chapelfield Shopping Centre opened) in the national retail rankings but has latterly slipped to 13th place³¹. The redevelopment of Anglia Square proposal represents the largest development scheme proposed in the city centre since Chapelfield was built. Retail rankings are largely determined by investment and the development and quality of the retail offer. Norwich has been pushed out of the top ten by other cities which have had major investment. In addition to its local impact upon choice and amenities on offer, Norwich's position in the retail ranking impacts on further retail investment as premium brands/retailers prefer to locate in "top ten" destinations and newer, well-maintained shopping areas with high footfall. This also has a negative knock-on effect on the number of day visitors and city break stays.
- 6.3 The trope is that people in Norfolk/Norwich "fear change". Norwich does not warrant such a label and those living and running businesses in the northern city centre deserve this investment and opportunity to transform the area and improve its prospects.
- 6.4 Many respondents to the consultation on the application, including local business owners and other residents expressed relish for the prospect of a new development and an enhanced leisure offer which would rid the city of the blight that is Anglia Square.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 In conclusion, the economic rationale for the redevelopment of Anglia Square has been laid out in this proof of evidence.
- 7.2 The one area in which there appears to be almost universal agreement is that Anglia Square in its current form is a blight upon the beautiful city of Norwich.
- 7.3 The current scheme will create much-needed local employment for Norwich residents including construction jobs with apprenticeship opportunities and skills training in the eight-year building development stage.

³¹ <https://www.javelingroup.com> Venuescore 2017

- 7.4 Norwich must attract new business relocations to increase graduate level employment to retain graduates from the city's two universities and to draw in highly skilled people from outside the area.
- 7.5 Progression of the proposed development will signal to the investor market that Norwich is open for business. This is especially important given the number of brownfield sites currently awaiting redevelopment in the city. Not only will the proposed redevelopment of Anglia Square regenerate the application site and surrounding area; also it could supply a much-needed stimulus to rejuvenate other neglected or derelict sites.