

Norwich

economic development plan
2025-2030



NORWICH
City Council

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Introduction: Why Norwich needs an Economic Plan

This 2025-2030 Norwich Economic Development Plan outlines our five-year delivery strategy to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

It serves as the action plan for achieving the ambitions set out in the Norwich 2040 Inclusive Economy Vision and establishes our economic priorities for the next five years.

The Norwich 2040 Inclusive Economy Vision: Our Ambition

This Economic Plan sits below the Norwich 2040 Inclusive Economy Vision. The 2040 Inclusive Economy Vision was developed through a comprehensive 18-month process:

Summer 2024: A statistical review of Norwich's economy, labour market, and resident prosperity was conducted by PRD.

Autumn 2024: In-depth engagement took place with the city's key public, private, and civil society stakeholders.

February 2025: The 2040 Inclusive Economy Vision was formally approved by the cabinet.

This work culminated in the 2040 Vision for: "a dynamic, productive, and inclusive economy which provides a foundation for Norwich to be the happiest, healthiest, and most liveable city in the UK." This vision statement is underpinned by five long-term outcomes:

Potential: In 2040, Norwich will be a social mobility hotspot supporting all young people to reach their potential.

Prosperity: In 2040, Norwich residents can access high-quality and health-promoting work.

Planet: In 2040, Norwich will have a thriving net zero economy defined by globally significant innovation and local climate resilience.

Place: In 2040, Norwich City Centre will host the highest concentration of creative, knowledge-intensive, and 'new economy' jobs in the East of England.

Promotion: In 2040, Norwich will attract and retain more talent and investment to enable the city's businesses to grow.

Together, these outcomes provide a framework for collective action to unlock growth and prosperity. The vision will enable Norwich City Council and its partners to adapt to global trends and local needs while measuring the council's contribution to long-term change.

Responding to the 2040 Vision: This Norwich Economic Plan

This Economic Plan translates the objectives of the Norwich 2040 Inclusive Economy Vision into practical actions that the City Council will take over the next five years. It aligns with and complements a suite of key strategic documents, including:

- The Norwich 2040 Vision and the Norwich 2040 Inclusive Economy Vision
- We are Norwich: A community-led plan 2024-2029
- The Greater Norwich Local Plan
- The Norfolk Economic Growth Plan
- Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy

In developing this Plan, we have sought to address the challenges facing local government head-on. Beyond the long-term financial pressures facing councils nationally, this also includes the Mayoral Combined Authority covering both Norfolk and Suffolk and the restructuring of local government across Norfolk.

Over the course of this Plan, Norwich City Council will be replaced by a new unitary authority, and Norfolk and Suffolk will elect a Mayor with additional powers over transport, economic development, planning, and further education. Our Economic Plan responds to this changing context, enabling Norwich to take advantage of the opportunities presented by both devolution and local government reorganisation. It does this by:

Taking a 'One Council' Approach: In addition to funding and delivering projects, we will leverage the full range of City Council resources and powers to foster an economy that is stronger, greener, and more inclusive.

Balancing short-term delivery with medium-term priorities: In response to local government reorganisation, we are prioritising impactful actions that we can

deliver in the next two years, while also developing medium-term priorities for Norwich which are adaptable to a future Unitary Authority structure.

Priority actions for the next two years:

Over the next two years, we will launch a number of key interventions to drive progress against the five 2040 Inclusive Economy outcomes. Our key actions will include:

Potential: We will scope, secure funding for, and convene an independent Norwich Social Mobility Commission which will provide recommendations on addressing educational inequality to be taken forward by the new Unitary Authority.

Prosperity: We will begin work on the nationally significant East Norwich regeneration site in 2026. We will utilise Council ownership of Carrow House to

establish the Norwich Unity Hub, offering affordable rented accommodation and fostering collaboration among the city's charitable organisations.

Planet: We will work across the council to actively pursue funding and deliver projects aimed at protecting, enhancing, creating and measuring Norwich's natural capital assets.

Place: We will commission and adopt a comprehensive masterplan for Norwich city centre to unlock its economic potential.

Promotion: We will use council procurement strategically to bolster the local economy and provide tangible benefits to local Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

1 Norwich's economy today

This Plan is based on an in-depth understanding of the Norwich economy, described in the 2025 Norwich Economic Vision evidence appendix and supplemented by monthly Norwich Economic Barometers produced by the City Council's Economic Development team.

This evidence shows that Norwich is Norfolk's economic powerhouse. It is home to 143,000 jobs and more than 10,000 businesses, making it one of the largest employment centres in the Greater South-East. Norwich contributes more than £3 billion per annum to the national economy and the wider urban area has the capacity for significant future growth.

The Council's commitment to supporting Norwich's growth is demonstrated by our success in securing substantial investment. Over the last five years, we have unlocked:

“

£35m from Homes England to spearhead the regeneration of Anglia Square

£25m of Town Deal funding

£7.6m from the Levelling Up Fund

£750k through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

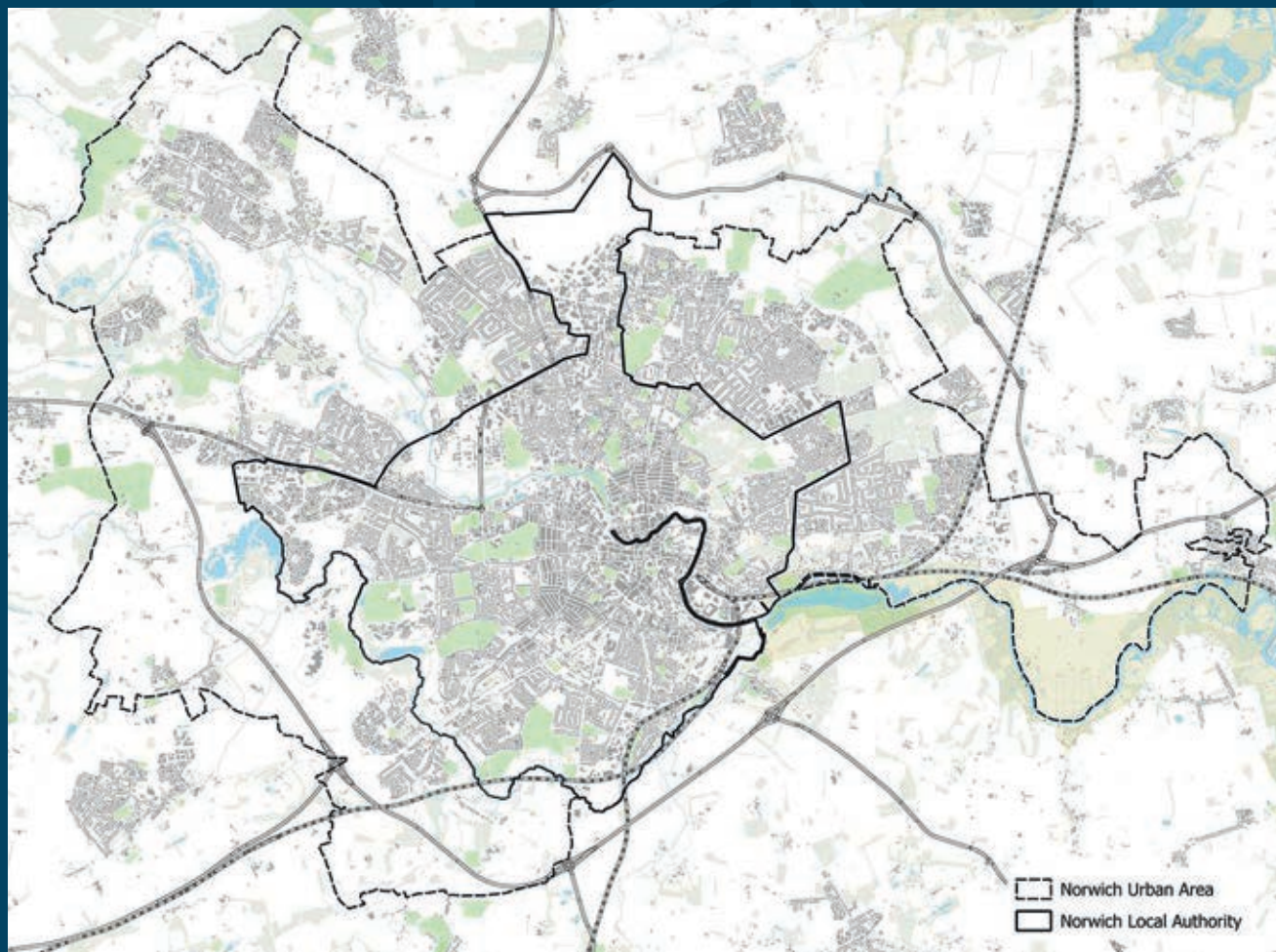
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An evolving economic geography

The Norwich City Council boundary does not accurately represent the city's true economic geography. A significant portion of the city's economic activity has shifted beyond these administrative limits, with 54% of its Gross Value Added (GVA) now located outside the city council area – up from 47% in 2010.

The Norwich built-up urban area (see Figure 1), which most would consider “the city,” includes key employment zones such as the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, Norwich Research Park, and Broadland Business Park. This urban area is home to an estimated 233,584 people and is expected to grow rapidly in the next ten years.



Norwich urban area statistical geography



Table 1 shows that the Norwich Local Authority (LA) area is punching below its weight compared to similar-sized towns and cities across several key economic measures. Growth in the number of businesses is the only one of these indicators on which the LA performs better than the England average.

However, the Table also demonstrates the importance of assessing the economic contribution of the Norwich Urban Area (UA). Once this is considered, economic growth since 2015 is only exceeded by

Cambridge and by Peterborough, exceeding the growth rates of larger cities such as Sheffield and Liverpool. This makes it even more important to understand how the city is growing, and where policy responses need to be targeted spatially to respond to the city's changing economic geography.

Businesses: A stagnating city centre economy

Table 1 shows that strong business growth since 2015 has resulted in employment growth

for the city. Looking at employment change from 2015 to 2023, gives a 1.1% loss of jobs within the city council area, but 4.3% employment growth in the wider Urban Area.

Most of Norwich's recent growth has been generated on the periphery of the urban area, while the city centre has stalled. City centre employment and GVA has declined since 2018 with businesses moving out to business parks and industrial estates on the edges of the city.

Table 1

Rank	Business change (2015-2024)	Employment change (2015-2023)	% Knowledge economy change (2015-2023)	GVA ¹ change (2015-2021)	Office floorspace change (2015-2024)	Industrial floorspace change (2015-2024)	Five-year business survival rates for businesses established in 2018
1	Peterborough 21.4%	Cambridge 12.9%	England 12.4%	Cambridge 30%	Ipswich 25.6%	Peterborough 32.3%	Lincoln 48.4%
2	Ipswich 15.2%	York 10.4%	Cambridge 11.1%	Peterborough 29%	Cambridge 13.1%	Cambridge 18.4%	Norfolk 45.9%
3	England 9.0%	Peterborough 9.2%	Oxford 9.5%	Norwich UA 27.1%	Colchester 10.2%	England 10.6%	Colchester 45.1%
4	Norwich 8.1%	England 8.9%	York 5.6%	Colchester 21%	Oxford 9.4%	Ipswich 8.1%	York 45.1%
5	Colchester 8.0%	Colchester 5.9%	Colchester 4.6%	Norfolk 21%	Norwich UA 4.1%	Colchester 5.5%	Cambridge 45.0%
6	Norfolk 5.2%	Norfolk 4.8%	Norfolk 0.7%	England 19%	Norfolk 4.1%	York 4.5%	Oxford 41.9%
7	York 4.1%	Oxford 4.8%	Norwich UA -0.4%	Ipswich 17%	England 2.7%	Norwich UA 3.3%	Norwich 40.5%
8	Cambridge 4.0%	Norwich UA 4.3%	Norwich -2.3%	Oxford 14%	Lincoln 1.8%	Norfolk 2.5%	England 39.4%
9	Lincoln 3.9%	Ipswich 2.8%	Ipswich -4.7%	Lincoln 12%	Peterborough 1.4%	Lincoln 2.0%	Ipswich 39.3%
10	Oxford 3.9%	Lincoln 1.8%	Peterborough -11.3%	York 11%	Norwich 0.1%	Norwich 1.8%	Peterborough 39.1%
11		Norwich -1.1%	Lincoln -21.2%	Norwich 10%	York -10.0%	Oxford 0.8%	

¹ GVA data for local areas is subject to a margin of error

The LA's business base comprises a higher proportion of medium and large companies than the national average. This makes Norwich more exposed to economic downturns, downsizing, and relocations, as reflected by the shrinking of several key sectors in recent years. Norwich is also heavily reliant on a small number of sectors which have declined in recent years.

Table 1 shows Norwich LA's five-year business survival rates are significantly lower than in comparator areas and the England


average, with only one in four of the businesses that started in 2017 still trading in 2022.

Office and industrial floorspace delivery has remained largely stagnant since 2015 with the most significant gains taking place outside of the city council area. Alongside this, Norwich's main growth drivers – such as Norwich Research Park – sit outside the city council's administrative boundary, while the employment function of the city centre has been undermined by the introduction of Permitted Development Rights,

allowing changes of use from commercial to residential properties. Since 2013, Norwich has experienced a substantial loss of office accommodation, with around 30% of floorspace lost to Permitted Development.

These trends have contributed to a 17% decline in city centre employment since 2018, while employment in peripheral business parks has surged. Left unaddressed, this threatens the long-term vitality of the city centre which is widely regarded by local stakeholders as the jewel in the crown of the region's economy.

“ **In response to this, we have:** Purchased Anglia Square through £34m funds from Homes England to revitalise Norwich city centre. The scheme will deliver up to 1,100 new homes, a variety of retail, office and leisure spaces with landscaped gardens and a new neighbourhood centre. We have also introduced an Article 4 direction in order to prevent the change of use of certain offices to residential within the city centre, unless planning permission is granted for it by the council. ”



Sectors: Nationally significant specialisms which can drive growth and renewal

Norwich is poised for its next economic evolution, driven by decarbonisation and the fourth industrial revolution. These forces will reshape the economy, creating new industries and boosting existing world-leading firms in finance, health, R&D, technology, and creative sectors—all key to the government's Invest 2035 industrial strategy.

The city benefits from the creative and innovative capacity of Norwich University of the Arts and the University of East Anglia (UEA). Norwich Research Park is a major European hub for food, health, and microbiology research, while the city centre excels in FinTech and Digital Services.

Though vulnerable to climate change, Norwich's renowned environmental science expertise at UEA and Norwich Research Park positions it to significantly grow its low carbon sector.

Nationally growing sectors like public administration, education, health, and finance/insurance/property are already strong in Norwich. However, while retail and motor trades have a large presence, they have declined nationally.

Norwich performs better than the England average in terms of high growth businesses as a proportion of the overall business base but has suffered declining numbers of scale ups per 100,000 people since 2013 and in terms of the overall business base since 2017. However, it is in the top 20 in the UK for growth between 2013-2021 when scale ups are measured by turnover.

The city is home to a growing Insurtech cluster, the largest outside of London. This burgeoning sector could contribute £100 million to the local economy by 2027, creating 600 new jobs. The city centre is also home to Norwich University of the Arts which has regenerated the Creative Quarter. There is potential to support more digital and creative businesses to start, scale and grow in the city building on the success of the Norwich University of the Arts Ideas Factory programme.

“ In response to this, we have: Created a Digital Hub to provide office space for ambitious digital businesses to scale and grow. We have also secured funding for MENTA (in collaboration with FUSE) which offers essential start-up advice, training, and mentoring for businesses, social enterprises, and entrepreneurs. ”



Commercial property market: Clear market failures which are undermining the employment role of the city centre

The highest rental values within the Norwich commercial property market are found in retail, where rents generally exceed Norfolk and England averages. Retail floorspace has increased by around 5% in the past 10 years, and while there has been an increase in vacancies over the past 2 years, they are still below 3%.

Industrial and light industrial rents have almost doubled during the past 10 years. At the same time, vacancy rates have increased

from 3.2% to 8.9%. This large increase reflects the impact of the Unilever factory closing at Carrow Works.

The office market has seen a slow increase in rents over the past 10 years, but rental levels do not outperform Norfolk as a whole. Office floorspace has increased by 3.7% and vacancy rates have increased by 1.5% since 2019. An underperforming office market has resulted in a lack of speculative office development which, if left unaddressed, will prevent the diversification and re-establishment of employment densities in the city centre – undermining its long-term resilience and competitiveness.

“ In response to this, we have: Used the Towns Fund to develop a Revolving Fund to unlock stalled brownfield sites. We have also developed a masterplan to steer regeneration in East Norwich. ”



Labour market: A large and growing labour market with high concentrations of low paying work

Population growth in the Norwich LA and the Norwich UA has exceeded growth at the national level. The city has a high proportion of working age people which can support a strong local labour market.

Norwich has the joint second youngest median age of a local authority in the East of England, at 34 years, and this has stayed

the same since 2011. However, there has been a significant increase in the number of residents aged 50-64 years (13.2%), while the number aged four years and under has fallen by 1,500 (17.2%).

Earnings in Norwich are comparatively low. This is likely to be the result of the city's relatively isolated location and large rural hinterland which means that there is less wage competition than in many other areas in the UK.

Workplace earnings are higher than resident earnings in Norwich, this is the result of the

high levels of in-commuting from the rest of Norfolk - many high earners employed in managerial and director level occupations are likely to live outside of the Norwich LA boundary.

Much of the workforce in Norwich is concentrated in low paid sectors which are central to the functioning of the local economy - in the urban area 42% of jobs are in low paying industries compared to 36% nationally. Norwich also has a higher-than-average proportion of part-time employees.

Table 2

Rank	Population change (2015-2022)	% working age people (2022)	% Claimants of working age people (Feb 2025)	% of LSOAs in top 10% most deprived nationally	Median resident earnings (2024)	Median workplace earnings (2024)
1	Cambridge 10.0%	Cambridge 74.0%	York 1.9%	Cambridge 0%	Cambridge £44,793	Cambridge £43,365
2	Peterborough 8.7%	Oxford 72.7%	Cambridge 2.2%	York 0%	Oxford £40,447	Oxford £41,152
3	Colchester 6.1%	Norwich 69.0%	Oxford 2.7%	Colchester 1%	Colchester £38,703	England £37,630
4	Norwich UA5.3%	Lincoln 68.5%	Norfolk 3.1%	Oxford 1%	York £35,908	Colchester £37,428
5	Norfolk 4.8%	York 65.8%	Colchester 3.3%	Ipswich 14%	England £37,617	York £36,830
6	Norwich 4.3%	Norwich UA 65.3%	Lincoln 4.0%	Peterborough 14%	Peterborough £35,566	Norwich £34,711
7	England 4.2%	Ipswich 63.1%	Norwich 4.2%	Lincoln 18%	Ipswich £34,873	Lincoln £34,488
8	Oxford 3.2%	Peterborough 63.0%	England 4.3%	Norwich 20%	Norfolk £34,712	Norfolk £34,425
9	Lincoln 3.1%	Colchester 63.0%	Ipswich 4.6%		Norwich £34,603	Peterborough £34,105
10	York 0.7%	England 62.9%	Peterborough 5.9%		Lincoln £32,831	Ipswich £33,482
11	Ipswich -0.3%	Norfolk 59.1%				

“ In response to this, we have: Secured funding for The Brighter Futures project to help long-term unemployed residents to access education, training, and work. ”

Inequalities: Increasing and multi-faceted barriers to prosperity

Research shows there is a strong relationship between high levels of income inequality and low levels of social mobility. On average, people living in deprived areas have worse outcomes from childhood to adulthood. This has an impact upon the wider economy, as well as the individual, because low social mobility can hinder economic growth and innovation, as the talents and potential of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds may not be optimised.

Women's earning potential is a key issue affecting participation in the labour market, particularly as Norwich is a low wage economy – more than one in five women earn less than the Living Wage. The reasons are manifold but include their prevalence in lower paid jobs and the propensity to part-time working because of caring responsibilities.

In areas of high deprivation, incomes are low, and residents are more exposed to cost of living pressures – Norwich has relatively high housing costs, high transport costs, and low earnings which all contribute negatively to economic and financial security. This is likely to have a greater impact on women who tend to have lower rates of savings, assets and pensions than men.

Low quality work (where there is an imbalance between effort and reward) has contributed to declining wellbeing and health outcomes for residents in deprived areas of Norwich. 20% of neighbourhoods in the city are in the top 10% most deprived nationally across key measures of prosperity such as income, employment, education and health. This creates a complex set of problems which results in large numbers of people being excluded from, or on the margins of, economic activity.

Problems of poverty, poor health and low levels of skill sit alongside and contribute to mental health problems, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy. These problems result in poor prospects for children including low attainment and relatively high numbers of children leaving school and classed as Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), contributing to a cycle of deprivation which is difficult to break.

Unemployment in Norwich mirrors national trends – the claimant count rate stood at 4.3% in September 2024. In addition, around one-fifth of working age residents are classed as economically inactive. Poor health is increasingly becoming an economic issue, with 6,200 residents in our city economically inactive due to long term sickness or disability, and another 5,200 economically inactive residents due to caring responsibilities.

Skills: High inequality in terms of qualifications and attainment

Qualifications or educational attainment are used as a proxy for skill because it is difficult to measure or monitor skills per se. Norwich has a high proportion of residents with degree level and level 3 qualifications. Conversely, there is a considerable

proportion of the working age population who have entry level or no qualifications.

The percentage of residents progressing going into full time education or training post compulsory schooling is much lower across Norfolk than the national and regional averages, as is the proportion who go onto university.

“ In response to these trends, we have: Collectively (with City College Norwich, New Anglia LEP, and Norwich City Council) invested £11.4m in the Digi-Tech Factory at City College Norwich to provide digital tech, engineering and design courses as a direct response to a key skills priority. We have also secured £3.1m through the Towns Fund to upgrade the Advanced Construction and Engineering Centre at City College Norwich. ”

The 2040 inclusive economy vision: Unlocking Norwich's potential

The evidence shows that Norwich is a city of immense economic opportunity, poised to make a vital contribution to the government's national growth ambitions.

The 2040 Inclusive Economy Vision is our strategic blueprint for harnessing this opportunity. It not only charts a course for directed economic growth but also defines the benefits this must deliver to Norwich's people and places.

Central to this vision is valuing and building upon what already makes Norwich special. We heard from stakeholders that the city's renowned liveability and quality of life offer are frequently decisive factors for

businesses and individuals choosing to locate in Norwich.

However, for many of the city's most deprived communities, health and wellbeing outcomes are poor and are getting worse. The Vision is designed to reverse this damaging trend by uniting public, private, and civil society partners to actively combat inequality and foster a healthier and more sustainable economy.

Our vision for Norwich's economy is therefore: "In 2040, a dynamic, productive, and inclusive economy provides a foundation for Norwich to be the happiest, healthiest, and most liveable city in the UK"

This vision will be achieved through the following 2040 outcomes which were defined through evidence and stakeholder feedback:

Potential: Norwich will be a social mobility hotspot that supports all young people to reach their potential.

Prosperity: Norwich residents can access high-quality and health-promoting work.

Planet: Norwich will have a thriving net zero economy defined by globally significant innovation and local climate resilience.

Place: Norwich City centre will host the highest concentration of creative, knowledge-intensive and 'new economy' jobs in the East of England.

Promotion: Norwich will attract and retain more talent and investment to enable the city's businesses to grow.

2 **Our response:** How the City Council will support Norwich's economy over the next five years

Principles behind this Economic Plan

The evidence shows that Norwich is a city of immense economic opportunity, poised to make a vital contribution to the government's national growth ambitions.

The 2040 Inclusive Economy Vision is our strategic blueprint for harnessing this opportunity. It not only charts a course for directed economic growth but also defines the benefits this must deliver to Norwich's people and places.

A long-term focus: Many of the challenges identified through the 2040 Economic Vision are not new. Low paying work, low social mobility, and city centre decline are decades in the making and will take many years to address. We are committed to driving transformational long-term change

and this document is the first of three five-year delivery plans supporting positive change against the five 2040 Vision outcomes. At the end of this first five-year Plan, we will review progress against the 2040 outcomes and update our delivery priorities for the five years to 2035.

Accelerating devolution and Local Government Reform: This Plan is being produced during a period of significant change for local government. Over the next five years, the City Council in its current form will cease to exist and a Mayoral Combined Authority covering both Norfolk and Suffolk will have new funding and powers to support economic growth and regeneration. Our interventions have been designed with these changes in mind, with actions in years 3-5 designed to act as evidence-led priorities for Greater Norwich which can be taken forward by future administrations.

Our levers for change

While we have big ambitions for Norwich, we must also be honest about the financial challenges we face.

Central government funding has been cut significantly over time, and - like everyone - the City Council has been impacted by the cost of things like energy and materials going up due to inflation. While the City's comprehensive long-term financial planning means that we are in a stronger position than many other councils' nationally, there is less money than there used to be to support economic development.

This means that we need to think creatively about the levers available to us to deliver positive change. Reflecting this, our Economic Plan establishes the Council's role as a:

Convener and partner - We will bring organisations that are important within the local economy together - helping to support new connections and ideas

Planner and regulator - We will provide strategic oversight of development and growth in the city

Asset owner - Where we are able to, we will explore the feasibility of using selective Council assets to drive social value and drive economic growth beyond commercial returns

Funder and deliverer - Where possible, we will advocate for the city and develop 'funding ready' projects to take advantage of public and private sector investment.

Advocate - We will promote Norwich, its residents, businesses and institutions to showcase positive activity and help attract investment

Place leader - We will oversee measurement and changes in the economy - providing evidence to inform more effective policy and investment decisions

Delivery timescales

Across these levers for change, our actions are profiled across two timescales:

2-year delivery: These are the actions that the City Council will deliver ahead of Local Government Reorganisation and the formation of new Unitary Authorities in 2027

3-5 year aspirations: Based on our extensive evidence base and strategic stakeholder engagement, we have identified medium-term aspirations which can unlock the potential of the Norwich Urban Area which can be taken forward by the new Unitary Authority.

3 Our action plan: How we will grow an economy of purpose

Long-term outcome 1:

Norwich will be a social mobility hotspot where all young people are supported to reach their potential

A lack of upwards social mobility has been shown to perpetuate health inequalities. While the City Council currently has limited direct responsibility for education, we will work to reduce entrenched deprivation, widen access to local opportunities, and broker stronger partnerships between education and industry.

Strategic priority 1.1 – Improve educational attainment in Norwich’s most deprived areas

Disadvantaged students in Norwich are less likely to progress to higher education than their peers – but we have seen how strong leadership can reverse these trends. In social mobility hotspots such as London the

progression gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils is much less stark than it is in Norfolk. We will work to understand the interventions that can reverse these trends, leveraging new powers and resources through devolution to make Norwich a social mobility hotspot.

Over the next two years, we will:

Convene and partner: By scoping and seeking funding for an independent Norwich Social Mobility Commission. The Commission will look to convene independent experts across several focused sessions to identify recommendations to inform the education priorities and focus of the new Unitary Authority to improve education outcomes in the city’s most deprived areas.

Fund and deliver: By securing UKSPF funding for the council’s neighbourhood’s team to invest in strengthening

neighbourhood networks in deprived areas to foster a more inclusive community.

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Convening and partnering: By working across the new Unitary Authority to deliver recommendations of the Social Mobility Commission to tackle educational inequality, unlock growth, and help all residents to reach their potential.

Strategic priority 1.2 – Increase awareness and visibility of local career pathways

Norwich is a rapidly growing city underpinned by multiple success stories such as the Norwich Research Park. While we anticipate that these economic nodes will continue to grow, the council will take an active role in supporting growth through high-profile projects such as the regeneration of Anglia Square. We will



harness investment to provide opportunities for the city's long-term communities - making them the primary beneficiaries in the next chapter of Norwich's growth story.

Over the next two years, we will:

Convene and partner: By using the regeneration of Anglia Square and partnerships with City College to provide high-quality construction employment and skills opportunities for residents

Show place leadership: By working with District Council partners to review and define what a best practice, future-facing skills service for Greater Norwich could look like - enabling the new Unitary Authority to hit the ground running.

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Funding and delivering: By scoping options for a Greater Norwich 'youth guarantee' with dedicated careers support for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Strategic priority 1.3 - Facilitate deeper collaborations between education and industry

Norwich's institutions are one of the city's major strengths. With two world-class universities, a strong Further Education sector, and several major anchor employers we have the building blocks to link local projects. In recent years, this has included securing UK Shared Prosperity Funding to support initiatives such as Business in the Community's Business Encounter Schools in East Earham, working with education providers to bridge the gap between business and education and enhance social mobility.

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Providing place leadership: By driving collaboration with Norwich's business forums which comprise a diverse membership and are aligned to the growth sectors that exist in Greater Norwich.

Long-term outcome 2:

All residents can access high-quality, health-promoting work

There is an established body of research showing that people with lower incomes are more likely to report poor physical and mental health. Low paying work is a persistent challenge for Norwich with more than four in ten jobs being in typically low paying sectors. We will work across the system to remove barriers to prosperity and support a local economy which is fairer and more inclusive.

Strategic priority 2.1 – Adults are supported to develop foundational skills throughout their lives

Adult education is a key priority for Norwich and Norfolk. We will work to address skills gaps and the proportion of adults with no qualifications to allow residents to maximise their earning potential and take advantage of new and emerging industries.

Over the next two years, we will:

Enable and convene: By using the Norwich Skills and Employability Forum and local intelligence to feed in priorities for adult education and the Adult Education Budget.

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Funding and delivering: Locally-focused skills and employability provision with services and outreach targeted in neighbourhoods with high prevalence of no/low qualifications.

Strategic priority 2.2 – Wider barriers to economic participation are addressed

In addition to skills and education, we know that factors such as health, education, and the availability and affordability of childcare affect people's ability to obtain and sustain work. Evidence shows that health outcomes – specifically for women – have

worsened over the last ten years. We will work across the system to tackle the social determinants of health.

Over the next two years, we will:

Fund and deliver: by working with Brighter Futures through the UKSPF programme to help unemployed individuals into work, training or volunteering.

Advocate and lobby: By working with key partners such as the NHS and County Council to build our evidence base to understand the main local barriers to economic participation.

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Planning: Planning for appropriate social and community infrastructure to remove practical barriers to economic participation (such as health-related economic inactivity and childcare)



Convening and partnering: Working across the system and the Institute for Health Equity to explore the feasibility for Greater Norwich to become a Marmot City.

Strategic priority 2.3 – Norwich has a thriving foundational economy and VCS sectors which provide a real living wage

We are proud of Norwich's foundational economy which provides essential services to support the city's population. Norwich is one of the UK's hot-spots for social enterprises – which are businesses which trade for a social or environmental purpose – and is recognised as a social enterprise city. We will celebrate and strengthen this

part of the economy, working in partnership to deliver a more inclusive economy.

Over the next two years, we will:

Fund and deliver: Business support for social enterprises. Working with MENTA and Fuse, we will use UKSPF funding to offer essential start-up advice, training, and mentoring for businesses, social enterprises, and entrepreneurs.

Use our assets and expertise for social good:

By using our ownership of Carrow House to support Norwich Unity Hub which will provide affordable rented accommodation to charitable organisations in Norwich and fostering collaboration among their members. By developing the St Saviours'

Box Park we will ensure that the vitality and diversity of local shopping facilities can be maintained and improved, increasing footfall to the local area as well as providing affordable workspace for local businesses.

Advocate and lobby: By developing ways to measure the social performance of our assets to ensure that social impact of the council's portfolio is considered alongside commercial returns.

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Using assets: By exploring other ways of structuring lease terms to support VCS sector and high social impact companies through mechanisms such as social value leases.

Long-term outcome 3:

Norwich will have a thriving net zero economy defined by globally-significant innovation and local climate resilience

The climate emergency is the biggest existential threat to the long-term health of Norwich's economy and communities. Norwich is a hub for climate science research and a growing net zero economy. The Climatic Research Unit (CRU) and the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at UEA combined with the Norwich Research Park's research into climate and environment aims to help solve global and societal challenges, such as climate change and loss of biodiversity. We will work to ensure that our approach to the economy builds on these strengths to place climate action at the heart of the city's economic identity.

Strategic priority 3.1 – Ensure regeneration, investment and growth enhances the city's natural capital

Resident and business engagement has consistently shown that Norwich's quality of life offer is a major selling point for the city. We will work to ensure that growth and regeneration actively supports decarbonisation and nature recovery by actively considering the economic value of the city's natural assets as part of the decision-making process.

Over the next two years, we will:

Deliver: By working across the council to actively pursue funding and deliver projects aimed at protecting, enhancing, creating and measuring Norwich's natural capital assets. This will include bidding into funding programmes such as the Nature Towns & Cities Fund.

Deliver: By investigating the opportunities to create local "green" jobs through £30m planned capital decarbonisation projects.

Enable and convene: By ensuring greater alignment between environment and economic development priorities. Practically, Economic Development will support the development of the council's forthcoming Climate Action Plan to ensure alignment with the Economic Vision and Economic Development Plan.

Enable and convene: By being part of the Norfolk Environmental Credits (NEC), a not-for-profit collaboration between Breckland, Broadland, North Norfolk, Norwich and South Norfolk Councils. Norwich joined in May and credits will be available for Norwich developments from late July 2025.

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Place leadership: By working with partners to develop a Natural Capital Investment Plan which distils natural capital investment priorities and identifies priority projects for funding by the Combined Authority or private funders; drawing inspiration and learning from Greater Manchester's Natural Capital Investment Plan.



Strategic priority 3.2 – Improve intra-city transport and decarbonise commercial property

We will work to provide the infrastructure to support a low carbon economy. This includes providing sustainable transport links to enable people to move around the city and improving the energy efficiency of the city's workplaces – most of which risk being unlettable without significant public investment.

Over the next two years, we will:

Fund and deliver: Improvements to the council's existing commercial property stock to ensure compliance with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) legislation

Advocate and lobby: By supporting Norfolk County Council's proposal to secure Active Travel England funding to improve cycling links between Mile Cross, Hellesdon and the city centre.

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Funding and delivering: Public transport and active travel project to improve intra-city travel and connections between the city's key economic nodes and the city centre.

Strategic priority 3.3 – Coordinate promotion and support for the city's growing green businesses

Unlike many places, Norwich is home to businesses that are pioneering solutions to the climate emergency and a greener future. We will work with key institutions to support the growth of these sectors, capitalising on Norwich's position as the largest concentration of food and health-related research in Europe to create jobs and drive economic growth.

Over the next two years, we will:

Advocate and lobby: for Norwich's green economy businesses through the council's external promotion of the city.

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Funding and delivering: Business support focusing on the unique needs of Greater Norwich's key growth sectors

Long-term outcome 4:

Norwich city centre will host the highest concentration of creative, knowledge-intensive, and 'new economy' jobs in the East of England

Norwich city centre is Norfolk's main economic, cultural, and retail hub. While the city's large catchment has seen its retail offer remain resilient in the face of Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis, the city centre has experienced significant employment decline in recent years with major employers relocating to out of town business parks. We will respond proactively to this challenge, by providing the right conditions for the city's growing creative, digital and knowledge-intensive businesses to scale.

Strategic priority 4.1 – Make Norwich city centre a hub for growing businesses

Norwich has historically been heavily reliant on a small number of large employers. However, in recent years the city centre has experienced a rapid growth in start-up businesses wanting to take advantage of the cultural, amenity, and connectivity provided by the city centre. We will work to address barriers to these businesses scaling – supporting these businesses to provide more high quality jobs for local people.

Over the next two years, we will:


Fund and deliver: The regeneration of Anglia Square which will increase city centre footfall, vibrancy and vitality which can support city centre-based businesses

Enable and convene: The St Saviours Yard meanwhile shopping spaces as part

of the Anglia Square redevelopment. This will feature over 80 shipping containers which aims to provide flexible, affordable and practical spaces, tailored to the needs of small businesses, freelancers, traders and creatives.

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Asset ownership: Exploring the creative use of public sector land holdings to increase provision of high-quality and affordable workspace for the city's small businesses.



Strategic priority 4.2 – Enhance the competitiveness of Norwich city centre

In recent years, Norwich city centre has been undermined by new Grade A office space being delivered on the outskirts of Norwich. In response to this, we will work to enhance the competitiveness of the city centre infrastructure – making it a location of choice for both established and growing businesses to encourage agglomeration, productivity and growth.

Over the next two years, we will:

Fund and deliver: A new masterplan for Norwich City Centre that will establish a bold and future-facing vision for the city centre and will be underpinned by a range of evidence-led, practical, and fundable transport, land use and housing projects.

Fund and deliver: A business case to explore the future of City Hall with options

to consider potential of this hosting new Grade A office space in the city centre.

Enable and convene: by supporting the delivery of regionally significant visitor economy projects such as the £27.5m renovation of Norwich Castle to increase footfall and spend.

Advocate and lobby: By prioritising senior officer representation on the Business Improvement District Board to foster strong relationships

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Funding and delivering: Interventions identified through the city centre masterplan to unlock the economic potential and competitiveness of Norwich city centre. This will include working with the new Combined Authority to develop projects and unlock funding.

Strategic priority 4.3 – Provide spaces to support and enable key sectors to grow

Norwich city centre is increasingly a hub for new and early-stage businesses. This includes rapid recent growth in digital and technology-focused businesses which are one of the 8 national priority sectors identified in the government's recent economic strategy. This, combined with Norwich University of the Arts expanding their city centre presence offers the opportunity to reinvent the city centre as the East of England's hub for creative, digital, and tech businesses.

Over the next two years, we will:

Fund and deliver: By completing the Norwich Digital Hub unlocking new space for ambitious digital businesses in Norwich, providing a focal point for the sector as a whole.

Fund and deliver: By working with district council colleagues to plan for the long term future of business support.

Fund and deliver: By exploring the feasibility of extending discretionary business rates relief businesses locating in key regeneration areas or in specific sectors.

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Provide place leadership: By delivering the Economic Vision for major employment growth at East Norwich which can capture overspill demand from a thriving city centre.

Long-term outcome 5:

Norwich will attract and retain more talent and investment to enable the city's businesses to grow

The city's employers have been clear that access to talent and skills are integral to their growth prospects. We see population growth and attracting new people to live and work in Norwich to be a critical ingredient to a thriving city and a strong economy. To do this, we will look to raise the profile of Norwich to ensure that we get the funding and investment we need to succeed in the future economy.

Strategic priority 5.1 – Coordinate purchasing power and social impact priorities of anchor institutions

Norwich boasts strong local supply chains which have been formed over generations. Retaining wealth and investment locally is

an important ingredient for a thriving SME business base. We will build on these trends by supporting public sector and anchor institutions to spend more with local businesses.

Over the next two years, we will:

Enable and convene: By working with the council's procurement team to increase the amount City Council spends with local suppliers – ensuring the City Council is leading by example.

Advocate: for the city's small businesses by building awareness of local suppliers amongst council procurement officers.

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Enabling and convening: The Greater Norwich Anchor Institution to understand how key public sector institutions such as local government and the NHS can work together on shared social and environmental objectives.

Strategic priority 5.2 – Strengthen place identity and branding, and promote Norwich's businesses and institutions

Stakeholders told us that attracting and retaining talent in key sectors was acting as a major handbrake on growth. We will work to change the perceptions of Norwich regionally and nationally by shining a spotlight on economic and quality of life offer available in the city.



Over the next two years, we will:

Fund and deliver: New homes across a broad range of tenures and sizes in key regeneration areas to attract a range of professionals to the city.

Enable and convene: Work with Norwich Business Improvement District to explore mechanisms to secure funding that supports the Work in Norwich Campaign.

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Enabling and convening: A Norfolk and Suffolk-wide inward investment campaign, placing the city's businesses and unique offer at the heart of the region's offer.

Strategic priority 5.3: Deepen strategic partnerships with the city's universities

Universities play a key role in developing a pipeline of skilled workers for the city. We will build on recent positive momentum to boost graduate retention and increase the number of students staying in Norwich after getting their degree.

Over the next two years, we will:

Enable and convene: By supporting university spinouts to access space in the city centre. We will form new partnerships to enable spinouts from Norwich University of the Arts to access space in the city centre (including council assets).

In years 3-5, priorities should include:

Enabling and convening: By working with the city's universities to understand the main reasons preventing people from staying in Norwich after graduation and develop strategies to address them.

4 Implementation and monitoring progress

The City Council's Economic Development team will own the delivery of this Plan. An annual performance report will be produced to track changes in the city's economy and the impact of council delivery.

The Economic Development Team already undertakes an annual Local Economic Assessment to understand the strength and vitality of Norwich's economy. As part of this assessment, we will also review progress towards the five 2040 outcomes in the Norwich Inclusive Economy Vision. This includes the following Key Performance Indicators:

1. Potential:

- % of children eligible for FSM achieving a 'good level of development' at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage
- % of children eligible for FSM achieving at least a level 4 in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2

- % of Free School Meals eligible children in Norwich progressing to Higher Education
- % of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
- Number of apprenticeships hosted on major regeneration schemes

2. Prosperity:

- % of residents with no qualifications
- % of jobs in typically low paying sectors
- % of residents economically inactive due to long-term sickness or disability

3. Planet:

- Level of MtCo2 associated with economic activity

4. Place:

- Number of new economy, creative and knowledge intensive businesses and jobs in the city centre
- Number of jobs in the city centre
- Location Quotient of creative, knowledge intensive and new economy businesses in the city centre
- Proportion of properties with access to ultrafast broadband

5. Promotion:

- Graduate retention rates
- Population churn using the CDRC's Residential Mobility Index



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